

**Illuminating the Chorus in the Shadows:
Elizabethan and Jacobean Exeter 1550-1610**
Vol 1 of 3 volumes.

Submitted by Kate Osborne to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History March 2016.

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Abstract

This thesis challenges the notion that little light can be shed on Exeter's 'middling' and 'poorer' sorts in the period 1550-1610, defined as 'the chorus' by Wallace MacCaffrey in his book *Exeter 1540-1640*. It selects data from mid- to late- sixteenth and early seventeenth century urban archives, defines the strengths and weaknesses of that data and captures it in a digitised database. It uses this data to test which of the methodologies of prosopography, collective and individual biography, social network analysis and occupied topography are most appropriate for analysis of the city's social structure and individuals' lived experiences. It subsequently selects collective and individual biography for use with the randomly incomplete data set presented by the archives. Using the database to create group and individual biographies, it then introduces elementary quantitative analyses of the city's social structure, starting by describing broadly the distinguishing characteristics of the leading actors and the chorus. Following on from this, it describes several groups who form part of the chorus, including the more civically active, alongside those with less data against their names. It investigates family and household dynamics and reveals how these are reflected through the occupation of baker. It continues by examining the *post-mortem* intentions of those who bequeathed goods and explores the lives of a selection of craftsmen, merchants, tailors and widows viewed through in-depth biographies created from the comparatively rich data associated with death. It also makes explicit that the lack of a particular document type compromises the degree of success in connecting the chorus to the cityscape using occupied topography methodologies. It reveals the challenges of recreating the notion of neighbourhood in the city's west quarter around St Nicholas Priory, then the town house of the wealthy Hurst family. It concludes that it is possible to outline a new model, that of the 'categorised, connected citizen', which challenges the validity of MacCaffrey's construct of a bi-partite society, one side of which is a murky unknown quantity about whom no 'striking assertions' can be made. This new model acknowledges the dynamism, individuality and interactivity of Exeter's inhabitants, and contents that it is a better one for enabling historians to treat respectfully people they cannot yet fully understand.

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Abbreviations

A2A	Access to Archives
AHGS	All Hallows Goldsmith Street
AHOW	All Hallows on the Wall
D&C	Dean and Chapter, Exeter Cathedral
DCNQ	Devon and Cornwall Notes and Queries
DCRS	Devon and Cornwall Record Society
DHC	Devon Heritage Centre (formerly Devon Record Office)
DNB	Dictionary of National Biography
EA	Exeter Archaeology
ECA	Exeter City Archives
HER	Historic Environment Record
HMC	Historic Manuscripts Commission
MCR	Mayor's Court Roll
MD	Master Database (for this study)
OPD	Other Property Document
OS	Ordnance Survey
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury
PDAS	Proceedings of the Devon Archaeological Society
PPB	Primary Plot Boundary
PWDRO	Plymouth and West Devon Record Office
RAMM	Royal Albert Memorial Museum and Art Gallery
SD	Subsidiary Database (for this study)
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SPIT	Single Point In Time (document)
TDA	Transactions of the Devonshire Association
TNA	The National Archives
WCSL	West Country Studies Library

Chapter 1: Introduction

'Nominal record linkage ... is the rather clumsy expression used to denote the process by which items of information about a particular named individual are associated with each other into a coherent whole in accordance with certain rules ... its techniques ... take us closer to the grassroots of history, bringing to light for ordinary men and women something of the details previously known only for the literate and well-born'.¹

The above quotation, taken from Wrigley's study *Identifying People from the Past*, encapsulates the aims, approaches and outcomes of this study of Elizabethan Exeter. In its quest to bring to light 'ordinary' men and women at this time, it attempts to define their characteristics, create group portraits of the more and less civically active, view family, friends, household and occupational dynamics and explore how they distributed their estates. Where possible, it creates more in-depth biographies and connects people to the cityscape to see if neighbourliness is detectable. This chapter sets out the rationale behind this study and the academic and local studies contexts in which it is developed. It also outlines how it responds to historical issues raised and introduces the methodologies used in addressing them. It concludes by setting out the study aims in full.

Rationale

The recent research and redevelopment of St Nicholas Priory in Exeter provides the inspiration for this study. A modest Benedictine Priory before the Reformation, it is situated in the parish of St Olave in the west quarter of the city and was occupied during the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries by the wealthy and prominent (but not gentle-born) Hurst family. Following a slow descent into multiple occupancy and dilapidation, it was purchased by Exeter City Council, restored and opened as a museum in 1916. In 2008, after a long period of relatively low-key existence, it was again repaired, refurnished and reinterpreted as the Hurst family's town

¹ E.A. Wrigley (ed.), *Identifying People in the Past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), p.1.

house, set in 1602, a date which reflects both the remaining architecture and, at the time, the last known year of the Hurst family's association with the site.²

The above reinterpretation project touches on the Hursts' marital connections with other, similarly wealthy city families. However, little is known about other associations that the family might have had with a greater range of city occupants in the late sixteenth century, or indeed who these people were, what they did and how they lived. There is also a lack of detailed information about the immediate neighbourhood and neighbours of the Priory. This study therefore explores the wider local human and physical site context for the period between 1550 and 1610.

Exeter's Elizabethan chorus: the starting point

There are two studies, one by MacCaffrey and the other by Hoskins, which are the starting point for any exploration of Elizabethan Exeter.³ It is MacCaffrey who feels that the vast majority of Exeter's inhabitants are practically invisible and their behaviour and relationships undetectable. He states:

... wherever our exploration has taken us, regardless of the angle of view, one fact has constantly emerged as most prominent. This is the domination of community life by a small group of families, interlocked by personal and business ties, and monopolizing wealth, power, and prestige. So absolute was this monopoly that the rest of the city's inhabitants seem hardly to emerge from the shadows of history. At best they form a kind of

² J. Allan and K. Osborne, *St Nicholas Priory: From Monastery to Museum* (Exeter: Exeter City Council, 2009), pp.22-33; K. Osborne and J. Allan, 'Presenting an Elizabethan Interior: the Reinterpretation of St Nicholas Priory, Exeter' in J. Allan, N. Alcock and D. Dawson (eds.), *West Country Households 1500-1700* (Woodbridge: Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology, 2015), pp.401-417.

³ W. T. MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, 2nd edn (London and Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1975); W.G. Hoskins, 'Exeter People in the Sixteenth Century' in *Two Thousand Years in Exeter*, 2nd edn (Chichester: Phillimore, 1960), pp.51-66.

chorus for the actions of this little group of leading actors ... we cannot, in concluding, offer any very striking assertions about the community we have been studying.⁴

His terminology is discussed below, but his view is implicitly corroborated by Hoskins in his popular study of Exeter. Although he refers to the less well-off members of Exeter's society, they remain as MacCaffrey describes, a shadowy group who have no individual names, such as the 'two adults in every five... assessed at nil in the records' or 'the brewers'. On only one or two occasions are named people referred to and these in association with famous city stories such as that of Elizabeth Glanville, one of a group of Exeter women who attacked the workmen pulling down the rood screen at St Nicholas Priory at the start of the Reformation.⁵ Elsewhere, he writes in detail solely about the wealthier sixteenth-century merchant society and accommodation.⁶ However, he feels, more optimistically than MacCaffrey, that 'enough material survives to write a whole book about Elizabethan Exeter, who lived in it, and what it looked like', and yet it is a book he never authored.⁷

Hoskins clearly believes in the potential to study a wider range of Exeter's Elizabethan inhabitants and Kowaleski, in her study of medieval Exeter's local markets and regional trade, is encouraging about the potential of Exeter's early city archival sources in this respect, although she feels they are particularly abundant for the late fourteenth century, rather than later. She notes Exeter's exceptional good fortune in its documentation survival rate, the influence of John Hooker, Exeter's Elizabethan Chamberlain and historian, in saving and calendaring many of the town's ancient records and the

⁴ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, pp.246 and 282.

⁵ Hoskins, 'Exeter People in the Sixteenth Century', pp.51, 57 and 59.

⁶ W.G. Hoskins, 'The Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', in P. Clark (ed.), *The Early Modern Town* (London: Longman for Open University Press, 1976), pp.148-167.

⁷ Hoskins, 'Exeter People in the Sixteenth Century', p.66.

continuation of that work into the nineteenth century.⁸ MacCaffrey describes these archives as 'rich' and Stoye goes further, feeling there are 'few provincial English cities, if any, which can boast such rich civic archives for the medieval and early modern periods'.⁹ This study therefore explores a wide range of these sources relating to the period 1550-1610 in a search to discover the social structure and topographical whereabouts of the chorus and indeed a more precise definition of it.

Academic context: the language of 'sorts'

The first question to tackle is 'who were 'the chorus'?' To try and define this so far unnamed shadowy mass of people, it is helpful to refer to the 'language of sorts', or the way in which, linguistically, society then described itself.

'Sorts of people' consists of a set of commonly-used terms of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which classified different kinds of people.¹⁰ Wrightson, in his study of 'sorts', argues that a dichotomous perception of society prevailed, evidenced, he believes, through the polarised use of linguistic terms such as 'the better sort', 'the best men', the 'principal', 'substantial', 'richer', 'learned' or 'chief' inhabitants, versus 'poorer', 'ruder', 'ignorant' or 'vulgar' sorts. He also argues that this reflected real collisions of interests, authority and ideals, and was used by those who regarded themselves as 'the better sort' actively disassociating themselves from the 'vulgar sort'.¹¹

⁸ M. Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.336; R. and S. Isacke, *Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter* (Exeter and London: Score, March and Birt, 1734); Rev. G. Oliver, *The History of the City of Exeter* (Exeter: William Roberts, 1861); S. Moore, Calendar of the records and muniments belonging to the Corporation of the city of Exeter (Manuscript volume, DHC, 1863-70).

⁹ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p. 3; M. Stoye, *Circled with Stone: Exeter's City Walls 1485-1660* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2003), p.6.

¹⁰ K. Wrightson, 'Sorts of People' in Tudor and Stuart England' in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People* (Basingstoke and London: MacMillan, 1994), pp.28-51.

¹¹ K. Wrightson, 'Estates, Degrees and Sorts' in P. Corfield (ed.), *Language, History and Class* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991), p.49; *ibid*, 'Sorts of People', pp.39-40.

What people at the time were not called by others, and did not call themselves, was the 'middling sort'. According to Wrightson, there are only occasional references to this term in the sixteenth century and it was not commonly used in a social structure sense until the mid-seventeenth century.¹² He agrees with Laslett that its origins may lie in an urban context coined perhaps to describe the numerous independent craftsmen and tradesmen who stood between the civic elite and the urban poor.¹³ He also posits that if such people enjoyed economic, social and perhaps institutional identity, they may have lacked a political identity that would have given them greater social structural recognition, in other words the label of 'middling sorts'. This linguistic polarisation is reflected in a contemporary description of local society by John Hooker, in his 1600 *Synopsis Chorographical of Devonshire*. He notes that in Devon (not just Exeter) there are four 'sortes and degrees' of people. These are the nobleman and gentlemen, the merchant, the yeoman/husbandman/freeholder and the labourer. However, Hooker states that the two groups that mostly live in the city are the merchants and the labourers, the latter translating as 'artyficers'.¹⁴ 'Merchants' and (unfree, paid-by-the-day) 'artyficers' might then have been linguistically of the better sort and common sort respectively, but the urban freeman who was not a wealthy merchant nor a day-labourer/artificer is invisible in Hooker's description. Wrightson suggests that 'perhaps the harsh glare of the anxieties and hostilities attending social and cultural polarisation cast the "middle sort" into conceptual shadow' and that they (not surprisingly) aligned themselves with the 'better sort' rather than the 'poorer sort'.¹⁵

¹² Wrightson, 'Sorts of People', pp.40-43; Wrightson quotes a rare instance of the use of 'middling sort' in an 'Apologie' for the city of London, written in the 1580s, where the citizens are divided into three sorts (the merchants and 'chief retailers', 'the most part of retailers and all artificers' and 'hirelings'). They '...of the middle place' were 'neither too rich nor too poor, but do live in the mediocrity' and were the most numerous group.

¹³ P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost – Further Explored* (London: Methuen, 1983), pp.6-7.

¹⁴ W. Blake, 'Hooker's Synopsis Chorographical of Devonshire', *TDA*, 47 (1915), p.342.

¹⁵ Wrightson, 'Sorts of People', p.44.

MacCaffrey divides Exeter's society into 'leading actors', that is, the better documented, politically powerful, wealthier and less numerous elite in opposition to 'the chorus', consisting of one large indistinguishable group of those less prominently described. In so doing, he reflects the contemporary polarized perception of the better sorts outlined above. However, given that people are individually named in so many of the sources used in this thesis, most of which were written by the leading actors, it would seem the latter did not regard everyone else as a nameless chorus, even if they were felt to be the common sorts in comparison with their own circle. This is the first point that calls into question the appropriateness of MacCaffrey's division for Exeter – other arise from this thesis. Moreover, the leading actor/chorus model also means that MacCaffrey perpetuates the idea that ordinary people are probably undiscoverable and, possibly, not worth discovering. However, what Wrightson does not deny, and what this study confirms, is that, labelled or not, the middling sort were there, and many aspects of their lives can be discovered through detailed scrutiny of a wide variety of sources. For the purposes of clarity, the terminology of leading actors and chorus is used throughout this thesis, but the concluding chapter proposes an alternative model to describe Exeter's early modern society in the light of the research findings.

If the late sixteenth-century better sorts actually embraced the better sort *and* the middling sort, it is historians, such as Barry, who have separated them out again by referring to the latter as 'the upper ranks/reaches of the middling sort' and, by implication, a lower rank of the middling sort. Barry defines the upper rank as merchants and larger retailers whose livelihoods depended on access to large amounts of capital, together with the leading members of the professions and the pseudo-gentry (those living on rentier incomes). His lower middling sort are the small shopkeepers, artisans, minor professionals and others, who lacked access to political power, extensive capital or genteel culture.¹⁶ The different terminologies outlined here are set out in Table 1.

¹⁶ J. Barry, 'Introduction' in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People*, pp.9-10; *ibid*, 'Bourgeois Collectivism?' in *ibid*, p.93.

In terms of defining who the chorus are with reference to 'sorts', it is argued in this study that they are equivalent to the 'lower middling sort' combined with the 'poorer' sort, and can be subdivided into the upper, middle and lower chorus. The observable data on which this is based is not linguistic but related to contemporary definitions of civic status which perhaps formed a local political identity and supplanted the need for the 'middling sort' label in Exeter, as Wrightson suggests. The leading actors are Barry's 'upper middling sort', the men who comprised the Chamber, the city council of its time, and their families. The upper chorus are those who, within the time period covered by this study, rose to the status of bailiff but who never entered the Chamber and the middle chorus are those who reached the status of freeman but not that of bailiff. The lower chorus are the 'poorer sort', who never achieved the status of freeman. Chapter three explores a wide range of data and argues that this subdivision observably carries through several aspects of life such as occupation, relative wealth, civic activity and the parishes with which individuals were associated.

Academic context: urban association

Exeter's inhabitants may have been allocated linguistically polarised positions by Hooker, and sub-divided themselves according to civic status, but they did not lead separate lives. In this respect this study contributes to what Barry believes is a neglected academic opportunity - the study of commonplace urban association - which he assesses as providing 'an unrivalled insight into the nature and values of the urban middling sort'. He argues that collective action at many different levels underpinned most individuals' achievements, alongside the activities of a relatively few individual entrepreneurs.¹⁷ The sources used for this study do not reveal collective actions through formal associations (clubs, societies etc) but they do shed light on the many and varied interactions within and between all the middling sorts at personal, family/household, group, parish and civic levels which impacted on day-to-day life and household survival within the relatively tight confines of the city walls.

¹⁷ Barry and Brooks, 'Bourgeois Collectivism?', pp.85-86.

These are examined in more detail at group level in chapters four to six and at an individual level in chapters eight and nine.

Related to this is the issue of human zoning, or geographical association-by-similarity in pre-industrial cities. Langton summarises the 'ideal type' models of residential and occupational zoning in early modern towns created by urban geographers Sjoberg and Vance.¹⁸ He explores their models through an in-depth examination of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and a more sketchy exploration of Dublin and Exeter using the Hearth Tax returns of 1671-2. Data collected for this study is analysed to test four aspects of Sjoberg's and Vance's models: the distribution of individual wealth and poverty along with occupational zoning (explored in chapter three), the whereabouts of aliens (chapter five) and household composition (chapter six). As Langton found for Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Exeter appears to represent a hybrid of Sjoberg and Vance's theories, at least in the late sixteenth century, and this is discussed in chapter three.

Academic context: history from below

This study also aligns itself with a contemporary concern in historical research, that of creating 'history from below' or, as Tosh puts it in his introductory historiography, 'the new social history' concerned with 'histories beyond the elite'. His view is relevant to this study in that he recognises that the composition of such groups and their place in the social structure have to be reconstructed from a very significant number of records drawn from a broad range of often mundane sources and believes that there is almost limitless scope for further work along these lines. His challenge is taken up by this thesis and by an increasing number of online digitisation projects such as *London Lives 1690 to 1800 – Crime, Poverty and Social Policy in the Metropolis* and blogs including *the many-headed monster* which ran an online

¹⁸ J. Langton, 'Residential Patterns in Pre-Industrial Cities: some case studies from seventeenth century Britain' in J. Barry (ed.), *The Tudor and Stuart Town* (Longman: London, 1990), pp.168-174.

symposium on history from below in 2013.¹⁹ Tosh also criticises earlier social historians for their tendency 'to take the line of least resistance and follow the trail through the records of institutions with an avowedly 'social' function - schools, hospitals, trade unions and the like' and feels the results are often narrowly institutional in character.²⁰ However, an exploration of Exeter's existing early modern studies reveals that the differences between traditional social history and the 'new' are not so clear cut. Most existing works *do* use a wide range of records and *do* reveal people not of the elite, albeit mostly those aspects of their lives directly connected with a specific theme, document-type, institution or structure.

Youngs, for example, uncovers the names and working relationships of a handful of the less prominent city individuals in her institutional study of the Guild of Tuckers, Weavers and Shearmen (hereafter referred to as 'the Tuckers'). She describes them as skilled men and small-scale employers with little in the way of capital resources, very few of whom would reach the ranks of the leading actors - a statement this study corroborates (table 3.15). She sees scope for a more extensive search of the city records to reveal the names and trades of ordinary men, although she notes that there will also inevitably be '...men of whom little will ever be known, not even their names'.²¹ The lower chorus also make a group appearance amongst the nameless poor in Evans's article on poverty and social control in Tudor Exeter.²² She mentions individually some of the leading actors and upper and middle chorus who appear as testators bequeathing cash directly to the poor, establishing almshouses and poor-relief schemes as well contributing to revolving loan funds which helped poor craftsmen set up in business. Her article therefore

¹⁹ <http://www.londonlives.org> [accessed Dec 30th 2015];

<http://www.manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com> [accessed Dec 30th 2015].

²⁰ J. Tosh with S. Lang, *The Pursuit of History*, 4th edn (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2006), p.136.

²¹ J.Youngs, *Tuckers Hall Exeter : The History of a Provincial City Company Through Five Centuries* (Exeter: The University of Exeter and the Incorporation of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen, 1968), pp.1-2 and p.6.

²² C. S. Evans, "An Echo of the Multitude": The Intersection of Governmental and Private Poverty Initiatives in Early Modern Exeter', *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies*, Vol.32. no.3 (2000), 410 and 418-420.

highlights one type of relationship within and between the leading actors and chorus, albeit on this occasion, something of an arms-length example. Harte quarries the Chamber act books of 1559-1588 for information about individuals and a few extracts refer to the chorus including several named brewers. Harte's reasons for selecting particular extracts are concerned with illustrating the day-to-day running of the city, although it seems likely that they are also the best stories from which to compose an engaging paper for the Devonshire Association. He refers, for example, to Thomas Bird, tailor of Exeter who was accused of 'kepinge of certyn pigges wthin this Citie....'.²³ Bird is an individual about whom more is discovered in chapter eight.

More recently, Stoye's studies of Exeter's city walls and water supply systems list the names and roles of chorus individuals associated directly with these particular structures. Their details are found mostly in the Receiver's Account Rolls, in the Chamber act books and one-off documents such as the 1556 List of the City Ordnance and the Account of Work on the Great Conduit.²⁴ He refers to groups of people intimately associated with the city walls and its components, including those who repaired and maintained it, those who lived on it, those imprisoned in parts of it, children who played on it and adults who used it for recreation. Mostly they are mentioned to illustrate his argument that in the early modern period this massive structure played a direct part in the ordinary, everyday lives of citizens and was not experienced only as protection against attack. However, where possible, he takes the biographical approach further, as with the city's gate porters. In this instance he provides a detailed description of their roles and responsibilities and refers to their job description, wages, appointment and dismissal, their apparel, lodgings, occasional pastimes and financial reimbursements. In his study of the water system, he reveals something of the life of Elizabethan

²³ W. Harte, 'Illustrations of Municipal History from the Act Book of the Chamber of the City of Exeter', *TDA*, 44 (1912), 222-223.

²⁴ M. Stoye, *Water in the City: The Aqueducts & Underground Passages of Exeter* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2014), pp.195-241 and p.245; Stoye, *Circled with Stone*, pp.114-184 and p.192.

plumber John Moore.²⁵ He also provides indices of personal names which assists greatly with adding detail to individual biographies in this study.²⁶ Stoye takes a biographical approach again in his article on witchcraft in Exeter between 1558 and 1610, concerned with evidence for the early prosecution of several individuals who were thought to be witches. This work makes particular use of the Exeter Rolls of the Sessions of the Peace and Gaol Delivery and the Chamber act books and he pieces together evidence for actions regarded by the authorities as witchcraft, the reactions of others to those they believed to be witches and background biographical details for the characters involved. He focuses on a few people in relation to very specific circumstances and actions, but does include individuals who were 'clearly at the very bottom of the social heap'.²⁷

Other more overtly biographical works relating to chorus members include Kent's comprehensive study of West Country spoonmakers which refers to goldsmiths working in Exeter during the period covered by this study.²⁸ There are also Rowe and Trease's detailed biography of apothecary Thomas Baskerville and his stock-in-trade, Ponsford's brief biographies of sixteenth-century Exeter clockmakers and likewise Homer's of Exeter pewterers and Mortimer's in respect of medical licentiates.²⁹ It is not the case, therefore, that no studies of 'ordinary people' have been undertaken for early modern Exeter, but they are limited by the context of the closely-themed studies in which they appear.

²⁵ Stoye, *Circled with Stone*, pp. 29-32, 37-50 and 58-62; *ibid*, *Water in the City*, p.109.

²⁶ Stoye, *Water in the City*, pp.280-288 and *ibid*, *Circled with Stone*, pp.227-231.

²⁷ *ibid*, "It is But an Olde Wytche Gonne": Prosecution and Execution for Witchcraft in Exeter 1558-1610', *History* 96 (2) 322 (2011), 149.

²⁸ T. Kent, *West Country Silver Spoons and their Makers 1550-1750* (London: J H Bourden Smith, 1992).

²⁹ M. Rowe and G.E. Trease, 'Thomas Baskerville, Elizabethan Apothecary of Exeter', *Transactions of the British Society for the History of Pharmacy*, 7.1 (1977), 3-28; C.N. Ponsford, *Time in Exeter* (Exeter: Headwell Vale Books, 1978), pp. 49-50, 56-57, 167 and 175; R. Homer, 'Exeter Pewterers from the Fourteenth Century to about 1750' *TDA*,127 (1995), 57-79; I. Mortimer, 'Index of Medical Licentiates, Applicants, Referees and Examiners in the Diocese of Exeter 1568-1783', *TDA*,136 (2004) 99-134.

This thesis therefore complements the above studies and distinguishes itself from them by collecting incidental occurrences of all Elizabethan individuals encountered in a wide range of key sixteenth and early seventeenth century city documents, *regardless of what type of encounter that might be*. The inclusive scope of data collection is deliberate in order to incorporate as much evidence about as many people and as many different aspects of their lives as possible from the start, as opposed to focusing on personal information of relevance to a particular theme. This also automatically extends the use of the biographical approach to a greater range of people, although there is a strong bias in the records in favour of the upper and middle chorus, even in the sources meant to cover the whole of society from the poorest to the wealthiest. The impact of this on the study's outcomes are discussed at length in chapter two and it can be argued that this is history 'from the middle' rather than 'from below', to coin Barry's phrase.³⁰ Nevertheless, this study covers some of the ground that Hoskins felt could be written about and perhaps meant to but never did, but which MacCaffrey felt was inaccessible.

Methodologies: an introduction

At the start of the study process, the methodologies chosen to investigate Exeter's early modern social structures were prosopography, collective biography, individual biography and social network analysis. They were chosen in order to exploit the available data in contrasting ways that produced different views of Exeter's inhabitants. However, in the end, it was not possible to make use of them all. The issues are summarised below and discussed in more detail in chapter two.

Prosopographical data is always concerned with external, observable characteristics of people, rather than their unobservable, inner, spiritual side. There are many definitions of prosopography, and much disagreement over them. For example, de Ridder-Symoens states 'Prosopography is a collective biography, describing the external features of a population group that the

³⁰ Barry and Brooks, *The Middling Sorts of People*, p.24.

researcher has determined has something in common.³¹ Keats-Rohan agrees with this in that she feels the methodology is not about focusing on individuals *per se* but upon the total collection of individuals in aggregate. However, she argues that prosopography is not the same as collective biography because it is about examining 'the interplay between a set of variables in order to understand certain historical processes'.³² She feels prosopography is essentially concerned with multivariate analysis, or exploring whether a group's variables (for example, parish, names, occupations) correlate in a way that indicates the statistical probability of a relationship, which then relies on context and wider knowledge for interpretation. Keats-Rohan also argues that another essential difference between collective biography and prosopography is that the former is subjective, being based on a group selected by the researcher whose members are known to have something in common from the outset, for example, bakers or almshouse dwellers. She claims prosopography is more objective because statistically significant correlations arising from multivariate analysis result in the discovery of new groups, with the membership not usually known beforehand.³³ Another viewpoint comes from Stone, who refers to 'elite' and 'mass' prosopography. The first he describes as being used for smaller, socially elite groups, operating within a tight time frame of around one hundred years and presented as a series of case studies solving a specific problem, rather than statistical analysis. The second focuses on much larger groups, takes a statistical approach, tends to deal with non-elites and needs 'vast quantities of data to be valid'.³⁴ Stone's elite prosopography aligns itself with the more qualitative collective biography approach and his

³¹ H. de Ridder-Symoens, 'Prospografie en middeleeuwse geschiedenis: een onmogelijke mogelijkheid?' in K.S.B Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications: a Handbook*, Prosopographia et Genealogica, XIII (Oxford: Unit for Prosopographical Research, University of Oxford, 2007), p.143.

³² K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (ed.), *ibid*, pp.143-4.

³³ *ibid*, p.144 and p.62.

³⁴ L. Stone, 'Prosopography', *The Past and the Present* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) pp.46-47 and p.69; D.C. Smyth, 'A Whiter Shade of Pale': Issues and Possibilities in Prosopography, in Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, pp.131-132.

mass prosopography with the more quantitative prosopography that Keats-Rohan defines.

An associated but complimentary approach to prosopography and collective biography is that of Social Network Analysis (SNA). SNA specifically examines relational information between individuals or groups of people. However, whereas collective biography and prosopography have their roots in collecting a range of biographical data, such as occupation, name and date of birth, SNA uses only the biographical data that denotes personal interaction such as buying and selling, bequeathing or marrying. It is then able to describe patterns of relationships which reveal something of the nature of society being studied and the position of individuals within it. The basis for SNA is a quantitative data matrix, in which rows and columns represent people and each cell of the matrix contains a binary measurement of a certain relation between them.³⁵ In this study, the incomplete nature of the dataset means that multivariate prosopography and SNA cannot be applied but collective biography can. The latter produces a collection of citywide population portraits and smaller group analyses, providing windows onto particular chorus life experiences or situations.

In addition to the collective biographies, individual biographies are created for archivally more visible characters from the chorus. Individual biography normally includes spiritual feelings, emotions and personal reactions, but Exeter's civic records relatively rarely contain such material.³⁶ Nevertheless, where there is more than one type of data to combine, qualitative and chronologically structured views of the lives of individuals can be partially re-created. On some occasions there is a particularly rich mix, usually where both a will and an inventory are associated with an individual, and these are explored in chapters eight and nine.

³⁵ C. Verbruggen, 'Literary Strategy during Flanders's Golden Decades', in Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, p.583.

³⁶ OED online <http://public.oed.com/> [accessed 17th August 2014].

Methodologies: occupied topography

The remaining key focus of this study is upon creating an occupied topography around the neighbourhood of St Nicholas Priory. It involves linking individuals to identifiable plots in the cityscape and attempting to discern neighbourhoods where biographical analyses reveals human interactions running hand-in-hand with plot adjacency. A review of studies relating to historic Exeter reveals very little in the way of plot-level studies and, at first, this seems encouraging as there appears to be a gap to fill in the city's history. An exploration of British urban topographical writing reveals that Exeter is not unusual in this respect, and recent publications indicate an opportunity to participate in what could be a revival of urban plot-level studies.³⁷ However, disappointingly, it turns out that rather than a missed historical opportunity, the lack of an essential combination of data sources explains why Exeter has not been, and is unlikely to be, the focus of a city-wide plot level study.

In summary, there is high-level, descriptive topographical coverage of the city over many years but just a handful of disconnected plot-level studies. As might be expected, the earliest Devon county histories do not focus particularly on Exeter but are mainly concerned with countywide natural history, descents of estates and genealogy.³⁸ Contemporary city description

³⁷ C.Fleet and D. MacCannell, *Edinburgh: Mapping the City*, (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd, 2014); Historic Towns Trust, *A Map of Tudor London 1520* (London: Old House Books, London, 2013); C.M. Fox, *A History of Bassishaw Ward: c1200-1600*, (eBookPartnership.com, 2014); D. Sivier, *Bridgewater: Personality, Place and the Built Environment From its Anglo-Saxon origins to the 17th century*, BAR British Series 605 (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014); R. Kain and R. Oliver, *British Town Maps: A History* (London: British Library, 2015).

³⁸ T. Risdon, *The Chorographical Description or Survey of the County of Devon* (Plymouth: Rees and Curtis, 1811); Rev. G. Oliver and P. Jones (eds.), *Thomas Westcote, A View of Devonshire in MDCXXX with a Pedigree of most of its Gentry* (Exeter: W. Roberts, 1845); Sir W. Pole, *Collections Towards a Description of the County of Devon* (London: Nichols, 1791); R. Polwhele, *The History of Devonshire*, Vol 1, facsimile of first edition published 1773-1806 (Dorking: Kohler and Coombes, 1977); M. Rowe and T. Gray (eds.), *Travels in Georgian Devon: the Illustrated Journals of the Rev John Swete (1789-1800)*, 4 vols (Tiverton: Devon Books, 1997-2000); S. and D. Lyson, *Magna Britannia: Devonshire*, VI, part 2 (London: Thomas Cadell, 1822); W. Page

chiefly comprises Hooker's 'Great Book' transcribed in *The Description of the Citie of Excester*, which would seem from its title to be very useful for the purposes of this study.³⁹ However, Sweet, in her study of early urban histories, points out that sixteenth- and seventeenth-century town histories were meant to showcase civic authorities' achievements and inspire the future rather than describe the cityscape, quoting Hooker as a fine example. It is indeed a work of civic pride, retelling stories of major events that demonstrate the city's loyalty to the crown, grants, charters, agreements and, more usefully for other aspects of this study, city business concerning the behaviour of its residents.⁴⁰ Fortunately, Hooker also commissioned a plan of Exeter from the engraver Remegius Hogenburg, copies of which survive in three states, A to C, the first being State A (illustration 1).⁴¹ The existence of this plan may explain why there is little contemporary written description of the physical attributes of sixteenth-century Exeter. It provides an unparalleled, if conventional, view of Exeter's overall layout and key features which largely correspond with some of the earliest visitors' descriptions of the city.⁴²

(ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Devon*, I (London: [n.pub], 1906); T. Gray, M. Rowe and A. Erskine (eds.), *Tudor and Stuart Devon: the Common Estate and Government* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1992).

³⁹ W.J. Harte, J.W. Schopp, and H. Tapley-Soper (eds.), *The Description of the Citie of Excester by John Vowell alias Hoker* (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 1919).

⁴⁰ R. Sweet, *The Writings of Urban Histories in Eighteenth-Century England*, Oxford Historical Monographs (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp.78-9.

⁴¹ W. Ravenhill and M. Rowe, 'A Decorated Screen Map', in Gray, Rowe and Erskine (eds.), *Tudor and Stuart Devon*, p.10. Here it is argued that the screen's production was associated with the transfer of ownership of the manor of Exe Island from the Courtenay family to the city in 1550 which provided long-desired city control of water power on which Exeter's fortunes depended.

⁴² L. Toulmin Smith (ed.) *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the years 1535–1543* (London: Centaur Press, 1964), pp.227-228; Harte, Schopp, and Tapley-Soper (eds.), *The Description of the Citie of Excester*, pp.30-38; R. Gough (ed.), *Britannia: or, A Chorographical Description of the Flourishing Kingdoms of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Islands Adjacent; from the Earliest Antiquity by William Camden*, translated from the edition published by the author in 1607, 4 vols (London: John Stockdale, 1806), vol 1, p.36; T. Gray (ed.), *The Travellers' Tales: Exeter*, vol 1 (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2000b), p.9.

However, crucially, for the purposes of this study, it is not drawn in sufficient detail to discern individual plots. Thereafter, very few studies of the city's history concern themselves with detailed topographical issues, focusing instead on other themes. Isacke's *Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter*, first published in 1677, largely repeats the information found in Hooker's *Description*, sometimes word for word.⁴³ Nineteenth-century city histories, such as Jenkins (1806), Oliver (1821) and Freeman (1887) concentrate on historical narrative with, in the cases of Jenkins and Freeman, glimpses of individual buildings of some antiquity.⁴⁴

In the twentieth century the high-level approach to Exeter's topography continues. MacCaffrey and Hoskins both tackle Exeter's overall layout through brief descriptions of the city based largely on Hooker's map. Hoskins' view on medieval Exeter is that the early streets filled up with businesses, some in particular streets, but his pamphlet on 'old Exeter' describes in general Exeter's growth and historic buildings, with no reference to individual plots.⁴⁵ He also claims that Exeter's cityscape fossilised between the medieval period and the nineteenth century, an idea corroborated by Newton and Portman, though challenged in a close examination of Friernhay (chapter 10).⁴⁶ More overtly topographical, Ethel Lega-Weekes' Cathedral Close studies aimed to 'put together evidence concerning some of the less fully investigated features of the Close'. However, she did not produce a building plot plan or a bird's eye

⁴³ Isacke, *Remarkable Antiquities of the City of Exeter*, pp.1-4.

⁴⁴ A. Jenkins, *The History and Description of the City of Exeter and its Environs* (Exeter: Hedgland, 1806) for example, pp.360-367; Oliver, *History*; E.A. Freeman *Historic Towns: Exeter* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1887), pp.61-72.

⁴⁵ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, pp.5-25; Hoskins, 'Exeter People in the Sixteenth Century', pp.62-66, pp.25-26 and pp.45-46; W.G Hoskins, *Old Exeter: a descriptions of its growth and old buildings illustrated with photographs, plans and a map* (London: Compton Dando, 1951).

⁴⁶ W.G. Hoskins, *Industry, Trade and People in Exeter 1688-1800* (University College of the South West of England: Manchester University Press, 1935), p.11; R. Newton, *Victorian Exeter* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1968), p.10; D. Portman, *Exeter Houses 1400-1700* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1966), p.2; DRO, ECA/G12, A Map of the City of Exeter including part of the County of the same City and portions of the Parishes of St Thomas the Apostle and St Leonard in the County of Devon Made from Actual Measurement in the Years 1818 and 1819 by I. Coldridge, Surveyor.

view of the area.⁴⁷ More recently, topographical emphasis has shifted to the everyday appearance of the city. Collectively, individual archaeological investigations produce a general impression of the changing sixteenth century townscape, very recently summarised by Parker and Allan. They describe two-storied houses with roofs parallel to the street being replaced by multi-storey houses with roof gables end-on to the street, tall stacks on frontages replacing lower medieval buildings which had spread further back, the building of paired houses and the subdivision of larger plots into smaller units.⁴⁸ Gray's publications of historic artworks and photographs depicting sixteenth century cityscape features add colour and detail lost to archaeological investigation.⁴⁹ Stoye's work on the English civil war in Exeter and the city's walls and water supply system all refer extensively to topographical aspects of the city – an 'intensely cramped and overcrowded place' – and he includes references to elements of this urban experience that other historians omit: the sewerage running down the walls from the 'jakes' in Friernhay, the stinking drains at Westgate, the dung heaps and carrion at the foot of the walls, the new water pumps and conduits, some highly decorated, together with the unsecured trapdoors, the exposed pipes, uncovered wells and what must have been almost constant road works needed for pipe maintenance. He describes a city with an enceinte which, over the period of this study, became less military and more domesticated, controlling trade and individuals' movements in and out of the city, acting as a viewpoint, a garden wall and a washing line.⁵⁰ However, his studies too are without reference to individual plots and the people associated with them, as that is not the point of his work

⁴⁷ E. Lega-Weekes, *Some Studies in the Topography of the Cathedral Close Exeter* (Exeter: Commin, 1915), p.7.

⁴⁸ R. Parker and J. Allan, 'The Transformation of the Building Stock of Exeter, 1450-1700', in Allan, Alcock and Dawson (eds.), *West Country Households 1500-1700*, pp.35-67.

⁴⁹ T. Gray, *Lost Exeter: Five Centuries of Change* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2002); *Exeter Unveiled* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2003).

⁵⁰ M. Stoye, *From Deliverance to Destruction: Rebellion and Civil War in an English City* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), pp.7-13; *ibid*, *Circled with Stone*, pp.8–50 and p.85; *ibid*, *Water in the City*, pp.3-6 and pp.85-112;

any more than it is for Kowaleski's work on regional markets, Evans' thesis on poverty, or Stephens' on early seventeenth-century trade and industry.⁵¹

The plot-level studies that do exist are unconnected and modest in scale. Higham provides useful insights into Exeter's early medieval town plan, arguing that its division into burgage plots was a product of the Norman conquest, and Parker and Allan argue that larger medieval plots became subdivided from c.1450 onwards.⁵² In addition, Newton, through his studies of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Exeter, offers an insight into cityscape changes since the late seventeenth century that impacted on earlier plot patterns.⁵³ Gray also addresses this theme, helpfully defining seven different periods of major topographical change in Exeter, six of them coming after the sixteenth century. In so doing, he refers to, and illustrates, many lost features that would have been familiar to the inhabitants of Elizabethan Exeter and his analysis is used in the attempted recreation of part of the Elizabethan cityscape in chapter ten.⁵⁴ Beyond these, the only plot-level studies are those of Youings, Portman and Exeter Archaeology.⁵⁵ Youings refers to people and plots referenced in the Tuckers' archives and Portman provides detailed portraits of individual Exeter buildings in his study of Exeter houses. Here he briefly mentions plots and their shape and distribution in relation to a selection of streets, illustrating some of these property boundaries through reference to maps based on that of John Coldridge made between 1818 and 1819 (discussed further in chapter ten). Following on from these is the series of individual tenement histories produced by Exeter Archaeology, Exeter's former city archaeology unit. These arise from *ad hoc* recording work linked to

⁵¹ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Evans, 'Poverty and Social Control'; W.B. Stephens, *Seventeenth Century Exeter: a Study of Industrial and Commercial Development 1625-1688* (Exeter: The University of Exeter Press, 1958).

⁵² R.A. Higham, *Making Anglo-Saxon Devon* (Devon: The Mint Press, 2008) p.187; Parker and Allan, 'The Transformation of the Building Stock of Exeter, 1450-1700', p.63.

⁵³ R. Newton, *Eighteenth Century Exeter* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1984).

⁵⁴ Gray, *Lost Exeter*, pp.xxiii-xxxiii.

⁵⁵ Youings, *Tuckers Hall*, pp.14-15, 21 and 33; Portman, *Exeter Houses*, pp.61-91.

Listed Building and planning consents for alterations and the reports refer to the people associated with the plots where known, for example at 51 Bartholomew Street.⁵⁶ Some were informally published as 'green' reports (now stored in the Devon Heritage Centre (DHC)) and eleven have been published in the Devon Archaeological Society's *Proceedings*. Plot information is also available for just a handful of plots/monuments which fall into the period 1540-1640 on Exeter City Council's *Historic Environment Record* (HER). Sadly, Exeter was not included in the original *Historic Towns Atlas* programme which uses the urban plot as a fundamental spatial unit. The programme's scope was apparently limited by accessible sources, willing personnel and available funding and until very recently the British element of this project was regarded as 'moribund'. A new wave of British town coverage under the auspices of the project does not yet include Exeter.⁵⁷

It is clear that something, so far unarticulated, has prevented and continues to prevent, a citywide plot-level approach being pursued when it is possible elsewhere. MacCaffrey hints at an unspecified issue with Exeter's collection of deeds which he feels is 'of less use' for the sixteenth century than for earlier periods.⁵⁸ Enquiries amongst archaeological colleagues are more forthcoming; 'for Exeter it's really complex, and in many instances the links don't seem to be there to put a full story together' and '... it was thought that Exeter could be another Winchester, but it can't.'⁵⁹ The reference to Winchester concerns Keene's large-scale, plot-level study of that town in the medieval period which uses what this study terms a SPIT document – a single

⁵⁶ J.B. Bedford and M.E.P. Hall, *Archaeological Evaluation of a proposed development site at 51 Bartholomew Street West, Exeter, Exeter Archaeological Field Unit Report 95.11* (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1995), p.6.

⁵⁷ M.D. Lobel (ed.), *Historic Towns, Maps and Plans of Towns and Cities in the British Isles, with Historical commentaries from Earliest Times to 1800*, vol 1 (Oxford: Cook, Hammond and Kell, 1969); M.D. Lobel (ed.), *The Atlas of Historic Towns*, vol 2 (London: Scolar Press for the Historic Towns Trust, 1975);

T.R. Slater, 'The European Historic Towns Atlas', *Journal of Urban History* 22 (Sept 1996), 246-7.

⁵⁸ Maccaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.294.

⁵⁹ John Allan, *pers comm*, 2009; Tony Collings, *pers comm*, 2010.

point in time document – which enables connections to be made at plot-level between disparate topographical sources and thereby attaches people to a cityscape. This study contends that the absence of a single SPIT document for early modern Exeter largely prevents occupied topographical reconstruction and certainly makes it challenging to plot people onto the cityscape in the west quarter of the city around St Nicholas Priory. The issue is explored in depth in chapter ten.

The study database

All the methodologies used in this study are underpinned by a digital prosopographical database, essential for rapid data retrieval, comparison and analysis. Digital technology was completely unavailable to McCaffrey, Hoskins and Youings, and although Keene, writing in 1983, spotted the potential of computers for his Winchester study, he was defeated by their then primitive development and the consequent unrealistic time implications of data entry and retrieval.⁶⁰

However, Kowaleski uses databases and clearly finds them indispensable, though the issues of time and bulk in respect of data entry, retrieval and storage remain very real ones.⁶¹ She states that to identify about 70% of 942 individual importers in the early fourteenth century required the collection of thousands of references from court rolls, civic elections, deeds, and lay subsidies c.1300-35, and adds a footnote stating that these references were compiled over fourteen years.⁶² Nevertheless, it is now realistic to underpin a shorter-term study with a database due to the very rapidly increasing sophistication of personal computers. Back in the 1980s and '90s, Kowaleski compiled 105,000 records over those fourteen years whilst this study created 55,500 not dissimilar ones in just two years. The database creation is described in detail in chapter two.

⁶⁰ D. Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p.442.

⁶¹ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, p.341.

⁶² *ibid*, p.337.

The study aims

To summarise, operating in the light of the perceived and linguistic invisibility of the middling sorts, the under-investigation of individuals' human associations and the impact of themed studies upon history from below, and despite the challenges presented by established methodologies and the limitations of the available data, this study aims to explore the extent to which light can be shed on Exeter's chorus in the period 1550-1610 in a way that provides a more rounded picture of the city that the Hurst family knew and interacted with. It does this by creating group and individual biographies for people and plots which enable:

- The identification and description of some of the characteristics of the chorus;
- the capture and analysis of interactions and neighbourliness within and beyond the chorus;
- fresh thoughts on how 'a whole book about Elizabethan Exeter' might be written and whether this would be 'history from below';

To fulfil these aims this study first selects data mostly from the DHC's mid- to late-sixteenth century archives relating to Exeter, defines their strengths and weaknesses in the context of the aims and chooses or adapts the most appropriate methodologies and database structure to manipulate them (chapter two). It then provides elementary quantitative analyses relating to the city's social structure and describes broadly the characteristics of the leading actors and the chorus (chapter three). Following on from this, it creates a further series of chorus group portraits, including of the more civically active (chapter four) and those with less data against their names (chapter five). It then investigates family dynamics and extended households and reveals how these are reflected through one occupation, that of the baker (chapter six). It continues by examining the *post-mortem* intentions of those who bequeathed goods (chapter seven) and creates a selection of individual and family/household in-depth biographies using the comparatively rich data associated with death (chapters eight (men) and nine (women)). It then examines the extent to which adapted methodologies can construct biographies for ground plots, as opposed to humans, and attempts to

connect the chorus to the cityscape in the west quarter around St Nicholas Priory (chapter ten). Finally, chapter eleven concludes this study by demonstrating how far the aims have been achieved, analysing its contribution to the study of early modern urban life and proposing a new model which challenges the validity of the construct of 'the chorus' as a group of people about whom no 'striking assertions' can be made.

Chapter 2: Research process, sources, data and methodologies

'When population studies are concerned with the centuries before any kind of Census existed they are, of all topics in urban history, the most apt to encounter almost insuperable difficulties.'⁶³

This chapter sets out the research process for this thesis and outlines the framework which guides it. It introduces the sources selected for scrutiny, their strengths and weaknesses and the impact of these on outcomes. It describes the underpinning database and data types, broad data analysis and, accordingly, the selection and rejection of methodologies. It explains the process of personal individuation, essential for works involving prosopography and collective biographical work, and concludes with the assertion that despite significant challenges, there is sufficient potential to achieve the study aims, albeit with bias in coverage towards the more civically active.

Study framework

There is no fixed method for prosopographical or collective biographical research. In his article on the strengths and weaknesses of such studies, Carney notes that the order in which they are undertaken varies as much as researchers and projects and that guidelines have to be adapted as the question and source materials indicate.⁶⁴ This study confirms his viewpoint.

A suggested set of prosopographical stages are set out in Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn's 'Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography', hereafter referred to as the 'Manual'. This suggests that first, the general research objective and working hypotheses are determined, followed by surveys of source material and theoretical literature. Decisions are then made about the target population and the use of qualitative and/or quantitative techniques. There then follows the creation of a specific questionnaire and subsequent

⁶³ W.J Petchey, *A Prospect of Maldon 1500-1689* (Chelmsford: Essex County Council, 1991), p.22.

⁶⁴ T. Carney, 'Prosopography payoffs and pitfalls' *Phoenix: Journal of the Classical Association Canada*, 27 (1993), p.174.

database, the contents of which are analysed, synthesized and finally the results are presented.⁶⁵

However, the University of Oxford's *Prosopography for Beginners* website tutorial argues for a different approach whereby the first stage focuses on defining the group to be studied (automatically making it more of a collective biography in Keats-Rohan's terms). The second stage then determines the sources to be used from as wide a range as possible and the third formulates the questions to be asked. The tutorial is very clear that 'there can be no prosopography that is not firmly rooted in its sources; the nature and type of source available will determine the nature and type of question that can eventually be asked of the assembled data'.⁶⁶

The rationale for this study means the population (Exeter's Elizabethan chorus) is already determined as part of the general research objective – the hypothesis being that prosopography, individual/collective biography, SNA and occupied topography will be able to shed more light on the chorus. A hybrid of the two above approaches takes the research forward from here. In summary:

- the timespan, population and geographical limits are more precisely defined;
- the sources (published and unpublished) are selected and their strengths and weaknesses assessed;
- sources are searched for collectable data-*types* which determine the database structure;
- initial analysis of the data *content* determines which methodologies to use;

⁶⁵ K. Verboven, M. Carlier and J. Dumolyn, 'A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography', in Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, pp.35-69.

⁶⁶ http://prosopography.modhist.ox.ac.uk/tutorial/tutorial_4.htm [accessed February 2nd 2015]

- the general research objective is translated into project aims to which data type and content best respond and which contribute to exploring the wider historical issues outlined in chapter one;
- methodologies are experimentally deployed;
- the results are contextualized through comparison with other studies where possible.

Time span

The scope of Kowaleski's study of Exeter in the late fourteenth century indicates the need to use as tight a timeframe as possible for this type of study. The years between 1550 and 1610 specifically cover the period when the Hurst family was thought to be associated with St Nicholas Priory and beyond it by several years either side. Finally, it embraces the entire reign of Elizabeth I, in response to Hoskins' assertion that a whole book could be written on the subject. It is not, however, a longitudinal study where significant changes over time are observed.

The target population

The Manual stresses the importance of defining a target population by a 'common and observable feature', that is, something objectively observable or verifiable from sources such as names or group membership, and not a subjective value such as 'rich' or 'economically successful'.⁶⁷ For this study, a person's name is the only common and observable feature, so the target population is 'named people associated with Exeter in the city archives', association with Exeter being also observable. Keats-Rohan points out that this approach has been used successfully elsewhere giving the example of 'everyone mentioned in literary sources during the period covered by the Roman Empire' used by Horster.⁶⁸ Names are included whatever their observable association with the city might be, so it embraces those who might not be 'of Exeter'. This takes a similar approach, if a slightly wider one, to that

⁶⁷ Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn, 'A Short Manual', p.51.

⁶⁸ Keats-Rohan, (ed.) *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, pp.28-29; M. Horster, 'The Prosopographia Imperii Romani (PIR) and New Trends and Projects in Roman Prosopography, in *ibid*, pp. 231-240.

of Kowaleski who, in her prosopography of medieval Exeter, identifies 'people who lived or were commercially active in Exeter'.⁶⁹

Within the above group, the chorus and the leading actors need to be clearly distinguished from one another. Holding civic high office is the only observable feature in the archives that indicates a high degree of wealth, influence and prestige associated with leading actors. MacCaffrey assembles key references from which to work, including Oliver's *History of Exeter* for lists of mayors and sheriffs, Moore's manuscript Calendar of the city muniments in the DHC for its list of Receivers and Isacke's *Remarkable Antiquities* for its lists of bailiffs.⁷⁰ In addition, Richard Izacke's Index Rerum, described below, enables Chamber members to be identified.⁷¹ To be nominated a leading actor in this study, an individual needed to have been a Chamber member (also known as members of 'The Twenty Four' or 'The Brethren'), though they might have progressed to one or more of the highest status roles of receiver, recorder, chamberlain, mayor, alderman, sheriff or MP. One hundred and twenty-six men were Chamber members between 1550 and 1610 (table 2.1). Twenty-six are not individuable (the issues of identification and individuation are discussed below) but the remaining 100 men are included in this study. Everyone else is 'a member of the chorus' - for the time being.

The geographical limits

The geographical range is the city of Exeter or, more precisely, the parishes which jurisdictionally make up the city, whether inside or outside the walls. City lay subsidies included the parishes of St David, St Edmund and St Sidwell which lay wholly outside the walls. In addition, data from the adjacent parishes of St Thomas, St Leonard and Heavitree are included on the database. St Thomas effectively comprised an adjoining suburb and plenty of contact occurred between here and Exeter 'proper'. However, Heavitree and St Leonard appeared to enjoy much less interaction with the city. The only

⁶⁹ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, pp.334-6.

⁷⁰ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.44 (footnotes).

⁷¹ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Books B1/2, pp.395-408; B1/3, pp.473-493; B1/4, pp.587-596; B1/5, pp.556-574; B1/6, pp.466-476.

observable Exeter-Heavitree connections appear in wills such as that of gentleman Thomas Cary and William Cove.⁷² In respect of St Leonard, a relatively wealthy Laurence Radford appears in the parish of St Pancras lay subsidy of 1577 and as the father of a child in 1580. He may be the Laurence Radford esquire of St Leonard who wrote his will in 1589 and whose overseers included Sir Walter Raleigh. Otherwise there are no observable connections with Exeter found in this study.⁷³

Sources included in this study

Exeter was a county borough from 1537 and consequently generated much official paperwork from an early stage.⁷⁴ For reasons of timescale and travel, this study concentrates on published, reputable transcriptions of key sixteenth-century documents in Exeter's archives, which shorten significantly the time taken to retrieve data for entry onto a database. These are accompanied by Exeter wills from The National Archive (TNA) Online Catalogue and an additional selection of DHC sources, all newly transcribed for this study. The latter are included because they are written in English, are in good condition and are clearly rich sources of information. Some also extend information from previously transcribed documents, such as churchwarden's accounts, military muster lists and rent books.

Table 2.2 summarises the number of references to, and gender of, those revealed by these documents. Unidentifiable individuals are those whose gender is undeterminable because they either lack a first name or have one which does not make their gender clear. Some records refer to more than one person, hence there are more people than records, and the figures need

⁷² TNA, PROB 11/66, image ref 67; PROB 11/73, image ref 220; the Cary wills and John Trosse are discussed further in chapter seven.

⁷³ TNA, PROB 11/76, image ref 253; M. Rowe (ed.) *Tudor Exeter Tax Assessments 1489-1595 including the Military Survey 1522*, New Series, 22 (Torquay: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 1977), p.62; C.A.T.Fursdon (trans), Exeter: St Mary Arches Parish Register Baptisms, Marriages, Burials 1538 – 1837 (2/7/1580).

⁷⁴ J. Draisey, former archivist at DHC, *pers comm*, 2009.

to be read in the context of an estimated population of 8-10,000 at the start of the period examined in this study.⁷⁵

The purposes for which the above sources were originally written, their main contribution to the dataset, their strengths and weaknesses and the impact of archival loss are discussed in detail below. In summary, their collective strength lies in providing a reasonable 'reach' across different aspects of life, including wealth, political, legal, domestic, property, religious, age and family issues. Their collective weakness lies in their random incompleteness through archival loss and damage, together with illegible, inconsistent and incomplete compilation.

Overall impact of sources on the study outcomes

Wrigley concludes that in general the poor, the highly mobile and the very young tend to escape recording.⁷⁶ In this study, the record is skewed overall in favour of revealing the native, wealthy, civically active, male population. Although the relatively less privileged, the very young and women are *not* invisible, their appearances are limited to specific circumstances. The collective reason for archival visibility is that individuals had attracted the attention, wanted or otherwise, of the Chamber or other authorities. In other words, they had some connection with concerns relating to wealth, trade control, behaviour, security and order, the holding and/or occupation of property and political expediency. As Palliser points out in respect of York, the aim was for towns to be quietly governed; 'corporations were expected to suppress rioting and disorder, to enforce political and religious conformity, and to supply the Crown with military forces on occasion'.⁷⁷ Less likely to be recorded are activities, and consequently people, where nothing was amiss or required by those in power. One other point is that most of the data is also impersonal. There are no diaries or personal letters to draw on and so

⁷⁵ Hoskins, *Two Thousand Years in Exeter*, p. 51; MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1650*, pp.11-13; Parker and Allan, 'The Transformation of the Building Stock', p.45.

⁷⁶ Wrigley, *Identifying People in the Past*, p.12.

⁷⁷ D.M. Palliser, *Tudor York* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), p.57.

virtually nothing reveals the intimate, everyday relationships or mindsets of those forming the chorus, apart from the odd sentiment expressed in wills.⁷⁸

By choice or chance, the selective approach taken in this study is less than ideal because the number and types of primary sources used should be as wide as possible as it is the pooling of this wealth of material which gives prosopography and collective biography their edge.⁷⁹ It is clear that expansion of this study to include a wider range of archive material will refine its conclusions and possibly enable it to overcome prosopographical sample issues, discussed below. Nevertheless, it serves to show what can be achieved with the resources to hand and illuminates the potential of further work.

The Sources

Anglican parish registers

The sources that reveal the most people are the manuscript transcriptions of Exeter's sixteenth-century Anglican parish registers available at the DHC, transcribed largely by Nesbit and Fursdon in the 1930s.⁸⁰ These provide information on dates of baptism, marriage and burial, the parish these were registered in, sometimes the place from which the individuals concerned originated, sometimes the circumstances, death 'of ye plague' for example, and sometimes family relationships ('son of', 'wife of') and the deceased's occupation. At this date, state Wrigley and Schofield, Anglican life events covered by the registers did not, theoretically, differ very greatly from births, deaths and marriages in general because non-conformity was relatively rare.⁸¹ However, coverage across the city is patchy for this period and Wrigley and Schofield did not include any Exeter parishes in their studies because none matched their inclusion criteria of long uninterrupted periods of

⁷⁸ K. Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p.102.

⁷⁹ Smyth, 'A Whiter Shade of Pale', p.26.

⁸⁰ C.A.T. Fursdon, *Exeter Parish Registers*; The Rev. F. Nesbit, *Exeter Parish Registers* (now shelved in the DHC main searchroom).

⁸¹ E.A. Wrigley and R.S.Schofield., *The Population History of England 1541-1871 a reconstruction* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), pp.4 and 15-32.

relatively complete recording. Occasionally these problems were recorded at the time, for example in St Mary Arches 'Heere Wanteth 4 yere wch you shall fynde in this leafe' and St Paul 'The Christenings, Weddings, Burialles that wer don in the yeres 1587, and 1588 and 1589, 1590 and 1591 are not registered in this boke for that it could not be found. Wryten in the other'.⁸² Table 2.3 sets out the coverage. The information within these registers also varies between parishes. In the St Edmund burial records, for example, immediate familial relationships are systematically included, as are, quite frequently, the deceased's occupation. By contrast, this is rare in St Mary Major.

It usually follows that where someone is recorded at their burial as 'son of' or 'daughter of' or 'child of' they are a child and sometimes they are specifically referred to as an 'infant' such as George Nogle in St Sidwell's on 26 April 1588. Very occasionally they are referred to as such at their marriage, which may be a clarification of family relationships rather than an indication of a young age. Sometimes the registers provide what might be the only written evidence of an individual as a relative of the person being registered. This does not mean they were alive at the point of recording, just that they existed and were named.

Ostensibly, all walks of society are covered by the parish registers, including women who are, nevertheless, less frequently represented as it is usually men who are named as the parent at their child's baptism. However, even where coverage is apparently full, as in the parish of St Kerrian, other documents such as wills reveal people missing from the registers, highlighting that there was no legal reason why every vital event had to be recorded in the parish in which it occurred.⁸³ There are also observable practices such as women marrying in their parish of birth, but then registering births elsewhere or, over their lifetime, in both their birth parish and elsewhere (see chapter

⁸² H. Tapley-Soper, 'Exeter Parish Registers: All Hallows Goldsmith Street, St Pancras, St Paul, Exeter', *DCRS*, 2 (1933), p.161.

⁸³ D. Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp.100-106.

three). Overall, where complete recording of live births and burials is present, the registers are especially useful for detecting family formation and dissolution, for calculating lifespan and detecting movement around the city, but they provide an incomplete picture of parishioners across the city. The Bishop's Registers which list marriage licences for the diocese of Exeter are discussed in chapter six.

Household inventories

There are 102 household inventories housed in the DHC drawn up between 1560 and 1610 when Exeter freemen and four freemen's widows died with unmarried children under the age of twenty-one and with an estate worth at least £5.⁸⁴ This attracted the attention of the Court of Orphans which was established by Royal Charter in 1560. Appraised by men living in the same ward, they list goods and leases of any value (but not real estate) so that the overall value of the deceased's 'movables' could be calculated. They usually started with the money and clothes on the body and then proceeded around the house, room by room, then outdoors to courtyards, stables and 'backsides'.⁸⁵ Debts owed could then be discharged and debts owing called in or written off as 'desperate'. The remaining sum was then divided into three parts – the widow's part, the children's part and a third part for the deceased's legacies. The Chamber, operating as the Court of Orphans, used the children's portion as a loan fund, paying it back to the children when, or if, they reached their majority or were married.⁸⁶ Eighty-six of the Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories (1560-1601) are transcribed by Juddery and plans are afoot for a revised re-publication. The editorial approach taken for those published is that of full transcription with the addition of information from documents relating to the freedom of Exeter and the lay subsidies.⁸⁷ Also used in this study are an interim, unpublished-but-updated version of

⁸⁴ A. Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.33.

⁸⁵ M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean, A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (London: Routledge, 2004), p.14

⁸⁶ J.Z. Juddery, *Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories, 1560-1571*, Exeter Archaeology Report No. 90.28 (Exeter: Exeter City Council, 1990), p.ii.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, p.ii.

Juddery's published work, held electronically by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter (RAMM) and this is distinguished in this study by the description 'electronic files'.⁸⁸ In addition, sixteen inventories drawn up between 1601 and 1610, and which are accompanied by a corresponding will, are transcribed for this study directly from the original documents.⁸⁹

Some 'inventories' are actually probate accounts carried out when the administrative process was coming to a close. Mostly, however, they are full inventories which include considerable detail about household and occupational goods and general interior household arrangements. These enable judgement to be made on wealth, popular taste, accuracy of occupational description elsewhere and changes in these over time. They sometimes provide data on human connections, in particular, good and bad debts owed by and owing to other people, sometimes beneficiaries of the deceased's estate and sometimes the names of appraisers.⁹⁰ The people appraised were those with young families yet established enough to possess some wealth, and they were associated with parishes from across the city. The people with whom those appraised made contact were wider ranging, from titled gentlemen to women referred to only by their first name. Although rich in information, inventories are not unproblematic as sources because there are, as for Bristol inventories for example, differences in the range of information included in each document, making comparisons fragile on occasion.⁹¹ Calculations are also suspect in some cases but for many, it is possible to combine the value of goods, leases and good debts and subtract from these bad debts and debts owing and to arrive at a net value for individuals. The inventories provide a picture of movables or sometimes just the overall value of these, at a point reasonably shortly after death. It is also probable that a few items had been moved around or removed entirely,

⁸⁸ J.Z. Juddery, trans., *Exeter Orphans' Court inventories 1560-1600 Updated Electronic Files* [n.p], [n.d]

⁸⁹ DHC, ECA, Exeter Orphans' Court Books 141, 142 and 143; DHC, ECA Exeter Orphans' Court Loose Wills Box.

⁹⁰ Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann, *Production and Consumption*, p.14.

⁹¹ J. Barry, 'Introduction' in Edwin and Stella George (eds.), *Bristol Probate Inventories Part III: 1690-1804*, (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 2008), p.ix.

especially if a few weeks or even months had passed since burial, an issue discussed in more detail in chapter seven. It is not until they are linked to wills that the personal value placed on these goods and their perceived appropriateness as bequests becomes clearer and sometimes what proportion of a total estate they made up.

Wills

Wills and associated documents such as grants of administration and inquisitions, provide data on the deceased, their disposable goods and property, (this time including real estate) together with their beneficiaries who sometimes include a wider circle of friends beyond the immediate household. One hundred and ninety complete wills fall into the time period covered by this study, of which 142 are copies preserved by the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) and stored by TNA all identified by 'TNA PROB 11'.⁹² The remaining forty-eight are listed on the Devon Wills Project Online website, which indicates originals in the DHC, several of which are associated with the Exeter Court of Orphans.⁹³ Also consulted are Moger's transcripts and extracts from Exeter wills which were subsequently destroyed in the Second World War. Although several are duplicated by originals found in TNA, nineteen extracts remain the only source of probate information, albeit in *précis* form.⁹⁴ All the men and widowed or single women represented in these sources are those who had sufficient estate to make writing a will worthwhile and, if associated with the Court of Orphans, met the criteria of that court. The fifty-nine wills of chorus men and women which are accompanied by an inventory are analysed in detail in chapter seven, though they exclude those individuals with insufficient wealth and goods to make a will worth writing.

⁹² <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/records/wills.htm> [accessed 21st January 2015].

⁹³ <http://genuki.cs.ncl.ac.uk/DEV/DevonWillsProject> [accessed 21st January 2015].

⁹⁴ O. Moger, Transcripts and Extracts from Wills and Other Records c.1921-1941 (DHC, typescript volumes).

Freedom records

Rowe and Jackson transcribe documents held in the DHC which provide information on men holding the freedom of Exeter. These furnish the names of 1,687 newly-free citizens, the date of their freedom, sometimes their master's names and their trade and sometimes the method by which they were admitted.⁹⁵ For example, William Symons, apprentice of Richard Hart, fletcher was made a freeman on 19 September 1552 and Humphrey Yeat, pinner was made freeman by a fine of £1 on 1 February 1557.⁹⁶ Being free of the city meant that these men enjoyed the franchise and, in theory, held a monopoly on retailing. Overall, they represent younger, potentially successful businessmen and are listed alongside 369 apprentice masters, one apprentice mistress and two wives who acted as apprentice mistresses alongside their husbands, all discussed in chapter six.

However, this list of freemen and associates is not wholly reliable. Until around 1562, non-freemen could simply pay shop fines ('chepgavel') to allow them to trade, but they would not be included in any listing of freemen. The documents from which the list of freemen is compiled are the Mayor's Court Books which, from 1533, provide the main source of information but with significant gaps running from 1557-1564 and 1569-1621. However during the sixteenth century, the admissions were also recorded in the Mayor's Court Rolls and ECA Book 55 in the DHC. The latter, which the list's editors judge to be reliable in completeness, has less information for each admission than in the court rolls, so the editorial practice is 'to treat the most nearly complete of these as a main source'.⁹⁷ Nevertheless, for the time period under consideration, there are evidently missing or less informative entries within the list. Unusually, apprentice records, a key source recording the enrolment of apprentices at the start of their apprenticeship, do not survive for Exeter as they do for other cities like Bristol. This undoubtedly increases the likelihood of under-recording of those gaining their freedom by this route. There are men

⁹⁵ M. Rowe and A. Jackson (eds.), *Exeter Freemen 1266-1967*, Extra Series 1 (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 1973).

⁹⁶ *ibid*, pp.79, 81.

⁹⁷ *ibid*, pp. xi – xxxv.

in this study who were, for example, masters of apprentices or who held the position of bailiff and therefore must have been free themselves for this to be the case (and in compiling the quantitative analysis for this study, those holding these positions were assumed to be freemen even if evidence for this is lacking). Less compelling as 'missing' candidates for the freedom, but perhaps likely to have held it, are those who were assessed for tax in the subsidy rolls, who sat as jurors or who operated as merchants.

City Quarter Session Rolls of the Peace

Documents recording the activities of the Exeter City Quarter Sessions of the Peace are stored at the DHC in regnal years and those used in this study run from 1569-1610, with gaps for regnal years Eliz 13-14, 18, 24 29-30 and Jas 1.⁹⁸ They comprise bundles of individual presentments in Latin on thin slips of vellum or parchment (usually with *billa vera* on the back indicating that they were to be pursued in the court), lists of jurors or occasionally of people investigating a particular issue, such as the state of the Yarn Market, and a record of the outcomes of the sessions in Latin, but with names and occupations in English. The last two types of documents are partially transcribed for this study, sufficient to identify jurors, those bound over to keep the peace and those providing surety for the latter's good behaviour. For example, Robert Clark was bailed to appear in court in 1572-1573 and William Payne cordwainer, Richard Horwill, innholder and Thomas Nicolls, saddler, all of Exeter, stood surety for him.⁹⁹ Several entries are too stained or torn to be readable. This source sheds light only on those who were caught or reported, not those who escaped the notice of their neighbours and authorities.

However, one strength is that 114 women are identified from these documents, thirty-five of whom were jurors sitting in groups of eleven or twelve. In 1605, 1606 and 1609, they sat to establish whether three felonous

⁹⁸ DHC, ECA, Exeter City Quarter Sessions Rolls of the Peace N13-09, 1569-1610. These are unpaginated and are in many cases loose leaves making it impossible to identify which presentments are associated with which session. Therefore in this thesis documents are identified by regnal year and the author's own image record.

⁹⁹ DHC, ECA N13-09 Quarter Session Rolls, 30 March Eliz 15 image12

women were ‘impregnat’. These were juries of matrons ‘empanelled to settle matters where propriety demanded a female resolution, giving women some part in the judicial process’.¹⁰⁰ Who these women might have been is discussed further in chapter five.

Lay Subsidy Rolls

Exeter’s lay subsidy rolls are discussed in detail in appendix 1. In summary, this study adopts the view that although the *absolute* wealth recorded in these taxation rolls is unlikely to reflect the actual wealth of individuals, they do reflect *relative* wealth in comparison with net inventorial values made usually about a decade later. However, it needs to be noted that the wealthier the individual, the more likely they were to be relatively undervalued.

Chamber Act Books

These are housed in the DHC, run from 1509-1652 and extracts from those covering 1550-1610 are transcribed for this study. They contain a record of actions which had been ‘wholly agreed’ by the members of the Chamber who attended each individual meeting, although frustratingly, sometimes the recording of an event or issue remains unfinished.¹⁰¹ MacCaffrey notes that they effectively replaced the Mayor’s Court Rolls for recording the activities of the Chamber.¹⁰² As the range of business covered is wide and very often does not include mention of particular people, the undated index to the full set of books drawn up by Edward Chick and accessioned into the town archives in 1923 is used to identify data relating to named people.¹⁰³ Although this index is largely centred around property names and broad actions, there are entries which provide personal names or suggest a story with a personal interest, for example, those who paid or lent to a levy for money in 1588 for

¹⁰⁰ DHC, ECA, N13-09 Quarter Session Rolls, Jas 3 image 2, Jas 4 image 1a and Jas 7 image 1; B. Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p.298.

¹⁰¹ DHC, ECA Chamber Act Books, B1/2-6.

¹⁰² MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.293.

¹⁰³ E. Chick, Index to the Act Books (DHC, manuscript volume, c.1923).

the 'settinge forthe of the two shippes & a pynnas for her maj svce in warlick-manner', and who are discussed further in chapter four.¹⁰⁴

Richard Izacke's Index Rerum, his categorizing of the act book contents, is found at the back of each individual book. In the fourth act book, for example, he groups the contents into 'accomptes, almshouses, benefactors, bakers and brewers, churches, corporation, common councillmen, town customs, Exe River, fayres & markets, freemen, fynes & escheats, graunts, gates & walles, justices, maior, nusances, offices, parliament men, proclamation, receiver, watches'. Although Izacke uses a folio numbering system which Chick replaced with penciled page numbers (and it is Chick's page system which is used in references for this study) the lists themselves are useful for adding detail to individual biographies and for discovering group membership such as those admitted to almshouses (chapter five) and Chamber members (chapter three).¹⁰⁵ Overall the people represented here are those of interest to the Chamber and are often associated either with the generation or expenditure of income or disturbance of the commonwealth. Occasionally pages are impossible to decipher because of variable ink and paper quality causing the handwriting to fade or blur.

Churchwarden's Accounts

The St Petrock churchwarden's accounts in the DHC were transcribed and edited by Shorto in 1878 and Dymond in 1882. Their work yields the names of churchwardens in given years and occasionally particular actions they took in relation to others.¹⁰⁶ A list of churchwardens' names from various parishes for 1563 is also consulted as well as a list in the churchwardens' account for St Mary Major of those inhabitants participating in the Crown Lottery in 1568.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ DHC, ECA Chamber Act Book B1/5, pp.1b, 1c, 1d, 554, 555-6.

¹⁰⁵ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, pp.587-596.

¹⁰⁶ R. Dymond, 'The History of the Parish of St Petrock, Exeter, As Shown by Its Churchwardens' Accounts and Other Records' *TDA*, 14 (1882), 402-492; E.H.H. Shorto (ed.), *Some Notes on the Church of St Petrock, Exeter during its Various Rules* (Exeter: W. Pollard, printer for the editor, 1878).

¹⁰⁷ Archivist., 'Sixteenth Century Exeter Churchwardens', *DCNQ* 20 part 4 (1938), 177-8; M. Rowe and T.J. Falla 'The Queen's Lottery, 1568', *DCNQ*, 33 part 7 (1976), 240-243.

Additional transcription work for this study includes the names of churchwardens, parishioners and their particular roles taken from other churchwardens' accounts. The parishes are St John Bow (1510-1610), Heavitree (1569-1610), All Hallows Goldsmith Street churchwardens' vouchers (1581-1602), St Mary Major (1552-1610) and St Kerrian (1603-1610).¹⁰⁸ Churchwardens are discussed further in chapter four.

The Description of the Citie of Excester and The Chronicle of Exeter

Harte, Schopp and Tapley Soper's 1919 edition of Hooker's 'Great Book', the *Description of the Citie of Excester* described in chapter one, includes translations and transcriptions of many different documents referring to named people. Most useful for this study are the Bishop's Roll, which appears to list his tenants in Exeter, plus a list of the lessees of Chamber property in 1585, examinations of witnesses to unruly events, a catalogue of those making major benefactions for the relief of the poor and proclamations of those banished and carted. This source therefore provides an accordingly varied selection of information about a wide range of people, albeit from circumstances similar to those covered in the act books.¹⁰⁹ *The Chronicle of Exeter* is a list of each year's mayor along with any notable events covering nearly 400 years and has recently been transcribed and edited by Gray. The section by Hooker starts in 1216 and ends in 1590 at which point it was continued by Richard Isacke. It contains biographies of those who were leading actors but occasionally others of lower status are mentioned in association with noteworthy actions such as Agnes Jones who was burned in Southernhay for poisoning her husband John.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ DHC, Churchwarden's Accounts 1550-1610, DD36765-75, DD36772, DD36773 (St John Bow); PW1(St Kerrian, St Mary Major); PW1-6 (St Mary Steps); PW2-3 (St Petrock, Heavitree) and PW10 (All Hallows Goldsmith Street).

¹⁰⁹ Harte, Schopp, and Tapley-Soper (eds.), *The Description of the Citie of Excester*.

¹¹⁰ T. Gray (ed.), *The Chronicle of Exeter*, (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2005), p.95 and p.105.

The 1569 Devon Muster Roll, and 1587-1588 and 1609 militia lists

These documents reflect local responses to national military alerts, such as the Earls' Rebellion in 1569, 'which revealed grave deficiencies in equipment' and the Spanish Armada invasion attempt.¹¹¹ The 1569 Devon Muster Roll, including the Certificate of Muster for Exeter, edited by Stoate and Howard in 1977, provides the complete list of names of 512 men who were theoretically aged between sixteen and sixty and fit enough to fight in war. It also discloses their military role in the muster as either archers, arquebusiers, pikemen or billmen and the names of men and women who provided certain armaments because they possessed goods to the value of at least £10 or yearly income from land of at least £5. Those who commissioned the musters are also listed but no other information is provided about any individual. Despite its complete state, the 1569 roll has its own challenges. For example, of the 111 archers, there are three men with the same name and it is impossible to tell if there were three different men, an administrative error, or if this was a way of making up numbers without actually being untruthful about the names of men participating. As well as eighteen other men who are unindividuable (explained below), there are another eighteen for whom a listing is their only appearance in the archives used for this study and nothing more is known about them. Of these last eighteen, six have a surname which does not occur anywhere else in the sources, which may suggest that they were not Exeter men. Alternatively, they may have been recent arrivals, perhaps apprentices or servants, or they too may have been fabricated names or 'borrowed' people from nearby villages.¹¹² The other twelve all possessed surnames held by other people in the Exeter archives which may suggest that archival loss is the reason for the paucity of information about them.

A second muster document (appendix 2) is a militia list of 1587-1588 in the DHC which lists 120 men and their muster roles. Only musketeers and calivermen (probably, the document is damaged at this point) are listed in full but the document itself is incomplete and other roles, including archers, are

¹¹¹ L. Boynton, *The Elizabethan Militia 1558-1638* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p.63.

¹¹² *ibid*, p.iii.

listed in the document's fragmentary preliminaries.¹¹³ A third military document is found in the DHC's Ancient Letters file (appendix 3). Dated 1609, it lists the names of 98 men serving in Exeter's East Quarter either with pike and corslett, musket or caliver or as an officer or drummer.¹¹⁴ Altogether there are 730 men covered by the three documents, some of them appearing in more than one. Mustered men and armour providers appearing in the first two documents are discussed in detail in chapter four.

Card index of members of the Tuckers' Guild

A recently discovered hand written card index of members of the Tuckers' Guild, is thought to have been drawn up by the late Joyce Youings, author of *Tuckers Hall* and has recently been transferred to the DHC. It is a valuable find in providing a quick way of capturing combined personal data relating to the clothworking activities of this particular group, once the author's shorthand references are deciphered and is a useful supplement to Youing's published work.¹¹⁵ There is also in the DHC the Calendar of Documents deposited by the Tuckers in 1958, which provides data on Guild membership, lessors and lessees, rents, dates and parishes relating to Guild property.¹¹⁶

Accounts of the Poor

Housed in the DHC, for a handful of years this contains the names of recipients, contributors, collectors, distributors, auditors, book-keepers and those owing money in respect of statutory poor-relief and the amounts of money involved.¹¹⁷ The book appears to be a response to the first Elizabethan poor law of 1563 which required accounts to be kept, parish overseers to be appointed and those paying and refusing to pay to be listed.¹¹⁸ It is one of the relatively few sources of information about the city's lower chorus, who are listed under a city quarter though not necessarily a parish, with Heavitree, St

¹¹³ DHC, ECA, Miscellaneous Roll 73, f.1.

¹¹⁴ DHC, ECA, Ancient Letters, 136.

¹¹⁵ DHC, Youings Tuckers Card Index, [n.d].

¹¹⁶ DHC, Calendar of documents deposited by the Company of Weavers, Tuckers and Shearmen, 58/7/1/2.

¹¹⁷ DHC, ECA, Accounts of the Poor, Book 157.

¹¹⁸ P. Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988), p.124.

Thomas, St Edmund, Cathedral and St Pancras parishes omitted. Those parishes that cross quarter boundaries appear twice but with different people listed on each occasion and this is commented on in chapter three. There are lists of the poor for 1563-1565 (in 1564 for the south quarter only) and 1567, together with lists of contributors to the relief for 1564 and 1570, for officers involved in its collection and distribution in 1564 and 1566-1570 and summaries of amounts collected and distributed or owed for 1564-1567 and 1570. More women recipients than men are listed, though the amounts they received are not gendered. The relative wealth of parishes based on the number of contributors and recipients is discussed in chapter three, an analysis of the men involved in its administration in chapter four and the relief of poverty, at least for some, is discussed in chapter five.

The Bond of Association

Beatrix Cresswell's transcription of the 1584 Bond of Association lists 180 signatures and marks, 126 of which are readable. Spurred by the assassination of William of Orange, the Bond was devised by Lords Walsingham and Burghley as 'an Instrument of an Association for the preservation of the Queen's majesty's royal person' and was a means by which the Queen's subjects could be signed up and mobilized in her defence. According to Turvey in his account of its application in Wales, signing it, an act performed in a public ceremonial fashion, was a pressurized occasion which would be difficult to resist without seeming disloyal to the regime. Subsequent amendments exempted the future James I from the Bond's provisions unless he was proved complicit, but they had the potential to make signatories to the original intentions of the Bond perjure themselves retrospectively.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately for Exeter, there is no mention of it in the act books which, as Cresswell points out, means it is not possible to know

¹¹⁹ R. Turvey, 'An ill-considered invitation to violence and vengeance: Pembrokeshire and the Bond of Association, 1584', *Journal of the Pembrokeshire Historical Society*, 21 (2012) 35-51.

whether Exonians signed it before or after the amendments.¹²⁰ Signatories are discussed further in chapter four.

Civic letters

Extracts from a selection of civic letters published by the Historic Manuscripts Commission (HMC) in 1916 provide the names of individuals and particular biographical data or personal interactions, a good many of them violent, such as Matthew Abbot's death from a rapier wound inflicted on him over a row about washing ruffs.¹²¹ There is no stated editorial policy in the introduction to this volume but it seems that the verbatim transcriptions are abbreviated to highlight the most narrative aspects of the documents.

Other documents

Amongst the shorter documents consulted, which mostly but not exclusively refer to leading actors, Snow's transcription of John Hooker's Gift List lists the names of seventy-three individuals who were the recipients of Hooker's pamphlets on the duties of sworn officers of the city and his catalogue of the Bishops of Exeter. It is discussed further in chapter four.¹²² Stoye's transcription of the 1549 List of City Ordnance and Bills of Charge, set out in his study of the city walls, provides information about expenditure by the Chamber on 'the Commotion' or Western/Prayer Book Rebellion, including the names of men supplying or receiving ordnance. Whiteley's edition of a Customs List of 1591 provides a list of thirty-five Exeter merchants with known merchants' marks, alongside merchants from outside Exeter.¹²³ Cotton's transcription of the Society of Merchant Adventurers' minute books from its foundation in 1560 to the end of Elizabeth I's reign, furnishes a range of names and their relationship to the Society. Alongside several in-depth biographies of Chamber members are the names of others gaining freedom of

¹²⁰ B. Cresswell, 'The Exeter Bond of Association with some notes on the signatures', *TDA*, 44 (1912), 267.

¹²¹ Historic Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Records of the City of Exeter* (London: HMSO, 1916), pp.59-60 (L90).

¹²² V.F. Snow, 'John Hooker's Circle: Evidence from his New Year's Gift List of 1584', *DCNQ* 33 part 8 (1977), 273-277 and pp.317-324.

¹²³ Stoye, *Circled with Stone*, pp.188-91; H. M. Whitley, 'The Maritime Trade of Exeter in Medieval Times', *TDA* 44 (1912), 530-546.

the Society and those with whom they had occasional dealings.¹²⁴ Lastly, MacCaffrey provides a list of the eighteen people wealthy enough to contribute to Exeter's endowed loan funds.¹²⁵

Sources used mostly for topographical work: rentals, Receiver's Account Rolls, other property documents and maps

Coverage of those holding property from the Chamber is found in the city's rental surveys. These list the property held by the Chamber by manor and, within that division, by parish. They include, with varying degrees of consistency, information about who held or occupied them, plot dimension, brief descriptions and the relationships to adjacent plots and fixed points in the cityscape. The earliest survey used in this study is dated 1564, of which there are two versions, (a) and (b), (b) appearing to be an earlier version of (a) as several entries in it have infilled blanks or altered names which appear in (a) as a properly made entry. However, the relationship is not entirely clear as version (b) has entries which version (a) does not but which seem to link to the rentals for 1585.¹²⁶ The 1585 rental appears in manuscript form and as part of John Hooker's *Description*.¹²⁷ These two rentals are broadly the same, the manuscript version appearing to be an earlier draft of Hooker's version. A 1640-1652 rental is also selectively transcribed as it contains some information relating back to the period with which this study is concerned (table 10.1).¹²⁸ A 1756 rental comprises a series of plans and plot measurements surveyed by John Richards which occasionally links to the earlier written rentals.¹²⁹

¹²⁴ W. Cotton, *An Elizabethan Guild of the City of Exeter: an account of the proceedings of the Society of Merchant Adventurers during the latter half of the sixteenth century* (Exeter: William Pollard, 1873).

¹²⁵ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.106.

¹²⁶ DHC, ECA, City Rental Survey, Books 186a and b.

¹²⁷ DHC, ECA, City Rental Survey, Book 187; Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper, *Description of the Citie of Excester*, pp.673-762.

¹²⁸ DHC, ECA, City Rental Survey, Book 189.

¹²⁹ M. Ravenhill and M. Rowe, *Devon Maps and Map-makers: Manuscript Maps before 1840* (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 2002), pp.184-190.

The Receiver's Account Rolls include, amongst many other items of income and expenditure, references to properties owned by the Chamber and are partly transcribed by Crocker in her report *Exeter City Properties*.¹³⁰ She extracts a sample of property entries on the first and last year of each decade between 1377 and 1721 and groups them into individual properties. Most of the time there is information about the parish in which properties lay, the rent due, the year it was paid and names associated with the property. For this study, only properties in the west quarter of the city are included in the database. A variety of other property documents (OPD's) including deeds, leases, bargains and sales, are transcribed in card indexes and calendars in the DHC and in an incomplete and unpublished study currently stored at RAMM.¹³¹ These provide the names of sub-tenants, lease assigns, other property owners/lessees, feoffees, buyers, sellers, and on one occasion a trespasser. Additional data is found by searching 'Exeter 1550-1610' on TNA's Access to Archives (A2A) which includes approximately half of the DHC catalogues.¹³² This reveals property references in the parishes of St Mary Arches and St Olave, but not in All Hallows on the Wall or St John.¹³³ In Plymouth Record Office there survives Thomas Prestwood's rental, which reveals him to be lessor of property to eighty-eight people in Exeter in 1573.¹³⁴ Properties recorded in a Cathedral debt account reveal the names of those granted leases by the Dean and Chapter, the rent, a brief plot description, the parishes in which the property stood and occasionally their tenants.¹³⁵ To summarise, the individuals exposed by this collection of sources were mostly able to afford to lease property from the more prominent landlords in the city who operated on a scale that appear to have required

¹³⁰ Crocker, *Exeter City Properties 1377-1721*, Exeter Archaeology Report 99.58 (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1999).

¹³¹ S. Reeve, Untitled, preliminary work on tenement holdings in files held at the Royal Albert Memorial Museum] [n.p:n.d].

¹³² J.Draisey, County Archivist, *pers comm*, 2009; <http://apps.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/faqs.aspx> [Accessed 20th August 2014]

¹³³ <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/> [accessed 16th August 2014]; DHC, 332A/PF.

¹³⁴ PWDRO, 72/279a (Thomas Prestwood's Rental).

¹³⁵ Dean & Chapter Exeter, Cathedral Archives, D&C 3813 debt account.

records to be kept. They also occasionally cover unofficial subletting or room occupation on a more domestic footing to people further down the social scale.

Maps depicting individual plots of land were indispensable for the topographical part of this study. The earliest complete city map of this type for Exeter is that of 1818 -1819 surveyed by John Coldridge (see chapter 10).¹³⁶ It has no written scale, is hand-drawn and is estimated to be scaled at 1 inch:21.7yards (one chain). Its origins are unclear. Coldridge was never the city surveyor but did act as Surveyor to the Commissioners of the Exeter Improvement Act of 1810. Ravenhill and Rowe argue that his city map was unlikely to have been drawn for the commissioners as John Wood produced a plot level map for them in 1840.¹³⁷ However, Kain and Oliver do associate Coldridge's map with city improvement, arguing that it shows 'only streets and sewers. There is a lack of behind-frontage detail', although this study finds sufficient behind-frontage detail to match map with inventory layout in chapter nine.¹³⁸ Ravenhill and Rowe suggest that Coldridge's map may have been produced for the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral or simply as a (failed) commercial proposition funded by public subscription. Town plans drawn between the Hooker birds-eye view of 1587 (chapter one) and Coldridge's map do exist, such as merchant Robert Sherwood's 1630s map, as well as those produced by Coles (1709), Stukeley (1723), Rocque (1744-64), Donn (1765) and Tozer (1792) but none of them depict individual building plots.¹³⁹ John Wood's map of 1840 is the next plot-level map created after Coldridge, followed by the OS 1:500 plans of Exeter surveyed in 1876. In this study, the OS plans are used for analysis in preference to Wood's map as Kain and Oliver point out that Wood's 'planimetric accuracy awaits detailed investigation [and] he did occasionally confess... that 'the environs are

¹³⁶ DHC, ECA/G12, A Map of the City of Exeter (Coldridge).

¹³⁷ Ravenhill and Rowe, *Devon Maps*, pp.42 and 182-3 (ECA G12).

¹³⁸ R. Kain and R. Oliver, *British Town Maps: A History* (London: British Library, 2015), p. 211.

¹³⁹ *ibid*, p.180 (ECA L618); T.Gray, *Exeter Maps* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2006), pp.14-23.

sketched".¹⁴⁰ In addition, there is the wooden model of the city by Caleb Hedgeland, displayed in RAMM. Completed in 1824, it depicts the city in 1759, ten years before the first medieval gate (Northgate) was demolished in 1769. Being three-dimensional, it holds evidence of street plans, plot patterns/dimensions and buildings. However, it would appear that Hedgeland worked from memory to build it and there are areas which are suspect as reliable evidence for those streets and buildings which are not the prominent or famous features of the city.¹⁴¹ Its use in this study is therefore cautious. There is also Exeter City Council's *Historic Environment Record* (HER). This GIS map-based system links to an MS Access database which serves up information about individual monuments including antiquarians' accounts, property documents, other primary resources, archaeological intervention records and relevant accessioned collections from RAMM.¹⁴²

Sources yet to be included

There are other sources which could be analysed and added to the database in future because they contain personal names with attached information. In the DHC there are the Charity Account Volumes, the Customs Rolls (including some names of upper chorus merchants, associated with ships and cargoes), the Mayor's and Provost's Court Rolls and Books, the accounts and rolls relating to ex-monasterial lands, the Manors of Duryard and Awliscombe, the Presentments of Nuisances at the Sessions of the Peace from c.1550-1588, law papers relating to fishing in the Exe, various documents within individual parish record collections, the unindexed but transcribed extracts of Inquisitions Post Mortem for Devon and the Court of Orphans Recognisance Books. The Act Books of the Guild of Tailors (currently being investigated as part of another Exeter history PhD thesis) have only been referred to occasionally but could be further exploited.¹⁴³ Also largely omitted are

¹⁴⁰ Kain and Oliver, *British Town Maps*, pp.96-7.

¹⁴¹ S.Bhanji, 'Caleb Hedgeland's Model of Exeter and the Topography of the Georgian City', *PDAS* 71 (2013), 206-7.

¹⁴² www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=10687 [accessed 20th August 2014]

¹⁴³ P. Williams, 'The Trading Community of Exeter 1470 – 1570', University of Exeter PhD thesis, forthcoming.

documents in Latin requiring new transcriptions and translation work such as the St Mary Steps Churchwardens' Accounts 1558-1602 and the Rolls of Sessions of the Peace and Gaol Delivery, as well as those with very low legibility due to their poor state of preservation. Finally, sources which, in the experience of other researchers do not offer much in relation to Exeter or to named people, include the Deposition Books of the Consistory Church Court and the Receiver's Vouchers.

In respect of the topographical part of this study, there was a temporary hiatus during the study period for this thesis when Exeter Archaeology was disbanded and the local studies library relocated, which meant that for many months, copies of Exeter Archaeology reports were unavailable for consultation. They can now be accessed in the DHC and amongst them are reports compiled on a similar basis to that compiled from the Receiver's Account Rolls, focusing on the city rentals, property deeds, the Exe Island Bailiff's Accounts, properties in the Manor of Exe Island and the court rolls and accounts of that manor, together with the Exebridge Warden's Accounts and Exbridge Properties.¹⁴⁴

TNA sources not yet consulted include those in adjacent county record offices in Somerset and Cornwall which yield a few results when an online search for 'Exeter 1550-1610' is applied. Similar results arise from initial online catalogue searches of the TNA, including the Exeter Port Books and Particulars of Customs Accounts, the Courts of Chancery, Exchequer, Requests, Star Chamber and Wards and Liveries, and the State Papers. Allied to the latter is the website State Papers Online, which re-unites a range

¹⁴⁴ J. Juddery, *Extracts from Exebridge Warden's Accounts Financial Summaries and Property Rentals 1556-1630*, Exeter Archaeology Report 90.31 (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1990); J.Z. Crocker, *Exeter City Rentals 1305-1600 and 1600-1721*, Exeter Archaeology Reports 99.04 and 99.05 (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1999); *ibid*, *Exeter Property Deeds*, Exeter Archaeology Report 92.29 (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1999); *ibid*, *Exe Bridge properties 1343 - 1711*, Exeter Archaeology Report 99.47 (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1999); *ibid*, *Extracts from the Exe Island Bailiff's Accounts 1551-1723*, Exeter Archaeology Report 98.56 (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1998); *ibid*, *Manor of Exe Island Properties 1562-1758*, Exeter Archaeology Report 99.24 (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1999).

of state papers in a fully searchable manner, and reveals local individuals of interest to this study. For example, Edward Clement (bailiff, merchant, civically active and a family man) reported from Morlaix in 1596 on how military activity had prevented Exeter merchants from venturing.¹⁴⁵ Edward's report may shed light on external affairs affecting the fortunes of Exeter merchants such as John Webber (biography 86) and John Hundaller (biography 38), both discussed in chapter eight, whose venturing activities involved Morlaix at around the same time, though neither of their names were detected by further searches on this website.

In due course, there will also be more resources to draw on which are not *yet* quite as accessible as they might be. For example, AALT – the Anglo-American Legal Tradition website – is concerned with '8,500,000 frames of historical material' from medieval and early modern England from TNA.¹⁴⁶ In effect, the project has photographed original documents and indexed them first by legal system, then by monarch. Under 'Elizabeth' they are indexed via a matrix of document type by calendar year, then by terms in each year. Unfortunately for the purposes of this study, it is not yet possible to search by personal name or location for most of the period under consideration in this study.

Religious sources

With the exception of churchwardens (chapter four), those involved in the religious dimension of city life are conspicuous by their absence in this study. The transcripts of sixteenth-century deeds relating to disputes between the Chamber and the Cathedral held in the DHC are yet to be consulted, as is the Clergy of the Church of England database which lists all known clergy for every parish.¹⁴⁷ Whilst one property-related document from the archives of the Dean and Chapter of Exeter Cathedral has been used (see above) that

¹⁴⁵ <http://go.galegroup.com/mss/start.do?p=SPOL&u=exeter&authCount=1> [accessed 30th March 2015 via University of Exeter Library]; TNA, SP12/259, f.167, Gale Document Ref: MC4304401015, alternatively via www.galecengage.co.uk.

¹⁴⁶ <http://aalt.law.uh.edu/> [accessed 30th March 2015].

¹⁴⁷ <http://theclergydatabase.org.uk/> [accessed February 2015].

rich collection remains, for the time being, largely untouched by this study. There is otherwise very little mention of the clergy within the records that are consulted. Of ninety-nine records referring to men in religious roles, 78% relate to other people's marriages, baptisms and burials, and occasionally their own. The remaining roles they play are will maker (8%), including the setting up a relief scheme for the poor by parson William Hearne, gaining the freedom of the city (2%) and acting as creditor in connection with preaching at funerals and thus appearing as a debt in an inventory (3%). A handful more have their rent paid by others, gain reward for help in the plague, live incontinently (see chapter 6) and physically attack workmen trying to erect a shop.¹⁴⁸

Sources lacking in Exeter

Exeter lacks any form of census for this period. These have survived for other towns, and include examples which relate particularly to the poorer members of society. For example, there is no known surviving Diocesan Population Return for Exeter for 1563 and 1603. These returns resulted from a Privy Council request to the Bishops to provide the number of households per parish, which would have helped with calculating the population size of parishes.¹⁴⁹ The chantry certificates for Exeter do not reveal the number of 'houseling people' or communicants served by the chantries in the city, which might otherwise have given an indication of parish population, excluding children.¹⁵⁰ Other towns have useful documents of which Exeter possesses no equivalent. In Maldon, for example, there survive lists of all freemen documenting their attendance at the annual Court of Election of councillors which states whether or not they were resident in the borough. These are accompanied by the lists of decenners, or all un-franchised men over the age of twelve and of at least one year's residence in the town, swearing an oath of loyalty. They survive complete from 1565-1582 and as Petchey remarks 'they

¹⁴⁸ DHC, ECA Chamber Act Books B1/5, p.199; B1/4, p.389.

¹⁴⁹ A.D Dyer and D. M. Palliser (eds.), *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603* (Oxford:Oxford University Press, 2001), p.323.

¹⁵⁰ L. Snell (ed.), *The Chantry Certificates for Devon and the City of Exeter*, (Exeter: published by the author, 1960), pp.xxiv and 73-78.

were meant to be reliable'.¹⁵¹ Likewise, Norwich has both its occupational census of 1589, which lists inhabitants of all society levels and their occupations and its 1570 census of the poor taken prior to a complete reorganisation of the city's poor law scheme, in which 525 men, 860 women and 926 children were recorded. In this census, ages, occupation, provision of alms, house ownership, place of origin, period of residence and sometimes employment status and children's education were covered – and all for some of the poorest in society.¹⁵²

Literacy

Finally, it has not been possible to look systematically at chorus literacy, largely because this study works mostly with transcriptions rather than original documents. Moreover, most of the original sources used were compiled by Chamber members, particularly Hooker, along with notary publics, scriveners and other clerks. There is evidence that some members of both sexes and of different social rank could at least sign their names, some with more confidence, or perhaps in better health, than others (illustration 2). Compare middle chorus Thomas Withycombe's frail attempt at the end of his will with the confidence of leading actor's wife Elizabeth Spicer. There is also evidence of individuals practicing their signature, such as John Williams.

Structuring the database around data types

As all the above sources indicate, the data used in this study is extremely fragmentary, consisting of thousands of incidental life occurrences - not great narratives or complete stories – and they require a database to marshal them. Recent improvements in the size and searching capabilities of personal computer programmes (such as FileMaker Pro, used in this study) enable simple database structures to be managed effectively by researchers who are not computer experts.¹⁵³ The basic premise of the study database is its

¹⁵¹ Petchey, *A Prospect of Maldon*, pp.22-27.

¹⁵² J.F. Pound, *Tudor and Stuart Norwich* (Chichester:Phillimore, 1988), pp. 59 and 125.

¹⁵³ R.W. Mathisen, 'Where have all the PDB's gone? The Creation of

tabular form. It comprises rows (called records in this study, each of which represents the occurrence of a personal name plus associated data) and columns (called fields, which contain particular data type gleaned from documents, such as date of birth, occupation or a role in a human transaction).

For this study, the database is structured around the data-types found within the range of documents used, so it effectively contains the transcribed texts analysed into individual fields. It was anticipated that there would be some similarities with the type of data collected by Kowaleski as the range of documents used is not dissimilar. She summarizes her data-types as 'occupations, wealth, political status, commercial activities and place of residence'. In this study, the data types can be summarized as 'occupations, wealth, political and social status, associated parish and connection to other individuals'. The full range of fields is set out in appendix 4 but is summarized here as first name, surname, status, clarifier (or relationship to others, places etc), role, associated parish, occupation and date. Being consistent across a wide range of documents, these fields co-incidentally reveal issues that most interested the Elizabethan administrative mind about its citizens, discussed further in chapter eleven. With the addition of fields for information about data sources, fully transcribed text and image references where available, the database is referred to as the Master Database (MD).

The database structure also reflects the one-to-one relationships between different people revealed in the documents used. It was intended to support SNA work which recognises directional relationships, that is, the transfer from one person to another of, for example, ideas, physical goods, wealth, or prestige. The direction of a relationship is based on a supposed transfer of power from one in a more powerful position to one in a less powerful position. These relationships are captured in the database through the concept of active and passive people in a specific relationship. The active person is the

Prosopographical Databases for the Ancient and Medieval Worlds' in Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, pp.66, 102 and 123.

one who makes a relationship transaction possible and the passive person reacts. Examples of active-to-passive directional relationships are benefactor to beneficiary (although slightly bizarrely the deceased person is the active one) and creditor to debtor. Non-directional relationship examples are neighbours or being on the same jury as, in theory, they are in an equal relationship. One person can be the active person alone, without interaction, for example someone who died, or became a freeman without mention of their apprentice master or who was just listed on the Muster Roll. The same person can, of course, be both a passive and active person in different transactions but those with relatively more active roles are assumed to be the more active and influential individuals, whilst those who have more passive roles are assumed to be less so, even without the formality of using SNA as a quantitative methodology.¹⁵⁴

Analysing database content to determine which methodologies to use

The MD comprises just over 55,500 records. Each individual occurrence of a personal name (that is, a first name plus a surname) in the archives has a record. All records with the same combination of personal names represent a set of records from which distinct people, sharing the same name, are individuated (explained further below) and the collective records for an individuated person creates their biography. The collective records for a particular aspect of life, for example, occupation, status or role, provides the basis for group research, which involves investigating the individual biographies of each individuated person in the group.

These simple statements belie the significant complications of sampling and quantitative prosopography, as opposed to qualitative collective biography. When it comes to sources for chorus-like populations, prosopography seems inherently contradictory. On the one hand, the Manual stresses its suitability for poorly documented populations, stating that 'the use and development of prosopography is closely connected to the problem of scarcity of historical data' and cites examples such as large groups of mostly anonymous or

¹⁵⁴ S. Wasserman and K. Faust (eds.), *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp.3-27.

poorly documented individuals.¹⁵⁵ Keats-Rohan agrees, though she states that prosopographical approaches ‘enhance’ the value of fragmentary datasets that are difficult to interpret or manipulate – rather than solve the issue of their incompleteness.¹⁵⁶

On the other hand, the Manual states that sources need to provide sufficient information to populate questionnaires, or databases, and may fail in this, especially for the less privileged layers of society. If the number of persons is high enough, one proposed solution is to use statistical methods and a calculus of probability to ‘fill the gaps’. Even so, the Manual points out that full statistical multivariate analysis is frequently impossible because there are not enough people to make it valid or meaningful, in which case, ‘for the lower classes, prosopography is often pointless, unless as part of a much larger and methodologically different research project.’¹⁵⁷ From this it is clear that the variable completeness of sources used in this study means they are not necessarily suited to prosopography even though, ostensibly, this methodology is meant to be appropriate for lower social groups. There is a risk of retrieving large numbers of individuals with only one or two pieces of biographical information, of collecting large numbers of names but not being able to distinguish individuals, and of not being able to recreate enough individuals of a particular kind to make it possible to extrapolate statistically when some fields remain empty. To what extent this is the case is not knowable at the start of a project, so this study took the advice that ‘the best way is just to try it’.¹⁵⁸

The first challenge that arose was that the data forms what Hudson, an economic historian, refers to as a ‘survival sample’ which is not suitable for wider statistical analysis. The results of research upon such samples can only reveal evidence about the sample itself and, states Hudson, it is possible

¹⁵⁵ Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn ‘A Short Manual’, pp.36, 42 and 54.

¹⁵⁶ Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, p.26.

¹⁵⁷ Verboven, Carlier and Dumolyn ‘A Short Manual’, in Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications* pp.42, 46-47, 59 and 61; Keats-Rohan (ed.) *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, p.12.

¹⁵⁸ Smyth, ‘A Whiter Shade of Pale’, p.32.

only to generalize, impressionistically, about the population as a whole.¹⁵⁹ This being so, it will never be possible to regard the contents of this study's database as representative of all the people who lived, or worked, or interacted in sixteenth-century Exeter. The data that survives is completely arbitrary and this is a problem encountered in other studies such as Overton and his colleagues' inventorial work.¹⁶⁰ The second challenge was that complex, multivariate statistical analysis across this particular survival sample, even if only representative of itself, was not an appropriate way to proceed either. Without the time to individuate an estimated 22,158 people (see below), there is an insufficient number of individuals each with a sufficient range of data upon which to undertake multivariate statistical analysis that would uncover hitherto unidentified groups. The third challenge was that a survival sample nullifies the point of using SNA because, as a quantitative methodology, it too needs complete or statistically complete-able datasets. The methodology will not work reliably unless there are 'measurements between all possible pairs of people in a population' and this is not the case with the data to hand.¹⁶¹ An attempt was made to imitate the work of d'Cruze who identified 'brokers' within eighteenth-century Colchester using SNA, but it was not successful because without all the known connections, the results were meaningless.¹⁶² What can be achieved, however, is a description of a *range* of connection types between people to indicate at least in what ways they encountered each other and examples are discussed in chapter three.

The main methodology taking this study forward is therefore collective biography, the less quantitative, more qualitative, selection-rather-than-sample based approach usually reserved for studies of the elite, but, in this study, applied to the chorus. A quantitative element is included however. Where possible it is enhanced by what Hudson terms 'elementary descriptive

¹⁵⁹ P.Hudson, *History by Numbers: an Introduction to Quantitative Approaches* (London: Arnold, 2000), p.175.

¹⁶⁰ Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann, *Production and Consumption*, p.29.

¹⁶¹ Wasserman and Faust (eds.), *Social Network Analysis*, p.8.

¹⁶² S. d'Cruze, 'The Middling Sort in Eighteenth-century Colchester: Independence, Social Relations and the Community Broker', in Barry and Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People*, p.190.

statistics' which identify the most important features of data through basic calculations and straightforward presentation and this approach is most widely explored in chapters three and four.¹⁶³

Complete and extension groups

Returning to the data itself, there are people who undertook an activity or held the same status or played the same role as others for whom a complete list of names survives, here called 'complete groups'. This is true in the case of the Chamber members, of those who rose to the level of Bailiff, those who appeared on the 1569 Devon Muster Roll, those who subscribed to the ship money levy in support of defeating the Spanish Armada in 1588, those identified as 'aliens' in the lay subsidies and those included on John Hooker's gift list in 1584. It is logical to investigate these groups because of their archival completeness and also their manageable size. Two other complete groups encountered are omitted because they are exclusively made up of leading actors: the Governors of the Society of Merchant Adventurers and contributors to the revolving loan fund, with the exception of Jane Hewett, discussed in chapter nine. Another, much larger complete group, the lay subsidy payers of 1586, numbers over 1700 individuals and is used in this study primarily in measures of wealth. The issue of undervaluation and therefore reliability for this purpose is discussed in appendix 1.

Added to these groups are incomplete 'extension' groups which extend exploration of the complete groups. These include the muster lists of 1587-1588 and the Bond of Association signatories both of which share a 'defence of the realm' theme with the 1569 muster group and the ship levy contributors. Individuals in both complete and incomplete groups frequently play other roles, including those of juror, churchwarden, inventory appraiser and surety provider, and these too are analysed as extension groups.

Subsidiary database

¹⁶³ Hudson, *History by Numbers*, p.53.

To enable easier group analyses, the data for all the individuals in the above two types of group are condensed into a smaller database called the Subsidiary Database (SD). The fields in the SD are set out in appendix 4 but can be summarized here as that information which reflects various statuses achieved by the individuals concerned, key roles and where known (or calculable) baptism and death dates, so that any 'career' can be mapped. The main associated parish is also included.

Identification and Individuation

At this point it is important to discuss how individual people are retrieved from the mass of mixed data. The process used is nominal record linkage and at the heart of this lie individuals' names. First, name spellings are standardized, as recommended by Keats-Rohan.¹⁶⁴ The manual methodology for doing so in this study is set out in appendix 5 and is something of an arbitrary method. Wrigley and Schofield discuss the issue of computerizing the process but back in the 1970s they concluded that human judgement was still needed, having failed with two programs to link satisfactorily names from Colyton parish registers.¹⁶⁵ Sharpe, revisiting the same parish, also relies on manual linkage.¹⁶⁶ Winchester does not particularly approve of standardizing names but prefers a 'guarded identifying phrase' such as 'the person who was called either Berkeley or Barcley'.¹⁶⁷ This bulky approach is addressed through keeping the original spelling in the 'original text transcript' field in the MD.

Identification by name and name standardization is only the first part of nominal record linkage. The next stage is to *individuate* people with the same name. Winchester, Wrigley and Schofield discuss the issue at length and

¹⁶⁴ Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications*, pp.179-181.

¹⁶⁵ E.A Wrigley and R.S Schofield, 'Nominal record linkage by computer and the logic of family reconstitution' in Wrigley (ed.), *Identifying People in the Past* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973), pp. 98-101.

¹⁶⁶ P. Sharpe, *Population and Society in an East Devon Parish: Reproducing Colyton 1540-1840* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), p.324.

¹⁶⁷ I. Winchester, 'On Referring to Ordinary History Persons' in Wrigley (ed.), *Identifying People*, pp.27 and 33.

together provide a set of rules by which this study attempts to abide and which are set out in appendix 2.5. Winchester calls linking records to a particular person *historical individuation* which relies on records which have *identifying items* (called attributes in this study) such as occupation, statuses attained and associated parish, as well as name. He states that once all, or a sufficient number of identifying items on a particular pair of records are in agreement, it is possible to judge that a historical individuation has been successfully brought about. He does, however, raise the point that what constitutes a 'sufficient' number of agreeing identifying items is a personal judgement. This, he acknowledges, involves general background knowledge, knowledge of specific record files and paleographical skills. He also accepts that it is 'intrinsically probabilistic'.

However, in historical records there are complicating cultural norms, such as differences in name spelling and genuine mistakes, like accidental transposition of numbers in dates. These can be addressed through an 'excuse procedure' or making exceptions-to-the-rule for certain historical criteria such as changes in dates (inevitable over a lifetime), geographical location and occupation, because these legitimately change whilst 'belonging' to the same person. In addition, in the case of occupation, the issue of bi-employment arises.¹⁶⁸ There are inevitably some leaps of faith to be made during this process. For example, in this study John James 'shoemaker' and John James 'cordwainer' might well be the same man, even if John James, labourer is not (though the possibility of bi-employment means he could be). Where there is a distinctive name, one can have more confidence in a successful individuation, such as for William Lant, Richard Mawdett or Walter Horsey.

The number of people covered in this study is not established exactly because of the very significant amount of time it takes to individuate a person from groups of identified people sharing the same name - generally speaking, around two hours depending on complexity. To individuate from just over

¹⁶⁸ Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann *Production and Consumption*, pp.65-73.

65,000 identified people in the MD is beyond the timeframe of this study, although it is an ambition for the future. However, a very approximate interim total is arrived at by carrying out the exercise for surnames beginning with A or B. The maximum number of individuated people is 2506 out of 7431 identified people, or 34%. It might therefore be argued, very cautiously, that from a database containing 65,172 references to identified people, the study includes a maximum of 22,158 individuals functioning in Exeter between 1550 and 1610.

Applying the above processes to names in the SD is realistic, however, and results in the emergence of three types of people. The first type cannot be distinguished from other people of the same name and, as unindividuable people, they are not useful for biographical analysis. The second type have only one aspect of their lives recorded and are similarly unhelpful for biographical analysis. The remaining type-three person is confidently individuated and has a clear biography, with usually more than three records in it. They are the individuals used for group analysis in this study.

However, there are yet further complications because it is impossible to know whether any of the type-three people have a complete set of attributes against their name. For example, an individual might be 'missing' a baptism registration date because the parish register is missing or defective. In this instance it is known the record is missing because that vital event had to have occurred. For other, optional, attributes it is impossible to know whether data is missing or not. For example, an individual may not have participated as an inventory appraiser or will witness, or they might have done so but it was not noted on the inventory at the time and/or the will was destroyed in the Second World War. These problems are not unique to Exeter - in her longitudinal study of Colyton in Devon, Sharpe stated that she felt she was embarking on 'mission impossible' in this respect.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Sharpe, *Population and Society*, p.2.

Despite all these issues - a reminder of Petchey's gloomy prognosis for pre-census population studies quoted at the start of this chapter - 900 people are included in the SD, of whom 123 cannot be individuated and, of those remaining, 144 have only one attribute against their name. Therefore, 633 usable type-three people remain who are associated with Exeter and named in the city archives 1550-1610. Their data is used in elementary descriptive statistical work, first in respect of the whole group on a citywide basis and second, in respect of defining further the chorus and investigating groups of civically active men with a greater range of data against their individual names. The results form the substance of chapters three and four.

However, from simple experimenting with sorting and sifting on various fields in the MD, it is clear that there are other people with, individually, a weaker range of data against their names and who are not necessarily included on the SD but who are linked to data of a more descriptive type. As a group, they too withstand scrutiny, though of a less quantitative and more descriptive nature. They are sexual offenders, strangers and plague victims, those described as aliens, those in almshouses or in receipt of pensions, occupational groups (bakers in this study) and particular families and households in terms of their changing size and composition. Their members include far more women and poorer members of society than those on the SD. The collective biographical treatment of these groups forms the content of chapters five and six.

It is also evident that a few individuals have a relatively exceptional depth of data against their names, in particular, those who have a will and an inventory of their goods. This data makes it possible to pull the historian's magnifying glass closer and investigate individual lives in the context of the groups above - of which they were usually members of at least one. These individuals, both men and women, are examined in depth in chapters eight and nine.

Finally, the data collected includes much cityscape information - parish, street, plot adjacency to fixed points such as churches and city gates and occasionally descriptions of buildings or plot types. This information is always

associated with people who owned, leased out, tenanted, occupied, held or otherwise had a connection with the cityscape, providing the raw materials for chapter ten. The occupied topography methodologies are effectively a different take on nominal record linkage and the same kind of rules apply, just to physical plots rather than people, and the results are described in detail in that chapter.

Conclusion

The challenging data set and processes outlined in this chapter, often ones of elimination, do impose limitations on how far the aims of the study can be achieved. However, there are sufficient individuable people to enable group and individual biographical analyses which capture personal interactions and patterns in behaviour. Wherever possible the results of analysis are compared with other studies of early modern urban society to see how conformable or otherwise were Elizabethan Exonians.

Chapter 3: Citywide Analysis : elementary statistics, broad urban context and defining the chorus

This chapter sets out a range of Hudson's 'elementary descriptive statistics' for a selection of Exeter's Elizabethan population. In drawing on the city-wide data from the study databases discussed in chapter two, it creates broad human and urban contexts for later group and individual portraits. It describes two broad zones of intramural and extramural character, though it acknowledges there are exceptions to the general impressions created. It attempts to distinguish more clearly the chorus from the leading actors and argues that the division of the former into upper, middle and lower layers had contemporary resonance which negated the need for a 'middling sorts' label.

Age at freedom

Although only an estimated 25% of householders are thought to have been freemen in Exeter, it is possible to calculate their age at the point of achieving their freedom of the city.¹⁷⁰ One hundred and twenty individuable men have both their date of baptism and their date of freedom recorded. Their ages at freedom are set out in table 3.1. It does not appear that the method of gaining freedom, either by fine, apprenticeship or succession, is strongly related to age, as all occur across the age range. Additionally, freedom was sometimes granted for services rendered or through pressure brought to bear by influential others, but the method is not always stated in the Exeter records so it is difficult to be definitive about the relationship between this and men's ages.

With twenty-five taken as the average age of freedom for these men, it is theoretically possible to calculate the approximate ages for all freemen at different stages in their lives, including those without a baptism date. Freedom is chosen as the attribute upon which to undertake calculations because ostensibly it is more age-specific. Other attributes, such as being a bailiff, juror or tax-payer, might simply be reliant on adulthood and even

¹⁷⁰ Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth*, p.258.

mustered men had a wide age range, officially at least, of being between sixteen and sixty. However, there are plenty of variations. As Pound notes in his study of Norwich, some men entered the freedom later, or very late in their careers.¹⁷¹ One Exeter example is John Hanne (biography 69), who gained his freedom aged thirty-four. Others were re-admitted having been expelled and such is certainly the case with Nicholas Hatch who, having gained his freedom on 20 September 1568, was expelled from it on 7 September 1590 and re-admitted gratis by the mayor and bailiffs on 3 May 1591.¹⁷² Yet more men migrated to the city as mature men and may well have achieved their freedom by fine when aged over twenty-five, but their ages are incalculable.

Some caution must also be exercised with regard to tuckers and freedom dates. Of 138 tuckers for whom a date of freedom of the Tuckers' Guild is known, sixty-six (48%) also have a date for their freedom of the city. Of these, only eleven (16%) gained freedom of the Tuckers' Guild *after* freedom of the city. Unfortunately, there is no tucker for whom a baptism date, a tuckers' freedom and a city freedom date are known, so it is not possible to know at what approximate age they usually gained their tuckers' freedom, so they are excluded from table 3.1 on the grounds that they may be slightly older. However, by 1602, ordinances of the Tuckers' Guild included the rule that all those admitted to the Guild had to obtain their freedom of the city within three months. This chimes with the findings relating to the 138 tuckers mentioned above in that, previous to this date, it seems freedom of the city had not been promptly sought or possibly not sought at all.¹⁷³ All these exceptions to the rule suggest that twenty-five is likely to be a conservative age for freedom in many cases and therefore the likelihood of an older age for other life events needs to be borne in mind if working from a freedom date unaccompanied by a baptism date.

¹⁷¹ Pound, *Tudor and Stuart Norwich*, p.49.

¹⁷² Rowe and Jackson (eds.), *Exeter Freeman*, p.102.

¹⁷³ *ibid*, p.xxiv.

Average lifespan

Wrigley and Schofield state 'Expectation of life at birth was exceptionally high in the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, varying in the period between 1566 and 1621 from a high point of 41.7 years in 1581 to a low of 35.5 years in 1591, and averaging over 38 years.'¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately it is impossible to calculate an average age at death for Exeter with data from the time period 1550-1610. It may be that 60 years is simply too short a length of time to capture sufficient data from a single city when several of its parish registers are missing or were started relatively late within this time period. Out of 17,861 records which represent every recorded baptism and burial for the period, and after various selection and filtering processes described in appendix 6, only 248 records represent a test selection of individuable people whose surnames begin with A, B or C with both a baptism and burial record in the right order. With baptism dates ranging from 1557-1610, their ages at burial range from twenty-six years to one day – but only three are aged over eighteen, so overall they represent the lifespans of children. When only records with baptism dates between 1550-1570 are considered to give the best chance of recording a full lifespan, the age range runs from thirty-three years to one day, but the majority of the ages at death are still under eighteen. From a test sample of fifty-nine women whose maiden names begin with A, it is also impossible to find sufficient married women with baptism date, marriage date and burial or remarriage and subsequent burial dates to draw any conclusions about the length of adult women's lives. As appendix 6 shows, there are so many individuals discarded because of problems in finding true matching pairs of vital events, these figures are unhelpful to say the least. As a result Wrigley's average age of thirty-eight years is taken as a guide to average lifespan in Exeter, although it may be a little on the high side for an urban situation. Laslett estimated life expectancy to have been in the low 30s in seventeenth century England. However, he points out that in Colyton it reached the 40s in favourable sixteenth century conditions, reminding us not to exaggerate the brevity of life in earlier times.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁴ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, p.234.

¹⁷⁵ Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, pp.97-98.

Personal wealth

As a proxy measure for personal wealth, it is possible to calculate the average taxable value of those considered wealthy enough to be taxed in the 1586 lay subsidy, excluding four aliens at a nominal 4d. This subsidy is the nearest to the middle of the period being studied and possesses the most complete entries. The lowest value is 2s and the highest £53. Three hundred and thirty-three people were recorded as paying tax that year giving an average value of £5.5 for goods and £5.3 for lands, an average of £5.4 between the two (table 3.2). Thirty-three percent of taxpayers were valued at £3 goods, by far the most frequent tax band, and 70% were valued at £5 or less. Therefore, anyone valued at over £5 in 1586 was likely to be one of the relatively wealthier citizens. However, all those taxed represent only 3% of the estimated total population of 9-10,000 people.

It is also possible to undertake calculations on inventorial wealth as another proxy measure by which to observe relative gross personal wealth. Officially at least, the Exeter Court of Orphans was interested in inventorial values of £5 or above, but for the 102 men and women represented as subjects of inventories, the range of total gross values between 1560 and 1602 runs from only £3 (Richard Hedgeland, joiner, 1596) to £2860 (John Anthony, merchant, in 1598).¹⁷⁶

Of the seventy inventories where gross value can be calculated, the average (mean) inventorial value is £429 and the median £155. These are extremely high values in comparison with inventories associated with smaller towns, such as Ipswich, with a total of around 5,000 inhabitants, and may reflect the relative wealth of a larger regional capital. In Ipswich, sixty-eight inventories compiled between 1583 and 1631 have an average gross value of £63 and a median of £26-and-a-half-pounds.¹⁷⁷ These are not associated with a Court of Orphans, and may provide a more rounded view of urban inventorial values.

¹⁷⁶ Juddery, Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories Electronic Files, OCI 60 and 72.

¹⁷⁷ M. Reed, *The Ipswich Probate Inventories 1583-1631* (Woodbridge: Suffolk Records Society, 1981), pp.9-112.

Occupational wealth

The 1586 subsidy payers can be correlated with occupation. Of the three hundred and thirty-three assesses, excluding aliens at 4d, twenty-one are widows. Table 3.3 shows with which occupations the remaining 312 subsidy paying men in Exeter in 1586 engaged, what percentage of subsidy payers were engaged in each occupation and what percentage of taxable wealth this represents. Table 3.4 lists breakdown of these overall occupational headings.

Discounting the 17% of subsidy payers with unidentified occupations, overall the two occupations which generated most taxable wealth were merchandising/cloth retailing and being a gentleman (who are not, here, professionals but of the gentry, presumably with a residence in the city). Together, they generated 59% of taxable wealth in 1586. Moreover, whilst merchants/cloth retailers, yeomen, servants and the food-related trades contributed a proportionate amount of the total subsidy in relation to their (taxable) numbers, cloth-production/using trades and especially other craft-related trades contributed a smaller proportion and by contrast, services and especially gentlemen contributed a relatively greater proportion. This draws a picture of a regional capital economy with more wealth in the hands of a smaller number of merchants and cloth middle-men, yeomen, service providers and gentry residents and less in the hands of greater numbers of artisan craftsmen.¹⁷⁸ Further examination of the sixty taxable men involved in cloth-related activity in 1586 reveals that cloth retailers were assessed at twice the value of cloth producers and users (£6 as opposed to £3), so the degree of individual wealth was far from uniform within this sphere of activity. Investigations relating to mustered men (discussed in chapter four) show that the cloth-related trades were the occupations from which a relatively high percentage of the poorer soldiery were drawn alongside some of the wealthy

¹⁷⁸ Yeomen in this instance might be the 'urban yeoman' that Dean Smith identifies in Colchester and other towns 'who speculated in urban property, acted as middlemen in commercial ventures and loaned money' in contrast to the usual occupation of agricultural landholder. R. Dean Smith, *The Middling Sort and the Politics of Social Reformation: Colchester, 1570-1640* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2004), p.20.

armour providers, re-emphasising the differences in individual wealth for this group. The same is true of the baking trade, described in detail in chapter five.

By way of overall contrast with Exeter, Mayhew finds in his study of Rye that the equivalent top three occupations were fishing (34.7%), merchandising (16.4%) and the basic food trades (15.7%), representing between them 67% of the 1576 sesse payers, Rye's equivalent to a lay subsidy. All of these contributed a proportionate amount of the sesse total relative to their numbers.¹⁷⁹ There is a clear difference between the nature of the wealthiest groups in a regional capital port such as Exeter compared to an important but much smaller port such as Rye.

Parish population types

It is not possible to calculate the absolute population size for different parishes because Exeter lacks any citywide census material for this period. In addition, incomplete parish register coverage means it is impossible to know for certain the numbers of those who were born, lived and died within the city walls, never mind how much they moved around between parishes, or chose to baptize their children in more fashionable parishes, or who, of those buried, were migrants into the city and who, of those baptized, moved away from it.

However, it is possible to obtain an impression of these issues and to view the available data in terms of 'turnover' in families. Here it is argued that in the extra-mural parishes, a greater overall number of parish vital events possibly represents a greater number of people. However, of more interest to this study, it may also represent a greater number of families with a 'higher turnover', that is, marrying and remarrying relatively more often, having fewer children survive, dying sooner and remarrying again. By contrast, the intra-mural parishes may have contained more 'lower turnover' families with relatively long relationships, more children surviving, fewer instances of second marriages and associated second sets of children. To demonstrate

¹⁷⁹ G. Mayhew, *Tudor Rye* (Falmer: University of Sussex, 1987), p.148.

this, the total number of baptisms, marriages and burials in given timespans in each parish are calculated. The decade 1580-1589 is chosen which sits in the middle of the period studied and also avoids the plague outbreaks of 1570-1571 and 1591 which skew burial counts. The year 1610 is also used as the single year for which most parishes are covered. These are compared with the estimated number of households calculated by Hoskins from the 1671 Hearth Tax, to provide an added time dimension and consistency check, but also to make use of the nearest equivalent to a census return, albeit a century later. The results are set out in Table 3.5.

From this it seems that most of the extra-mural or largely extra-mural parishes (St Sidwell, Holy Trinity, St Thomas, St Edmund and St David) appear to host a greater number of vital events and largely comprise the parishes with the greatest number of households a hundred years later, although the situation in St Thomas is unknown. The same is also true of intramural parishes St Paul and St Mary Major. The relatively lower number of vital events in the largely extra-mural St Mary Steps and All Hallows on the Wall may indicate a more industrial, less residential nature. Beyond this it is difficult to make comparisons, given the different number of parishes in each column, but it is possible to observe that St Olave, and St John noticeably move up the vital event rankings by 1671, which may be a reflection of early seventeenth-century residential infilling of lands around St Nicholas Priory (discussed in chapter ten) and the same may be true of St David, St Mary Steps and St Paul. Other parishes remain relatively stable in their rankings.

A deeper investigation of a selection of these figures reveals a striking contrast between the seven parishes with the longest series of complete parish registers. They comprise four of the intramural parishes (St Kerrian, St Petrock, St Mary Major and St Paul) and three of the extramural (St David, St Thomas and St Sidwell). The results are set out in table 3.6.

Although there was a city-wide net population growth between 1550 and 1610, these figures show that hosting more vital activities does not necessarily result in greater natural growth in parish population – it is the

relative numbers of types of event that matter. This is clearly demonstrated by comparison of figures for St Sidwell and St Mary Major, both of which top the ranks in terms of numbers of events, but which have polarized ratios of baptisms to burials. It would seem the figures support Slack's contention that the suburbs were where death visited more frequently.¹⁸⁰ However, if the intra mural parishes appear to be experiencing natural growth and yet, over time, remain in the lower ranks of population size as measured by the number of vital events and the extramural parishes appear to be experiencing neutral or negative growth but remain in the higher ranks of population size, then it may be possible to argue that there is out-migration from the intramural parishes and immigration into the extramural parishes.

Returning to the issue of 'turnover', families from both intramural St Kerrian and extramural St David were analysed and compared. Families were identified through having baptized in these parishes at least one child where the father was identified. The details are set out in appendices 7 and 8 and table 3.7 summarises the findings.

Of those families with an observably complete cycle, a greater percentage associated with St David involve second marriages, marriages overall are of a shorter duration and the ratio of burials to baptisms is higher. Moreover, although many families in both parishes recorded their vital events around the city, it is clear from appendices 7 and 8 that those associated with St Kerrian were mostly, though not exclusively, linked with intramural parishes and those from St David were linked mostly with extramural parishes.

Parish wealth

Using the lay subsidy rolls, it is broadly possible to argue that prosperity was greater within the walls than without, but the picture is not entirely clear cut. Using just the pounds from the 1586 subsidy, an average valuation of wealth per parish can be calculated and ranked (see table 3.8). In terms of average valuations, the median parish is St David, providing a guide to which parishes

¹⁸⁰ P. Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p.194.

are the relatively richer (above it) and which the relatively poorer (below it). The parish of St John Bow is skewed towards having a relatively high mean tax of £7.2 because two extremely rich individuals lived there alongside a number of relatively poorer tax payers, the median score is accordingly relatively low. A comparative exercise for the lay subsidy of 1557 finds that parish rankings correlate in broad terms with 1586 with the exceptions of St Paul, St Pancras, St Kerrian and St Stephen, which, if taken at face value, appear to have become relatively poorer by 1586. St Mary Major, on the other hand, appears to have become relatively wealthier. However, if an apparant dip in prosperity in fact represents undervaluation, those people and parishes so undervalued and consequently slipping down the ranks push parishes whose wealth appears to remain the same up the rankings and erroneously gives the impression of a growth in relative wealth there. The parish of St Stephen, for example is centrally located with its church on the High Street and, apart from its dramatic slip down the rankings in respect of the lay subsidy, is otherwise an apparently wealthy parish with relative few poor-relief recipients and a relatively high number of poor-relief contributors (see below).

Bearing this in mind, it comes as less of a surprise that when the average parish contributions to poor-relief contributors in the 1570s are taken into account, they do not directly corroborate the 1586 average parish wealth ranking. Evans points out in her article on poverty in early modern Exeter that the rates were set according to the ability of residents to pay, not on the extent to which poverty existed in a particular parish. Therefore it might be expected that the wealthier parishes contributed more than the city average on the grounds that they housed a greater proportion of people who were able to pay higher amounts. Evans does indeed observe that at parish level in 1564-1565, wealthier parishes subsidized poorer ones across the city.¹⁸¹ Tables 3.8 and 3.9 set out the variables. Whilst not unexpectedly, St Petrock, St Mary Arches and St Mary Major housed a greater proportion of contributors giving greater amounts, and St Olave fewer but still wealthy contributors, the

¹⁸¹ Evans, 'An Echo of the Multitude', p.412.

poorer parish of St Pancras also collected some of the higher than average contributions – which may indicate undervaluation in the lay subsidy. In contrast, ostensibly wealthy St John appears to house relatively high proportion of contributors giving less – its relative subsidy wealth likely skewed by its few very wealthy residents and the same may be true for St Lawrence. Meanwhile, All Hallows Goldsmith Street and St Kerrian made relatively few contributions and in smaller amounts, which may indicate that they were not so wealthy as the lay subsidy at first suggests but were perhaps pushed up the rankings by possibly undervalued parishes like St Stephen and St Pancras. The conclusion is that parishes were not clearly divisible into ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ but were more complex in their wealth make-up.

If the parishes in table 3.8 are reordered according to their central or peripheral locations, it is possible to view the geographical distribution of those individually paying the highest amounts of lay subsidy to provide another view of parish wealth distribution (table 3.10). It shows that of the forty-eight relatively most wealthy individuals (those valued at £10 or over) twenty-nine (60%) were associated with the central parishes, in particular in St Petrock, the most central of them all. Of these forty-eight people, 52% comprised merchants and drapers, 29% gentlemen and 6% wealthy widows. In addition the wealthiest baker (Nicholas Erron) and butcher (Richard Gifford), an attorney and three of unknown occupation were located here.

Parish distribution of poverty

It is also possible to refine the whereabouts of those receiving poor-relief within parishes. They are listed by city quarter as well as by parish and some parishes appear in more than one quarter, in accordance with their boundaries crossing the main streets of High Street, Fore Street, North Street and South Street which defined the quarters. Table 3.11 sets out the evidence.

In St David, St Petrock and St John Bow, the poor were present across the parish. In St Olave, St Mary Arches, All Hallows on the Wall, St Paul, St Lawrence and Holy Trinity they were found only in one quarter, but these are

the quarters which made up the majority of the parish. The remaining parishes fell entirely into one quarter but all except St Kerrian and St George contained poor-relief recipients, and they had listed four each in 1563. Only St Edmund and St Pancras are not recorded as having housed any poor-relief recipients in either year. It would seem, therefore, the poor (or at least the respectable poor) were not 'ghetto-ised' but lived almost everywhere and were spread between the north, west and south quarters, although the east quarter stands out as having twice as many - in particular in St Sidwell and Holy Trinity. This may be related to the fact that these two parishes were ranked first and second in terms of vital events mentioned earlier (table 3.5).

Parish occupational activity

As well as focusing on occupational *groups* such as 'cloth trade' or 'food provision' as above, it is also possible to look at occupational *needs*, that is, occupations sharing the same operational requirements, such as fast running water to operate machinery, a downwind position because they were noxious, more space because they involved dangerous and dirty 'industrial' activities, easy access or visibility to customers because passing trade was key or, in contrast, those that could operate from domestic premises anywhere in the city.

Eight hundred and ninety-one records from the study database simultaneously mention, and thus firmly link, an occupation with an active personal name and a parish. This selection of records derives from wills, inventories, lay subsidy rolls, churchwardens' accounts, parish registers and property documents. Ironically, with parish records and property documents it is not always possible to be entirely sure that the parish referred to is the parish in which an individual lived and worked. This is because, for example, baptisms could take place in godparents' rather than parents' parishes, and marriage often took place in the bride's parish which may or may not have been the same as that in which the couple subsequently lived and worked. Likewise, property documents may refer to a lessee, but he may have sub-let the property rather than lived in it himself. Therefore, the analysis captured in table 3.12 is based on people in an occupation who had a recorded interest in

a parish which is likely, but not guaranteed, to have been related to their occupation between 1550 and 1610. There are also another 5000 or more records on the database which mention a name and an occupation but no parish and which need matching to other records relating to these individuals to see if a parish can be confidently allocated. Returning to table 3.12, there is a bias in favour of the parish of Holy Trinity because the parish registers there almost habitually record occupation, whereas other registers largely do not. It is possible that being a parish with a fuller occupational record, which was neither very rich nor very poor and which contained both intramural and extramural land, it may represent a city average for the balance of occupations. This parish is therefore separated out so that total occurrences of each occupation can be seen with and without its influence. Although an attempt was made to map these results onto the cityscape, it is rare to have knowledge of exactly where within a parish an individual was located. With insufficient data to map exact zoning patterns, the exercise was abandoned.

Despite all these caveats, it is possible to detect broad zoning by occupational need, though the results bring no great surprises. First, malodorous activities connected with butchering, skinning and tanning are almost exclusively in the more peripheral parishes, with the slight exception of St George where Butchers' Row was located. The same is true for the running water demanding activities of tuckers, dyers and millers (although tuckers were more widespread) and those in occupations requiring nearness to agricultural land. Those occupations requiring 'industrial' workshop space were nearly all located in peripheral parishes containing extramural land or intramural parishes containing open ground like All Hallows on the Wall. In this selection of individuals, innkeepers, providing accommodation and food to city visitors, were mostly located in peripheral parishes, perhaps because they needed to be easily found by those unfamiliar with Exeter. Sadly none of the sources used here securely establish the exact whereabouts of their premises.

Much more evenly spread are those artisan-shopkeepers operating in domestic workshop space, such as tailors, cordwainers and goldsmiths and those working in purely distributive occupations. Together with servants and

parish priests, merchants are the most widely spread of them all. This pattern seems likely to reflect the locations of both the wealthy wholesale merchants and the smaller, perhaps less successful players (discussed in chapter eight). Of the occupations which could operate anywhere in the city, the professional services of apothecaries, doctors and barbers, the legal profession and clerks all gravitate towards the city centre parishes whilst the labourers, barrel bearers and carriers are found in the peripheral parishes. It is noticeable that the majority of those in the building trade; helliars, carpenters, smiths and especially masons, are based in Holy Trinity which, whilst reflecting the bias towards that parish in the records, may also reflect nearness to the Cathedral, surely one of the largest ongoing building maintenance opportunities in the city, alongside the city walls and underground water supplies.

These findings are relevant to an exploration of Sjoberg and Vance's 'ideal type' models of early modern urban residential and occupational zoning summarized by Langton.¹⁸² Sjoberg (1960) proposes a pre-industrial city where a centrally located, inter-marrying elite control education, politics, religion, entertainment and ceremony. They do not engage in merchandising but locate centrally to avoid noisome streets and poor transport. Aliens are segregated and occupational zoning is a product of craft networking. Malodorous occupations and the poor in menial part-time work are based in the suburbs. In contrast, Vance (1971) proposes a 'many centred' pre-capitalist city where occupational-cum-residential zoning is much more strongly influenced by guilds and the desire for social networking amongst guild members than Sjoberg proposes. Vance pairs this with a vertical, socially mixed topography, that is, with masters living in a house with the shop on the ground floor, family on the first floor and servants and apprentices in the attics. However, Langton notes that Vance also proposes a merchant elite resident in the town centre for economic reasons and that he hardly touches on the residential fate of the casually employed poor, now a lurking, contentious and riotous proletariat. Neither groups sits well with his overall theory. Langton concludes with his own thought that early capitalist cities

¹⁸² Langton, 'Residential Patterns in Pre-Industrial Cities', pp.168-174.

theoretically develop elite households on the periphery once men start to accumulate capital and to own, rather than hold land. This leaves town centres populated by poorer residents occupying smaller properties which Vance suggests happens 'sometime in the sixteenth century'.

As Langton found for Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Exeter appears to represent a hybrid of Sjoberg and Vance's theories, at least in the late sixteenth century. The wealthiest merchants, though not all merchants, were centrally located, and there were no signs of a capitalist city with wealthy suburbs yet emerging - the deserving poor were alongside the rich across the city, not just in the suburbs or the centre (though the undeserving poor were banished beyond the city walls). As chapter five will explore, judging by some of the households in St Mary Major, this mix continued within the walls of individual middle chorus households, as Vance proposes, and there is no sign of immigrant segregation, rather the opposite (chapter five). Exeter was not, however, a many-centered city with occupational location dominated by guild influence. According to MacCaffrey, the guild system was weak in Exeter as the Chamber, comprising mostly merchants (table 2.1) controlled the granting of all guild charters and ensured that any guilds or companies were strictly subservient to it.¹⁸³ Vance's merchant elite were therefore the *same* men who comprised Sjoberg's intermarried, political and ceremonial controllers. Overall, a broadly zoned landscape emerges, seemingly influenced by the location of necessary operational needs, including noxious ones as Sjoberg suggests, but the boundaries are blurred with parishes containing a mix of occupations. However, it is impossible to discern from the data for this study whether poor transport and dirty streets made any impact within a relatively small scale city like Exeter.

Parish pictures

Combining all the above findings provides an impression of the differing fortunes and changing parish dynamics over the years. Broadly speaking, it seems possible to describe two parish population types; the intramural with

¹⁸³ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, pp.86-88.

lower turnover families, greater prosperity yet with out-migration and the extramural with higher turnover families, more poverty and more immigrants. The more 'industrial' areas within and without the walls correspond with the quarters housing 'high turnover' families, whilst the retail/service/professional occupations are most strongly associated with the wealthier quarters housing 'low turnover' families.

Beyond this, it is difficult to assign definitive labels to characterise individual parishes. In the extramural group, though often described as poor and overcrowded (see chapter five), St Sidwell did not house the greatest number of poor-relief recipients, though it may have had an immigrant population. Although it appears to have grown relatively wealthier, in terms of increasing its ranking between 1557 and 1586 for average tax assessment, this may represent the impact of the undervaluation of other parishes, discussed earlier. This may well be the case for St David too, a middle-ranking parish for wealth, which looks as if it became slightly wealthier, though it housed a growing number of poor-relief recipients, probably more immigrants and relatively few relief contributors. In the intramural wealthier group, St Kerrian and St Petrock were both amongst the wealthiest parishes. Yet St Kerrian ranked around the middle for poor-relief recipients and contributors and either its relative wealth ranking was on the decline or it was undervalued, whilst St Petrock maintained a premiere wealth position and accommodated far more poor-relief contributors than recipients. Both may have been losing their native families or perhaps, as fashionably wealthy parishes, registering more births from inhabitants from elsewhere. St Mary Major was one of the intramural parishes with the most vital events and a relatively strong natural growth rate. Its taxable wealth appeared to be increasing, it consistently housed the most poor-relief contributors and it was home to some prestigious inhabitants including John Hooker. However, it also housed the greatest number of poor-relief recipients and its poor-relief contributors were not amongst the wealthiest. In St Paul, also an intramural parish with a medium number of both vital events and natural population growth, taxable wealth appeared to decline and it had the fewest poor-relief contributors paying some

of the smallest amounts. The impression is one of cheek-by-jowl poverty and prosperity.

Individual situations

It is also possible to combine the findings from this chapter to provide basic proxy indicators for individuals' own situations. For example, it can be suggested that an upper chorus haberdasher aged around thirty-four who lived in an eighteen -roomed house in the parish of St Mary Major, who was valued for the 1586 subsidy at £8 and who left an inventory worth net £1800, was likely to have been relatively very prosperous, yet not amongst the most prestigious of citizens – such a man was Thomas Greenwood (biography 27). Of almost the same net value at £1,708 was leading actor Henry James (biography 39) a notary public aged thirty-eight, assessed for tax in 1577 (unfortunately without value noted), who dwelled in a house with twenty-four rooms/spaces, in the likely undervalued parish of St Stephen. Both were far above the status of Owen Singleton (biography 70) the thirty-four-year-old barber of St Mary Major, who was never assessed for a subsidy, who left an inventory worth net £41 and lived in a five-roomed property. More complicated is John Hundaller (biography 38) a tailor of the parish of St John, aged fifty-eight, who seemed to dwell in a two- to three-roomed house, was never assessed for a lay subsidy, whose worldly goods were valued in pence and yet who was worth over £200 net. These four examples illustrate that it is possible to start to distinguish different kinds of lives for chorus individuals, even if it is difficult to pigeonhole them precisely, and this approach is developed in particular in chapters eight and nine.

Defining 'the chorus'

Returning to the wider ambition of defining the chorus, mention has already been made in chapter one of upper, middle and lower chorus members. Defining the chorus in this way, that is beyond being 'not of the Chamber', begins by drawing on all the 633 clearly individuated men and women contained within the study SD. One hundred individuated men are identified as leading actors (15.7%) so collective biography is used to distinguish subgroups within the remaining 533 chorus men and women.

Historians' approaches to dividing up society into layers tend to be based on lay subsidies, for example, MacCaffrey's work dividing Exeter society into eight subgroups based on divisions of taxable wealth in the 1525 subsidy.¹⁸⁴ Dyer uses the same source to divide Worcester's citizens into four groups, but as he says 'the sub-division of the graduations of wealth reflected here is a hazardous task, for dividing lines must always be rather arbitrary'.¹⁸⁵ However, after some adjusting, both authors arrived at something akin to Barry's upper and lower middling sort and poorer sort. Mayhew, in contrast, uses the contemporary, externally observable and therefore, it could be argued, less arbitrary divisions of Rye's mayors and jurats, common councillors, freemen and non-freemen to analyse the sesse.¹⁸⁶

The starting point in this study is, like Mayhew, to use contemporary and externally observable ways of dividing society. To reiterate, Chamber members are distinguished from the upper chorus (those men who held the post of bailiff but who never progressed beyond that position), the middle chorus (those who were freemen but who never achieved the status of bailiff) and the lower chorus (those who were never freemen). On this basis, of the 533 individuals, eighty-eight (13.9%) fall into the upper chorus, 289 (45.7%) into the middle chorus and 156 (24.8%) into the lower chorus. The SD allows several attributes to be examined for all these men and women to see if they collectively support or refute this approach to subdivision. The weakness of the approach is that wealthy but civically less active and/or archivally less visible people may be wrongly grouped, in particular those whose freedom or apprenticeship records are missing. For example, nothing is known about lower chorus Nicholas Greenow except that he was an archer and a minor debtor, that he left a will and that he does not appear to be a freeman. However, his will shows that he held lands and shops and evidently owned enough estate for disposal to be worth writing one, and the same is true of

¹⁸⁴ *ibid*, pp.248-9.

¹⁸⁵ A.D.Dyer, *The City of Worcester in the Sixteenth Century* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1973), pp.174-5.

¹⁸⁶ Mayhew, *Tudor Rye*, p. 112.

Robert Buller whose will boasted considerable wealth.¹⁸⁷ It seems likely that they were freemen but may fall inappropriately into the lower chorus due to incomplete evidence. In the subsidiary database these are the only men for whom the lack of freedom is clearly questionable. If there are others, the case for their being free is not obvious as the remainder of their biographies suggest that they were civically relatively inactive. It would appear that if they are wrongly grouped, they would not make very much difference to the quantitative analysis presented here.

In terms of presentation, the number of men linked to the attribute being studied is totalled and then the number of men representing different aspects of that attribute are turned into a percentage of that group for ease of comparison. For example, for the leading actors there are seventy-six men for whom the attribute of occupation is known, of whom six were involved in the textile trade, or 8% of those men. The exception to this approach is the lay subsidy table where omission from paying tax is significant, as named appearances in the subsidy lists are virtually complete, so omissions are likely to be deliberate rather than arising from archival loss. Tables 3.13 to 3.18 analyse the men in the SD according to a number of attributes to test the reliability of the chorus layers used and comment is also made on whether the different layers are over or under represented in these attributes against the overall make up of the SD. The columns allow easy comparison of data for each group. The attributes used are lay subsidy value above £5, occupation, associated parish, muster role, alien status, being a recipient of John Hooker's gift pamphlet, acting as juror and churchwarden, providing surety for others at city quarter sessions, appraising an inventory, signing the Bond of Association, contributing to the ship money levy in 1588 and having a role in poor-relief administration or receiving it.

The chorus layers: leading actors (100 people)

The results suggest that there is sufficient consistent evidence to validate the approach of layering the chorus using contemporary distinctions. In

¹⁸⁷ TNA, PROB 11/59, image ref 371; DRO, ECA Orphans' Court Loose Wills Box, W24.

summary, they demonstrate that the selection of leading actors in this study were mostly wealthy merchants and gentlemen and, where associated parish was known, most lived in the wealthiest intramural/low turnover parishes (tables 3.14, 3.15 and 3.16). Of those connected with the musters, most were sufficiently wealthy to be armour providers and relatively few served as common soldiers. When they did, later in the century, they appeared to prefer wielding calivers to new-fangled muskets. Individually and collectively they contributed the greatest amounts to the ship money levy (tables 3.17 and 3.18). They are over-represented as contributors to poor-relief and provided the greatest proportion of payers contributing 3d or more relief a week. They formed the majority of auditors for the poor-relief books and were as likely to keep the books as the upper and middle chorus, but were less involved in the collection and distribution of these funds and as likely as the upper chorus though slightly less likely than the middle chorus to default on paying poor-relief (table 3.18). They were also noticeably less likely to provide sureties for others (discussed further in chapter four), less likely than other freemen to be quarter session jury members (although they sat as Justices of the Peace) and were possibly a little cautious about signing the Bond of Association and appraising inventories. They featured large in John Hooker's gift list but did not dominate it. They were as likely as any of the chorus to be a churchwarden, but none were aliens (table 3.18). Overall, in terms of the attributes, they are over-represented in comparison with the composition of the SD, except in terms of holding alien status, serving as common soldiers and providing sureties. Whilst it might reasonably be anticipated that these would be men who participated fully in civic life, it is also possible to argue that they display a relative aversion to 'ordinary' activities and may illustrate Wrightson's observation on the better sort actively distancing or rather distinguishing themselves from chorus.

The chorus layers: upper chorus (88 people)

In respect of the upper chorus, each year four bailiffs were appointed, one of whom was also Receiver for their year. The latter are excluded from this

analysis as they were leading actors.¹⁸⁸ In terms of wealth, a lower proportion of the upper chorus appeared to enjoy greater taxable wealth than both the leading actors and the middle chorus (table 3.14) which may mean that they were relatively undervalued in the lay subsidies, particularly as over half those with a known occupation were merchants. There was also a high percentage of men occupied in the merchandising and cloth retail trades and bailiff seems to be the highest rank to which a tucker, weaver or man in the food-related trades could aspire in this selection of men (table 3.15). Where associated parish is known, fewer of this group lived in the very wealthier/intramural parishes than the leading actors, more lived in the middle ranking parishes but similar proportions to the leading actors group lived in the poorer/extramural parishes (table 3.16). In the 1569 muster, and like the leading actors, most were armour providers, though a greater proportion were pikemen. By 1587-1588, a greater proportion were musketeers than calivermen compared with the leading actors and upper chorus members were the only men to be appointed sergeant. Whilst a greater proportion of leading actors than upper chorus were involved in the 1569 muster, by 1587-1588, the reverse was true (table 3.17). In comparison with the middle chorus, the upper chorus contributed individually greater amounts to the ship money levy but a smaller total overall. Though less likely to be auditors of poor-relief than leading actors or to be distributors of that relief, they shared their book-keeping responsibilities. They contributed medium to larger amounts to poor-relief (between 1d and 3d or more) and defaulted on payment in similar proportion to the leading actors. They were slightly more likely than leading actors to be a churchwarden or a juror, less likely to appraise an inventory or sign the Bond of Association and almost as reluctant to provide surety. Just a handful were aliens (table 3.18). Proportionately, like the leading actors, they are over-represented for most attributes in comparison with the overall composition of the SD, including receiving a gift from John Hooker. The only difference between them and the leading actors is their over-representation in the clothing trade and in wielding pikes and muskets. The figures give an impression of men with similar attitudes and values to the leading actors, but

¹⁸⁸ Macaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.30.

not *quite* of their substance, though perhaps positioning themselves for future greatness, even if this selection of men never gained that status before 1610.

The chorus layers: middle chorus (289 people)

The middle chorus appears to have contained approximately the same percentage of relatively wealthy men as the upper chorus but where occupation is known, far fewer of them were merchants (though more were yeomen than the upper chorus) and they were employed in a greater range of occupations, in particular the cloth-related, food and other trades as well as service provision (table 3.14 and 3.15). Where associated parish is known, they were more evenly distributed across the full range of parishes, but in particular St Mary Major and Holy Trinity, with which a third of them were associated (table 3.16). Relatively few were armour providers but many more served as common soldiers than did leading actors and the upper chorus, and they were spread evenly across handling harquebus, pike and bill, though they were less likely to be an archer. About the same proportion to the upper chorus were calivermen or musketeers and although their individual contributions to the ship money levy were relative modest, they collectively contributed more than the upper chorus (tables 3.17 and 3.18) . When it came to poor-relief, they were proportionately far more involved in the collection and distribution of funds than in the auditing and book-keeping. They made up half the relief contributors in the selection examined, though they were far more likely to contribute no more than 2d a week or to be assessed at 0d contribution. A greater proportion of middle chorus men than leading actors or upper chorus defaulted on payment (table 3.18). This group contained the highest number of aliens, seemingly the highest status that most of them could achieve. The middle chorus were from where proportionately more jurors, surety providers and inventory appraisers were drawn and they were the keenest of all to sign the Bond of Association, but they were under-represented as churchwardens and of proportionately less interest to John Hooker than the upper chorus (table 3.18). The picture of these men is of a much broader, artisan-craftsmen group, more closely associated with day-to-day issues that oiled the commonwealth works: they were men who got their hands dirtier.

The chorus layers: lower chorus (156 people)

Finally, John Hooker appeared to have no interest in the lower chorus, even though it seems highly likely that those members visible in this study are the upper echelons of the lower chorus (table 3.18). They consist entirely of men who were never valued at £5 or more in any lay subsidy and twenty-five of them were valued in pence only (table 3.14). This is not surprising, given that non-freemen were supposedly largely excluded from trading monopolies within the city where wealth was to be made. None were merchants but nearly half were cloth production workers, many were in other trades and nearly all servants fell into this group (table 3.15). Very few lived in the wealthier parishes, except for St Mary Major which had a large percentage of all groups living there. The largest percentage of the lower chorus lived in extramural/higher turnover St Sidwell and Holy Trinity (table 3.16). None were armour providers so this group had the greatest percentage of serving soldiery, over fifty percent of them archers, though they are very under-represented in the later muster, bearing in mind this is likely a result of partial document survival (table 3.17). Only one contributed to the ship money levy and, in this group, there was a relatively high percentage of aliens. None ever appeared to have appraised an inventory or sat on a jury, very rarely they were churchwardens and surety providers and just a handful signed the Bond of Association. All the poor-relief recipients in the selection of men investigated fell into this category (table 3.18). It appears that there is a clear distinction between this chorus layer and those above it. They wielded little power or influence but served the economy and were first in line for the burden of front-line military service and first in the queue for poor-relief.

However, the proportion of the SD comprising lower chorus men is just under 25% which does not reflect the reality of the section of society effectively at the bottom of a social pyramid. One calculation may show how many of the lower chorus are 'missing' from the records. In the relatively wealthy parish of St Kerrian, which has full parish register coverage, 198 households/families (or at least groups of people with the same surname) are listed of whom only sixty-three individuals (31% at most) were ever valued for tax between 1550

and 1610, leaving a minimum of 69% who were not. This is a crude measure as it does not take account of movements between parishes or out of the city by families some of whom were thus taxed elsewhere, or the increasing under-representation of people of taxable wealth, but it nevertheless provides some indication of the large proportion of the city's population that comprised the lower echelons of the lower chorus. In addition, there are unknowable quantities of others who remain entirely 'silent' members, their names appearing not once in the archives.

The above summaries support the argument that the division into upper, middle and lower chorus, or in contemporary terms, bailiff, freeman (only) and non-freeman, does reflect differences in the degrees and types of active civic involvement and 'lifestyle' at group level. How does this compare with dividing early modern society by taxable value? Table 3.19 shows how the chorus divisions used in this study relate to lay subsidy payments in 1586. Gentlemen and widows are listed separately, widows being often difficult to attribute to a chorus layer if their husbands cannot be identified and gentlemen being taken to be apart from the chorus.

The table shows that the different groups overlap each other considerably in terms of the range of assessment values and consolidates the argument that starting with a contemporary division of society, backed up by other evidence, is a tenable alternative approach to describing this large proportion of a city's early modern population.

Even allowing for a ten-year time difference, the data in table 3.19 contrasts very strongly with Rye where Mayhew's equivalent to the leading actors (the mayors and jurats) form only 3.4% of ratepayers in 1576, the common councillors (the nearest equivalent to bailiffs) 5.6%, the freemen (equivalent middle chorus) 20.1% and the non-freemen (equivalent lower chorus) 70.9%. An even greater contrast is that non-freemen in Rye were calculated to hold 42.8% of assessed wealth and the mayor and jurats only 18.3%. Average individual assessments also differ significantly, with mayor and jurats in Rye

at £42, Common Councillors at £22, freemen at £9 and non-freemen at £4.¹⁸⁹ From these figures it appears that either the inhabitants of Rye were individually wealthier than in Exeter, including the lower chorus, or that the Rye tax assessment was far more accurate than was Exeter's. Rye inhabitants paid a total of £3,277 in 1576 whereas Exeter paid only £1,793 ten years later, which seems to indicate that Exeter, almost certainly a wealthier place, was very significantly undervalued in real terms.

Conclusion

The elementary statistics indicate far more light and shade than the homogeneity implied by the word 'chorus'. It seems that the contemporary, status-based division of society had real meaning that ran through several areas of civic life and supports Wrightson's suggestion that the label 'middling sort' was not necessary because different statuses – bailiff, freeman and non-freemen - already fulfilled the purpose. This chapter also undermines the concept of a chorus which had a clear dividing lined between itself and the leading actors, except in terms of wealth and political influence. It indicates far more of a series of graduations in other characteristics between leading actors, upper, middling and lower sorts. However, these broad-brush descriptions of relatively large groups are still populated by largely nameless individuals, much like the 'brewers' referred to by Hoskins in chapter one and as yet, have not been viewed as men and women who encountered each other whilst fulfilling these and other roles in their daily lives. Therefore, chapter four subdivides the chorus into groups defined by attributes used in this chapter and a more qualitative approach to their collective biographies is taken in order to explore their personalities and interconnections. Inevitably this focuses on the more civically active and archivally visible individuals but chapter five extends this study to the less civically active and chapter six to families and households.

¹⁸⁹ Mayhew, *Tudor Rye*, p.112.

Chapter 4: Group analysis: civically active men

This chapter creates collective biographies of civically active men from the complete and extension groups described in chapter two. It does this by combining elementary quantitative approaches with more descriptive material and by drawing on the findings of wider studies. The results seem to reflect both Hindle's findings in the rural parish of Swallowfields, Wiltshire, and those of Allridge in Chester, that some public and parish responsibilities were delegated to reliable middling sorts of men, perhaps inspired by a conscious desire to compensate them for dwindling political liberties taken up by leading actors.¹⁹⁰ In addition, this chapter explores the possibility of revealing personal characteristics suggested by the roles of juror, churchwarden, surety provider and inventory appraiser and sheds more light on the recipients of John Hooker's New Year's pamphlet gift. It analyses the attributes associated with the different roles of mustered men and the changes in these across time and outlines the kind of men who signed the Bond of Association. It investigates who contributed most Armada ship money (and perhaps why), and likewise analyses the variations in poor-relief contributions. It reflects on the careers of a selection of bailiffs and with all these groups, indicates where and when leading actors and chorus acted together within and across the boundaries of upper, middle and lower chorus. Where pertinent, it brings into the spotlight individuals whose biographies highlight issues under discussion.

Jury service

Juries were bodies of twelve or more men sworn either as Grand Juries or Petty/Trial juries at assizes and sessions, as well as at other courts. The Grand Juries decided whether presentments were fit to bring to trial ('*billa vera*') or not ('*ignoramus*'). Those answerable meant an individual was

¹⁹⁰ S. Hindle, 'Hierarchy and Community in the Elizabethan Parish: The Swallowfield Articles of 1596', *Historical Journal*, 42, no. 3 (Sept 1999), pp. 836 and 843; N. Allridge, 'Loyalty and identity in Chester parishes 1540-1640' in eds., S. J. Wright, *Parish, Church and People* (Michigan: Hutchinson, 1988), p. 106.

indicted and went to trial involving a Petty or Trial Jury who heard the evidence and decided if they were guilty as charged.¹⁹¹

This study makes use of the jury lists which form part of the Exeter Quarter Session Rolls of the Peace from 1569 to 1610 but it is difficult to know which type of jury they represent. Using the SD, of 185 men who were jurors, eighty-five (46%) were middle chorus, fifty-five (30%) were upper chorus and forty-five (24%) were leading actors, which, compared with the overall SD (table 3.13) proportionately represents the middle chorus, under-represents the upper and lower chorus and over-represents the leading actors. It might be argued that the Grand Jury would be more likely to be made up solely of leading actors, and Lawson notes that grand jurors were described at the time as substantial gentlemen who were the most 'sufficient' in terms of understanding and estate.¹⁹² However, there is no evidence of this in these Exeter quarter session jury lists. For example, in 1594-1595, the only jury list in which the preamble refers to twenty-four jurors instead of the usual twelve (although there are twenty of them listed) has the same social composition as another list in the same session bundle which refers to twelve jurors, although nineteen are listed. Both juries comprised four leading actors, three middle chorus men who had sat on juries only once or twice before and the rest who had sat on more than three juries and/or were upper chorus members.¹⁹³ It would appear that the Exeter juries, possibly of both types, were made up of a balance of authority, experience and developing experience and provide an example of the leading actors and upper/middle chorus members working together. However, it is not possible to tell if the deliberations of the higher status men dominated the others.

¹⁹¹ J.S. Cockburn, *A History of English Assizes 1558-1714* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972), pp.111-119.

¹⁹² P.G. Lawson, 'Lawless Juries? The Composition and Behaviour of Hertfordshire Juries, 1573-1624' in J.S.Cockburn and T.A. Green (eds.), *Twelve Good Men and True: The Criminal Trial Jury in England, 1200-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p.124.

¹⁹³ DHC, ECA, N13-09 Quarter Session Rolls, Eliz 37 image 1, Eliz 37 image 7;

Lawson also lists the specific qualities required for jury service in his study of Hertfordshire juries between 1573 and 1624.¹⁹⁴ These qualities were concerned with age, legal or moral background, residency and property ownership. In terms of age, jurors had to be adults but not in their dotage. Lawson is unable to quote figures on ages, as jury lists do not provide them, but from this study it is possible to see, assuming an age of at least around twenty-five at freedom, that, for example, ten jurors in 1585 were apparently aged between twenty-seven and sixty-one, with an average age of nearly twenty-eight and a median of twenty-nine.¹⁹⁵

The legal qualification focused on being free of a criminal record or suspicions of any sort of wrongdoing. Lawson can see little indication that bystanders, possibly of doubtful character and referred to as 'talesmen', were called upon to serve in Hertfordshire and Dean Smith agrees, stating that in Colchester, jurors were mostly respectable men who were not drawn from the crowd on the spur of the moment.¹⁹⁶ However, Lawson still feels that there was a degree of flexibility around this qualification and the Exeter records support this. The example of juror William Pinfold is pertinent here (biography 57). Pinfold was a middle chorus goldsmith of St Pancras/St Paul, who found himself on the other side of the court on several occasions. Having been rescued by his servant Richard Fawell from the 'pytt' of the Guildhall to which the Chamber had committed him for unspecified reasons in 1560 (an action for which his loyal servant was imprisoned), he was charged in 1561 with keeping a tippling house contrary to statute, selling ale at the wrong price, selling wine without licence, failing to have a sign over his door, receiving suspicious persons and threatening the bailiffs. He was committed to ward until he could put in 'suffycient affirmacon' for his good behaviour. Following this, in 1564, he escaped prosecution for sleeping with, and paying with his own hand, prostitute Joan Harton (16d a session), despite being presented by six constables who deposed where and when this happened. He denied all and represented himself at the trial. In 1569 Pinfold was again presented at

¹⁹⁴ Lawson, 'Lawless Juries?', pp.117-157.

¹⁹⁵ DHC, ECA, N13-09 Quarter Session Rolls, Eliz 28 image 1.

¹⁹⁶ Dean Smith, *The Middling Sort*, p.83.

the city quarter sessions but the highlight of his anti-social behaviour culminated in the accusation by Elizabeth Whitfield of fathering her illegitimate child (discussed in chapter five). It was *after* all of these 'misdemeanors' that he was selected as a jury member in 1577.

William Pinfold, therefore, seems at the very least to have been an intriguing choice of juror. He does not appear to be a man who could defend himself by being described as 'a man of honest conversacion and of upright and honest dealing'.¹⁹⁷ He was never assessed for any lay subsidy which suggests that his goldsmithing was not one of the most successful businesses of this kind, and this was perhaps, a reason for his unofficial beverage sales. According to Capp, notions of dishonour may have meant his business was effectively boycotted as 'respectable people had no wish to be compromised by association', but he nevertheless apparently lived by his labours and did not appear to receive poor-relief or be dependent on other means.¹⁹⁸ This may have provided those trying to find jurors with reason enough to appoint him, whilst exercising a conveniently selective memory. However, there were, according to Lawson, repeated complaints from government in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century that juries were composed of 'men of weake Judgement and verie meane estate whose educacon and capacitie have not ... made them fitt for this service.' Although Lawson argues that simple and ignorant jurors could probably not have coped and Wrightson claims, in respect of hundredal jurymen, that they were simply representative of the society at large, characters like William Pinfold may have given the government real cause for concern.¹⁹⁹

The residential qualification meant that where jurors had prior knowledge of an offence, they had to be drawn from the same neighbourhood. In Hertford,

¹⁹⁷ A. Shepard, 'Honesty, Worth and Gender in Early Modern England, 1560-1640' in J. Barry and H. French (eds.), *Identity and Agency in England 1500-1800*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.93 and p.96.

¹⁹⁸ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, p.280.

¹⁹⁹ Lawson, 'Lawless Juries?', p.125 (quoting TNA, SP 12/77/48 (Byll for Juryes)) and p.142; K. Wrightson, 'Two Concepts of Order: Justices, Constables and Jurymen in Seventeenth Century England' in J. Brewer and J. Styles (eds.), *An Ungovernable People* (London: Hutchinson, 1980), p.26.

which like Exeter hosted both assizes and quarter sessions, the population local to that town were especially drawn on for jury service, but beyond that the connection between the crime location and the jury is extremely tenuous. An examination of a jury of eighteen men serving at the Exeter quarter sessions in 1585, the nearest year to the lay subsidy of 1586, reveals that they came from thirteen parishes, including poorer ones of St Sidwell, St Mary Steps and St Paul.²⁰⁰ In a relatively small geographical area like Exeter, as opposed to all the parishes of the county of Devon, it seems likely that being 'of the city' was residential qualification enough. Those upon whom they were passing judgement in one session were also associated with at least five different parishes, although not all could be identified.

Finally, the property qualification was key. Lawson states that it was assumed that there was a link between the economic status of jurors and the calibre of decisions they made and that a moderate degree of wealth was seen as the necessary prerequisite to impartiality and independence and was the best guarantee of socially acceptable verdicts. In theory, property meant possession of land to the annual value of 40s but Lawson notes that in reality it was not necessarily so and that even contemporaries were confused on this point.²⁰¹ The selection of jurors in this study are never less than of middle chorus status but it is not possible to detect whether all held sufficient property. However, the two wealthiest occupations, merchandizing and the cloth retail trades, make up 43% of the jurors (table 4.1) and 82% of jurors are lay subsidy payers in 1586 (table 4.2).

In addition to being men of an age to have had some life experience, reputable (maybe), local and a freeman, they probably had to be tough. Wrightson feels that the position of those 'ensnared between the national legislative prescription and local customary norms' was a difficult one.²⁰² They needed to be men robust enough to withstand the inevitable discomforts

²⁰⁰ Lawson, 'Lawless Juries?', p.123; DHC, ECA, N13-09 Quarter Session Rolls, Eliz 28 image 1.

²⁰¹ Lawson, 'Lawless Juries?', pp.123-4.

²⁰² Wrightson, 'Two Concepts of Order', p.22.

that would occur from being one who found a near neighbour guilty with the resultant passing of a possibly punitive sentence. William Pinfold may well have fitted the bill.

Perhaps this need for resilience explains why there is some evidence for poor attendance by jurymen. Cockburn, in his history of the assizes, feels that jurors were always difficult to find.²⁰³ There were certainly complaints in Hertfordshire about bailiffs who gave insufficient warning or notice to jurors but in contrast, Lawson finds that overall there was little problem with finding jurymen and that it was rare for a juror to serve on more than one jury at a single session.²⁰⁴ In Exeter, the evidence is inconclusive as some jurors served just once but others many times, such as goldsmith John Jones (biography 40) who served eight times between 1569 and 1577, weaver Silvester West (biography 88) who served nine times between 1572 and 1584 and cutler Roger Selby (biography 69) who served ten times between 1590 and 1605. Dean Smith suggests that a greater average length of service by an individual may indicate a greater level of dedication (and probably knowledge and resilience) and that they must have voiced a desire to do this.²⁰⁵ On the other hand they may just have been put upon when others were hard to find. In summary, whilst the role of juror is an imperfect proxy for general upstanding character, it is probably true to say that the Exeter jurors were amongst the more able, civically active, articulate and involved members of the chorus, though perhaps of more robust personality – reputable or otherwise.

Churchwardens

The medieval office of churchwarden originated in the need for parishioners to maintain the fabric of the parish church itself, to maintain property given to their church, and to dispense charity (though none appear to have been poor-relief collectors or distributors in Exeter when occupying the office of churchwarden). However from the 1530s onwards they were required to

²⁰³ Cockburn, *A History of English Assizes*, pp.118-9.

²⁰⁴ Lawson, 'Lawless Juries?', p.127.

²⁰⁵ Dean Smith, *The Middling Sort*, p.107.

enforce local conformity with the new religious settlement, and from 1552 were required to inform on those who did not attend church. They were chosen by parishioners until, in 1604, it was acknowledged in canon law that effectively churchwardens were officers of the Tudor administration, and one of the two officers was to be chosen by the minister.²⁰⁶

What kind of men were churchwardens? Some contemporaries thought them to be inferior men. Sir Thomas Smith, for example, felt in 1583 that urban churchwardens were 'lowe and base persons' such as tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, brickmakers, bricklayers and masons. Whilst in terms of occupations, Dean Smith finds this to be true for Colchester, it is not so for the selection of the sixty-four Exeter churchwardens from the SD.²⁰⁷ As for jurors, the wealthier occupations of merchandising and cloth-retail dominate this particular selection of churchwardens. Moreover, an examination of Exeter bakers in chapter five reveals that most of the four bakers who acted as churchwardens were in the top rank of their occupation. Table 4.1 lists the churchwardens' occupations and table 4.2 their other attributes. The SD also reveals that all but one were at least middle chorus members and forty (66%) were upper chorus or leading actors, an over-representation in comparison with the overall SD (table 3.13). It seems that being a churchwarden was one of the more attractive positions for the civically superior and again shows the leading actors and chorus working together. This evidence also supports Carlson's argument, based on his research on pre-civil war wardens in rural Cambridgeshire, that churchwardens were not from socially inferior layers who were intimidated by their 'betters' into failing to present non-attenders at church, a criticism he feels has been unfairly made by other historians.²⁰⁸ He also notes that they needed to be wealthy enough to be able temporarily to

²⁰⁶ E. Carlson, 'The origins, function, and status of the office of churchwarden, with particular reference to the diocese of Ely' in Margaret Spufford, (ed.), *The World of Rural Dissenters 1520-1725* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.165 and p.181.

²⁰⁷ Dean Smith, *The Middling Sort*, p.69 and p.79 note 99 (referring to Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*).

²⁰⁸ Carlson, 'The origin, function and status of the office of churchwarden', p.193.

subsidize parish expenses out of their own pockets.²⁰⁹ Table 4.2 shows that 92% of churchwardens were lay subsidy payers in 1586.

Carlson also lists other qualities and attributes of churchwardens he found in his study. Ten Cambridgeshire wardens averaged an age of forty-and-a-half years at appointment, and in Exeter, with a selection of forty-nine men with a baptism date estimated from their freedom, the average (mean) is at least thirty-six years old, with a median age of thirty-five and an age range from twenty-seven to fifty-three years.²¹⁰ One man, Alnett Budley (biography 11), with an actual baptism date was aged thirty-seven. Overall, this suggests that in most cases, men of some maturity were chosen. Carlson feels that age itself was less significant than the fact that they were married with children and thus able to manage a household and act as a parent, qualities reflected in the duties of churchwardens.²¹¹ In Exeter, forty-four (69%) were married with children at the time of their wardenship and it seems likely that the remaining twenty simply have deficient biographies. In Cambridgeshire they served a bewildering combination of service years and were often yoked in pairs.²¹² In Exeter, four was the greatest number of years served and the usual service pattern was one of overlapping pairs whereby two consecutive years of service for one churchwarden overlapped by one year another warden's two-year service, which suggests a rather efficient way of new wardens being able to shadow those who had served for a year.

Carlson cannot find evidence in the Cambridgeshire wills of particular personal religious outlooks but deems them 'conformable' rather than 'godly'.²¹³ In Exeter, thirteen of the sixty-four churchwardens made wills which survive in full and a similar conclusion is reached. All of them, to a greater or lesser degree, express their thanks to Almighty God for their sound minds, state their lively faith, bequeath their souls to Him and hope that their sins will be redeemed through Jesus Christ and their bodies resurrected on

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, p.189 and p.199.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.192.

²¹¹ *Ibid*, pp.192-3.

²¹² *Ibid*, p.185.

²¹³ *Ibid*, p.204.

Judgement Day. They are formulaic during the reign of Elizabeth and similar to non-churchwarden wills, although the two wills written during the first years of James' reign are far more fulsome in their language with additional references to the Holy Trinity and double amens. The one exception is John Hooker who, in 1601, wrote one of the shortest wills, simply bequeathing his worldly goods to his brother when God thought it fit to remove him from the mortal world. These are possibly the words of a man who was wise to the long-winded and expensive legal norms.²¹⁴

Churchwardens kept the parish accounts of income and expenditure, so it would seem that at least one of the pair had to be reasonably literate and numerate. It appears that Thomas Filmore, baker (biography 19), could not write because whilst acting as churchwarden of the parish of Holy Trinity in 1605 and 1606, he left only his 'marke' in the parish register. In addition, in order to avoid being fined for deficient presentments and wasting court time, churchwardens needed to be able to distinguish between reasonable church absenteeism (for example to look after small children) and those who absented 'obstinately for religion'.²¹⁵

Churchwardens had to be able to deal with abuse they might encounter when collecting fines for non-attendance, but Carlson notes that there was rarely evidence of refusal to serve, and none has so far been found for Exeter. He believes this was due to pride and honour in being thought trustworthy enough to merit the role as well as a perception of genuine need to undertake it, despite the onerous paperwork.²¹⁶ He finds no women churchwardens but in Heavitree in 1602, widow Mary Taylor was an active churchwarden.²¹⁷ He also finds one extraordinary example of a disgruntled, obscene and drunken

²¹⁴ TNA, PROB 11/98, image ref 815.

²¹⁵ Carlson, 'The origin, function and status of the office of churchwarden', p.172; Nesbit, Exeter: Holy Trinity Parish Register Vol 1 Baptisms, p.3, Nesbit, Exeter: Holy Trinity Parish Register Vol 5 Marriages and Banns, p.3, Nesbit, Exeter: Holy Trinity Parish Register Vol 3 Burials, p.1.

²¹⁶ Carlson, 'The origin, function and status of the office of churchwarden', p.191

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.192; DHC, Churchwardens Accounts PW 3, f.19.

churchwarden who was, not surprisingly, chosen only once.²¹⁸ He is not unique - Exeter can match him with Thomas Marshall (biography 46) a murderous, slanderous and possibly mentally unstable individual who likewise served only one term as churchwarden of St John Bow in the mid 1570s. Stoye has written about his savage beating of a suspected witch in 1562, possibly believing he was possessed and showing absolutely no remorse when she was thought to be dead, stating 'it is no mater it is but an old wytche gonne'.²¹⁹ A former apprentice of William Hurst I, Thomas Marshall also appeared to have had uncontrollable angry outbursts, having been heavily fined for unseemly language and threats earlier in 1562.²²⁰ He owed 20d poor-relief in around 1570, was disenfranchised and had his shop closed down for trading as a non-freeman in 1573 and was sent to gaol in 1574 for abusing the Mayor. His behaviour did not ameliorate thereafter as he also evaded the lay subsidy in 1586 for which he was fined 40s. He had been a bailiff in 1557 but was never again selected for this role and he appears to be another individual who challenges the notion of the civically active being of honest repute.

In contrast, there are examples of churchwardens doing their duty seemingly to the best of their abilities. For example, outbreaks of plague required them to put themselves in real danger and Slack points out that churchwardens, amongst other minor officers, had to carry out the unpleasant work of identifying, confining, supplying and burying the infected, that is if they did not employ someone to do it on their behalf.²²¹ It is not possible to tell whether Nicholas Cornish, churchwarden of Heavitree took the risk himself or delegated to others when, on 27 May 1604, an item of expenditure noted in

²¹⁸ Carlson, 'The origin, function and status of the office of churchwarden', pp.204-6.

²¹⁹ Stoye, 'It is But an Olde Wytche Gonne', pp.129-151.

²²⁰ There are three William Hursts referred to in this study; the first was mayor five times, referred to as William Hurst I, the second is his son who died with few facts known about him, referred to as William Hurst II and thirdly, William Hurst I's grandson by his other son John, referred to as William Hurst III. This William is the one who occupied St Nicholas Priory. They are discussed in appendix 13.

²²¹ Slack, *The Impact of Plague*, p.270.

the churchwardens' accounts refers 'to Nycholas Cornysh for to buy such nessesarye phsition for Mrs Ellis our late mynestes wyddow when she was sicke in the plague in the vicarridge howse att hevitree xxs' (see biography 15). He appears to have had genuine concern for his fellow men as another neighbourly duty he carried out was to keep a lost child called John Blackmore for six weeks, although the parish did recompense him for his expense.

That churchwardens could be men-of-action is also seen amongst the wardens of St Mary Major where, compared with other parishes, the churchwardens' accounts are relatively full for the period, perhaps because John Hooker lived here as an active parishioner which prompted better record keeping. Table 4.3 lists the names of active men in the parish and the causes in which they were involved which included organizing loans and gifts for poorer parishioners, selling vestments, purchasing palls and ensuring churchwardens had sureties to cover their debts. The most protracted issue, however, is that of the collapsing church spire. Appendix 9 reveals the frustrations felt by the increasingly desperate parishioners who, having failed to obtain a financial contribution from the Cathedral towards repairing the spire, then obtained consent to demolish it and repair the remaining tower. However, they were stopped in their tracks by the Chamber who promised to contribute funds to repair the spire and then did nothing. Their surrounding neighbours petitioned the parishioners to effect repair before the increasingly dangerous structure collapsed upon their heads and they grasped the nettle, regardless of the Chamber. Churchwarden and gentleman Thomas Hampton's (biography 30) accounts of the tower demolition and rebuilding the following year show that the parishioners took the opportunity to undertake a range of church improvements during what was clearly a complex building project that cost over £200. Many local builders were involved, and of the twenty-three mentioned, twelve (52%) were connected with the parish at the time or had family who were, and two more were from the adjacent parish of Holy Trinity, perhaps from a pool of those working on the Cathedral.

Overall, the most active parishioners and churchwardens in St Mary Major include William Mongwell (biography 53), Thomas Hampton (biography 30) Walter Body (biography 6), William Greenwood (biography 28), John Geane (biography 24) and Richard Stansby (biography 73). Richard Rowe (biography 66), Roger Connet (biography 12) and Laurence Bonfield (biography 7) were never wardens but appear to have been equally energetic. They connected to each other in their personal lives, for example, Richard Rowe witnessed the will of Thomas Hampton and some of them lived in close proximity to each other. In the city rental of 1599, William Mongwell and his family held the first of eight tenements in Bullhill Street adjacent to the Yarn Market, Laurence Bonfield held the sixth and Walter Body the eighth.

In summary, this selection of Exeter's churchwardens appear to have been higher status, middle-aged family men who could be relied on to toe the religious party line. Together leading actor and chorus churchwardens worked together across eighteen years to support the poor, move with the religious times and save the parish from collapsing buildings and the risk of being sued for damages by the Cathedral. With the odd exception, they were able individuals who were on some occasions dutiful if not brave, concerned, tenacious and entrepreneurial, all a far cry from Thomas Smith's description but not unlike Carlson's Cambridgeshire equivalents.

Surety providers

Surety providers in this study are those men who provided financial assurance for potential offenders. The latter were required by the Justices to post bond, backed by two other people, guaranteeing that they would stay out of trouble for a stipulated period of time, a practice which rose steeply in the later sixteenth century.²²² A surety provider firstly had to have sufficient wealth to be taken seriously by the courts. Accordingly, the SD includes ninety-four men who stood surety for others, of whom 67 (71%) were assessed for the lay subsidies, twenty-six (39%) of them valued at £5 or over at some point. Of the remaining twenty-eight men, twenty-two are middle chorus and therefore

²²² M. K. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour in England 1370-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.34.

more likely to be in the wealthier levels of society. According to Muldrew in his study of early modern economic mechanisms, contemporary advice by William Burton in *A Caveat for Suerties* indicated it was considered an act of hospitality and neighbourliness, even a Christian duty to provide sureties, at least to secure loans. However, friends who provided surety were thought unwise to jeopardize the financial stability of their own households.²²³ If this advice was taken, then the provision of surety may provide a glimpse of friendly trust between the two parties. On the other hand, if the advice was given because abuse of generosity was frequent or people were pressured into giving support when they could ill afford it, the opposite would be true, but it is impossible to tell.

Some men repeatedly provided this service. Tailor William Masters (biography 48) provided it for carpenter Robert Norris in 1572, Hugh Doble in 1594 and Roger and Katharine Wells (spinster) in 1595, and personal links can be established between them all. Robert and William were both churchwardens of St John Bow in 1572 and had both been pikemen in the 1569 musters, and Hugh Doble and Roger Wells were tailors. In contrast, baker Edward Ward (biography 84) provided surety for tailors Nicholas Green and John Hundaller, and tucker Richard Dawkins in 1572, for Thomas Gill (who married Eleanor Filmore, possibly a relation of baker Thomas Filmore) and John Smith (unindividuable) in 1591 and for Isabella Bowes of Alphington in 1593. The relationships between Edward and those he supported are not clear.

What is clearer is that, in comparison with being churchwardens or jurors, merchants were less likely to be surety providers than cloth-production workers and only as likely to provide surety as men in other craft trades (table 4.1). Likewise, table 3.18 shows that only 9% of surety providers on the SD were leading actors and although only 12% were upper chorus, a slight under-representation, 73% were middle chorus – a significant over-representation. Where leading actors in the SD did provide surety, it was more often to

²²³ C. Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p.160.

gentlemen and other leading actors, although table 4.4 shows that they occasionally bestowed their financial support on chorus members too. This is something of a surprise as Hooker states that none of the Chamber or any city office holder should provide surety or they would be fined 40s. Perhaps for some, friendship or coercion outweighed the financial penalty.²²⁴ These reasons might also underpin the case of John Webb, a leading actor for whom surety was provided by members of the chorus. In summary, surety providers appear to be more likely to be middle chorus members in the less wealthy occupations, yet of sufficient wealth to be able to support, perhaps in Christian fashion, their trusted friends and associates in particular times of trouble.

Inventory appraisers

There were at least 213 men appointed inventory appraisers in Exeter between 1560 and 1600. Comprising leading actors, upper and middle chorus men, they are all over-represented in comparison with the overall SD as no appraiser was from the lower chorus. They needed to live in the ward of the deceased person whose inventory was to be drawn up and usually received a small payment or food for the work.²²⁵ Other than that, one of them needed to be able to write and undertake calculations to come to a conclusion about the gross and net worth of the late individual under assessment. To be credible they must also have needed good judgement for assessing what everyday items were worth, including sometimes more obscure artefacts which came to light, such as in Richard Mogridge's inventory, detailed in chapter eight. On one occasion it is possible to see how accurate their inventorial skills were in terms of assessing market value. William Lant's inventory (biography 42) includes a bill of sale for some of his possessions and, from fifty-two clearly identifiable items, the difference between the appraised value and the sale price is visible. Sometimes the appraisers had estimated accurately, such as for a gold brooch, a brewing vat and a bible in English, but for just under half of the items they over-estimated value and only very occasionally did they under-estimate it in comparison with

²²⁴ Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper, *Description of the Citie of Excester*, p.937.

²²⁵ Juddery, *Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories, 1560-1571*, p.i.

actual sale price. The appraisers may have been pushing up values on behalf of the Chamber, but it appears that on this occasion, the citizens of Exeter drove a hard bargain.

In Exeter they appear to have worked in teams of four and in the SD, eight men appraised more than three inventories. The number appears to be the normal maximum but one appraised five times and their appraisal records are set out in table 4.5. There is clearly a link not just between the ward within which appraiser and appraised were both resident but also in terms of prestige in that, in this selection of men, upper chorus members usually appraised middle, upper and leading actors whilst middle chorus members usually appraised middle layers only. It would seem that precise occupational knowledge was not necessary although it can be argued that victuallers and craftsmen Andrew Morey, Thomas Pointington, Nicholas Carpenter, John Fishmore and Thomas Jurdaine were mostly appointed to appraise victualling and craft-based inventories and Thomas Snow and Paul Triggs were merchants appointed to appraise merchant inventories (though Saywell Betty was a tailor). The exception is John Watkins, a middle chorus merchant. He appraised the inventories of Richard Stansby, a cutler of comparatively modest wealth (biography 73) and Warnard Harrison, a relatively wealthy cordwainer (biography 31) but also that of William Seldon, a merchant and a leading actor. However, examination of the complete teams of inventory appraisers on these occasions reveal that that he provided much needed experience. With Warnard Harrison's inventory, only one of the other appraisers had any experience (John Hart who had appraised Edmund Beardsley) and with both William Seldon's and Richard Stansby's inventories, it appears that none of the others had ever appraised before. It is also worth remembering that John Watkins was not just a small-time merchant but a member of the Society of Merchant Adventurers, which may have been an additional encouragement to appoint him as appraiser for William Seldon on this occasion.

In summary, the role of inventory appraiser can act as a proxy measure for mental acuity, with an ability to learn from others with more experience or lead

those with less. It may also indicate an understanding of the 'lifestyle' of appraisees and the likely types and approximate values of material wealth that accompanied this, rather than precise knowledge of their particular occupation.

John Hooker's gift

Receiving a pamphlet gift from John Hooker on New Year's Day 1584 reflected a well-established custom of distributing gifts to friends and relatives at this time of year.²²⁶ Its receipt can therefore be argued to be a proxy for being well acquainted with, if not well thought-of by, one of the city's most influential leaders. Snow, in his article on this gift, surmises the recipients to be Hooker's socio-economic circle - mostly his friends but also relatives and fellow citizens. All male and adult, virtually all of Exeter, and mostly civically active, Snow states that they comprise merchants and/or urban landlords plus some craftsmen, who possibly owed their livelihood to the cathedral or were Hooker's preferred suppliers, and a handful of ecclesiastics.²²⁷

As table 3.18 shows, none were known to be less than members of the middle chorus. Although for seven men, nothing else is known (Snow lists them as ecclesiastical figures or not/uncertainly identified) the remainder represent a broad rather than narrow selection of men – certainly not a clique of leading actors and upper chorus only. Nineteen recipients were not assessed for lay subsidies and the fifty-two recipients associated with a parish come from a total of seventeen city parishes both wealthier and poorer, though mostly intramural. Of the thirty-seven men whose occupations are known, seventeen (46%) were merchants and the remainder a mixture of usefully skilled men from a wide variety of crafts and services, including a dung carrier.

Presumably all could read if a pamphlet was to make any impact at all. Calculating ages from freedom dates, the eldest was aged approximately seventy-four and the youngest two were apparently just fifteen, though in fact likely to be older. The gift list reveals John Hooker to have been a man who cast his net wide in terms of his connections and, perhaps through the

²²⁶ Snow, 'John Hooker's Circle', p.273.

²²⁷ *Ibid*, pp.273-277 and pp.317-324.

mechanism of his gift, made his appreciation of skill and civic contribution clear as only three men on his gift list did not apparently play any other civic role.

Mustered men

Men from Exeter called upon to serve in the Elizabethan militia are identifiable from muster documents described in chapter two, namely the 1569 Devon Muster Roll and the militia list of 1587-1588 which fall either side of a key date in domestic military strategy. Before 1573, and in relatively peaceful times, parish constables were responsible for finding the men, arms and money assessed as necessary and mustered men were not trained or armed for their roles in advance.²²⁸ In 1573, a new strategy was adopted and the government formally ordered 'a convenient and sufficient number of the most able to be chosen and collected ... tried, armed and weaponed, and so consequently taught and trained.' The 'trained bands' were organized under professional muster-masters who instructed both local captains and soldiers. Their most important function was the use of firearms and it was stated that 'traying of the shotte is the firste and moste requisite parte of the travel of the muster mr.'²²⁹ In January 1588, Giles Carpenter, servant to Sir Thomas Dennis, himself a captain of 300 men, was paid as the muster master for Exeter and continued to be so into the reign of James I.²³⁰

Table 4.6 sets out the recorded attributes of mustered Exeter men. The first observation is that in 1569, leading actors and the upper chorus relatively rarely became involved in musters as soldiers but contributed mostly as armour providers, that is possessors of yearly income from lands and goods sufficient to be required to provide horse, armour and weapons by the *Statute of Armour and Weapons*. Stoate states that in Exeter they 'complied to a man

²²⁸ Boynton, *Elizabethan Militia*, p.16.

²²⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 91,105-6.

²³⁰ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Books B1/4, p.55, B1/5, pp.443 and 448, B1/6, p.273; Stoyles, *Circled with Stone*, pp.89-90. Giles Carpenter also warned Alderman Ignatius Jurdaine of a plot about 'Londoners and decayed courtiers' arming and garrisoning Exeter castle.

with the statute, providing neither more nor less'.²³¹ The greatest number of armour providers were leading actors and they, together with the upper chorus, are over-represented in comparison with the study SD, whilst the middle and lower chorus are under-represented (table 4.7). Unsurprisingly, 60% of providers are associated with wealthier occupations, in particular merchandising/cloth retail trades (table 4.8). Some were valued at above average tax levels in 1557, which none of the soldiery were and they are associated with the middling to wealthier parishes. Overall, they were noticeably older and more civically active than the common soldiery, though surprisingly, perhaps, two of them were aliens. Only one man was both a provider and a soldier, leading actor Philip Yard, who was a caliverman in 1587-1588 (biography 95).

In respect of those handling weapons, it is possible to see the impact of the creation of trained bands in 1573 on the types of men mustering. In both musters, soldiers were mostly drawn from the lower and middle chorus, but the middle dominated more towards the end of the century and a greater proportion of weaponry handling was undertaken by leading actors and upper chorus in the 1580s than in 1569. In 1569, all soldiers were untaxed or taxed at below the city average but by 1587-1588 a greater percentage of the calivermen and musketeers than previous soldiery were assessed in the nearest lay subsidy. Boynton points out that the contemporary viewpoint was that the more wealthy soldiers were, the more able they would be to buy their own arms and pay for their own training, which seems to be the case with this selection of men. The government may also have been wary of arming and training the lower orders.²³² It is noticeable too that relatively rarely were those of alien status armed, perhaps through fear of arming immigrants.

In broad terms, the 1569 soldiers hailed from extramural and poorer intramural parishes but, over time, St Sidwell virtually ceased to become a source of military men, whilst St Mary Major remained a constant source and St Petrock and other wealthier parishes played a greater role. Whilst the

²³¹ Storate and Howard, *Devon Muster Roll*, p. iv.

²³² Boynton, *Elizabethan Militia*, pp.109.

1569 soldiery were rarely civically active, with the slight exception of the billmen providing surety, those mustering in the 1580s were more so, though older calivermen were more civically active than younger musketeers. There is just discernible a difference between being a caliverman and a musketeer in Exeter, with the former comprising more older, wealthier leading actors using established weaponry, and the latter comprising more younger freemen and bailiffs using newer technology.²³³

No particularly strong patterns emerge from attempting to correlate different soldiery roles with occupation (table 4.8). Cloth-production trades appear to have been associated with all common soldiery roles, arquebusiers were equally associated with other crafts and four of them were joiners, carpenters, locksmiths and metalworkers, which may have proved useful for men required to maintain primitive firearms.²³⁴ Musketeers were more evenly spread amongst trade types (though not services) whilst relatively more calivermen were merchants and fewer were involved in the food trades.

In the end aptitude and ability probably counted most and on appearing at the general musters, recruits were sorted into the categories of 'choyce men', 'the second sorte' and those 'unable but to keep the country'.²³⁵ The muster master was then responsible for matching man to weapon by trial and error 'as by vew of Eye thei shall seeme most fit for'.²³⁶ Boynton states that propriety expected that gentlemen and the 'strongest and best' men fought with pikes, the 'nimblest' men with firearms (musketeers were the 'strongest and squarest fellows' whilst arquebusiers were 'the least and nimblest') the clumsiest men were armed with bills and the least able with pick and shovel, as pioneers.²³⁷ Most soldiers appear to have been in their twenties but the billmen were the youngest by a small margin and perhaps relative youth can

²³³ *Ibid*, pp.xv-xvi: Calivers, the standard firearm which superseded the arquebus, were about three-and-a-half feet long and were fired without a fork rest. Muskets had four-and-a-half foot barrels and were fired from forks but had the power to pierce armour and superseded the caliver.

²³⁴ Boynton, *Elizabethan Militia*, p.112.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, p.27.

²³⁶ *Ibid*, p.106.

²³⁷ *Ibid*, pp.107, 112.

be associated with clumsiness and inexperience. In respect of pikemen, the slightly higher percentages of bailiffs and freemen amongst their ranks perhaps corroborates the idea that pikemen were of a comparatively better sort and, by association, perhaps healthier and stronger. However, the Exeter data cannot substantiate the contemporary claim that gentlemen were supposed to be pikemen – in the selection for this study they were all armour providers and one a caliverman. Stature played its role in this selection process too, though there is nothing in the Exeter records to contradict or refute this.²³⁸ In summary, despite all the above issues, it is possible to show how the leading actors and the chorus were both involved in mustering, even if, with the exception of Philip Yard, they largely maintained a distinction in how they contributed.

Signatories to the Bond of Association

The background to the Bond of Association is described in chapter two and it is possible briefly to say something of eighty-three individuable men who signed this declaration to avenge any executioner of the Queen. As table 3.18 sets out, the majority were leading actors, upper and middle chorus, the latter forming the largest group. Generally speaking, the signatories were those who might be expected to sign – the more civically active, the wealthy, merchants and gentlemen are over-represented, whilst aliens, most craft trades and the less well-off are under-represented, but the figures are very small.

Ship money contributors and non-contributors

One hundred and forty-three men and two women, of whom 123 are clearly individuable, are listed as contributors to the ship money levy in the Chamber's fifth act book together with the amounts they paid in and, in some cases, were paid back. The entries, all in 1588, are dated 24 April (eighty-nine contributions) 13 June (twenty-nine contributions) and 15 June (twenty-

²³⁸ In Hertfordshire they 'refused to take archers except 'suche as are bothe Lustye in bodye, & able to abyde the wether, & canne Shoote a good Stronge Shoote, for heretofore we have allowed manye Simple & weake archers' (Boynton, *Elizabethan Militia*, p.67).

seven contributions) and they are described as those who had paid or lent to a levy for money for the 'setting forth of the two shippes & a pynnas for her maj svice in warlick—manner'.²³⁹ The Privy Council usually asked justices to assess the wealthier inhabitants and draw up such lists and MacCaffrey points out that the first levy was indeed aimed at the wealthier inhabitants and resulted in a collection of £373. For the second levy in June, the Mayor and three Deputy Lieutenants set down a rate that 'all and everie' inhabitant of Exeter would pay towards the crisis and this resulted in about £40, producing a combined total of about £413. It would seem the city only actually contributed one ship and one pinnace, plus mariners for a third ship but with the purchase of powder, the costs appeared to total at least 455 marks, so there appears still to have been a shortfall. The overall mix of attributes for ship money subscribers is set out in table 4.9.

Over a third of them were occupied in the wealthier merchandising and cloth-related trades and of the 119 associated with a parish, 70% are linked to the wealthier intramural parishes. A greater proportion of them participated in civic roles than did men in the overall SD, leading actors and upper chorus members make up 44% of subscribers and the middle chorus 54% with only aliens apparently playing little part in the initiative alongside the lower chorus (noted in table 3.18).

Unsurprisingly, most of them were assessed for lay subsidy in 1586. Very frequently a rate of 2s in the pound and 3s in land linked to subsidy valuations was used to calculate ship money contributions.²⁴⁰ To check whether this was the case in Exeter, the taxable value range for the 1586 lay subsidy has been set out and an average ship money payment per tax band calculated (table 4.10).

²³⁹ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Books B1/4, p.570; B1/5, p.1b, p.1c-d, pp.554-556.

²⁴⁰ A. Haeseler Lewis, *A Study of Elizabethan Ship Money 1588-1603* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1928), p.49.

It appears that the amounts contributed towards the ship levy are broadly proportionate to the taxable value ascribed to individuals. They range from Thomas Bruton and George Smith paying £20 each and valued for taxation at £20 and £30 in goods respectively, the highest sums from both sets of figures, to widow Elizabeth Sweet paying 4d and valued in the lower, though not the lowest, tax band of £3. The most notable point is that virtually all those contributing paid well over the official rate, such as Thomas Heard and William Newcombe who paid 60s (or £3) though they were valued at only £3. This may have been a generous response to the Privy Council's desire that the wealthy, or at least the wealthier, should contribute more 'to relieve and ease their poor neighbours'. It may also explain the low numbers of contributors overall as, with an estimated 10,000 inhabitants of the city, 145 contributors (1.5%) was a far cry from the 'all and everie' of them anticipated, or at least advertised.²⁴¹

However, coercion is perhaps more likely. Haesler Lewis states that ship levies were 'grudgingly given', even when compensated by the Crown, and the 1588 levy was to be met by unprecedented *uncompensated* levies from coastal towns.²⁴² It may have been that when drawing up the lists, the justices (that is, the Chamber) were well aware of undervaluation in the lay subsidy and therefore had leverage to pressurize individuals into contributing more in line with their actual wealth. Elsewhere in the country, heavy hints were dropped to recalcitrant contributors to the effect that future subsidy valuations might be 'little to their ease'.²⁴³ It also seems that the Chamber was determined to squeeze funds out of anyone it could. Nineteen levy payers were not considered sufficiently wealthy to be taxed in 1586 but still contributed between 2s and 20s. Ten of them were chorus men early on in their careers who were not yet of taxable interest, but the remaining eight never paid tax and one was a widow, when most subsidy-paying widows did not contribute.

²⁴¹ McCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.239.

²⁴² Haeseler Lewis, *Elizabethan Ship Money*, p.9.

²⁴³ *Ibid*, pp. 48 and 238.

If some ship money contributors were pressurised, others may have negotiated reduced payments or evaded payment altogether. In this respect, it is impossible to say with certainty whether levy payments listed as received were the same as amounts requested but Capp, in his article on women and public life, states that the poor were probably conscious of any leverage they might have in a difficult situation and that 'attempts to bargain with parish officers were probably far more common than the few cases that have found their way into the written record'.²⁴⁴ The evidence is slight but the payment and non-payment of ship money may provide an example of the chorus, along with some leading actors, not playing by the rules. In table 4.10, two individuals, weaver William Flay (biography 20) and feltmaker Thomas Acland, appear to pay less than the 6s rate appropriate for their lay subsidy band of £3. More significantly, 63% of the 1586 lay subsidy payers did not contribute to the ship levy a couple of years later. Investigations into individual biographies of those in the wealthy parishes of St Petrock, St Mary Arches and St Kerrian reveal that possible reasons for non-contribution are death, widowhood and alien status. However, in just these three small parishes there are still eleven civically active, tax-paying men, mostly merchants, equally distributed between leading actors, upper and middle chorus, who did not contribute to the ship money levy for reasons which are not readily apparent, unless they were simply absent from the city and that was excuse enough. No convincing patterns arise from correlating non-payment of the levy with other contributions towards the protection of the realm, such as mustering or signing the Bond of Association. Nor is there any discernable reason why some men later received a partial refund, unless they were those who had loaned funds rather than contributed them. In summary, it seems that both leading actors and some of the wealthier elements of the chorus co-operated, if under duress, to support the defence of their realm through ship money contributions. Collectively those who might reasonably have been expected to contribute did so but individually more variable responses are visible, hinting at processes of negotiation or evasion.

²⁴⁴ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, p.298.

Poor-relief contributors and recipients

This may also be visible amongst the contributors and contributions to poor-relief. Table 3.18 provides a broad analysis of those involved in the contribution, collection, distribution, auditing and book-keeping concerning the management of non-compulsory but probably coercive poor-relief between 1563 and 1570. In general, those higher up the social scale paid out more, were most involved at audit level, least involved in the mechanics and were never recipients. Those in the middle paid less, and collected and distributed more, those at the bottom occasionally contributed but more often received it. Inevitably, there must have been others who neither contributed nor received payment.²⁴⁵ Within these observations on the 158 individuated men who have documented connections with poor-relief, there are intriguing variations and omissions which make it difficult to refine definitions of who contributed to poor-relief. They may also suggest that when in 1624, Dr Richard Vilvaine protested strongly about Exeter's poor rates which he regarded as 'unequal, because some are set up too high and others too low, by fear or favour', the issue was a long-standing one.²⁴⁶

Bearing in mind poor-relief contribution was based on the ability to pay, of these 158 men, 106 paid lay subsidy at some point. However, of these, seven men wealthy enough to pay lay subsidy in 1557 and/or 1577, the nearest assessments to 1563-1570, were assessed at 0d for poor-relief, such as Digory Baker (biography 2). It may have been that they were absent from the city at the time – Digory Baker certainly travelled around (see below) – rather than that they argued for a 0d assessment. However, there are also thirty-four individuable men who paid lay subsidy at the same time and who were mustered in 1569, indicating they were probably able and present during the short period in which poor-relief is recorded. However, they do not appear to have been even considered as potential contributors to poor-relief. They include leading actor John Sampford (biography 67) and long-lived merchant John Withycombe (biography 94).

²⁴⁵ M. K. McIntosh, 'Poverty, Charity and Coercion in Elizabethan England', in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 35 no.3 (winter, 2005), p.465.

²⁴⁶ Evans, 'An Echo of the Multitude', p.408

Of the fifty-two men who were not valued for lay subsidy, eighteen were assessed at 0d poor-relief and three were in receipt of relief, which might be expected. Of the remaining thirty-one men not assessed for lay subsidy, ten were assessed for poor-relief contributions of 1d to 2d, none of whom later contributed to the ship money levy and only three of whom provided surety for others. These appear to be poorer men somehow assessed as wealthy enough to contribute. Eight others paid 3d or more and, judging by their other activities, were clearly wealthy men. Yet, for some reason, they do not appear to have been valued for lay subsidy. Of those remaining, eleven men were poor-relief auditors, collectors and distributors and the last two men owed money for poor-relief, perhaps either because they refused to pay it or because they could not afford it, the reason is not recorded. Of all twenty-six men owing relief payments, eight were assessed at 0d contribution, suggesting that they were no longer able to pay. The majority of the remainder were leading actors or upper chorus members who paid lay subsidy and who therefore do not appear to have been able to plead poverty, but nevertheless opted out, such as Henry James (biography 39), Philip Yard (biography 95) and Thomas Marshall (biography 46).

Only three men on the SD are poor-relief recipients, two of whom are aliens, the other an archer of Holy Trinity. Seven other aliens are poor-relief contributors of 1d-2d, all of them paying lay subsidy and two of them armour providers. They include Dr Ambrose Torres (table 5.3) and cordwainers Warnard Harrison (biography 31) and Arnold Reynolds (biography 64), so the association of alien status with poverty is not a given and the issue of poor-relief illustrates the varied fortunes of alien residents, discussed in chapter five.

The above analysis outlines a broad pattern of contribution and management of poor-relief that might reasonably be expected - the rich paying more, the poor receiving more. Nevertheless it appears to reveal examples of men who either negotiated their way out of this particular form of civic contribution or were unfairly pressured into paying it, in the manner which so annoyed Dr Vilvaine. Evans notes that by 1580, the Chamber was starting to crack down

on people who refused to pay – particularly once poor-relief became compulsory in 1572.²⁴⁷

Civic duty

As all the above groups indicate, civic duty was part and parcel of some men's lives and to conclude this chapter it is pertinent to look more closely at the upper chorus group who, as bailiffs, embraced extra civic duties and enjoyed extra kudos as they occupied the bridge between ordinary freedom and influential civic office.

Hooker in his *Description*, described the bailiffs as '... wyse, auncyent and grave and of greate experience'. As well as being god-fearing, wise, prudent, unbiased in judgement and skilful in their office, they had to have 'a speciall care aswell for the Conservation of the private citizens as of the whole bodye of the Comon-welth...'.²⁴⁸ In practice, they collected city revenues, kept records and made judgements in the Mayor's and Provost's Courts, the latter being their own court. As Clerks of the Market, they checked prices, weights, and measures and saw fair play at market time. They searched for 'idle and evell Disposed psons' and were to 'Remove all annoyesaunces'. They took charge of the night watchmen and ensured candlelight in each door during winter. They were, therefore, men with a visible and omnipresent degree of secular control within the city and, as Hooker put it, they were, or at least supposed to be, 'of good name and fame'.²⁴⁹ Were they? Tables 3.13-3.18 set out broad attributes for the upper chorus and here they are further investigated to see whether Hooker's description can be confirmed. Table 4.11 sets out the civic activity levels for those who were bailiffs between 1550 and 1610.

This shows that the bailiffs were not homogenous in terms of levels of civic activity. For some, no other roles were held and virtually nothing is known

²⁴⁷ Evans, 'An Echo of the Multitude', pp. 411 and 414.

²⁴⁸ Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper, *Description of the Citie of Excester*, pp.807-8.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, p.791.

about them, although for some, early death can explain relative lack of activity and there are other roles they may have held not covered by this study such as constable or watchman. For most, one or two other roles were undertaken and for a handful, up to three. For only ten of them was being a bailiff the last of these roles they held and perhaps for these men, being a bailiff was the culmination of their civic contribution. In contrast, eighteen men (20%) became bailiffs for the first time in the middle of their civic careers, having already played existing roles. One example is Paul Triggs who was an inventory appraiser before becoming a bailiff, after which he was a juror. For seventeen men (19%), becoming a bailiff was the first active role they appeared to play, such as baker Peter Vilvaine who later acted as juror and churchwarden. Of those who were bailiffs only during the period 1550-1610, eight (9%) later became leading actors.

Sixty-seven men have both a date of freedom and date of their appointment as bailiff. Their ages are calculated (assuming an age of at least twenty-five at freedom) and summarized in table 4.12.

The average age of a bailiff is thirty-eight, the median thirty-seven and the age range runs from twenty-six to fifty-four, with the highest frequency being thirty-five (six men). Although the role seems to have been the province mostly of men with some experience, relative youth and/or a modest track-record of achievement was not a bar to holding this post. It is also possible see that, sometimes, as for inventory appraisers, bailiffs were chosen with mixtures of age and experience. In 1565 Alexander Triggs had twenty years more experience as a freeman than his fellow bailiff Robert Lambell, and in 1577, John Hakewell had twelve years on John Field, but it is not invariably the case as in 1607, all three bailiffs had gained their freedom within a year of each other.

Sometimes it is possible to shed a little light on the character of individual bailiffs. Roger Selby, a saddler of the parish of Holy Trinity (biography 69) appears to have taken seriously his duty of having a special care for individual citizens by housing others and acting as a godparent (both roles are

discussed further in chapter five). He was married to Margaret, whom he buried in August 1597 in what may have been an outbreak of infectious disease. During this, he appeared to have had the care of others as, in September 1597, he buried 'out of' his house, a Mary Wild, wife of Thomas the comfitmaker of the same parish, swiftly followed by Mary Lubly the daughter-in-law of Thomas in December 1597. In respect of godparenting, his servant Alice Botton and servant/apprentice John Hance were married in June 1599, she a pregnant bride, and he, though aged twenty-four, not yet a freeman - a status he would not attain for another decade. Later that year Roger was godfather to Daniel and John Langworthy and in December that year also to John Hance's firstborn son John, who died a month later. However, if he was a virtuous man in terms of the care of individuals, he had not always been so in respect of the wider commonwealth with his earlier practice of heaping water-polluting pig excrement against the pump in St Rock's Lane.²⁵⁰

Other bailiffs appear to live uncontentious lives and to be 'of good name and fame'. Haberdasher William Mongwell (biography 53), merchant Alnut Budley (biography 11) merchant Thomas Bridgeman (biography 8) and Gilbert Saywell, occupation unknown (biography 68), were all married with children and between them undertook other civic roles, tenanted property, paid their subsidy, provided surety, acted as master to apprentices, contributed ship money and signed the Bond of Association. In the role of bailiff, however, Gilbert Saywell endured an unpleasant encounter with goldsmith Richard Osborne in 1561 who was imprisoned for six days for 'mysusinge and evill intreatinge of Gilbert Saywell one of the Stewardes at the feast of Walter Hillings'. Other aspects of the lives of some of those chosen to be a bailiff can be seen in later chapters: in particular Thomas Greenwood, the well-stocked hatter to a wide clientele (biography 27); Hilary Galley, the busy merchant with no sons to whom to leave his property (biography 22); Nicholas Carpenter, the successful cordwainer with alien origins and a large family (biography 31); John Follett, the merchant careful to treat the children of both his marriages

²⁵⁰ Stoye, *Water in the City*, p.103.

fairly in his will (biography 21); Richard Reynolds, the wealthy, fancily-dressed and well-armed mercer (biography 65); Thomas Bird, draper/tailor to gentry and ordinary folk alike (biography 5); Walter Horsey, one of the wealthiest and most ambitious merchants with friends in higher places (biography 37); William Lant, a tailor with a penchant for pattern and colour (biography 42); Stephen and Peter Vilvaine, father and son bakers (biographies 81 and 82) and baker Nicholas Erron (biography 18). Within the bounds of 'good name and fame' they were a varied set of men.

Some men's biographies suggest that they could have become a bailiff and suggest why, perhaps, they did not. One such man is Digory Baker (biography 2) a weaver and member of the Tuckers from 1564, who spent much of his earlier career in official roles. In February 1565 he was appointed to search the Merchants' Hall for sales that 'Londoners' were making and for which he was paid 5s by the Chamber. Later that year he was appointed a sergeant and he provided surety for other tuckers as others provided surety for him. In 1574, when acting as sergeant, he accompanied Reginald Digby to Peter Carew in London, who had arrived from Spain with secrets to be disclosed to the Chamber, and who paid for the cost of Digory's horse. He signed the Bond of Association, and was included on John Hooker's gift list, surely a sign of civic approval. After this date, however, his career took a downward turn. At some point he was appointed overseer of the House of Correction but in 1593 was removed from this post having been judged to have no ability to do the job. He also entered an undisclosed dispute with the Chamber who recompensed him with a gown cloth 'in consideration of all challenge & demands wch he makes to theme of the cittie'. If he ever aspired to the role of bailiff, his 'good name and fame' by then must have evaporated as far as the Chamber was concerned. He was buried in the parish of Holy Trinity in 1603.

In summary, why some men were chosen to be bailiff at particular times in their lives is not clear from the surviving records but they are mostly successful and capable businessmen of proven ability. On occasion, however there must have been personal attributes, potential abilities or particular

circumstances involved which are invisible to the historian centuries later and explain why a man like Thomas Marshall (biography 46), clearly a perpetrator rather than a preventer of trouble, should also have been a bailiff.

Conclusion

This study has so far examined mostly those who have relatively generous amounts of data against their individual names with the result that it focuses much more on men, as opposed to women and to relatively established, wealthy and well-connected men as opposed to those in less prominent or fortunate circumstances. In terms of drawing a picture of particular groups, the results are impressionistic rather than definitive descriptions but they do enable a clearer idea of the skills and talents, attitudes and values of the better-evidenced chorus men. Marshalling minute pieces of individual data reveals that individually they could be industrious, concerned, adaptable, cooperative, ambitious, kind and skilled. They could also be devious, coercive, reluctant, thwarted and troublesome. Whatever else, they were certainly not a bland or dull set of middlemen, administrators and citizens.

In chapters five and six, the challenge moves to groups comprising individuals with less information against their individual names but who nevertheless collectively enable the chorus to be viewed through a range of life experiences rather than civic roles and who therefore help develop a more balanced picture of this majority group of inhabitants.

Chapter 5: A wider selection of chorus groups

Chapters five and six set out a series of chorus group portraits of a more descriptive and less quantitative nature than those in chapter four, which enable the chorus to be viewed in terms of lived experiences and personal interaction. Mostly, the groups are made visible by their connection with issues of concern to civic or national authorities, be it interest in religious conformity, the right to practice a trade, the redistribution of the wealth of deceased freemen with living children, the punishment of sexual offenders, public health crises, immigration or care of the elderly and infirm. This chapter sheds light on those encountered through the Chamber's concern with the perceived and actual threats to the commonwealth of sexual incontinence, strangers, plague and aliens and concludes with an exploration of incapacity and old age. Chapter six examines family and household formation, extension and dissolution and explores some aspects of working life and family interconnections through an exploration of the occupation of baker. Together these chapters extend the reach of this study to people with relatively little individual biographical information against their names, in particular women.

Experiences of sexual offending

A series of misconduct cases, including depositions and sometimes punishments, are recorded in the Chamber's fourth act book. Why they should be separately compiled from the quarter session rolls is not immediately clear but they run chronologically from 1559 to 1576 and include offences such as incontinent living, adultery, bastardy, scolding, evil living, receiving lodgers, unruly alehouses and gaming, all summarised by MacCaffrey.²⁵¹ The focus in this section is upon those cases concerned with sexual misbehaviour which MacCaffrey describes as 'sordid little histories ... all of a likeness' and which he largely side-steps, other than claiming that punishment fell much more frequently on women than men and that they were often associated with vagrancy. In this study, a more nuanced light is thrown on the treatment of both sexes for what was perceived as disorderly conduct. The examples not only involve both genders but also cross the boundaries

²⁵¹ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, pp.92 -100.

between the chorus and leading actors. Once biographical details are added, it can be seen that the cases are not all alike and reveal a range of difficult situations that individuals found themselves in or engineered for themselves.

Why are they recorded separately? It would seem that a religiously-fired but temporary enthusiasm for prosecution explains the short, but intense run of notes in Exeter. McIntosh, in her study of medieval and early modern social control of disorder and disharmony, argues that presentation at the county sessions or church courts was sometimes felt appropriate where smaller courts could not name, shame and punish with as much vigour.²⁵² In addition, Ingram, in his exploration of the legal and social background to church courts, points to a growing demand, from protestant and ultimately puritan circles, for tougher punishments for sexual offenders, which he argues were part of wider European theological changes that stressed the dangers of unrestrained sexual activity.²⁵³ With this context in mind, MacCaffrey's reading of Hooker's *Chronicle* leads him to argue that Bishop Miles Coverdale left behind him a core of convinced protestants in the decade before 1560 (though he notes that the Bishop protested about the Chamber meddling with ecclesiastical matters, including morals), and Hooker himself noted zealous 'suppressing of the false & popish religion and the setting up of the true service of god & preaching of the gospel' on Elizabeth's accession.²⁵⁴ It is therefore possible to argue that the act book notes reflect circumstances similar to that of Kingston-upon-Hull outlined by McIntosh. She suggests that an early puritan influence lay behind the 'righteous indignation' of an order made there in 1563 which made offences like those in Act Book Four punishable by the cart, cuckingstool, pillory or imprisonment.²⁵⁵ Likewise, Dean Smith, in his Colchester study, notes that in the 1560s, a minority of puritans and other committed protestants there 'fashioned an alliance for the correction of

²⁵² McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, p.28.

²⁵³ M. Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.151-2.

²⁵⁴ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.98, footnote 39 and p.189; Gray (ed.), *Chronicle of Exeter*, p.100.

²⁵⁵ McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, p.204.

untoward behaviour'.²⁵⁶ McIntosh also observes that although initial enthusiasm and support for puritan ideals could be engendered amongst citizens to tackle social problems of general concern, once the puritanical lead waned with death or disenchantment, underlying enthusiasm from others was revealed to be far lower and 'efforts at social reform were quietly dropped within a few decades after their inception'.²⁵⁷ This appears to be reflected in the dates of the Exeter act book evidence and, as MacCaffrey notes, the ruling elite had a tendency to blow with the prevailing religious winds, and they would blow again in the direction of puritanism under the enthusiastic leadership of Ignatius Jurdaine, whose civic career began in the 1590s.²⁵⁸

Most offenders were punished in Exeter either by whipping at the cart's tail or carting with 'rough music' (or 'beating of the bason') to attract the crowds, followed by banishment from the city, or alternatively, banishment more or less immediately with the threat of whipping/carting on return. Carting is described by Ungerer as 'a processional spectacle, a liminal mode of cultural performance, that lasted several hours' and involved pelting with rotten eggs, vegetables, filth and even stones, so the consequences could be fatal.²⁵⁹ These were therefore serious punishments for session juries to pass but were what were normally 'used in suche cases'.²⁶⁰ Mayhew suggests that the thinking behind such punishments was 'a necessary blending of justice with mercy, of exemplary punishment and mitigation or forgiveness'.²⁶¹ Lawson argues that the logic of exemplary punishment demanded that the law be enforced selectively, rather than absolutely, in order to maintain an

²⁵⁶ Dean Smith, *The Middling Sort*, p.147.

²⁵⁷ McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, p. 205.

²⁵⁸ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, pp.190-196; Stoye, *From Deliverance to Destruction*, pp.19-37.

²⁵⁹ G. Ungerer, 'Prostitution in Late Elizabethan London: The Case of Mary Newborough', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 15 (2003), 176-178.

²⁶⁰ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.152; McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, pp.109 and 114.

²⁶¹ Mayhew, *Tudor Rye*, p.200. He argues that other writers on crime and punishment in this era see this approach as being derived from the 'law of the Old Testament and its mitigation by Christ's teaching of the need for mercy, in the New Testament...'

appropriate level of fear and respect for it and that therefore juries were less likely to convict women, the inexperienced and less serious offenders.²⁶²

Amongst the Exeter examples discussed here, there is not much evidence of leniency towards women, little evidence of forgiveness and rather more of exemplary punishment but there is also evidence that it was not always women alone who were punished and that the Chamber punished its own membership when necessary.

To begin with 'incontinent living', twelve cases in this particular series are ones where the women only were banished with a threat of carting, such as Ellen Hunt, widow, who was taken at the house of Thomas Norden in Exeter.²⁶³ Likewise, Emma Serges, wife of John of St Mary Major, was 'taken in the chamber of' John Deymon one of the vicars choral, though John Deymon may have been immune from prosecution by secular authorities as a member of the clergy.²⁶⁴ However, Ingram points out that it was a Christian principle that sexual immorality was equally reprehensible in both genders and that moralists at the time attacked the idea of a double standard for men, and perhaps the Chamber were mindful of this.²⁶⁵ Both Thomasine Aumger and Roger Norman were banished from the city on 16 June 1562. Thomasine apparently came back, but was spared the whipping she should have had for so doing, providing she never returned.²⁶⁶ Whether she returned to try and be with Roger is not known, but in April 1571, a Roger Normande was buried in the parish of St David, which lies entirely outside the city walls, though within its jurisdiction.²⁶⁷ John Wilkins and Alice Thomas were whipped and carted respectively for incontinent living and theft, Joan Tomalyn confessed to incontinent living, having been reported for such by neighbours, and she and Gilbert Pearse were both whipped and Gilbert banished, and Henry Wright

²⁶² Lawson, 'Lawless Juries?' pp.149-154.

²⁶³ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.259.

²⁶⁴ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.10; Ungerer, 'Prostitution', 146.

²⁶⁵ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, p.154.

²⁶⁶ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, pp.184 and 198.

²⁶⁷ Nesbit, St David's Parish Register Burials, p.5.

was banished back to Bristol whence he came for incontinent living with widow Joan Jane.²⁶⁸

Inevitably, incontinent living sometimes led to bastardy. It was predominantly women who were punished for this offence, such as Mary Silkins the wife of Robert Silkins surgeon, who was carted in 1563 'for that she is wth child by a Portingal a doctor of Physycke'.²⁶⁹ There is a possible candidate for the illicit partner. It could have been Francis/Narcissus Prampergo, a doctor of medicine who gained his freedom in 1566 and was buried in St Paul in 1585, though there is nothing to suggest he was Portuguese other than his surname.²⁷⁰ Alternatively, it might have been Dr Argenton who, it was noted by John Hooker in 1561, was of the opinion that 'it was lawful for every man with consent of his wife to accompany & have the carnal knowledge of any other woman...'. He was bound over to keep the peace and possibly to recant his opinions.²⁷¹ The only other 'Portingal' so far discovered is Balthaser Gonsalnis but he is not stated to be a doctor and does not appear in the records until 1591.²⁷² There is no record of a Portuguese doctor being punished, nor of Henry Higgins, a mariner, and the father of Joan Bailiff's illegitimate child ('as she sayeth') whose existence was the cause of Joan's banishment.²⁷³ On several other occasions, however, the men did not escape scot-free in bastardy cases. John Gifford, middle chorus butcher, was imprisoned and carted for the pregnancy of servant Joan Townsend, though after giving birth, she too was carted and banished.²⁷⁴ The burial of Joan HERNYMAN, illegitimate daughter of Wilmot is recorded in February 1568 and the fourth act book reveals that in May 1567, William Austin was carted through the city for whoredom with Wilmot HERNYMAN. Whether Joan was the result of this liaison is impossible to prove, but the dates are suggestive that she was and Wilmot herself was buried just over a year later in March 1569 in

²⁶⁸ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, pp. 243, 318 and 351.

²⁶⁹ *ibid*, p.243.

²⁷⁰ Rowe and Jackson, *Exeter Freeman*, p.87; Tapley-Soper, 'Exeter Parish Registers Vol II All Hallows Goldsmith Street, St Pancras, St Paul', p.439.

²⁷¹ Gray, (ed.) *Chronicle of Exeter*, pp.102-3.

²⁷² Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Burials, 12/10/1591.

²⁷³ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book 1/4, p.209.

²⁷⁴ *ibid*, p.138.

the parish of St Paul, so it seems she was not banished.²⁷⁵ A William Austin appears to have been father to Elizabeth, a legitimate daughter, baptized in St Kerrian in 1560 and was a member of the Tuckers between 1552 and 1568.²⁷⁶ Straightforward denial of paternity did not necessarily mean escape from punishment either. William Dunn, hellier, denied being the father of Alice Sladen's baby but both were whipped at the cart's tail and banished on pain of a double whipping.²⁷⁷ Christine Auley, wife of Richard insisted that her pregnancy was due to her husband Richard, despite him having been away five years, though whether she was believed and how, or if, she and another man were punished, is not recorded.²⁷⁸

Sexual encounter in return for a promise of marriage or some other reward was also punishable (the parallel issue of betrothal and bridal pregnancy is discussed in chapter six). Thomas Hooper received 'tenne lashes wth a whyppe at every corner' and banishment for attempted bigamy with Alice Newcombe who had given birth to his child but without his promise of marriage being fulfilled, the same promise servant Edmund Knight had made to the pregnant Katherine Payne.²⁷⁹ The most detailed version of this age-old story however is that of Barbara Bowden in 1565 (appendix 10) who was caught and banished having agreed to an illicit sexual relationship with her employer, tailor David Windeat. David and his household had a track-record of misdemeanors, one of his servants having been imprisoned and fined for breaking the sumptuary laws (his ruffs too big and his heels too high) whilst he was disfranchised from the Tailors' Guild and failed to deliver paid-for apparel due to local gentry.²⁸⁰ Though Barbara hoped otherwise, David remained married (to John Hooker's sister according to Westcote) and subsequently baptized a son before the entire household was eradicated in

²⁷⁵ Tapley-Soper, 'Exeter Parish Registers All Hallows Goldsmith Street, St Pancras, St Paul', p.436; DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.305.

²⁷⁶ Nesbit, St Kerrian Parish Register Marriages, Baptisms and Burials, p.1; DHC, Youings Unpublished Card Index.

²⁷⁷ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.268.

²⁷⁸ *ibid*, p.329.

²⁷⁹ *ibid*, pp. 243 and 338.

²⁸⁰ DHC, ECA, Tailors' Act Book 1, f.35.

1570, most probably by plague, so perhaps Barbara had a lucky escape.²⁸¹ Another case is that of Magdalene Heard. She was caught with tucker Ambrose Howell by Hugh Grinstead who, being ill, was staying in Ambrose's house in 1576. Ambrose apparently barred the door between Hugh and the workpress room whereupon he 'had to doo wth her there upon a longe planke & prmisted her a rewarde & when he had done she bid him remembr his prmises the nexte morrow at nighte.' Magdalene, of whom nothing else is known, confessed to all that Hugh had reported but protested that this was the one and only time it had happened.²⁸² Ambrose was married to Pascow Ratcliffe in 1553 but there is no record of her death or of any children's baptisms.²⁸³ Whether he was a frustrated, unfaithful husband, a forceful, opportunist persuader (the barring of the door implies a disturbing lack of escape or rescue) or a lonely, ageing widower who acted on impulse on just one occasion, and whether she willingly consented to such uncomfortable circumstances on the promise of reward, is difficult to say. The punishments are not recorded on this occasion.

Organised prostitution, as opposed to illicit relationships, was outlawed too. Relatively mild sanction was imposed on Joan Bolt, who was banned from keeping lodgings having been arrested for being a bawd (a procuress or person keeping a place of prostitution) and likewise Margaret Joyce, who escaped with a warning.²⁸⁴ Other cases reveal the involvement of widows and married women. As mentioned in chapter four, William Pinfold paid 16d for the services of Joan Harton, a relatively low charge in comparison with London prices of between 3s and 10s.²⁸⁵ Both she and Wilmot Tucker, her associate or possibly bawd and wife of John Tucker, labourer, were carted for this in 1564, as were bawd Thomasine Hopping, wife of Gilbert Hopping, a tucker, and her prostitute widow Katharine Bird alias Newton.²⁸⁶ Sometimes

²⁸¹ Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Burials, pp.6 and 11; Westcote, *A View of Devonshire*, pp.526-7.

²⁸² DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.339.

²⁸³ Nesbit, St Petrock Parish Register Marriages and Baptisms, p.4.

²⁸⁴ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, pp.184 and 293.

²⁸⁵ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.266; Ungerer 'Prostitution' p.167.

²⁸⁶ *ibid*, pp. 46 and 266.

the bawd was a woman's own husband. Marion Barnes, wife of Richard Barnes, barrel bearer, was convicted on several counts of incontinent living with John Cowse, smith – but this was sometimes done 'at thentisinge of the said Richard', and he did not escape punishment. On March 8 1560, he was imprisoned until he could 'put in good sureties to be of an honest and good behaviour'. It was further noted on March 22 that he was released from 'beating of the bason before his wiff being carted' but was banished from the city.²⁸⁷

A prostitution ring is revealed operating between 1560 and 1564 in the stories of Agnes King, the wife of Robert, a brewer of St Mary Major, and Ann Deacon the wife of William. They were married women who appear to have become prostitutes based at the Cornish Chough Inn, pimped by bawds Margaret Wilsdon and Trephania Anstey (appendix 11). A Robert King is recorded as being the father of George who was baptized on 11 November 1562 in the parish of St Mary Major, which appears to make it possible that these were the husband and son of Agnes, who may, therefore, have been leading something of a double life.²⁸⁸ It does not appear to have been a happy business relationship, and possibly it was not even a consensual one as Ann apparently 'cryeth vengennece of the said Margaret'. It is not known in these cases whether poverty or other influences resulted in the prostitution of these women.

Alongside local constables and jurors, the Justices relied on local informants and victims of crime to present offenders. Capp describes the context in which this happened, how 'dishonour was contagious' and resulted in neighbours subjecting their fellow citizens to what he feels was self-interested, intrusive and obsessive scrutiny concerned with the reputations of individuals, streets and neighbourhoods.²⁸⁹ It is not known who informed on the Crewse family, but it is possible to understand how concerned their neighbours might have

²⁸⁷ *ibid*, pp.17 and 19.

²⁸⁸ Fursdon, St Mary Major Parish Register Baptisms (1934) [no page number].

²⁸⁹ Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, p.269.

been in the light of Capp's analysis. On 3rd February 1560, order was taken with widow Thomasine Crewse, who had been arrested several times for bawdery, but showed no amendment in her behaviour. She was bawd to married Julian Wheaton who was also carted because she and a client consorted at Thomasine's house. Thomasine was banished on pain of at least the pillory for returning but it seems unlikely that she actually departed the city because by 1563 she was a recipient of poor-relief of 4d in the parish of St Mary Major and for this to be so, it was necessary for her to have been resident for at least three years.²⁹⁰ There had also been trouble between her son George Crewse, his wife and his neighbours and he continued the family tradition as a bawd, providing an instance of how exemplary punishment did not always work. On 17th November 1564, he was sentenced to a carting for several times receiving into his house Peter Cotton with his lover (widow Mary of Kingsbridge) and then accompanying them to Minehead, knowing they were not married. After that, on 30th November 1564, Elizabeth Clemon was sentenced to be carted and banished for her incontinent life in George Crewse's house.²⁹¹ Despite all of this, George Crewse was appointed a poor-relief collector in the early 1560s. Given that, as Evans points out, the poor-relief statutes introduced a possibly coercive element to the collection of relief, George might have been a good choice if he had come from what appear to be a 'rough background'.²⁹² The neighbours of Alice Tronsfield had equal cause for concern as her activities brought down both her own household and that of others. Alice was arrested for incontinent living with Thomas Shark in his Rack Lane stable. Released in the hope of better behaviour, she was subsequently accused of sexual misbehaviour with sundry gentlemen's servants, and noted by the court to be without any 'shamfastnes or womanheed of womankind'.²⁹³ Her husband Thomas's solution was to beat her out of their home and so she went to stay with Roger Blerth, butcher and his wife, apparently sleeping altogether in the same bed, but on some

²⁹⁰ DHC, ECA, Accounts of the Poor, Book 157, f.4; McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, p.93.

²⁹¹ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, pp. 96, 235, 237 and 268.

²⁹² DHC, ECA Accounts of the Poor, Book 157, f.1; Evans, 'An Echo of the Multitude', p.412.

²⁹³ Evans, 'An Echo of the Multitude', p.69.

occasions with just Roger. Whether this involved illicit sexual relations or, as McIntosh points out, was a way of extracting extra value from costly bedding and keeping warm, can never be known but constable John Tucker and others reported them and Roger was carted with Alice whilst Thomas her husband was sentenced to beat the bason because he knew of his wife's incontinence.²⁹⁴

With the exception of illegitimate pregnancies, it is difficult to know whether any of the accusations were true or were deliberate or accidental misinterpretations of innocent circumstances, but taking the evidence at face value, it would appear that both parties at least consented to sexual encounter, if not necessarily for their personal enjoyment. However, there are other cases where the language used, or circumstances described and the punishment meted out, makes it possible to argue that coercion and force was used. One example is that of servant Elizabeth Whitfield who became pregnant in 1573 by William Pinfold, the goldsmith/innkeeper mentioned in chapter four and who consorted with Joan Harton. She declared 'she ys wth childe by the said Mr Willm Pinfolde & he did beagate yt on her in his lyvinge chamber Whiles his wife was to morninge prayer. And also he had to doo with her in a barne at the ende of Southynghey beinge Mr Parrs barne.' Elizabeth Whitfield was recorded as the mother of Joan Whitfield who was buried a year later in the parish of St Paul - Joan's baptism did not appear in the records.²⁹⁵ There was no constancy or promise of marriage here, just hurried, functional encounters ('doings') where no-one else could see or hear. In another case, it is possible to suggest that more force may have been used because of the punishment received. On the night of 23 June 1561, three men came to married Blanche Cook's house '... & ther evry one of them had carnall knowlage wth her one afr the other that ys to say ffirst Thomas Saunders seconde Andrew Richard Keyser his man & Thirde John Nicolls'. Blanche confessed to incontinent living and was banished but the three men 'for there

²⁹⁴ *ibid*, p.69; McIntosh, *A Community Transformed*, p.68.

²⁹⁵ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, pp.329 and 337; Tapley-Soper, 'Exeter Parish Registers All Hallows Goldsmith Street, St Pancras, St Paul', p.437.

mysbehavior evell rule & wantn lyfe were whipped naked in the Guyldhal the same daye at after nonne in presence of the bayleffs or Stewards of the city & all the scolers of the high Schole'.²⁹⁶ There seems here to be acknowledgement that something particularly unpleasant had happened. Had Blanche actually been gang-raped? Rape was a criminal offence but the case was not tried on this basis and Blanche confessed to the crime of incontinent living, but is this really what happened?

In her paper on early modern rape, Walker argues that the language and cultural norms of the day could disguise rape because of 'a wretched paradox'. If a woman acknowledged penetration this meant she had submitted to sexual intercourse which was seen as the same as consenting. Walker also argues that women could not admit to fighting back in order to prove they did not consent because this would make them appear disorderly and dishonourable.²⁹⁷ In her study of the language of sexual insult and moral perceptions, Gowing expresses this argument as 'effectively, only women could be penalized for extramarital sex and only men could be guilty of violence'.²⁹⁸ The few successful rape trials appear to be those where women portrayed the act as one of *violent passion*, for which men were clearly culpable (and rape was then, as now, defined as being 'done by violence'), not *sexual intercourse*, for which they were not.²⁹⁹ Blanche may not have had the ability, knowledge or opportunity to describe her circumstances differently and in confessing that sexual intercourse had taken place, condemned herself. Walker points out that Catharine MacKinnon's critique of modern rape law is entirely applicable to the early modern period: 'rape is a sex crime that is not [legally] regarded as a crime when it looks like sex'.³⁰⁰ The deeply humiliating punishment for the perpetrators here suggests, however, that

²⁹⁶ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, pp.19-20.

²⁹⁷ G. Walker, 'Rereading Rape and Sexual Violence in Early Modern England', *Gender & History*, 10 no.1 (1998), 9.

²⁹⁸ L. Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.180.

²⁹⁹ Walker, 'Rereading Rape', p.18; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p. 296 referring to Matthew Griffith's definitions of sexual activities in his marriage handbook *Bethel: A Forme for Families* (1633).

³⁰⁰ Walker, 'Rereading Rape' pp.5.

there was recognition by the Chamber that this was no ordinary case of incontinent living as it is the only example of this kind of punishment in this series of cases.

It was not always men who passed judgement on women. In certain circumstances, it could also be women and some women's experience of motherhood may have made them attractive as participants in a particular legal process - that of the matron jury. Thirty-five women, recorded in the Exeter quarter session rolls, twice in 1605 and again in 1609, assembled as such to judge whether or not felonous women (Wilmot, Ann and Ricarda) were pregnant, though not to judge their circumstances or to pass sentence.³⁰¹ This was a role which Capp points out gave them, nevertheless, considerable power, including that of life or death as if pregnant, a commutation of the death sentence would follow.³⁰² For sixteen of the women nothing more is known and for three more, their possible husbands are unindividuable. Details of the remaining sixteen are shown in table 5.1 although some of these are themselves unindividuable or have only possible relationships to other men (denoted with a question mark).

It would seem they were exclusively from the middle and lower chorus families and usually with experience of family life from marriage to pregnancy (and on occasion, probably pregnant themselves, such as Thomasine Wolcott). They also came from a range of parishes, although tending towards the extramural, high turnover parishes, especially St Sidwell. None of them or their husbands were lay subsidy payers but one of them was, and several of them could be, related to men who were jurors, so it can be argued that women chosen for this type of jury service might be those experienced in pregnancy and childbirth and/or from a family adjudged suitable for jury service. The anomalies here are the unmarried women although in all three cases their histories are not clearly individuable and they may, in fact, be married women with children, but the evidence for this is missing.

³⁰¹ DHC, ECA, N13-09 Quarter Session Rolls, Jas 3 image 2, Jas 3 image 6 and Jas 7 image 1.

³⁰² Capp, *Where Gossips Meet*, p.298.

So far, all cases have involved no higher social level than the middle chorus, but such misdemeanours were not confined to them. Chamber member Richard Sweet was certainly sexually active with servants before his (unrecorded) marriage to Richarda. Convicted of bastardy in 1561 with Amy Baker, servant of Mr Henry Fortescue and also with another servant woman in his house, he was spared the ignominy of a public carting and instead thrown into the Guildhall pit for forty days on bread, water and solitary confinement unless, should he be suitably repentant, the mayor chose to shorten the sentence. No such clemency was shown to Amy who, it was alleged, already had another child and, heavily pregnant, was sentenced to banishment from the city.³⁰³ She never again appears in the city records. Having then gained his freedom as a merchant in 1564, Richard married, and nine children were baptized before Richarda's burial in 1591 (appendix 7). The Chamber appears to have been even-handed in punishing one of its own, but not as heavy-handed as it might have been in this instance, and there is always the possibility of other cases involving leading actors never even reaching the public eye.

In summary, it may have been that there was a particular enthusiasm to punish disorderly sexual behaviour in the 1560s and 1570s in Exeter, perhaps connected with religious reform, but it was not just the chorus or just women who were punished. There seems to have been a recognition on several occasions that both parties were culpable and it is possible, though unprovable, that the reason that some of the more detailed cases were separately recorded is that they were at least bordering on rape. The 'wretched paradox' may have disguised it but Blanche Cook and perhaps Elizabeth Whitfield, Magdalene Heard and Amy Baker were not seeking refuge from impoverished widowhood, unhappy marriages or consenting to a hoped-for future husband when they 'lived incontinently', but were victims of unwanted sexual encounters from which there was no escape. These are, however, just a handful of cases compared with the thousands of legitimate, if

³⁰³ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.152.

not necessarily happy, intimate relationships evidenced by children's baptisms. The couples recorded here are just the ones who were caught in the act or perhaps those desperately suing for maintenance and acknowledgement of illegitimate children or the retention of their good name.

Experiences of strangers and plague

Another area of concern to the authorities was that of 'strangers', those from beyond Exeter, though not necessarily from beyond the seas. Some strangers were 'housed' in the parishes of Holy Trinity and St Sidwell, the only parishes to record this detail. Between 1564 and 1609, 109 records refer to housed people, of which ninety-five are burials (twenty-three from various almshouses) and fourteen baptisms (eight illegitimate). To put this in perspective, there are 5986 records of baptism and burial for these parishes combined so the 'housing' records comprise only 1.8% of the total. With the exception of the almshouses, they were lodgers within households.

According to McIntosh, they were of concern because although they were a source of rental income for some, poorer lodgers could be a drain on others when they qualified for parish poor-relief after three years' residency. This issue was one of several which made housing poor subtenants an offence.³⁰⁴ Roberts, however, states that it was difficult to enforce urban policies of turning subtenants away because those subletting, such as poor widows wishing to supplement meager incomes, were not opposed to newcomers.³⁰⁵ In this respect, the Chamber took an active policing role in 1560, ordering that all newcomers should be brought before the aldermen to be interrogated.³⁰⁶ As those discussed here are noted in the parish registers, not the court records, they may have been those approved by the aldermen and not those in impoverished circumstances. For example, in September 1589, Thomas Gee from London was buried 'out of' Anthony Barrett's house. A Thomas

³⁰⁴ McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, p.93.

³⁰⁵ M. Roberts, 'Women and Work in Sixteenth-Century English Towns' in Penelope J. Corfield and Derek Keene (eds.), *Work in Towns 850-1850* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1990), p.86.

³⁰⁶ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.90; Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper, *Description of the Citie of Excester*, pp.941-2.

Gee became a freeman of Exeter in 1555 and was noted in Act Book Four in 1581 as demanding recompense from the city for lost merchandise that he had been sending to the New Inn over the last year.³⁰⁷ He may, therefore, have been an acceptable temporary lodger, simply supervising his Exeter business. Edith and James Brokeden had gentleman Thomas Heath from Plymouth staying in their house, and he was buried from 'out of' there in 1596.³⁰⁸ So far these appear to be respectable lodgers.

Plague, however, was no respecter of wealth or gentility and lodgers and travellers were associated with the disease. Slack, in his study of plague outbreaks in England, notes that in the outbreak of 1591 the first burials in Crediton included a landlord who had housed a lodger from Torrington.³⁰⁹ There were three plague outbreaks in Exeter during the period of this study; 1570, 1590-91 and 1604. In June 1570, the Chamber were clearly aware of the risks associated with travellers entering the city when they refused permission for fellow member Eustace Oliver to return there after having moved to Topsham, only to find himself in the midst of the infection in that town.³¹⁰ Likewise, in 1575, no person was allowed into Exeter without a testimonial proving they had not been in plague-infested Bristol for fifteen days.³¹¹ However, Slack notes that in 1570 the Chamber beat a retreat from the city and drastically curtailed the number of meetings it held. Despite the plague orders of 1578 which stated that JP's (that is the Chamber) were to meet every three weeks during outbreaks, they behaved in the same way in the 1590s outbreak.³¹² It turned out that the 1570 and 1590 outbreaks were the worst within the period of this study (diagrams 1 and 2) and the devastating impact can clearly be seen on many families, including the Neelds.

³⁰⁷ Rowe and Jackson (eds.), *Exeter Freeman*, p.81; DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.404; Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Burials, p.29.

³⁰⁸ *ibid*, p.45.

³⁰⁹ Slack, *Impact of Plague*, p.86.

³¹⁰ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book, B1/3, p.244

³¹¹ *ibid*, p.353.

³¹² Slack, *Impact of Plague*, pp.210 and 257.

Ciprian Neeld (biography 54) is most notable for losing most of his family to the 1590s outbreak. Having buried four children before 1590, it was the plague visitation of that year which all but destroyed his remaining household. Three children were buried in October and November, including his married son Thomas, alongside servants Elizabeth and Mary Chappell, followed by Ciprian himself in November and in the same month yet another son Henry and finally daughter-in-law Joyce. That left only son William aged ten and perhaps his mother, although she was never recorded. This devastation occasioned the drawing up of an Orphans' Court inventory and the fourteen standing bedsteads and substantial house of at least thirteen rooms revealed in it must have felt very empty in 1591. If he did survive, William Neeld does not appear thereafter in the records.

In 1603 the plague orders were reprinted and backed up by statute in 1604. This time it is possible to see the Chamber hard at work on preventive measures from the start and Slack states that in other major towns the orders were also already being enforced immediately.³¹³ The testimonial remained important: Nicholas Mitchell possessed one as he travelled away from Exeter. It certified that there was no plague in Exeter where he had lived since birth, nor in Topsham from where his ship would sail and that plague-ridden London was 140 miles away.³¹⁴ It was dated October 1603, but they were sailing close to the wind as, by November of the same year, special warning was given by the bailiffs to the inhabitants of their wards that no one should receive people or goods from plague infected places on pain of a £5 fine and disenfranchisement. The Chamber carried out other preventative measures such as cancelling the Lammass and Maudlin fairs that year, where strangers and travellers might congregate.³¹⁵

Nevertheless, the plague took hold in Exeter the following year. It is not known whether it was a stranger housed by a citizen or some other source

³¹³ *Ibid*, pp.209-212.

³¹⁴ DHC, Episcopal Registers, 733/5.

³¹⁵ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/6, pp.100, 102-3 and 134.

which precipitated this outbreak and because of missing parish registers it is impossible to see which in parish it might have arrived first, but it had certainly reached both All Hallows Goldsmith Street and St Sidwell by early Spring that year. In 1604, one Peter Mogridge of St Sidwell, married with several children and a provider of materials for city building projects, was in March and April housing Thomas Light, stranger, as well as Richard [blank].³¹⁶ Both were amongst the first to be identified as being buried 'in ye plague' in the parish burial register. St Sidwell was the only parish to identify the outbreak specifically, and they were swiftly followed by those listed in table 5.2, but the outbreak was not confined to this parish. John Pitford, son of John, a tailor, was recorded buried in the parish of All Hallows Goldsmith Street on 20 March 1604, aged one. He may have died from an entirely unrelated cause at so young an age but his siblings Agnes (aged three) and Robert (age unknown) seem far more likely to be victims given the proximity of their burial dates in the same parish on 11 and 12 May. On 22 May, John's other daughter, Alice Pitford (age six), was also buried, but this time in the parish of St Sidwell '... (out of Mr Gallerise barne) dwelling in ye cytie but because of the sickness is theare removed, in ye plague'. Her brother James (age unknown) was also buried of the plague in St Sidwell, three days after his sister and five days after that their father John was likewise buried from Hilary Galley's barn.

The Chamber was behind the containment measure of moving of sick people out of the city as, in May that year, Act Book Six records that they agreed to keep infected people together in 'some fytt house' at their discretion, if God would see his way to providing such.³¹⁷ It would appear that he did, through widow Pascow Galley, her daughter Elizabeth and their barn (biography 22), thus enabling the Chamber to implement the order for the 'shutting up' of infected households by creating a 'pesthouse'. Hilary Galley's inventory of 1601 mentions this structure and it would have been an unpleasant place to die if it had remained unchanged, as it contained barley and beans (and

³¹⁶ Stoye, *Circled with Stone* pp.154 and 157-9 and *ibid*, *Water in the City*, p.240.

³¹⁷ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/6, p.130.

presumably rats and mice) and, alongside a few pieces of equipment, 'a heape of donge'. Bedsteads were apparently provided however and Pascow made 5s from the endeavour.³¹⁸

The strategy may have worked as there is no record of John Pitfords's wife Joan, their twin daughters Ann and Priscilla or their middle son Thomas' burials, so perhaps they survived. Slack argues that the outbreak of 1603 to 1604 was not serious in comparison with the two earlier ones, and this can clearly be seen by comparing the thirty-one entries in table 5.2 with the forty-one entries identified as plague victims for 1570 and the 105 for 1590 (only recorded in the parish of St Thomas on these two occasions).³¹⁹ More convincing still is a comparison of overall burial rates across all parishes between 1550 and 1610. Acknowledging that, because of missing registers and different time spans covered by those which do exist, it is not possible to calculate absolute figures, it is nevertheless possible to see that around 1570 and 1590 mortality peaks and baptism slumps far more noticeably relative to 1604, as shown in diagrams 1 and 2.

The pesthouse and its occupants' parish origins shed a subtler light on the assumption that more plague occurred in extramural parishes than wealthier intramural parishes because the former were filthy, infested places. Slack states that in 1604, St Sidwell experienced unusually high mortality and describes the parish as 'a notorious slum area of Exeter, famous for its destitution and disorder as well as for its disease.'³²⁰ However the references from which he draws this conclusion merely state that there was a relatively greater number of poor people in this parish, and although this is supported by evidence in this study (tables 3.8 and 3.10) it is not evidence for a chaotic haven of disordered living. Rather, it may be that St Sidwell experienced higher mortality on this occasion because at least one other (wealthier) parish was bringing its sick to die there, and there may have been others,

³¹⁸ Ransom Pickard, *The Population and Epidemics of Exeter in Pre-Census Times* (Exeter: Townsend & Sons, 1947), p.35.

³¹⁹ Thomas Lane Ormeston, *St Thomas Parish Register Vol 1 1576-1672* (1933), pp.54-56.

³²⁰ Slack, *The Impact of Plague*, p.117.

unrecorded. This being said, the rest of the families in table 5.2, bar possibly two, appear to have lived in the parish of St Sidwell, being either married or having children baptised there, and as Evans notes, extraordinary rates were levied twice for the relief of St Sidwell in 1604 alongside two levies for the rest of the city.³²¹

In summary, the relationship of leading actors and the chorus in these circumstances was one of the former imposing necessarily strict orders upon all concerned – without exception – in order to reduce the scale of impact of a devastating disease. The fact that the bailiffs needed to threaten the imposition of heavy fines and the serious penalty of disenfranchisement, speaks of chorus members failing to take the threat seriously or being prepared to take significant risks for personal gain rather than restrain their actions for the ‘commonwealth’. Peter Mogridge, despite housing two victims in his own home and burying his daughter Mary aged nine in April 1604, appeared to survive the outbreak and it did not stop him from housing another stranger, Edward Gater, as soon afterwards as 1605. The need for individual gain from paying lodgers for some appeared to have overcome the very real risk of family and neighbourhood, if not citywide, annihilation.

Experiences of being an alien

Another perceived potential source of disorder were ‘aliens’ or strangers who were from Ireland, Scotland or otherwise overseas. An estimated 50,000 or more men, women and children arrived and settled in England fleeing protestant persecution in France and the Low Countries from 1546 onwards. In some provincial towns ‘alien settlements’ were established, such as that in Norwich, where they formed over one third of the population and many different ranks and professions arrived, sometimes destitute. Some in Rye even established their own churches.³²² In that port town, the numbers fluctuated hugely as refugees arrived and then returned home and in 1582, with an estimated natural population of 4000 at most, it was home to over

³²¹ Evans, ‘An Echo of the Multitude’, p.415.

³²² D. Hey, *The Oxford Guide to Family History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.34-35; Mayhew, *Tudor Rye*, p.82.

1500 French refugees. On occasion, perhaps not surprisingly, this bred fear about trading competition despite the town's overall support for protestantism.³²³ Exeter, on the other hand, appeared to experience no such difficulties as its intake was small and well integrated and had been arriving before 1522 at the very least, as aliens are listed in the military survey of that year.³²⁴ As far as the records reveal, there was no widespread concern about 'an alien invasion' and the subject of aliens does not appear in the index to the act books. However, Hooker noted that no foreigner would have any voice at an election, none would trade amongst themselves except on fair days and no alien would be granted freedom without the consent of the Chamber.³²⁵ Nevertheless this group comprises another dimension of the chorus and one which is an informative comparator with the 'native' bakers discussed in chapter six.

Men were ascribed the status of 'alien' in the Lay Subsidy Rolls, the only documents that so define them in this study, apart from one reference in the freedom records. Aliens were liable for tax under the Subsidy Act of double the rate of native residents or, if they possessed neither goods nor wages, a poll tax of 8d, although some appeared only to pay 4d in Exeter.³²⁶ Fifty-seven men were identified as aliens between 1557 and 1602, of whom fifty-four are identifiable (table 5.3). They were usually members of the middle and lower chorus. Only a few of them became a bailiff, juror or churchwarden, mustered, made their own will, had an inventory drawn up or, if resident in St Mary Major, joined in the Crown Lottery. None it would seem, ever provided surety, became a Merchant Adventurer, a Chamber member, signed the Bond of Association or received a gift from John Hooker. Their integration, as a group, was therefore far from complete in these respects and yet they appear to have blended in with the native population. There may be several reasons for this. One might be that their names were often thoroughly anglicized, which could have diluted their 'otherness', though it makes identifying their

³²³ *Ibid*, pp.79-90.

³²⁴ Rowe (ed.), *Tudor Exeter*, pp.7-33.

³²⁵ Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper (eds.), *Description of the Citie of Excester*, pp.902-5.

³²⁶ *Ibid*, p.xiii.

origins more of a challenge. The names Carpenter and Barbanson, for example, may have been derived from Charpentier (France) and Brabazon (Brabant).³²⁷ Francis Bryna is described as a Lombardian and his surname sounds as if it is anglicized from the Italian surname Briano. Dr Ambrose Torres was certainly Spanish, and although he retained his Spanish surname, one of his own four sons was named Nicholas Mitchell (who held the testimonial for travel in 1603).³²⁸ In contrast, sixteen people are noted with the surname 'Irish' or 'Ireland' across the period covered by this study, which rather suggests their overseas origins.

Living alongside them were other families without alien status but with what would seem to be non-English names, such as Roland Fabian, the Vilvaine family, Ciprian Neeld, Ferdinando Callendar, Henry Dabinet (or Dubonet) and Giles Coiffe. Marian Larrett, is described in the parish records of Holy Trinity as a 'Frenchman'. He had married Margery Stovard in 1578, and their first son George was born 'out of the house of Hugh Stovard', one of seven children baptized before Marian's death in 1607. Likewise, 'Steevin Petyt a French boy who dwelt with Mrs Jourdaine' was buried in St Kerrian in 1604.³²⁹ Most of these were not assessed for subsidies so they may have been identified as aliens but the sources fail to reveal it. However, the Vilvaines, Ferdinando Callendar, Henry Dabinet and Ciprian Neeld were assesseses and were not identified as aliens paying alien rates. It may be that they formed second or third generations of overseas families (the Vilvaines were at least third generation, discussed in chapter six, and there was a Thomas Dabernant, mercer, mentioned in an Ottery St Mary Will of 1517).³³⁰ They may represent the children and grandchildren of aliens, who appear not to have been identified in the same way their parents were. They therefore suggest that the

³²⁷ Hey, *Oxford Guide to Family History*, p.34.

³²⁸ Ambrose Torres is described as a Spaniard in Rowe and Jackson, *Exeter Freeman*, p.84.

³²⁹ Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Marriages and Banns, pp. 2; Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Baptisms, p.12; Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Burials, p.3; Nesbit, St Kerrian Parish Register Marriages, Baptisms and Burials, p.9.

³³⁰ C.Wakefield and P. Baker-Clare, *Tudor Wills 1485-1602* (Ottery St Mary: Ottery St Mary Heritage Society, 2011), p.20.

population of overseas origin was longstanding and larger than just those noted as aliens in the subsidy returns and that they contributed to normalising the presence of overseas neighbours.

The range of nationalities may suggest that smaller numbers of aliens from different countries rather than larger numbers from one place arrived in Exeter. They were also spread thinly across the city with only four parishes having no recorded aliens and the largest cluster, consisting of just twenty, centered around the parishes of St Stephen, All Hallows Goldsmith Street and St Paul. The occupations of twenty-five alien men included tailor, smith, cordwainer/shoemaker, doctor/physician, glover/parchment maker, notary public, joiner, goldsmith and mercer and, on eleven occasions, servant to these occupations. For the remaining thirty-two men occupation is unknown. Ten aliens were freemen and it would seem that another reason for successful integration might be that a good number of these occupations were 'higher end' trades and professions, making a visible contribution to the local economy but without threatening it. The range of amounts on which aliens were taxed (excluding the 4d and 8d rates) ran between 20s and £20 although only seven paid more than £5 at any time during the period considered in this study, such as notary public Michael Brown who was valued at £8 in 1557. He lived in Southgate Street in the parish of St Mary Major, and as well as overseeing gentleman John Stawell's will and appraising the inventory of church goods for St Mary Major, was also appointed one of the city wine sellers and in 1554 became a bailiff. Peter Trosse of All Hallows Goldsmith Street was likewise a bailiff and, together with tailor Alexander Napper, was wealthy enough to be listed as an armour provider for the 1569 military muster, albeit at the lowest level. Together they illustrate that poverty was not a given for aliens.

Knowledge of medicine would have been a useful addition to the citizenry of Exeter, and Francis Bryna, a doctor of medicine, is identified as an alien in 1577 in St George, valued on £6 of goods (biography 10). He appears to have been appreciated by the city, as he gained his freedom as a doctor in 1581 by gift of the Mayor and Bailiffs, as opposed to paying a fine. The only

alien to contribute to the ship money levy, he was a generous benefactor to his friends, servants and the poor and made his firmly protestant beliefs explicit in his will where he stated that his body should be buried 'without any funeral pompe or papistrye or Adolatrye'. He seems to have been a man who would have appealed to those of the Chamber with puritan leanings. Earlier, Bryna had felt it necessary to apply for denizenship which he received on 6 June 1570, along with Ambrose Torres, who was denizised on 13 July 1560, and Francis Foynante (occupation unknown) on 5 March 1575, all by letters patent. Denizenship included the right to apprentice an alien son with an English master (a right removed by Act of Common Council in 1574) but the proportion of aliens taking denization was 'fairly low'.³³¹ In Exeter this may be because the problem of apprenticeship was solved by apprenticing the sons of aliens to their fathers, which is the case in all of the three known examples where sons of aliens gained their own freedom. According to the testimonial for travel noted earlier, Ambrose Torres fathered four sons, though none are recorded in the parish registers or records of freedom nor, like their sister Joan, have their lives linked to leases. Physicians did not take apprentices so perhaps, if Torres felt that not all his sons could follow him in his profession, he had to apprentice them to other trades, hence his denization application. There is no record of Francis Bryna baptizing any sons, but he may have faced a similar situation.

Like Torres' sons, many aliens do not appear in the parish records. This may be because they were not members of the established Church, because they did not marry and have children, because they died beyond the time span of this study, because they disappeared from Exeter or because the parish records do not exist for their parish at the appropriate years. Where parish records do survive, some alien families were clearly integrated into the parish procedures for recording vital events such as Godfrey Harman whose four children's baptisms were recorded in St Kerrian and whose wife's burial was recorded in 1579 along with his own in 1601. This is also true for the family events of John Nicholls (table 5.3), Warnard Harrison (biography 31) and

³³¹ L.E. Kermode, *Aliens and Englishness in Elizabethan Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.3.

Alexander Napper was even appointed churchwarden of All Hallows Goldsmith Street in 1563.

Aliens were not immune to brushes from the law, to financial difficulties or to their share of unhappiness, along with the rest of the populace. The act books reveal that in 1560, cordwainer Warnard Harrison had some of his shoes forfeited and John Hatch was threatened with fines for keeping pigs within the city walls. Francis Lavendar, goldsmith of All Hallows Goldsmith Street, was cited for taking malt into his house in 1561 (for illicit brewing?) and in 1562 parchment maker Martin Barbanson was charged with having his servants damage Duryard wood, possibly bark collecting in connection with parchment making, and was ordered to bring in a dozen parchments as recompense. Arnold Reynolds appears to have been trapped in a very unhappy marriage (discussed in chapter six) and several aliens were amongst the recipients of poor-relief such as John Nicholls, who was assessed at no more than 8d across three lay subsidies. Married to Julian, he was the father of four children in St Petrock and one of that wealthy parish's few people receiving poor-relief of 4d a week during the 1560s. A widower by 1577, he was allocated a place in an almshouse in the early seventeenth century, as was Cornelius Hayes. Other alien poor-relief recipients were Oliver Dugard and Isebrand Green/Kryne. Peter Lapkin's fortunes seem to have fluctuated as, having been in receipt of poor-relief in 1567, he was by 1573, at least living 'of almes rent free' in 'a little low room with [the comparative luxury of] two glazed windows' (table 5.3). By 1577 he was owed £3 by his landlord Thomas Prestwood, which suggests that he was not utterly destitute if he was able to lend such an amount in the first place, but if he ever reclaimed it, he had not long to enjoy it as he was buried in All Hallows Goldsmith Street in 1578. It can be argued that receipt of poor-relief and placements in almshouses are further indicators of the integration of aliens into the city community, as there is no evidence that being labeled as such prejudiced the Chamber against this entitlement once they had met the three year residency requirement.

It is also possible to detect aliens maintaining varied and quite close links between themselves. Warnard Harrison was a cordwainer and employed alien Clement Owlborough as a servant in 1568 who himself became a cordwainer, achieving his freedom in 1570, his master being Lambert Johnson with whom Warnard had pairs of shoes forfeited. Warnard's apprentice was Nicholas Hatch who appraised the inventory of cordwainer Richard Taylor and was, alongside Feet Lindon, involved in the administration of cordwainer Roland Fabyan's estate. Warnard and Joan Harrison held the lease of a tenement which was occupied by Richard Reynolds, possibly the son of alien Arnold Reynolds also a cordwainer/shoemaker. In 1572, Nicholas Carpenter, cordwainer son of alien John Carpenter, married Warnard Harrison's widow Joan in St Mary Major, and, it would appear, bettered himself from the son of an alien to the husband of a wealthy widow in the leather trade (biography 31 and discussed further in chapter eight). Arnold Reynolds employed alien Laurence Matthew as a servant and his inventory of 1570 revealed that he was owed money by Henry Roberts, bookbinder, who employed Gilbert Taylor an alien servant. Alexander and Sandy Napper lived adjacent to Ambrose Torres and to Peter Lapkin in Corry Street and they all shared Thomas Prestwood as a landlord. However, Francis Bryna's will reveals that most of his beneficiaries were non-aliens and, as chapter six will reveal, the bakers were at least as inter-connected, so this is not a peculiarly alien trait. These two groups together strongly suggest that mutual support through trade interests was usual practice, whether alien or native, perhaps substituting for the lack of a strong guild system in Exeter.

To summarise, it would seem that the modest number of aliens in sixteenth-century Exeter formed a distinct community but certainly not an exclusive one nor a particularly insular one. They were masters to non-alien apprentices and appraised inventories of, and left bequests to, non-aliens. They occasionally rose to the civic positions of bailiff and churchwarden, they were sources of income for landlords, they married local women and at the end of their lives, at least two of them were allocated places alongside native residents in Exeter's almshouses.

Experiences of incapacity

The Chamber administered private legacies for almshouses and pensions as well as the sums collected for parish poor-relief and MacCaffrey and Evans examine thoroughly the post-reformation impetus, need and mechanisms for these aspects of corporate life.³³² As part of this administrative work, the Chamber recorded the allocation of almshouse places and pensions in the city's act books and, in the case of poor-relief, in a separate account, known as the Accounts of the Poor, Book 57. This study complements MacCaffrey's and Evans' work by combining these sources with biographical references to shed light on some of the individuals in receipt of support. The findings are summarized in table 5.4 together with references for all poor relief recipients mentioned in this chapter.

Slack, in his work on poverty and policy in England, states that children were not expected to house their parents if they had already established separate households. He argues that it was rare they could afford to do so if they had dependent children of their own, that parents were assumed to have made their own arrangements for their old age and that where not, pensions and possibly a place in an almshouse were allocated.³³³ This appears to have been the case with baker Roger Ford (table 6.7) who was married with children when his widowed mother was allocated the next available place in an almshouse in 1594. Wrightson additionally points out that parents might relatively rarely have survived to old age to need support whilst others worked until death.³³⁴ There are exceptions to every rule, however, such as currier William Street who was married to Ann and baptized his daughter Dorothy in the parish of Holy Trinity in 1590. His father Hugh was 'dwelling with his son', but it did not shelter him from the plague. He was buried in April 1591 (after which William buried Dorothy in June followed by Ann in July).³³⁵

³³² MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, pp.100-114; Evans, 'An Echo of the Multitude', pp. 408-411.

³³³ Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, p.84.

³³⁴ Wrightson, *English Society*, p.114.

³³⁵ Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Burials, p.38.

When extra support was necessary, pensions or poor-relief were meant to supplement other income rather than replace it. These measures, together with almshouse places, were also meant for the deserving poor, who, according to Hindle, were identified primarily by their 'inability to labour: they were the "lambe ympotent olde blynde and such other amonge them being poore and not able to worke"'.³³⁶ In Exeter, there were certainly people incapacitated due to age and disability and several instances where they were once active public servants, but the picture is not one of recipients who were totally 'impotent', that is, unable to do or achieve anything. There are amongst them those who held properties, such as neighbours Katharine Brusie and William Wyatt who both held tenements in the parish of Holy Trinity, and those who married despite their poverty such as Isebrand Kryne/Green, Elizabeth Aprice and Margaret Wheaten. It is also possible, though unproven, that Richard Wilkins 'of the Wynnards' was the same Richard Wilkins later felt by his neighbours to be potent enough to be presented for witchcraft, for which he was subsequently hanged.³³⁷ Though perhaps none of these were able to work, poor-relief recipient and bawd Thomasine Crewse, discussed earlier in this chapter, was certainly hard working in her illicit activities and provides a curious definition of 'deserving'.

Hindle also points out that recipients of support were meant to live model lives of worship, industry, sobriety, childrearing and deference. Porter, in his portrait of the London Charterhouse, indicates that almshouse inmates too were meant to form model communities.³³⁸ However, he highlights the difficulties of keeping good order in the Charterhouse as, despite a recruitment practice involving only those with 'good testimony', there were fights (between staff and between inmates), misuse of allowances, drunkenness, pawning of livery gowns and selling of left-over food and beer in the town. Some of these problems were ascribed to poor quality masters,

³³⁶ Steve Hindle, 'Civility, Honesty and the Identification of the Serving Poor in Seventeenth-century England' in Barry and French (eds.), *Identity and Agency*, pp.38 and 43.

³³⁷ Stoye, 'It is But an Olde Wytch Gonne', 146-7.

³³⁸ S. Porter, 'Order and Disorder in the Early Modern Almshouse: The Charterhouse Example', *London Journal* 23 (1) (1998), 1.

rather like Digory Baker, the disgraced Master of Exeter's House of Correction (biography 2) and Porter considers that Charterhouse may have been typical for the time, citing both Sir Francis Bacon's pessimistic writings in which he anticipated trouble there and examples from elsewhere.³³⁹ McIntosh's gentler view on the issue is that those selected for admission into an almshouse were unlikely to be violent disrupters of the good order of their village or town but that the authorities nevertheless observed, regulated and disciplined their actions.³⁴⁰ Her assessment sits well with the Exeter evidence as the Chamber certainly expected Exeter inmates to behave properly once almshouse places had been allocated, evidenced by its order in 1565 for the visible presence of the Combe Row almshouse inhabitants at the Cathedral at 10 o'clock each morning for prayer, on pain of displacement. It also expelled German Haywood, after three years in Hurst's almshouse, for 'misdemeanors' and likewise expelled blind John Pearse from there in 1610 'for disobeying the orders and constitutions of the same, viz by marrying a woman under the age of five and fifty years'.³⁴¹ Evans describes the not dissimilar rules instigated by John Davye who gave lands and tenements to the city to endow almshouses in St Mary Arches in 1600.³⁴² Further evidence appears in the will of Exeter tailor and alderman Richard Prouze in 1607, who established his own almshouses in Broadhempstone. He decreed that any almsperson who married, lived 'unhonestlie or unorderlie' or neglected the service of God, would be removed forthwith and appointed his son as one who should make this decision alongside the vicar and sidesmen of Broadhempstone church.³⁴³

The Exeter evidence suggests influences on the allocation of support and therefore who was regarded as 'deserving' in the city. In respect of almshouse places, the inhabitants of Hurst's Almshouses, appear to have been drawn mostly from those already receiving poor-relief (table 5.4). Of the twelve poor men and women listed as receiving 4d each there in 1565, eight were already drawing on relief from parishes across the city such as

³³⁹ *ibid*, p.10.

³⁴⁰ McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, pp.117-119.

³⁴¹ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/3, p.173.

³⁴² Evans, 'An Echo of the Multitude', p.422.

³⁴³ TNA, PROB 11/110, image ref 789.

Elizabeth Erett who received poor-relief in the parish of St John and Joan Small who received the same in the parish of St David. Age and/or physical disability, combined with past civic service, also appear to be good reasons for admittance to almshouses. Thomas Bending, admitted to the Coombe Row almshouses with his wife Ebett in 1604, had been a churchwarden of St John Bow around 1600. Likewise, Simon Jane was churchwarden of St John around 1562 and was admitted to St John's Hospital in 1578, although he seems to have almost 'inherited' his place from a Robert Jane - what relationship the two men had to one another is not known. Emlin Hart was admitted in 1594 simply for 'beinge very olde...', and Radigan, the wife of William Snow, was 'aged, impotent and blinde' though William would not be allowed her place after her death.

It also appeared to help if one had friends in high places, especially if you had caught the attention of the Chamber for the wrong reasons in earlier life. Henry Combe, pinner, was imprisoned for four days in 1561 for keeping a tippling house and receiving evil persons. He was released on condition he offended no more. As far as is known, he kept to the law and by 1578 it was ordered that he should have a Coombe Row almshouse at the behest of the Earl of Bedford. It was clearly possible to make amends for earlier transgressions, even without the intervention of others and this seems to have been the case with Thomas Ireland, a smith/locksmith, who in 1561 was apparently outspoken in support of the Pope. Despite this dangerous outburst, he later found himself serving on a jury and thereafter appeared to live a quiet life as a family man in St Mary Major. His admittance to Hurst's almshouses was not recorded but he died there in 1588. Joan Hutchings, bound over to keep the peace in 1572 was later an inhabitant of the Coombe Row almshouses, along with her husband.

One almshouse inmate, Alice Lambert may be an example of a whole life spent at the bottom of the social scale. Alice was the illegitimate daughter of leading actor and apothecary Thomas Lambert, by Ann Price, and a beneficiary of his will in 1555. Thomas's legitimate wife was Christine and in 1566 Christine Lambert (who could be the widow or daughter of Thomas, but

with seven children seems likely to be the widow) married Robert Drew in the parish of St Mary Major and there in 1568 dwelled Alice Lambert as part of Robert Drew's household. Nothing else is known of Alice for most of her life but, as an acknowledged illegitimate child, her chances of marriage were poor. In 1607 the Chamber agreed that she should have a place in Palmer's almshouse. Assuming it is the same Alice, and that she was aged around fifteen in 1566, she would be around fifty-five in 1607.

In Exeter, almshouse occupancy was not just for the elderly poor and impotent, it could be for the younger poor and entire families seemed to have spent their lives in the Wynards almshouse, although its founding purpose was for twelve poor, infirm and elderly men to be provided with decent lodging and assistance.³⁴⁴ On 16 September 1588, George Mogford married Joan Edridge in the parish of Holy Trinity, a pregnant bride. Five weeks later he baptized Matthew and then buried him aged two years in the same parish, described as 'the son of George out of the Wynards almshouse'. In 1590 Joan was buried too, described as 'the wife of George of the Wynards'. In 1575 John Payne married Fridiswide Hamont in the same parish. Between 1590 and 1591 he buried three children, Mary, Peter and John and on each occasion was described as a miller 'out of the Wynards'. He also married and buried Dunes and was himself buried from the Wynards in 1608. Anthony Stephens married Elizabeth Demond of the Wynards in 1574. A year later, he baptized Judith, again described as being of the Wynards and when he was buried in 1579 this description still applied.

Vacant places in almshouses were quickly re-allocated, sometimes too hastily. Peter Baker, was valued on £5 goods in 1557 but by 1570 he was poor enough for the parishioners of St Mary Major to give him an alb (a liturgical vestment, presumably useful for its cloth). Although his admittance into an almshouse was not recorded, he was buried in the parish in May 1578 and the Chamber noted in June that year that, due to his death, his almshouse place was to be offered to Hugh Wall and his wife for the rest of

³⁴⁴ Oliver, *History*, p.184.

their lives. It seems, however, that the Chamber had forgotten that a Mrs Baker existed because by September that same year, they had agreed that Margaret, Peter's widow, who was still in the Combe Row, was to have one of the spaces in the Hurst almshouses if they could come to an agreement with Hugh Wall. It would seem that Margaret may have stayed put, as she was buried in the parish of St Mary Major in April 1583, nearly five years later. It is impossible to say how quickly places were actually filled after allocation, although a delay of at least three years occurred in the case of Rabidge Way, a female inmate of the Ten Cells. On eighteen occasions, an approximate date of admission and a date of death are both available, which make it possible to estimate the length of stay; the range runs between one month and twenty-six years. Sometimes almshouses were occupied by people who should not have been there. In 1604 John Way 'who had unlawfully gotten the possession of a almshouse in the Combe Rowe did submit himselfe to this house as the lawful donor thereof & promised to delivr the key & possession of the said house [that is the Chamber] to Mr Maior....'. There are three John Ways in the records and one of them was living in St Mary Steps in 1602, where he was valued at £5 in goods.³⁴⁵ Why (and how) he came to be occupying this room remains a mystery, although he may have been related in an unrecorded way to Rabidge Way.

Ageing public servants appear to have been supported through pensions of 2s a week. For example, cutler William Knowles (biography 41) had been the city armourer and was known personally to John Hooker, who gifted a pamphlet to him. He was made a sergeant but reached the point where he was physically unable to continue and the Chamber, recognizing his contribution, granted him of pension of 2s a week. Widowed back in 1588, William was buried in the parish of All Hallows Goldsmith Street in mid-January 1594, having received city support for less than eight months. Another sergeant, Robert Beal, already eighty in 1554, would have been aged around eighty-seven in September 1561 when allocated a pension. Like

³⁴⁵ W.G. Hoskins (ed.), *Exeter in the Seventeenth Century: Tax and Rate Assessments 1602-1699* (Exeter: Devon & Cornwall Record Society, 1957), p.2.

William Knowles, he was described by the Chamber as 'decrepyt & spent in yeres' and no longer able to serve. They awarded him an annuity of £5 4s which amounted to 2s a week. His death was not recorded but twenty-three years later in June 1584 his wife, whom one can only assume was far younger than him, was admitted to the St Rocks almshouse, so he was clearly not alone in life on the occasion of his pension allocation. Faithful servant, Richard Bartlet, swordbearer since at least 1567, assessed on 20s land in the parish of St Mary in 1577 and signatory to the Bond of Association, by 1586 'waxeth olde & [was] not likely longe to be able to enioye the said office'. When Richard retired, he too received 2s a week from the city. He was buried in 1591, so at least lived to enjoy his pension for five years.

Public servants were not the only recipients of pensions. Thomas Twiggs (biography 80) was a yeoman-innholder who held common pasture in Northernhay and lived in a tenement with stables and garden outside the North Gate. It appears that his earlier life was one of relative prosperity and respectable status as he was a juror, a subscriber to the ship money levy and a contributor to the poor-relief of 1d. This did not continue into later life, even allowing for under-valuation in lay subsidies. Assessed on goods value £5 in 1557 (half the average valuation) by 1593 he appeared to be worth only 5s in lands. But although there was no record of his freedom, it seems likely he had been a freeman of some financial substance and one with high-status friends for whom he stood surety, including gentleman Gilbert Dennis, bailiff and gentleman John Brushford and Thomas Knight, scrivener of St Sidwell. In 1576 he had buried his daughter Alice in the parish of St David and there is no record of his son, also Thomas, other than his baptism in 1563, so it would appear that Thomas was ageing and alone. In May 1605 the Chamber agreed that he should receive a pension of 24s 4d for the rest of his life, although the frequency of payment is not stated. However, as for William Knowles, he did not receive it for long, as he was buried in the parish of St David on 4 April 1606.

On Thomas Twiggs' death, the next recipient of this pension was William Fidler. He was married to Elizabeth, baptized ten children and lived all his life

in the parish of St Mary Major. He was a tailor, who gained his freedom in 1566 and by 1576 had been elected a Master Warden of the Tailors' Guild. However, he appears never to have been valued for a lay subsidy (though he was a poor-relief contributor) or to have undertaken any civic role other than as a harquebusier in the general muster. He began to receive his pension in 1606 and assuming he was aged around twenty-five in 1566, he would have been around sixty-five years old. He had lost his wife in 1596 and his eldest, unmarried daughter in 1597 aged twenty-seven years. His second eldest daughter had married in 1603 aged thirty-two and already had two children that year (with more to come). His other children, though in their twenties and thirties were not recorded as being married, buried or achieving their freedom, but it seems unlikely that they were living with him. Perhaps William Fiddler's need for support centred around his age, possibly an infirmity, but more likely his isolation. Pensions administered by the Chamber originated from private endowments and, as Evans points out, these were originally aimed at the deserving poor.³⁴⁶ It seems William reflects a contemporary definition of 'deserving'.

Only six recipients of financial or housing support visible in the records for this study are known to be freemen, but this enables an estimation to be made of their age at the time they received support. William Satterly gained his freedom in 1558 and by 1583 he was admitted to St John's Hospital aged at least fifty (an estimated age as he was a tucker). Robert Ireland gained his freedom as a currier in 1559 and was allocated a place in an almshouse in 1600 aged at least sixty-six years. By way of comparison, at Charterhouse men were admitted after the age of fifty, or forty if maimed.³⁴⁷ Hugh Simmonds was a jerkin maker who gained his freedom in 1557 and by 1588 he was to have a St John's Hospital pension at around the age of fifty-seven, but Laurence Edmonds and Robert Chester were aged around thirty-eight when receiving poor-relief and Thomas Rider only thirty-two. Perhaps, having achieved the wherewithal to practise a trade, they suffered calamitous bad

³⁴⁶ Evans, 'An Echo of the Multitude', p.424.

³⁴⁷ Porter, 'Order and Disorder', p.4.

luck such as the early onset of debilitating illnesses which prevented them from earning a living.

Those who had made civic or parish contributions are also visible amongst the recipients of parish poor-relief and several were also almshouse occupants. Widow Joan White had been a contributor to St Petrock's new rood loft back in 1556 and Alice Brown had been a licensed wine seller. Richard Harmerton was appointed Beadle of the Poor in 1560 and tasked with making sure no-one went begging from door-to-door, but was himself apparently in receipt of poor-relief by 1563. Poor men and women could live an itinerant life within the city such Katharine Waxmaker, who received relief in 1563 in the parish of St Petrock, in 1565 in St Paul and in 1569 in St Mary Arches and James Stansby who received it in the parishes of St John Bow and St George. Others appeared to have received relief from the same parish for over a decade such as Isebrand Green/Kryne in All Hallows on the Wall, Robert Jane in St Lawrence, Elizabeth Aprice in St David and Elizabeth Autry in St Mary Arches. Slack notes that men rarely made up more than a third of the pensioners in any of the lists he consulted and this is reflected in the Exeter figures. In 1563, 104 out of 152 people (68%) receiving poor-relief were women and in 1569 the figure was 93 out of 130 people (71%).³⁴⁸ For some women, wealthy acquaintances might not prevent the need to draw on poor-relief but they could help in other ways, as in the case of leading actor Joan Tuckfield. In 1568, she bequeathed her one-time servant Agnes Labey 20s and to Katharine Courtis an old cloak, both of whom drew on parish poor-relief between 1563-7.³⁴⁹ Katharine was also an occupant of Palmer's almshouse in Holy Trinity where she died in 1581. The issue of women's support for other women through bequests is discussed further in chapter seven. Collective biography does, therefore, permit a glimpse of the backstories and circumstances of some of those who experienced old-age and incapacity, who received pensions and poor-relief and who occupied the rooms of almshouses in Exeter. Whilst mostly the preserve of the deserving lower chorus, members of the middle chorus also fell on hard times and

³⁴⁸ *ibid*, ff.3-5 and 42-43; Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, p.180.

³⁴⁹ DHC, ECA Exeter Orphans' Court Loose Wills Box.

needed support, though it appeared to help if they had made earlier contributions to the common good and had no-one else to turn to.

Conclusion

Collective biography enables the creation of group portraits of the less visible chorus in particular circumstances, usually challenging ones and mostly through the lens of Chamber control. They add dimensions to an overall impression of the chorus which contrast strongly with the picture painted by the thriving and civically active members portrayed in chapter four. There is much that the available evidence does not reveal, such as the heightened emotions, heartbreak and personal wretchedness which many of the circumstances here must surely have engendered. It is impossible to know whether neighbours were smugly triumphant in their prosecution of neighbours or, aware of the clearly very precarious line between good fortunate and bad, regretfully felt they had to report misbehaviour for reasons of self-preservation. There are no clues as to whether neighbours of those housing strangers regarded them as a real threat to their wellbeing or whether they shrugged their shoulders and quietly attempted to mitigate the potential risk with a prayer. There is no direct evidence of whether aliens were tolerated because it suited the local economy and other needs of citizens or were genuinely embraced and welcomed and nor is it possible to know whether the erstwhile hard-working but now ageing public servants gratefully anticipated their pensions or received them out of necessity and with regret, knowing their productive lives were over. Nevertheless, more light and shade is thrown on these sections of the chorus which brings its members a little further out of the shadows.

Chapter 6: Family formation and working households

Urban families

Marriage was a significant step to take in the sixteenth century as it meant not only the formation of a new household and, in due course, legitimate family, but was also regarded as the building block of social order, respectability, political authority, production, consumption and property transfer.³⁵⁰ In contrast to Cressy's study of early modern courtship and marriage, there are no diaries, autobiographies or personal letters to draw on from the archives used in this study that show how later sixteenth-century couples in Exeter came to be betrothed and then married. Here it is assumed that they followed a common journey which Cressy describes as 'suggestion and invitation, viewing and contact, assessment and decision whether or not to proceed' and that at least 'mutual liking' was usually involved, if not love, which Cressy argues was regarded as fundamental.³⁵¹

Likewise, there are no descriptions of local wedding celebrations, although over 2700 marriages are recorded in the available parish registers for the study period and it is estimated that more than 90% of women reaching adulthood in sixteenth-century England would marry.³⁵² It is also only very occasionally that the state of marital relationships are detected in wills (discussed later in this chapter and in chapter seven).³⁵³ Nevertheless, through official sources, rather than personal and private ones, the Exeter evidence provides examples of almost all the types of family formation, dynamics and dissolutions that Wrightson discusses in *English Society* and Brodsky outlines in her chapter on London's Elizabethan widows in *The World We Have Gained*.³⁵⁴ There is enough material to outline a range of chorus family life experiences, even if missing parish registers in Exeter rule out the

³⁵⁰ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, pp.125-128.

³⁵¹ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, pp.239 and 261.

³⁵² Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 68.

³⁵³ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p.285.

³⁵⁴ Wrightson, *English Society*, pp.66-118; V. Brodsky, 'Widows in Late Elizabethan London' in Lloyd Bonfield, Richard M Smith and Keith Wrightson (eds.), *The World we have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp.122-154.

more statistical studies relating to marriage and remarriage discussed by Brodsky in respect of London.

Brodsky defines urban families as having a distinct emotional colouration: pessimistic about children's survival; unsentimental, with rapid replacement of dead spouses and outwardly directed towards friends, neighbours and dependency on more distant kin.³⁵⁵ She also emphasizes the precarious character of family formation and challenges Wrightson's view of the family as a source of 'security' and 'identity' because of the high turnover of family members.³⁵⁶ As noted in chapter three, the Exeter evidence supports both views, arguing for the presence of both less secure, extramural/high turnover families and relatively more secure, intramural/low turnover families. Within these divisions, the families concerned responded to the varied circumstances they encountered in different ways and demonstrate how generalization is challenged by collective biographical detail.

Family reconstitution

Combining parish registration events (a technique known as 'family reconstitution') provides opportunities to build outline narratives of individual family formation through marriage, the number and frequency of full-term pregnancies that ended in baptism and family dissolution and reformation evidenced through burial and remarriage.³⁵⁷ For this approach to work, the marriage date plus the burial date of one partner is needed with all baptism and burial dates in between. The families 'of' a particular parish in this study are defined by having baptized at least one child there. An examination of the parish records of St Kerrian, chosen as one of Exeter's smaller, wealthier, intramural parishes and crucially one where there are no breaks in the recording of such events throughout the period under consideration, reveals that even in the most promising archival situations, this kind of reconstruction has its challenges.

³⁵⁵ *ibid*, p.140.

³⁵⁶ Wrightson, *English Society*, p.66.

³⁵⁷ Wrigley and Schofield, *The Population History of England*, p.193.

Most often, families are not included in the analysis because there are no marriage or burial records for adult partners. Joan Redwood (biography 62), for example, does not qualify because her marriage is not recorded in the parish records so she cannot not be linked in this way to her husband John, although subsequently she appears as a detailed case study in chapter nine. Nor can couples be included if they move out of the city because records for parishes other than those in Exeter are not included in this study. In addition, the impossibility of individuating between families with household heads of the same name operating in the same parish means that it is only possible to work with names that are unique in a parish. Finally, often the parish records for the children's baptisms and deaths are at odds with the children apparently left alive according to their parents' wills. Brodsky concludes that families reconstituted from parish records overstate the number of surviving children whilst wills understate them, but in Exeter, there are examples of additional surviving children found in wills who do not appear in parish registers.³⁵⁸ Nevertheless, appendix 7 sets out twenty-six family units which possess a clear marriage date plus a burial date for one partner, which represent 22% of 118 identifiable St Kerrian families between 1550 and 1610. They are discussed in the next section.

Freedom and marriage

Of these twenty-six families, there are seventeen where the husband had obtained the freedom of the city and both the date of this and his marriage are known. Marriage followed freedom for eight (just under 50%) of these, usually within two to three years. For five other men, there was no precise date of freedom, only a year between Michelmasses within which their marriage date also fell, making it impossible to tell which event came first. Four more achieved their freedom after marriage but for two, their first children were baptized only four and five months afterwards, so hastily arranged marriages seem likely. Another variation is leading actor Henry Hull who gained his freedom halfway through the creation of his family of ten children. He obtained it through a £2 fine and his description as 'gent' implies it was

³⁵⁸ Brodsky, 'Widows in Late Elizabethan London', p.135; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, pp.286-292.

perhaps an honorary version of the freedom, or perhaps a second-time admission. The evidence from St Kerrian tentatively suggests that in Exeter, establishing a means to generate income and economic independence was normally seen as a prerequisite to marriage and family formation. Taking a wider selection of individuals (those represented in the ninety-five biographies compiled for this study) for only twenty-four are both freedom and marriage date known and occur within five years of each other. Of these, fifteen (63%) reveal freedom achieved before marriage and nine (37%) *vice versa*. Overall, the Exeter evidence seems to support Ingram's argument that the need to accumulate the skills and resources necessary to maintain a viable household was a powerful inducement to postpone matrimony, or at least to undertake it after the achievement of freedom.³⁵⁹ This contrasts with evidence from Bristol which suggests that freedom was purchased when apprentices were to be taken on as employees which usually occurred *after* marriage and the establishment of a household.³⁶⁰ Only two St Kerrian men seem clearly to have taken this route.

Marriage and baptism: age at marriage

One inventory, that of Thomas Cook (biography 14), lists the birthdays of five children which can be matched to their baptism record. All but one were baptized the day after their birth, so it would appear that it is reasonable to use baptism dates in age calculations. Although the sample is small, Wrigley and Schofield point out that the church urged parents to baptize as soon after birth as possible and that in the sixteenth century some parishes closely followed this ideal.³⁶¹

For eleven women in the parish of St Kerrian there survives both a date of baptism and marriage in that parish. Their ages at marriage are set out in table 6.1. There is little to suggest that either the fathers' status or the date of the marriage were relevant to the brides' ages at marriage. For the grooms, age is calculated from freedom as no baptism dates are known and all

³⁵⁹ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, p.130.

³⁶⁰ J. Barry, PhD supervisor, *pers comm*, 2015.

³⁶¹ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, p. 96.

achieved freedom before marriage including Edmund Passmore who appeared to be a widower marrying for the second time and whose previous marriage had followed his freedom date. The average (mean) and median age for the Exeter bridegrooms is a likely minimum of twenty-six years old, which is consistent with Brodsky's London figures where the age group containing most bridegrooms is twenty-five to twenty-nine years old. Exeter's bridegrooms also just fall within the age range for those from early seventeenth-century Wiltshire, quoted by Ingram, of a mean age of between twenty-six and twenty-nine, but they are younger than Wrigley and Schofield's calculations of an age of twenty-eight for grooms between 1600 and 1649, the earliest dates for which they feel data is reliable – although, as noted earlier, the Exeter ages are likely to be on the low side.³⁶² Exeter brides, with an average (mean) age of almost twenty-one and a median of twenty-two, seem to compare best with Brodsky's London study, the age group with the greatest number of brides there being twenty to twenty-four.³⁶³ Ingram's Wiltshire figures estimate a mean age of around twenty-four for brides and Wrigley and Schofield of around twenty-six years old between 1600 and 1649. It would seem Exeter's brides and grooms followed an urban model of slightly earlier ages at marriage.

Wrightson suggests that there were many influences on marriage age from economic considerations and parental pressure to love itself, and Ingram argues that a subtle system prevailed which combined love with prudential considerations, community values and family interests.³⁶⁴ These are largely invisible influences in Exeter but the legal lower age limit for sexual consummation of marriage for women was twelve and for men fourteen, and the Exeter evidence supports Ingram's statement that it was tacitly accepted throughout society that matrimony should be reserved for those of the age of

³⁶² Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, p.129; Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, p.255.

³⁶³ Brodsky, 'Widows in Late Elizabethan London', p.130.

³⁶⁴ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, p.142; Wrightson, *English Society*, pp.70-88.

discretion and that most people married much later than the legal threshold.³⁶⁵ Wrightson, too, believes that it was comparatively unusual for someone from the middling sorts to contract marriage at such an early age.³⁶⁶ Nevertheless, little Elizabeth Pope lived to survive her unusually early start to married life and appears in the sources as Elizabeth Halstaff who subscribed 12s to the ship money levy in 1588. She is listed in the 1602 lay subsidy in St Kerrian as a widow and was finally buried there in 1605, aged forty-six. There are no baptisms recorded for this marriage, although it appears to have always been associated with St Kerrian.³⁶⁷ The daughters of Walter Horsey (biography 37) also married at an unusually early age, discussed in chapter eight. Through marriage it is also possible to see interaction between the leading actors and the chorus, with some leading actors' daughters apparently being married to upper and middle chorus men. With this particular selection, no first marriages represent an upward movement for women (though the reverse is true for their husbands), but none were the eldest or only child. However, chapter eight reveals that movement from upper chorus to leading actor level was a reality for at least for one widow and certainly for Walter Horsey's daughters.

Marriage and baptism: seasonality

Seasonality in St Kerrian and across the city can be seen in Exeter marriages and baptisms during the period under consideration. The average number of marriages per month was 228 but hardly any took place in March (as marriage was forbidden during Lent) and less-than-average took place in February and December, the latter perhaps linked to the partial observation of the marriage ban during Advent. The months with most marriages were January, May/June and October/November and these observations are similar to those made in York, though there is a less pronounced peak in

³⁶⁵ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, p.129; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p.312.

³⁶⁶ Wrightson, *English Society*, p.68.

³⁶⁷ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book 1/5, p.554; Hoskins (ed.), *Exeter in the Seventeenth Century*, p.5, Nesbit, *St Kerrian Parish Register Marriages, Baptisms and Burials*, p.9.

November for Exeter.³⁶⁸ The patterns for baptisms in both cities are also similar, with peaks in early spring and early autumn, a trough in midsummer and a lower-level plateau in midwinter, and Wrigley and Schofield's figures show that both cities appear to reflect a national norm.³⁶⁹ Between 1550 and 1610 there were also ninety-eight marriages undertaken by ecclesiastical licence, a way of marrying during seasons when church marriage was prohibited, marrying privately and with more haste, as it dispensed with reading out banns. A licence cost 5s to 7s and so tended to be used by the wealthier.³⁷⁰ The number of such marriages relating to Exeter inhabitants known from the 'Bishop's Registers' increased from four in the 1550s, seven in the 1560s and four in the 1570s, to thirty-three in the 1580s, twelve in the 1590s and thirty-seven in the 1600s.³⁷¹ For several years, there are none listed at all, so records seem likely to be incomplete – although decades with major plague outbreaks seem to co-incide with dips in an otherwise upward trend.

Marriage and baptism: pregnant brides and illegitimacy

As noted above and in chapter five, pregnant brides were not unknown. Wrightson quotes between 10% and 30% of women in different parishes being in this position and Ingram too states that about a fifth of all brides were pregnant by the time they were married in church. Both point out that spousal (a verbal contract of marriage between a man and a woman, invisible in the sources) was legally valid and binding, and Cressy argues that it was widely thought acceptable for a couple who had been 'made sure' by such a contract to enjoy full sexual intercourse.³⁷²

For most people, 'marriage' meant marriage in church, but, with a two-stage system, it was inevitable that some women would become pregnant between

³⁶⁸ Palliser, *Tudor York*, pp.116-117.

³⁶⁹ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, pp.286 and 298, Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, pp.298-305.

³⁷⁰ *ibid*, p.309.

³⁷¹ Lt Col J. L.Vivian (ed.), *The Marriage Licences of the Diocese of Exeter from*

the Bishop's Registers Part 1 (Exeter: William Pollard & Co, 1887), pp.2-21.

³⁷² Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p.277.

spousal and marriage.³⁷³ Returning to the parish of St Kerrian, John Cook, skinner, married Elizabeth Butcher on 29 November 1591 and just over four months later, their child Vanswyll was baptized. Likewise, Roger Davy, tailor, married Julian Burgess on 15 June 1559 and their son John was baptized just over five months later. Some women, however, did not marry, or were unable to marry before their child's birth. Joan Francis baptized Thomas her illegitimate son in March 1578 but buried him in March 1579, the only recorded instance of illegitimacy in St Kerrian for this period. This may have been a genuine case of illegitimacy that arose from 'incontinent living', or it could have been that Joan's spoused husband-to-be had died before their church ceremony could take place. There were 159 illegitimate baptisms recorded across Exeter between 1550 and 1610 (table 6.2) which represents 1.8% of all recorded city baptisms and is close to the 2% recorded by Palliser for one parish in York but lower than Laslett's national average (mean) of 4% between 1581 and 1610 (1.6% of Exeter baptisms were illegitimate between those years).³⁷⁴ The gaps in parish register coverage make comparison between parishes difficult but for those parishes with fuller registration coverage, the wealthier/more stable family model of St Kerrian and St Petrock appear to go hand-in-hand with relatively low illegitimacy rates.

Marriage and baptism: parenthood

Analysis of the sources gives the impression that experiences of marriage and parenthood varied widely, even within this very small parish in Exeter. When marriages here lasted between one year and thirty-seven years (with a mean of fifteen and a median of fourteen) this is hardly surprising. The shortest recorded was that of merchant Richard Mawdett (biography 51) who married Welthian Maynard on 13 January 1558 but buried her on 19 August 1559. Slightly longer lasting, Agnes Taylor married John Redwood in November 1588, only for him to be buried in February 1593 but with no recorded issue. Roger Levermore married Joan White in 1565 and Elizabeth was baptized in 1567. Roger, however, was buried in August 1570 just days before his son

³⁷³ Wrightson, *English Society*, p.85; Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, pp.132 and 157.

³⁷⁴ Palliser, *Tudor York*, p.119; Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, p.142.

Samuel was baptized in September 1570 leaving Joan a widow with two very young children. Their fate is not recorded but giving birth at the height of a plague visitation must have been a particularly risky endeavour.

Longer-lasting marriages produced families of varying sizes. Two marriages (8%) apparently produced no children but the remaining twenty-four marriages baptized between them at least ninety-three children (appendix 7) the number of children per family ranging from eleven to one (a mean of 3.8 children per family, and a median of three, lower than Hoskins' estimate for merchant families 'norm' of five or six children).³⁷⁵ Twenty-five (27%) of these children died in childhood, a mean of 1.7 and median of 1.5 per family. This is slightly higher than Wrigley and Schofield's assertion that a quarter of all children born in this period would fail to live to the age of ten and this may reflect the urban setting, but it is also a very small selection.³⁷⁶ The data associated with some marriages where many children were baptized, indicate the frequency of successful pregnancies (table 6.3)

The figures must be used with caution. Grace Spicer, for example, appeared to baptize seven children with an average interval of 31.5 months, but her husband William's will reveals additional children whose baptisms, though unrecorded, would reduce the interval to be more in line with the rest of those in table 6.3.³⁷⁷ Other issues that need to be taken into account in this respect, alongside missing parish registers and vital events taking place in out-of-city parishes, are miscarriages and still-births which were not generally recorded. Nevertheless, the bare statistics reveal different experiences of starting a family. Some couples appeared to struggle, such as Philip Driver who married Joan Fletcher in 1551 but did not baptize Emanuel until 1560, over eight years into the marriage. Merchant John Sampford married Ann

³⁷⁵ Hoskins, 'Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', p.158.

³⁷⁶ R. Schofield and E. A. Wrigley, 'Infant and Child Mortality in England in the Late Tudor and Early Stuart Period' in C. Webster (ed.), *Health, Medicine and Mortality in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), pp.61 and 65.

³⁷⁷ DHC, ECA, Orphans' Court Book 142, f.71; TNA, PROB 11/104, image ref 674.

Gere in 1570 and in July 1571 Mary was baptized but buried in December. In August 1574 John was baptized, but buried five days later. Finally in February 1577 another son called John was baptized and appeared to survive alongside eight siblings, only one of whom died in childhood. Ann herself was buried in 1603, fourteen years after the last apparent baptism. In contrast, Agnes Grencellto married Andrew Gregory in 1571, baptized William in 1572 and then no more children appear to have been baptized between then and Andrew's burial in 1588, some sixteen years later. Joan Levermore married Robert Lyle in February 1570 and, starting in 1572, baptized at least five children (two of whom died in childhood) before Robert was buried in 1600 and Joan in 1606. Joan, having spent twelve years of marriage producing children, was buried, probably in her fifties, twenty-four years after her last child was apparently baptized.

Parish records reveal other women are likely to have died as a result of childbirth. For example, Nicholas Robinson married Eleanor Wallis in April 1564. Over the next fourteen years she gave birth to ten children, only one of whom was recorded as dying (within a day of her birth). Finally on 12 April 1578 twins Gentle and Richard were baptized but Eleanor was buried just twelve days afterwards, having experienced some minimal gaps between pregnancies (table 6.3). Widening the search to other parishes to explore the fate of twins, it seems they were especially vulnerable to early death, sometimes alongside their mother, even if they survived the initial trauma of a double-birth. Table 6.4 sets out their baptism and burial dates, selected from those families with surnames beginning with A,B and C.

Second marriages and widowhood

Second marriages, often within weeks of becoming a widow or widower, are very evident in the records. Merchant Hilary Galley (biography 22, the late owner of the barn in chapter five) married Joan Thomas in July 1581 and three children followed in the next five years. The last, Mary, was baptized on 5 May 1586 but Joan died eleven days later. Left with a three-year-old, a one-year-old and a newborn baby, Hilary, aged approximately thirty-one and an active merchant, married Pascow [blank] just three months later, but no

children were apparently forthcoming from this marriage although it lasted fifteen years. It is not possible to tell whether Pascow was an older woman on marrying Hilary and the marriage was one of convenience to bring up the existing girls, whether motherhood simply eluded her other than in the role of stepmother or whether the records are missing. Hilary died in September 1601, leaving Pascow described as a widow in the 1602 Lay Subsidy Roll and as the executrix of his will (discussed further in chapter seven). With slightly less haste, merchant William Birdall, aged approximately twenty-eight, widowed by the death of his wife Alice and left with a toddler daughter, married his servant Grace Smith twenty-one months later and subsequently baptized at least three more children (appendix 7). If Grace had been working for him at the time of Alice's death, or perhaps was hired soon after, there would have been less need for haste and perhaps, effectively, she stepped into the role of mother before marriage. Her elevation from servant to mistress of a household seems a happier experience than some of her fellow serving women, discussed in chapter five.

Widows remarried rapidly too. Between 1573 and 1574, Peter Benson (biography 3), stationer, gained his freedom. In 1575 he married Agnes Nicholas in St Petrock but was buried on 17 June 1583. Less than three months later, with a seven-year-old daughter and three-year-old son, his widow married fellow stationer William Holmes aged approximately twenty-five who had gained his freedom only five days before and thereafter baptized at least five more children. Agnes must have seemed a good business prospect for William, being the executrix of Peter's will and the recipient of the residue of his estate, including, it would appear, his business interests, as nothing except modest amounts of money and clothing were bequeathed elsewhere. Perhaps Agnes enjoyed the prolonged association with the stationery trade, with which she would have been familiar and in which, perhaps, she played an invisible part. Brodsky states that the widows of city craftsmen and tradesmen tended to remarry quickly, often to younger, single men.³⁷⁸ Agnes might have been able to marry John Dight, Peter's other

³⁷⁸ Brodsky, 'Widows in Late Elizabethan London', p.123.

apprentice who gained his freedom in the same month as William – but he married another of the parish and baptized children there.

By contrast, some wealthier women experienced long widowhoods. Leading actor John Shear married Dunes Earl in 1571 but he died in 1583 leaving her a widow for twenty-six years until her death in 1609 and upper chorus Mary Baskerville was widowed for thirteen years (appendix 7). It was possible to experience a long widowhood but remain active and economically independent. Venturing into another parish, Jane Hewett (biography 35) was married to John, described both as a cordwainer and a merchant. John was buried in the parish of St Mary Arches in 1570 and although there is no record of his freedom, he purchased land in 1569, so it seems unlikely he was a member of the lower chorus. In 1569 Jane was presented at the Exeter Quarter Sessions for selling wine above the statute price, but in 1570 and 1571 she was properly licenced for this purpose. Jane last appears as a contributor of £10 to the revolving funds scheme in 1603, and although this was the lowest amount invested, it may represent Joan's turning of a long widowhood of at least thirty years into a successful business opportunity, although alternatively she may have been the main or sole beneficiary of her husband's estate. Joan Tuckfield, wife of merchant and alderman John Tuckfield and widowed since around 1554, was apprentice mistress to Roger Bond when he gained his freedom in 1566, the intervening period of twelve years suggesting that she was his mistress from the start and did not take over from her husband on his death.³⁷⁹ Both women appear to be Exeter's equivalents to Brodsky's wealthy widows of London, over half of whom did not remarry but some of whom were involved in economic activity.³⁸⁰ As Prior states 'under common law *femme sole*, that is the single woman or widow, suffered no legal constraints which would handicap her in trade'.³⁸¹ This appears to be true for Exeter's single women – Kowaleski quotes fourteenth-century cases from the textile trades - although they had to pay an annual

³⁷⁹ TNA, Prob 11/39, image ref 277; Rowe and Jackson, *Exeter Freeman*, p.87.

³⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

³⁸¹ M. Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society* (London: Methuen, 1985), p.102.

fine.³⁸² Other Exeter apprentice mistresses are discussed below. Brodsky also found that for very poor widows, remarriage was also unlikely.³⁸³ Examination of the parish records of Holy Trinity and the Chamber act books reveals long widowhoods recorded in the city's almshouses. Anstice Hilliard alias White was admitted to Palmer's Almshouses in 1581 but was not buried until 1607, a widowhood and occupancy of twenty-six years. Likewise, Agnes Halfyard, also admitted to Palmer's in 1570, remained there until her burial sixteen years later in the parish of Holy Trinity in 1586 (see table 5.4). Other poor widows may have resorted to prostitution, discussed in chapter five.

It is impossible to know how many marriages ended in judicial separation 'from bed and board' or annulment, neither of which are directly reflected in parish registers, but one example may exist in Julian Reynolds.³⁸⁴ She was the apparently unhappily married wife of alien Arnold Reynolds (biography 64) whose will and inventory are discussed in chapter seven. In his will, written in August 1570, Julian seems no longer to be living with him and his dislike of her treatment of him is evident: 'she hath much misused me when she was dwellinge with me and spoyled me of suche goods as I had....'. Arnold Reynolds was buried in 1570 in the parish of All Hallows Goldsmith Street and in 1595, a Julian Reynolds was buried in the parish of St David. Whether she was Arnold's ex-wife cannot be fully determined, as there is no 'widow of....' to clarify, but on this occasion the lack of clarifying description together with their burials in different parishes just may be an indication of an estranged, if not separated couple in the context of his inventorial description. If so, the Reynolds women seem to have a tendency to defy convention, as daughter Elizabeth was alleged to have married without consent shortly after Arnold's death which, if true, meant she risked losing some of her paternal inheritance.

Many of the above examples support Brodsky's questioning of Wrightson's view of families as providing emotional stability, and demonstrate a selection of short marriages, rapid remarriage, combined families, parental and sibling

³⁸² Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, p.154.

³⁸³ Brodsky, 'Widows in Late Elizabethan London', p.123.

³⁸⁴ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, pp.145-147.

loss and childlessness. They could well have been situations where the theoretical pessimism and lack of sentimentality she proposes might reasonably thrive, although there is no direct evidence for this. On the other hand, the stability that Wrightson claims can be seen in the marriage of Grace Smith to her employer, in Agnes Benson's rapid remarriage to another of her husband's occupation, the fact that seventeen out of twenty-seven marriages (63%) in St Kerrian lasted ten years or more and that in 2012 the median length of marriages for England and Wales ending in divorce was eleven-and-a-half years but the median length of sixteenth-century marriages ending in death was fourteen years for the St Kerrian families.³⁸⁵ Even allowing for standard phrases in wills, evidence of love, or at least of affection can be found. One example is that of Gregory Dodd, Dean of Exeter Cathedral who in 1570 describes his wife Elizabeth as his 'lover and compannyon'. Another is gentleman John Short who demonstrates affection for his children in his nuncupative will of 1595 (though perhaps also some concerns about his wife's attitude towards them) when he requests his relative to be good to her and his children and hopes his wife 'will use my children well. Theie are hers as well as mine.'³⁸⁶ There are also occasional instances of family stability in parents who were present for the lives of, and outlived, two successive generations of their families, such as goldsmith John Withycombe (biography 94) who outlived his wife, his children and some of his grandchildren. Married in 1564, he was still alive in 1604, seemingly a constant in the Withycombe family.

Although the evidence discussed so far demonstrates that Exeter families could experience many combinations of forming, expanding, shrinking, re-expanding, dying out or growing branches, it is difficult to judge whether they generally formed a family group of one married couple plus their children and perhaps servants, or not, due to the lack of census material for the city at this time. It is therefore impossible to make generalizations about whether combinations which are relatively rare elsewhere, such as two or more couples in a household or three generations of the same family living

³⁸⁵ www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/vsob1/divorces-in-england-and-wales/2012/stb-divorces-2012.html#tab-Duration-of-marriage [accessed 24 October 2015]

³⁸⁶ TNA, PROB 11/79, image ref 308; TNA, PROB 11/52, image ref 386.

together, are rare or more common in Exeter.³⁸⁷ It is, however, very occasionally possible to see the size of households as they moved in and out of properties and to glimpse the make-up of some of those participating in the Crown Lottery in 1584, all of them in the parish of St Mary Major (see below).

Families did not necessarily own the property they occupied; the property documents used in this study reveal that much appears to have been owned ultimately by the Chamber and leased or sub-let from others. In one instance it is possible to see families moving out of, and growing into, premises as their families expand. It is also possible to catch a glimpse of the crowded and poor state of repair of the homes in which some chorus families lived. Edith and Edmund Bonamy appear to have been the adopted children of middle chorus cutler Richard Mogridge (biography 52) whose will and inventory of 1578 reveals the occupants of properties whose leases were bequeathed to Edith and Edmund. Occupying Edith's tenement in Preston Street (described as 'a house' in Peter's inventory) were middle chorus tailor John Salter and his wife Dorothy plus their several small children who paid one year's rent of 26s 8d for half of the tenement and [blank] Clapp who paid another year's rent for the other half. John Salter vacated the premises a quarter of the way through the following year, just before another son was born (perhaps they needed a larger house) and Clapp paid for the following year's rent for his half and three-quarters of the rent for the half previously occupied by Salter. A John Clapp, possibly of the lower chorus, was married to Agnes Tesard and whilst living in the parish of St Mary Major baptized two children by 1580 followed by two more by 1584, which might explain his desire to occupy the half of the tenement vacated by John Salter.

Occupying Edmund's premises, also a house in Preston Street, was lower chorus member Garrett Collins who occupied the top half of a third tenement for 8s, presumably with his wife Elizabeth and their three, eventually four, young children and Widow Langford who occupied the bottom half of the third tenement, described as the lowest tenement, probably going downhill.

³⁸⁷ Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage*, pp.126-7.

Garrett Collins and Widow Langford appeared not to have paid their rent but the premises needed major repairs for which Edmund had to pay. These comprised a new roof and windows, which cost 25s for twelve days' labour from John Searell (tiler), Simon Blackmore (carpenter), John Bagwell and John Smote plus 17s 2d for 'lyme, pynnes, crestes, rafters, laths, lathe nayles, a 1000 of stones [tiles] sande, hache nayles and 4 bordes to mak new wyndowes'. It is not known if the occupants found alternative accommodation during these substantial works.

Lottery households

Without census material, household structures are difficult to discern but one glimpse is afforded by an alternative, if imperfect source. This is a list in the St Mary Major Churchwardens' Accounts of those who participated in the Queen's Lottery in 1568, a state-sponsored affair aimed at raising funds for the improvement of harbours and other public works.³⁸⁸ Those listed are set out in table 6.5 and include some people apparently grouped by household - householder, family, servants and others of an unstated relationship, though not everyone in the household necessarily participated. Lone individuals also bought tickets, such as widow Katharine Johnson. When compared with parish registers this source lists individuals invisible in the registers but also contains gaps or at least misses out family members who were apparently alive. It cannot provide a confident overview of Exeter household composition but when matched with the registers, it is possible to obtain a better idea of the variety of household makeup, or at least of those which have the fullest coverage. For example, there were households with a married couple and children, plus servants and/or other acquaintances such as those of Richard Bowden, John Hill, William Trevett and Michael Brown. There were all-female households such as widow Duckenfield's and there were more complex households such as that of widow Margaret Nicholls who appeared to provide a roof over the head of another person's servant as well as a male acquaintance, his daughter and his servant - unless, of course, they were simply visitors who chose to join in the lottery at the time of their visit. This

³⁸⁸ Rowe and Falla, 'The Queen's Lottery', 119-122.

may also explain the Perry household situation where William Mongwell, his wife Margaret and three children appear to be present, possibly as visitors to, though perhaps as residents in, Alice Perry's household as she is the first to be listed. William Perry was apparently alive and a churchwarden in the parish in 1570, so it may have been that he was away at the time, leaving Alice in charge.³⁸⁹

Godparents or gossips

Other people associated with the family/household were godparents, also known as 'gossips', customarily two godfathers and a godmother for a boy, two godmothers and a godfather for a girl.³⁹⁰ They were chosen from among relatives (especially grandparents), friends, neighbours, employers and landlords and in this, according to Houlbrooke, 'spiritual and natural kinship overlapped'. Cressy also argues that many families treated godparentage as a matter of social respect and esteem.³⁹¹ Whatever the specific motivations for bestowing godparentage, and they are largely invisible in the Exeter records, the recipients' ostensible purpose was to answer on behalf of the child in respect of forsaking the Devil and all his works and to see them brought up in Christian life – though few might live long enough to keep this promise.³⁹² The evidence relating to godparents supports Brodsky's argument that individuals other than immediate family could play a significant role in some households from practical assistance to moral and material support.³⁹³

There was no legal requirement to record godparents in the parish registers and indeed few are recorded in Exeter. Only between 1582 and 1609, in the parish baptism records for Holy Trinity and very occasionally for St Sidwell, is

³⁸⁹ DHC, PW1 009.131D, f.18.

³⁹⁰ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p.150.

³⁹¹ R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.142; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p.156.

³⁹² *Ibid*, p.152.

³⁹³ Brodsky, 'Widows in Late Elizabethan London', pp.148-153.

this relationship recorded, due to the particularly thorough parsons there.³⁹⁴ Sixty-eight men and fifty-three women are described as such and godparentage can shed more light on the godparental role of the women in particular, although six are unidentifiable, four are unindividuable and for twenty-one of them, nothing else is known. Of the remaining twenty-two, most are simply stated as being godmother to a child, and most were from the lower and middle chorus, but for some it is possible to view the circumstances in which they found themselves godmothers.

Some appear to have been real friends in need. Katharine Searell, for example, was the wife of William Searell and godmother to Agnes Minson and Katharine Leigh. Having been born in their house, Katharine Leigh was baptized on 13 December 1597, described as the daughter of 'one William Lee of Great Tarrington latlie decessed and borne of the bodie of Marie Lee out of William Searels house carpenter who came from ye parrish aforenamed for to see her friends...'.³⁹⁵ Likewise, Elizabeth Moody, the wife of John Moody found herself, on 10 March 1600, a godmother to Elizabeth Haulce daughter ... 'of Richard of Axminster and borne of ye bodye of Marie ye wife of ye fore sayd Richard being a strannger and out of ye house of John Modye with out ye Sougthgate and hath geven his Word to discharge ye parish of ye child...'.³⁹⁶ Katharine Matthew, wife of William (biography 50), was godmother to Nicholas Demond whose mother, Eleanor, in 1605 '...died in William Mathewes house without the Southgate, wife of John Hatter dwelling in exiland in seinete Edmond's parish.' Whilst Katharine may have chosen to support the legitimate Nicholas, as well as two other children, eleven years earlier she had not taken on the role of godmother to William's sometime servant Joan Humphrey, who gave birth to illegitimate Michael Humphrey in the parish in 1594.

Other illegitimate children did find godparents. Mary Adams was godmother to Mary Gone baptized on 2 November 1597 who was the daughter of

³⁹⁴ *ibid*, p.154.

³⁹⁵ Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Baptisms, pp.21 and 34;

³⁹⁶ *ibid*, p.39.

'...Hugh begotten of the bodie of [blank] base borne not chastely in matrimonie or wedlock...' . Likewise, on an undated day in 1588, Isatte Whitehead and Wilmot [blank] were both godmother to Wilmot Roberts, daughter '...of Amye basse borne and as they say begote by forse on the way goynge to plemoth whome she knows not...' . Bearing in mind that godparentage, even at lower levels of society, could involve gifts at the christening such as food and drink or small accessories and favours, these appear to be generous gestures.³⁹⁷

Like Isatte and Wilmot above, Mabel Ellis and her mother seem also to have joined forces as godmothers in 1598, in their case, to Mary Nicholls alias Saunders, the daughter of Mary and Thomas who were themselves godparents to four others within the parish between 1596 and 1598, although they each godparented different children.³⁹⁸ Godparents were supposed to be old enough to have taken Holy Communion, which Cressy estimates as around age 16, though Grace Convers, the youngest of Mary Nicholls' godparents, became a godmother in March 1598 aged fourteen having herself been baptized in September 1584. Though young, she was buried in June 1601, aged eighteen.³⁹⁹ Family godparenting can be seen in the examples of Jane and Nicholas Wills (biography 91) , who appointed Nicholas' brothers Zachary and John (biographies 91 and 93) as godparents in 1600, and John Hurst, who in 1552 was godfather to John, Gilbert and Margaret Yard who were probably related to his sister Joan Yard, though they were not her children.⁴⁰⁰

Not all godparents were from the same parish or chorus group. Jane and Nicholas Wills appointed as godmothers to their daughter Jane, Jane Bevis and Margaret Ellacott, wives of leading actors and wealthy merchants Richard Bevis of St Mary Arches and John Ellacott of St Petrock. Neither Richard nor

³⁹⁷ *Ibid*, pp.21 and 33; Cressy, *Birth, Death and Marriage*, p.159.

³⁹⁸ Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Baptisms, p.31, 33 and 34,

³⁹⁹ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p.154; Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Baptisms, pp.18 and 34; Nesbit, Holy Trinity Parish Register Burials, p.53.

⁴⁰⁰ TNA, PROB 11/36, image ref 30.

John mentioned their wives' god-daughter in their wills, so having upmarket godparents did not, at least on this occasion, result in any observable financial advantage.⁴⁰¹ However, in several other Exeter wills, godchildren of the testator and their spouses were beneficiaries. Joan Hayfield/Heathfield (biography 33) left bequests for her godsons John and Jeremy Garrett, and cook William Hellings (biography 34) left a gold ring to his goddaughter and a gold noble to his godson. Godchildren also left bequests to their godparents/gossips such as William Lant (biography 42), who bequeathed a coat, a jacket and a gown to his three godparents (of unknown gender, but perhaps likely to be men given the nature of the bequests), Joan Heathfield who left her godmothers Joan Risdon and Philippa Beal, hats, petticoats, aprons and partlets and Elizabeth Body who bequeathed her godmother Bonfield four pewter platters and the 4s she owed.⁴⁰² Henry Passmore's godfather John Piggott was bequeathed a moiety of a tenement in Halberton, although it was to her godfather's wife that Lucy Hussey left items.⁴⁰³ Godparents were also handy at the bedside of the dying and it was they who appear to have assembled the nuncupative will of bookseller John Gropall, as the document testifies; 'the witness within specyfied do testyfye that the testatour did in his deathe bedde declare and say thes wordes my gossip Yarvin and my Gossippe Lynnte...'. Joan Risdon above was also a witness for John Young's nuncupative will.⁴⁰⁴

Exeter godparents seem also to have affected the naming of godchildren, a pattern seen elsewhere in the late sixteenth century, although Cressy notes that it was not necessary to name children thus and that the trend seemed to wane in the seventeenth century.⁴⁰⁵ It can be no coincidence that Katharine Searell was godmother to Katharine Lee, Elizabeth Moody to Elizabeth

⁴⁰¹ DHC, ECA, Orphans' Court Book 143, f.23; TNA, PROB 11/115, image ref 68.

⁴⁰² Juddery, *Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories Electronic Files*, OCI 13 item 3; DHC, ECA, Orphans's Court Loose Wills Box, W33; TNA, PROB 11/93, image ref 603.

⁴⁰³ TNA, PROB 11/65, image ref 52; DHC, ECA, Orphans' Court Loose Wills Box, W29.

⁴⁰⁴ TNA, PROB 11/37, image ref 108; TNA, PROB 11/73, image ref 66.

⁴⁰⁵ Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, p.161 and note 49.

Haulce, Mary Adams to Mary Gone, Jane Bevis to Jane Wills (although her mother was also Jane) and Wilmot [blank] to Wilmot Roberts. The same pattern is seen in men's names in wills where, for example, Francis Bryna is godfather to Francis Cook, Leonard Yeo to Leonard Martin and another Leonard Yeo, Robert Chaff to Robert Bigglestone and Robert Tozer, and Roger Chardon to Roger Carr, Roger Davy and another Roger Chardon. His other godson is Richard Chardon, presumably because three Roger Chardons would be confusing even for Elizabethans. In one variation on this theme, Thomas Maunder is godfather to Maunder Langton. Alternatively, fathers' saints' or monarchs' names were chosen, though there is no obvious correlation of saints' day dates with chosen names in Exeter.

Apprentices

Households extended beyond the realms of immediate family and godparents into the occupations which sustained them, some of which supported apprentices, usually for a period of seven years – if they were to gain their freedom.⁴⁰⁶ At first glance, most of the Exeter apprentices were taken on by masters rather than mistresses with 369 masters appearing in the records of freedom between 1550 and 1610 as opposed to five apprentice mistresses across the entire archives used in this study. Table 6.6 shows that 8% of apprentices with middle chorus masters (and the middle chorus are under-represented as masters in comparison with the overall SD) progressed to achieve a status above the level of middle chorus, including two drapers, William Newcombe and Laurence Barcombe, who became leading actors. For apprentices of upper chorus masters, 28% rose above the status of middle chorus and for those of leading actors, 42% achieved this. Leading actors are over-represented in this selection of apprentice masters in comparison with the SD, which may mean that the success rate of their apprentices is overstated. Nevertheless, this does seem to demonstrate that good connections from the start made a difference to social status enhancement.

⁴⁰⁶ Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper, *Description of the Citie of Excester*, p.870.

Although the majority of apprentices were supported by masters, it is through the biography of one apprentice mistress that it is possible to suggest how one apprentice might have helped enable the continuance of a working household when most of its family died out. In her article on women and the urban economy, Prior argues that, if a man became ill, women simply had to do more - supervising the apprentices, seeing the orders were fulfilled and, when widowed, having to take responsibility for seeing any apprentice through his apprenticeship or turning him over to another master and/or running the business herself.⁴⁰⁷ The example of Joan Nicholls illustrates several of these points. Joan Gill married Robert Nicholls (biography 55) in 1567, a month before he gained his freedom as a barber and two months after the legitimate baptism of a daughter Grace. Grace was baptized in the parish of All Hallows Goldsmith Street where, in 1573, Robert appeared to be a joint tenant of a capital messuage on the corner of High Street and Goldsmith Street. It is not known who Grace's mother was but it may have been that she died in childbirth, making Joan Robert's second wife, with whom, by 1577, he had baptized two more children, Richard and Elizabeth. Robert's business appeared sturdy as he was a poor-relief contributor in 1570, his first apprentice, Humphrey Roche, gained his freedom in 1579 and in 1580 Robert was licenced to practice surgery in Exeter. However, in July 1587 he was buried in the parish of All Hallows Goldsmith Street. Two years later in 1589, Joan was stated to have been mistress, alongside her deceased husband, of newly-free Thomas Wallis.

Thomas Wallis continued to be associated with the parish of All Hallows Goldsmith Street, so he may have continued Robert and Joan's business as there is no further record of their son Richard. Joan may also have had to remain active in the business as both Grace and Elizabeth Nicholls were buried within two days of each other in May 1591 in All Hallows Goldsmith Street, aged twenty-four and fourteen years old respectively, as was Thomas's wife, also called Elizabeth. It seems likely that they were all victims of the plague outbreak (discussed in chapter five) which Joan and Thomas

⁴⁰⁷ Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society*, pp.95-96.

survived. Thomas remained in the parish, fathering three daughters between 1592 and 1594 by an unknown new wife whilst Joan appeared to retire in 1598 when she was granted a place in Palmer's Almshouse for the rest of her life, though her burial is not recorded. To gain an impression of Thomas Wallis and Joan Nicholl's occupational life, it is possible to turn to the biography of neighbouring barber Owen Singleton (biography 70). He operated for nine years between achieving his freedom in 1593 and burial in the parish of All Hallows Goldsmith Street in 1602 and his inventory sets out his barber-shop equipment including 'three casses of instruments' which may be evidence of his being a surgeon as well, although he was not licensed to practice as Robert Nicholls was.

Another kind of apprenticeship is visible in the household of Alice Bridgeman who was the wife of merchant Thomas Bridgeman and the daughter of John Jones the well-known Exeter goldsmith (biographies 8 and 40). Alice married Thomas in February 1576 and had baptized eight children by 1587. In the middle of constant pregnancy and child rearing, her father was buried in January 1584 and in his will written the year before, he stated:

I give and bequeath ... that if Katherine Weeks ... shall and will be bounde as apprentice to my daughter Alice Bridgeman for to serve forth so many yeares as yt was prmised she should serve with my wife and me my saide daughter Alice and her husband maie have and receive suche rente as shalbe due to her during the said tyme of her apprenticeship to her only use and behosse as yt was prmised by her kinfolk that then at the ende of the said her service she shall have of my guifte and bequeth the somme of three poundes of lawfull money of England with all siche thinges as I have in custody to her use.

With the death of her son John in February 1584 followed by the birth of three more children, perhaps Katharine was able to relieve some of the burden of family life for Alice. The only other mention of a Katharine Weeks is the apparently youngest child of freeman John Weeks, baptized in wealthy St

Petrock in January 1569 and so aged fourteen at the time of John Jones's will.⁴⁰⁸ John Weeks was not assessed in the lay subsidies of 1577 or 1586, which suggests he was not amongst the wealthiest of men. However, with Katharine's kinfolk paying 'rent' to Alice and the promise of £3 at completion - this particular apprenticeship is clearly not a 'parish' apprenticeship, described by Prior as 'all too often a form of cheap labour' with minimal training and associated with housework; the model might have been the same, but the circumstances were not.⁴⁰⁹ A Katharine Weeks was buried in the parish of St Sidwell on 6 December 1587, and, if she is the same Katharine, she was aged 18. It is not known whether she completed her apprenticeship with Alice and claimed her bequest, but she appeared to have temporarily extended and supported the Bridgeman household.⁴¹⁰

Only two other apprentice mistresses are mentioned in the records used in this study. Joan Parramore and her husband John, a merchant, shared masterly duties for their apprentice Robert Dyer who gained his freedom in 1577 when both were still alive.⁴¹¹ Alice Birch appeared to operate as sole apprentice mistress to Thomas Dodderidge when he gained his freedom to practice an unstated occupation in 1597.⁴¹² Nothing more is known about Alice, although she might be Alice Burrage described as a spinster in the Exeter Quarter Sessions indictments in 1595, where she was bound over to keep the peace.⁴¹³ If they are one-and-the-same Alice, the fact that neither she nor her apprentice Thomas have any kind of profile in the sources may suggest that they belonged to the lower eschelons of the middle chorus and supports the suggestion by French that spinsters, no matter how useful, did not achieve 'social autonomy or a public role equivalent to that enjoyed by married women'.⁴¹⁴

⁴⁰⁸ Nesbit, St Petrock Parish Register Baptisms, p.16.

⁴⁰⁹ Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society*, p.103.

⁴¹⁰ Fursdon, St Sidwell Parish Register Burials [no page number].

⁴¹¹ Rowe and Jackson, *Exeter Freeman*, p.101.

⁴¹² *Ibid*, p.107.

⁴¹³ DHC, N13-09 Quarter Session Rolls, Eliz 38 image 15.

⁴¹⁴ H. French, 'Introduction' in Barry and French (eds.), *Identity and Agency in England, 1500-1800*, (Basingstoke:Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.28.

There may have been many more women apprentice mistresses in Exeter households who worked alongside their husbands but who do not appear in the sources. Prior worked with the continuous series of freedom records in Oxford and although she finds that there are very few cases of apprentice mistresses coupled with masters, and none after 1583, she suspects under-registration of women, especially after 1540, when wives' names or the wording *et uxore* begin to disappear from the records.⁴¹⁵ In Bristol, the apprentice records do record mistresses' names alongside their husbands because in Bristol, unlike many towns, both husband and wife were responsible for taking on an apprenticeship.⁴¹⁶ However, the same couples are only represented by the husband's name in the corresponding freedom records. The same archival absence for Oxford and Bristol may have occurred in Exeter, although there is no clear reason why the women discussed here are exceptions.

The baking trade

Having considered chorus family life and its extensions, this section examines in detail the occupation of baker because several of its members have relatively strong biographies (biographies 1, 4, 16-19, 25-26, 29, 43, 49, 76, 81-82, 84, 87 and table 6.7) and these demonstrate in more depth how families involved in the same trade interconnected on many levels. Juddery provides a summary description of Exeter's sixteenth-century bakers drawn from her work on the city's Orphans' Court inventories, and this study is able to expand it from coverage of three individuals to over seventy and to analyse not only their household goods but also their interrelationships and civic participation.⁴¹⁷ In this respect, it is also enlightening to compare the life experiences of a group of largely native workers in a particular occupation with those of the alien group discussed in chapter five.

⁴¹⁵ Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society*, p.104.

⁴¹⁶ J. Barry, 'Bristol Pride' in M. Dresser and P.Ollerenshaw (eds.), *The Making of Modern Bristol* (Tiverton: Redcliffe Press, 1996), pp.37-8.

⁴¹⁷ Juddery, *Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories*, p.iii.

The Exeter bakers were incorporated in November 1464 and re-incorporated under the common seal in 1487-1488. Hooker recorded that the Mayor was responsible for giving the bakers their assize, which was calculated each Wednesday, and the bailiffs ensured that they kept to the price. Their bread was to be 'wholesome for mannes body' and each baker was to 'put his or their owne proper marke upon every of his loves baked and to be sold'. They were to grind their corn at the city's mills on pain of forfeit but they were largely protected from outside competition as no 'foreign' bakers could sell their bread in the city except on market days and then only at the Carfax until twelve noon. Bakers were also paid 16d 'for carriage of the bredd' distributed as gifts within the city.⁴¹⁸ In 1568, for example, wealthy widow Joan Tuckfield specified that £5 in bread be annually distributed to the poor, in the form of 600 loaves two weeks before Easter and another 600 two weeks before Christmas. Later, in 1609, the Chamber itself ordered the baking of 'eighty dozen' of bread for the poor.⁴¹⁹ Other outlets were organizations like the Tailors' Guild who enacted that the officers of the company were to receive two or three loaves of bread at Christmas and Easter (at 3d a piece).⁴²⁰ Unlike the bakers of London, no distinction was made between white bakers and brown bakers, so presumably all bakers made both finer and coarser breads.⁴²¹ Kowaleski describes Exeter's medieval bakers. They appeared only occasionally to join the freedom and as bakers only (as opposed to bakers who became merchants) rarely reached what Kowaleski describes as Rank B, the nearest equivalent to the upper chorus in this study. They quarreled over servants, took strike action relating to price and quality and deeply resented the restrictions on where they could grind their corn – particularly when millers appear to have mishandled their grain on numerous occasions.⁴²² They were more frequently accused of conspiracy than were

⁴¹⁸ Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper, *Description of the Citie of Excester*, pp. 723, 808, 819, 849-50, 874 and 892.

⁴¹⁹ Evans, 'A Echo of the Multitude', pp.415 and 424.

⁴²⁰ DHC, ECA, Tailors' Act Book 1, f.62.

⁴²¹ R.H. Tawney and E. Power (eds.), *Tudor Economic Documents in Three Volumes* (London: Longmans, Green & Co, 1951), Vol 1, p.157.

⁴²² DHC, ECA, Presentment of Nuisances 1550-1588, C5/100, p.83.

other trades, which Kowaleski argues may have been because of their control over a vital foodstuff.⁴²³

Numbers and distribution

It is possible to say more about the seventy-six bakers identified in this study, even though twelve of them are unindividuable. Of the remaining sixty-four, forty-seven can be associated with a parish of whom just over a third came from the parish of Holy Trinity. However, because of its conscientious parson, this parish has the highest percentage (9%) of parish records noting occupation, the mean across the other parishes for which records exist being 2.5% and the median 1.9%. It seems unlikely that most bakers lived in Holy Trinity but more likely that there were many more bakers than were generally recorded and that Holy Trinity is representative of this. The mean number of bakers per parish, between 1550 and 1610, excluding Holy Trinity, is two-and-a-half and the median three, but in Holy Trinity there were sixteen individuable bakers.

Studies of rural inventories in Kent reveal that the home production of bread was relatively rare in waged households and associated more with wealthy gentry households, suggesting that home baking was something of a luxury.⁴²⁴ An examination of the Orphans' Court inventories appears to show that the same is true for urban Exeter. The majority of inventories which mention kitchens usually reveal that room to contain cooking implements relating to roasting and boiling. Whilst home-baking equipment may be disguised amongst the general pots and pans, only one kitchen, that of middle chorus innkeeper John Brook of the parish of St Pancras, contained a combination of trough, boards and hogsheads that together suggest baking, probably for his customers (see later in this chapter for more detailed discussion of baking equipment). The only other contenders are weaver/tucker John Dennis and saddler Edmund Beardsley who both occupied property with bakehouses. John's contained brewing equipment whilst Edmund's contained one bushel of rye, neither of which suggest

⁴²³ Kowaleski, *Local Markets and Regional Trade*, pp.139-141.

⁴²⁴ Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann, *Production and Consumption*, p.80.

operational bakeries, but rather beer brewing. Even amongst the wealthiest households revealed from this source, only leading actors Henry James enjoyed a separate bunting house, Thomas Chappell the luxury of a 'pasterhouse/paysteri/pastery' and John Spurway a bakehouse with a chest, tubs and beam scales with weights.⁴²⁵ If the inventories are evidence of a general lack of home-baking except in a few wealthier households, then Holy Trinity with its sixteen bakers looks increasingly as if it could be representative of other parishes. It may also have been that many households made their own pies and pastry but took them to the bakers' workshops for baking, thus saving on time and fuel and ensuring that their food was properly baked.⁴²⁶

Working across all the documents used in this study, 55% of those bakers associated with a parish were linked to Holy Trinity, St Sidwell and St Mary Major combined but no bakers were recorded in St Olave, St Mary Arches, St Petrock, St Lawrence, St Pancras or St Stephen and perhaps less surprisingly, All Hallows on the Wall (being mainly gardens) or around the Cathedral. It is difficult to see any pattern here and it is not possible to say that bakeries were associated more with wealthy parishes or with more populous parishes. By comparison, in 1576 in Rye, 12 bakers were more or less evenly spread across the town in terms of parish distribution.⁴²⁷ It may be that the Exeter archives simply do not portray a more even spread that might have existed. It is possible to pinpoint where one baker operated, although frustratingly there is no inventory to complement this information. Peter Vilvaine inherited the home and bakehouse left to him by his parents in the parish of All Hallows Goldsmith Street, and the bargain and sale of 1562 describes the 'messuage, curtilage and garden' as located between three high streets. Perhaps the most likely position in All Hallows Goldsmith Street is between modern day Waterbeer Street (north in sixteenth-century terms) Goldsmith Street (east) and High Street (south), and he could have been a

⁴²⁵ Juddery, Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories Electronic Files, OCI 11, 18, 29, 43, 45 and 57.

⁴²⁶ P. Brears, 'St Nicholas Priory, Exeter: Research Towards the Refurbishment of the Kitchen and Dining Parlour' (unpublished report held at RAMM, February 2005), pp.22-23.

⁴²⁷ Mayhew, *Tudor Rye*, p.147.

near neighbour to Robert Nicolls the barber-surgeon. Peter Vilvaine was one of the wealthiest bakers who trained up three apprentices, which may be connected with his premises being situated on the High Street spine.

Being the producers of an essential foodstuff, the number of bakers might be a reasonable indicator of the overall relative size of the city's population. In terms of numbers being recruited into the trade, of the forty-one bakers with known freedom dates, there was an overall increase in recruitment across the period under consideration, with a burst of new entrants at the start of the seventeenth century, perhaps in response to an increasing population and therefore demand for bread or alternatively, more complete records (see table 6.8). The reductions in recruits at the start of the 1570s and 1590s coincide with the devastating episodes of plague discussed in chapter five, and may account for the temporary downward trends – with the exception of the 1604 outbreak which, consistent with other evidence, seems not to have had such an impact.

Eight individuable bakers are recorded as apprentice masters, including fathers acting as masters to their sons such as Stephen Vilvaine (son Peter), John Bonifant (son John), John Redwood (son John), Nicholas Gunstone (son John) and Edward Ward (sons Richard and Thomas). Nicholas Gunstone gained his freedom in 1559 and became Master of the Bakers Company in 1563. Although he was buried in the parish of St Paul in 1570 and his son John gained his freedom by succession in 1575, there is no record of his grandson Thomas continuing in the trade. What relationship to each other were John and Edward Humphrey, John and Robert Manning, Edward and Laurence Ward and John, Robert and Richard Paty remains unknown, but clearly family bakery businesses were not unusual. Curiously, baker Nicholas Rowe was apprentice master to his son Richard who gained his freedom by succession to his father, but as a skinner. Chains of skill transference to those other than family members are also evident, such as Nicholas Erron who was master to Christopher Heathfield who gained his freedom in 1592. Christopher's own apprentice was John Fry who gained his freedom in 1597. They could, of course, be in-laws related by unrecorded marriages, in the

same way as the Glanfields, Maunders and Geanes (discussed below) but it is impossible to know.

Civic status and attributes

No bakers were leading actors (table 3.15) but four were from the upper chorus, much like their medieval counterparts. The men so identified are Thomas Gregg bailiff in 1546, Stephen Vilvaine in 1556, his son Peter Vilvaine in 1579 and Nicholas Erron in 1583, who was also the only baker to receive a gift of one of John Hooker's pamphlets in 1584. Forty-six others were from the middle chorus, and of the seventeen who did not have their freedom recorded, ten played other civic roles which suggest they were in fact freemen. Only seven others appear to have played no other civic role which may indicate they were of the lower chorus. Nine bakers acted as jurors, seven as churchwardens and fifteen as surety providers for others. Edward Ward (biography 84) serves as a good example of a civically active baker, as, despite the misdemeanours of his youth (he was carted for sexual relations with Peternell his servant and also for accepting his pregnant sister into his house in 1561), he became a churchwarden, a pikeman, a poor-relief distributor and contributor, a juror and a surety provider for several people. He was creditor to, and appraised the inventories of, Alan Marks, cook and William Flay, weaver, was involved in the administration of Roland Fabian's estate and was a witness to the wills of stationer Peter Benson and Nicholas Erron. Alongside his civic life he was also father and apprentice master to Richard and Thomas and master to Emmanuel Driver.

Nine identifiable bakers were recorded as joining the musters between 1569 and 1609, just 3% of the identifiable mustered men with a known occupation in 1569 and 4% in 1587-1588. In 1569, two were pikemen and two harquebusiers, the two roles in which men from food-related occupations appeared to participate most overall (table 4.8). Only one of the pikemen, upper chorus Nicholas Erron, was also one of the wealthier bakers, befitting the better-type of man that pikemen were supposed to be. Wealthier baker John Geane and (at the time) relatively less wealthy Roger Ford were the harquebusiers so wealth did not seem to play a strong role in the selection of

bakers' roles here; perhaps they were just good shots. In the 1587-1588 muster, two bakers were musketeers and one, George Searell, was a calivermen. In 1609 John Proctor served as a caliverman and Thomas Filmore as a musketeer with the East Quarter trained band (and stored a 'bastorde musket, one head peece, one flaske & touchbox wth sworde & dagger' in his hall). Of all these firearms operatives, only George Searell was ever considered wealthy enough to pay the lay subsidy, further undermining the argument that wealth accompanied the expense of bearing firearms. Six bakers contributed to the ship money levy in 1588 but none from this group is known to have signed the Bond of Association. Overall, they do not appear to have been the occupation most visible in the defence of the realm – perhaps the baking of essential foodstuff was considered more vital.

No bakers were recorded as being aliens, unlike the situation in Rye where there were protests against the 'French bakers' who were felt to be stealing the trade of local men in the 1570's.⁴²⁸ However the names of men like Henry Dabinet, Richard Larrell and Roger Courtis, who have no record of freedom and even Nicholas Erron (alternatively spelled as Aron/Arrant) with his freedom record in 1557, may suggest overseas origins. As discussed in chapter five, the Vilvaines sound as if they should have had continental origins but at least three generations of them owned city property, demonstrated in the bequest of property to Peter by his parents Stephen and Richord who in turn had been granted it by Peter's grandfather John (biography 82).

Wealth

Although, in terms of occupational wealth, bakers are included in the middle ranking food occupations in this study (table 3.3) closer scrutiny of individuable bakers' lay subsidy valuations show them to have varied widely, with seven paying above average for their parish but many more paying under or not at all (table 6.9). Mayhew calculated the total assessed wealth for Rye's twelve bakers in 1576 as £91, representing 2.7% of the total

⁴²⁸ *ibid*, p.84.

assessment value of £3277 for that year.⁴²⁹ In 1586 in Exeter, the fifteen bakers' assessed wealth was only £45 but it still represented 2.5% of the total assessment value of £1793 for that year. The Rye bakers' mean assessment value in 1576 was £7.5 (and the town average valuation was £7.8) but in Exeter in 1586 it was £3, when the overall average valuation was £5.4 for that year. The relative wealth of Exeter bakers seems lower than in Rye although the figures appear to reflect the overall taxation undervaluation in Exeter, noted in appendix 3.

Other comparisons can be made through examining net inventory values (table 6.10). The wealth of 10 Exeter bakers as measured by their inventory values is higher than those for Rye and Worcester bakers for the same period. Mayhew calculated the mean value of nine bakers' inventories in Rye between 1540 and 1603 at £26 13s 9d and Dyer found the inventory values for Worcester bakers who died before 1590 ranged from £20 to £40.⁴³⁰ In Exeter, net values ranged from £34 to £498 with a mean of £118 but a median of £62. Despite the less-than-average subsidy valuations for bakers overall, the provincial capital seemed to be the place for at least some to become relatively wealthy, although the inventory mean and median values were well below those of the Exeter inventories as a whole, an average (mean) inventorial value of £429 and a median of £155.

Unfortunately the list of set annual wage rates for Exeter as required by the *Statute of Labourers and Artificers* in June 1563 does not refer to bakers, although in Rye they are included amongst the 'artificers by the year' as opposed to the 'labourers by the day'.⁴³¹ Rye bakers and brewers are at the top of the list earning between £3 and £4 per annum.⁴³² In London, whitebakers rates were £4 13s 4d by the year with meat and drink.⁴³³ It would seem that Thomas Gregg, Stephen Vilvaine, Nicholas Erron and maybe George Searell, Peter Vilvaine and John Geane were the last of this

⁴²⁹ *ibid*, p.148.

⁴³⁰ *ibid*, p.151; Dyer, *City of Worcester*, p.138.

⁴³¹ DHC, ECA, Miscellaneous Roll 35a.

⁴³² Mayhew, *Tudor Rye*, p.125.

⁴³³ Tawney and Power (eds.), *Tudor Economic Documents*, Vol 1, p.367.

occupation to make a truly comfortable living up until the 1580s, and that towards the end of the century, if the relative value of lay subsidies can be believed, bakers like Henry Dabinet and Richard Addis were maintaining a steady level of wealth, perhaps making the most of the rise in food prices.⁴³⁴

Interconnectivity

That the bakers appeared to be an interconnected group is demonstrated by the range of contacts between them and also some of the city's cooks during their lives and in the event of their deaths. Of the seven bakers who appraised inventories, three appraised other bakers (Henry Dabinet appraised James Taylor and Gregory Hunt, George Searell appraised Nicholas Glanfield and Robert Colman appraised Thomas Gregg). Edward Ward appraised the inventory of cook Alan Marks who was a debtor both of Edward and of baker George Elliot and was also the tenant of baker William Freer. Likewise, William Marks, cook was a debtor of baker Richard Bodley. Edward Ward was also a witness to the will of baker Nicholas Glanfield and Nicholas, in turn, was a creditor of baker Humphrey Collipress who owed him 4s in 1583 and a debtor of Richard Addis, owing him 4s for malt. He was also a debtor of John Geane his stepfather (John Geane married Agnes Glanfield in 1567) and Nicholas gained his freedom from him in 1576. Silvester Maunder subsequently married Nicholas Glanfield's widow Alley Glanfield in 1583 six weeks before gaining his freedom from Peter Vilvaine. Silvester Maunder was brought up by merchant John Barstaple after the death of his father Henry Maunder in 1564 and presumably Barstaple apprenticed him to Vilvaine. Henry Maunder was the brother-in-law and will overseer of baker Thomas Gregg who had died in 1560, so there were existing baking connections in the family. Baker Richard Reed married Joan Geane, but what relation to John she might have been is not recorded. George Searell was also one of the executors of baker Roger Courtis' will, John West left 20s to three of Robert Matthew's children and Nicholas Erron left £5 to his 'daughter-in-law' (stepdaughter) Alice Marks, her surname indicating that she may have

⁴³⁴ Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, p.100.

married into the family of cooks mentioned above, or alternatively, Nicholas married a widow of that family.

Bi-employment

Two bakers are also described as millers; Richard Addis, based in St Edmund and Henry Dabinet in St Mary Steps, both parishes which were crossed by leats and other mills, and in the curtilage of James Taylor's premises was 'a grendyng Stone 2s'. However, although no other bakers appeared to be described as members of other occupations, they did appear to have other sources of income which both support and contradict Dyer's analysis of the situation in Worcester. He states that 'opportunities for economic diversification, such a conspicuous feature of other trades, must have been limited for the baker, for only a small number branched out into the making of malt, and none at all farmed.' It is true that there is little evidence of maltmaking bakers in the city, although Richard Addis was owed 9s for malt by Nicholas Glanfield, but Richard Halstaff rented the 'pasture of Southernhay' in 1593, as did John Mountsteven of Heavitree who held 'a parcel of ground taken out of Southernhay' in 1564, as well as a lease on 'a meadow called Cowemmarsh next the great river of Exe' in 1553. These do not appear to be arable lands farmed for the production of grain crops, so perhaps these bakers were supplementing their incomes or diets with animal husbandary. Dyer found this to be the case in Worcester, arguing that stock needed less time than crop-raising.⁴³⁵ Backyard husbandry was certainly a feature of the Exeter bakery trade. Nicholas Glanfield had four pigs and some chickens, Thomas Filmore was rearing pigs successfully with five piglets in the courtyard and two fitches of bacon in his hall worth £10, Richard Larrell owned three pigs and Henry Dabinet had 2 pigs in the linhay plus '2 fleaches of Backon' in the bakehouse, more in the shop and five gallons of butter in the spence. Perhaps he was the most popular purveyor in Exeter of bacon butties. However, bakers were not alone in this activity as table 6.11 shows that other traders also kept pigs, dyer Richard Wills being the owner of no less than four fitches and seven animals.

⁴³⁵ Dyer, *City of Worcester*, pp.134 and 138.

Returning to crop husbandry, Dyer's claim that Worcester bakers did not participate in arable farming contrasts with the Exeter evidence. Richard Larrell, operating on a very modest scale, had listed in his inventory of 1595 'the Corne in the Grounde 30s' and in 1610 Thomas Filmore had an unidentifiable crop growing worth 32s. Other bi-employments include running an alehouse (noted in John West's inventory of 1570) and James Taylor, Thomas Filmore and Robert Matthew all had wool and spinning equipment in their shops which suggests a broader household economy, perhaps carried out largely by women as it was in Worcester.⁴³⁶

The business of baking

The Orphans' Court inventories grant a glimpse into the material culture of bakers' businesses. In 1560 Thomas Gregg's position as a substantial baker was seen in the eight bushels of 'Beane Flower', twenty-six bushels of wheat (the best flour for bread) and a bushel of salt. Given that a bushel of flour which weighed 56lbs could produce twenty to thirty-five loaves, he appeared to have the potential to make over 160-280 loaves.⁴³⁷ He had three bunting hutches, used for making top-grade very fine flour for the best manchet bread, two troughs with covers, five free stones for the floor of an oven or ovens and two oven stoppers, or doors, most of them in his bakehouse. His inventory was appraised eleven months after his burial in 1559 and gives the appearance of a business left untouched since; his shop remained furnished with chairs, small tables, chests, coffers and tubs, used for storing wheat, all of which are broadly appropriate for the basic retail of bread.⁴³⁸ However, his 'shop' may have been his 'workshop' or place where he gathered his wares after baking, rather than a retail outlet. Laslett notes that London bakers were only permitted to sell bread in markets, although he does not think this sufficient evidence to say all bakers were so constricted.⁴³⁹ However, in the

⁴³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 96.

⁴³⁷ P. Brears, *Cooking and Dining in Medieval England* (Trowbridge: Cromwell Press, 2008), p.116.

⁴³⁸ P. Brears, *Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London, Prospect Books, 2015), p.122.

⁴³⁹ Laslett, *The World We have Lost*, pp.2 and 258.

Exeter Presentment of Nuisances, baker Robert Horwood 'carries out his bread to his customers', so delivery rounds were certainly an option in Exeter.⁴⁴⁰ Given the large amounts of short shelf-life ingredients, it is possible that the Gregg business remained operational. However, all his children were still just children, even if Thomas left his son William his premises. Perhaps his wife Elizabeth continued to run the business despite the family's wealth, or perhaps a newly-free baker such as Nicholas Gunstone made use of the bakehouse – he achieved his freedom in September 1559.

The suggestion of a continuing business is supported by the evidence for Henry Dabinet's shop/workshop in St Mary Steps in 1606 which appeared to be equally well stocked, containing amongst other items 'a prese to putt bred in' and actual bread - sixteen shillings' worth 'of diverse sorts'. His inventory also lists wheat, meal and thirty-eight tubs of bran. Henry, however, had a son-in-law, Bartholomew Miller, who had gained his freedom as a baker and to whom he left three bushels of wheat. His own son Henry also remained in the same parish, paying the subsidy there in 1629. It is therefore possible that the inventory reflects the unbroken continuation and basis for development of a successful family business, as an Alderman Dabynot is listed as a poor rate contributor in Holy Trinity in 1699.⁴⁴¹ Similarly, in 1583, Nicholas Glanfield's shop/workshop contained two old coffers and a hogshead and his bakehouse was stocked with meal, bran, wheat, malt, bunting hutches and what appeared to be a portable meal ark ('a coffer and poales').⁴⁴² These well-stocked premises might be explained by the remarriage four months later of his widow to Silvester Maunder who quickly gained his freedom as a baker. The family continued to live in the same parish, perhaps running the same business.

In contrast, in 1564, Robert Matthew appeared to have a bed in his shop as well as the aforementioned spinning equipment and his bakehouse contained merely seven sacks, a sack of wheat and 'other stuffe remayninge in the bake

⁴⁴⁰ DHC, ECA, Presentment of Nuisances, C5/100, pp.83-5.

⁴⁴¹ Hoskins (ed.), *Exeter in the Seventeenth Century*, pp.12 and 99.

⁴⁴² Brears, *Cooking and Dining in Tudor and Early Stuart England*, p.122.

house' to the value of only 13s 4d plus a moulding trough in his kitchen. In 1570, John West's shop appeared to be practically empty although he had left implements in Mrs Mountsteven's house. His bakehouse held modest contents, though ones indicative of high-quality breadmaking, together with 'a sacke of stuffe'. This view of their premises needs to be tempered with the caveats that usually apply to inventorial evidence, discussed further in chapter seven. For example, table 6.12 shows that for some bakers there were at least a couple of weeks between burial and appraisal, and therefore clear opportunities for material goods to acquire new owners, or be returned to their rightful owners and for sorting out and re-arrangement of household goods. It may be that other bakers acquired and/or removed useful items of shop stock, ingredients and equipment from their deceased fellow traders before appraisal. The words 'other stuffe *remayninge* in the bake house' (my italics) may imply that most of Robert Matthew's 'stuffe' had been moved elsewhere and John West might even have anticipated this by storing some equipment with Mrs Mountsteven of another baking family.

Alternatively, the apparent lack of retail-appropriate furniture in deceased bakers' shop spaces may mean that the storing and/or selling of bread simply involved very little furniture but a lot of bread, which might have been sold, perhaps given to the poor or eaten by mice and mould. It seems curious, though, that no-other baker appears to possess or desire Thomas Filmore's hour-glass (an early oven-timer?) or Richard Larrell's 'books', which may mean account or even recipe books, as they were found in the kitchen.

It is likely that the Glanfield establishment, and others, delivered bread to their customers as well as to the poor, as the importance of the horse to these tradesmen becomes clear through their inventories. Nicholas Glanfield owned a horse (plus another owed to him by a John Fellows as a desperate debt) with a pack saddle, a hackney saddle and a pair of panniers. Robert Matthew, John West, Thomas Filmore, Richard Larrell and James Taylor possessed harness, 'furniture', pack saddles, side saddles and panniers and although many others possessed horses and their 'furniture' (see table 6.11), bakers are the only individuals to be associated with panniers. These

descriptions all imply that most bakers could and did ride horses and used them for transporting goods. Thomas Gregg's riding days seemed to be over however as, although clearly able to ride (he possessed a 'Ridyng Cote of Clothe') his saddle and two pairs of stirrups were stored in the Chamber over the Entry amongst old beams, old iron, broken led, a lead pipe and 'other trasshe' and for both him and James Taylor, there was no horse in the stable. Where no horse is listed it seems likely that the animal had been removed to be fed and watered by others, especially if no one remained in the household to do so, which seems likely in the case of James Taylor who had been a widower with an eight-year-old daughter. Other animals are noted as being pastured outside the city, such as Francis Bryna's horses (biography 10).

The bakers' inventories enable an examination of how this section of Exeter's community managed wealth creation and maintenance. It was a finely tuned balancing act according to Muldrew in his detailed study of credit (in all its senses) and its intimate relationship with household reputation and honesty. He discusses how households made judgements about extending and withdrawing credit in order to compete and make profit rather than drown in debt, either their own or that of others.⁴⁴³ The inventory of Nicholas Glanfield shows the results of an apparently successful balancing act. Of his recoverable 'good' debts approximately £44 out of £89 (49%) were for 'bisky' (biscuit-bread) and bread. Of his irrecoverable 'desperate' or 'bad' debts, just under another £3 was owed for bread (13% of £23 total desperate debts) and overall his goods and good debts outweighed his own debts and bad debts owed by approximately £80. His inventory also reveals the catchment area of his business, as those who owed him for bread were 'of' the towns around the Exe Estuary, down either side, as far as Dawlish and Exmouth and inland as far as Moretonhampstead. In respect of debts good and bad, Nicholas was the greatest risk-taker of the bakers. Of the seven for whom there is debt information (table 6.11) their debts owing to others ranged between £7 and £38 and their average (mean) lending to others was £28, with a range of £112 (Nicholas Glandfield) to 20s (Robert Matthew). This suggests that their

⁴⁴³ Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, pp.3-4.

income was likely more than the £4 per annum discussed earlier. Comparison with other middle chorus members whose average (mean) lending was £243 and who owed between £2 and (exceptionally) £1000, suggests, however, that overall perhaps bakers did not enjoy significant credit with, or extend it to, others. This may have been connected to the fact that bakery is a quick-turnover, diurnal business, not a longer-term investment proposition. Future parallel studies of other businesses would enable this view to be better contextualised and it is worth bearing in mind that the financial risk taken by the middle chorus pales in comparison even with the selection of upper chorus members in table 6.11 whose average (mean) lending was £509 and who owed between £5 and £332.

Muldrew also points out how hoarding of relatively rare coinage was considered a miserly and un-Christian habit.⁴⁴⁴ Bakers, on the whole, seem to be modest on this front. Robert Matthew possessed only 12s, Thomas Filmore owned £4 in 'ready money' and Henry Dabinet £19. The exception was Thomas Gregg with £311 which was well above the average (mean) for other middle chorus men of £75 and even above that for the upper chorus of £264. In terms of savings invested in plate, bakers held an average (mean) of £10, excluding Thomas Gregg who owned £82, in comparison with other middle chorus men who owned an average (mean) of £13 and upper chorus men of £18. Thomas Filmore apparently possessed no plate unless it was removed before appraisal, but then most of his wealth lay in leases worth over £140. As for almost every other indicator, the bakers were relatively wealthy, but not usually the wealthiest of men, Thomas Gregg excepted.

Appearance and personal lives

Finally, it is just possible to glimpse individual personalities and appearance for some bakers. Thomas Gregg (aged either in his fifties or sixties) expressed a desire to be buried in St Sidwell. He also requested that bread and ale be distributed to the poor at church. He may have worn much of his considerable wealth, possessing a number of heavy gold and silver rings and

⁴⁴⁴ *ibid*, p.113.

two girdles which bore silver bars, precious stones and other gilt fittings and amongst his several gowns was an old one 'facid with Catts Skynns'. His ordinary apparel totalled £6 in value, twice as much as his contemporary Robert Matthew whose relatively plain clothing totalled £3. Henry Dabinet clearly valued his wardrobe, bequeathing a jerkin and a pair of breeches 'of myne owne wearinge' to his son-in-law and Nicholas Glanfield bequeathed 'all my clothes aswell lynnen as woollen belonginge to my bodie savinge my beste cloake' to his brother Harry. Nicholas, like Thomas Filmore, may have effectively owned an oven-timer in his clock worth 33s though it was located in his chamber over the shop with beds, so perhaps he was just a stickler for punctuality. James Taylor kept his kitchenware in the hall, together with 'a hanging Candelstycke ... with foure Snowfes [snuffers]' and 'a Seat to Sytt by the ffyer'. This suggests this widowed man, perhaps with his young daughter, lived mostly in one room.

In summary, Exeter's Elizabethan bakers were spread across the city and throughout the chorus. Civically active, none alien but some perhaps with overseas origins, their individual wealth and fortunes varied widely and show how difficult it is to generalize about a group once individual biographies are created. They were overall a growing trade, many were family businesses or combined family businesses and they intertwined on many levels, through training, financial support and marriage. Some appeared to diversify and nearly all were mobile within if not beyond the city. How typical they were of Exeter tradesmen awaits further similar studies of other occupations but they demonstrate how collective biography provides a multi-dimensional portrait of this chorus group and provides wider context for one of the depth biographies in chapter nine, that of Joan Redwood, the widow of baker John Redwood.

Conclusion

Returning to the theme of Exeter's Elizabethan families and households, it is extremely difficult to create hard and fast rules about them when only faint impressions rather than hard statistics are available. Even the intramural/lower turnover wealthier families in the smallest of parishes demonstrate a significant number of variations in size, shape and survival,

although overall, they do not appear to differ significantly from norms evidenced in other studies. Some households may have been havens of stability, affection and prosperity, others appear to have been miserable and the end of them a relief. Households could contain various combinations of immediate family, servants, apprentices, unrelated others and their acquaintances. Young people might marry slightly younger, the men usually after gaining their freedom. Some achieved greater ambitions through the marriages of offspring although the couple might not have any expectations about how long their marriage might last. They might have expected to produce children but not necessarily on a continuous basis and might not have been surprised to lose a quarter of their children to an early death, especially if twins were conceived. In the event of a partner's death, and if they were from craftsmen and merchant households, they might marry again quickly, perhaps for love, perhaps for convenience. They might survive by remarrying into the same occupation or finding others to manage the household or take over the business. If women were wealthy or particularly poor, long widowhoods might have followed, though not necessarily unproductively. For those caught out by pregnancy in a two-tier marriage system or through rape or incontinent living, others acting as godparents might help by lending their names and support to the new-born. Lifelong friendships with gossips might result in thoughtful bequests and personal support at the very end of life. Despite the fact that collective biography challenges generalization – there is an exception to every rule and much frustration with absent evidence, in particular personal documentation such as diaries – it is possible to gain an impression of a busy chorus; creating and running working households, balancing the books (or not), dealing with household and civic duties, transferring skills, encountering personal loss and attempting to survive in a very uncertain world.

Chapter 7: Chorus wills and inventories

Wills and inventories are undoubtedly the richest sources of biographical information encountered in this study and their broad content is summarized in chapter two. This chapter explores how a selection of Exeter men and women planned the distribution of their property in respect of their families and acquaintances and compares the findings with studies undertaken elsewhere. It examines fifty-nine wills (those of thirty-eight men and twenty-one women), the men being those chorus men with both a will and an Orphans' Court inventory, chosen in order to maximize the amount of probate information on which to draw. The women are the total number of those whose wills survive in the DHC and TNA for the period under consideration, whether members of the chorus or of leading actors' families. The women were all widows or single women, as married women did not draw up wills, and only the wills of Joan Redwood and Joan Heathfield are accompanied by inventories.⁴⁴⁵ A further two women, Beatrix Cary and Richard Vilvaine, were the widows of men whose wills also survive and this study takes the opportunity to compare these documents. It is a modest sample as this study has encountered 209 individuals from Exeter, or near surroundings, with some form of will made in their name between 1550 and 1610.⁴⁴⁶ Of the 188 men, seventy-one (38%) are leading actors, fourteen (7%) are upper chorus, sixty (32%) are middle chorus, and forty-three (23%) are apparently lower chorus, meaning the leading actors are over-represented in comparison with the subsidiary database, whilst the upper and middle are under-represented and the lower chorus proportionately represented. Of these 188 wills, fifty-four are accompanied by inventories and of these, sixteen are leading actors and thirty-eight men are chorus members. These thirty-eight men, together with the twenty-one women, comprise the fifty-nine wills examined here.

Source interpretation

At face value, wills provide information on a deceased person's estate, how it was intended to be distributed and what that distribution implies about the

⁴⁴⁵ Erickson, *Women and Property*, p.25.

⁴⁴⁶ Working with wills traced through the Devon Wills Project, TNA, the Moger Index and the Orphans' Court books.

testator's approach to supporting those they left behind. They sometimes reveal the value of bequests, particularly cash bequests but do not reveal the value of bequests of property or 'the residue' of an estate, the costs of funerals or the amount of any remaining debt to be discharged, all standard items in wills. Another point to bear in mind is that wills were made towards the end of the distribution process, and earlier gifts to family and friends during the deceased's lifetime are rarely recorded. This can give the mistaken impression of favouritism when, for example, same-gender siblings received different value bequests.⁴⁴⁷ That said, wills do occasionally reveal undisguised personal affection or dislike towards others, such as Arnold Reynold's attitude towards his wife, discussed in chapter six.

Probate inventories on the other hand, are largely devoid of emotion, being drawn up by appraisers as an administrative procedure to help executors and administrators achieve a just distribution of the deceased's assets.⁴⁴⁸ In terms of material culture, they can provide information on the minimum number of rooms in the property concerned, the range and sometimes the positioning within a property of the deceased's durable worldly goods together with their market value. As for wills, some caution is needed in their interpretation. Items may have been moved around as the household adjusted to new circumstances and Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann make the key point that absence of evidence is not evidence of absence. Inventories were usually drawn up after a death but not necessarily immediately afterwards (see chapter six in respect of baker's inventories). This left time for goods to be removed by others for various reasons such as claiming bequeathed goods, reclaiming loaned goods, selling goods in order to meet immediate expenditure and, perhaps, just plain theft. Empty rooms may have been left out of the inventory, low value items omitted or grouped together as 'stufte', and transitory items like fresh food, pets and children's toys excluded alongside items which 'belonged' to a still-living wife, and which were not the husband's to give away. An example of the latter, discussed in wider context

⁴⁴⁷ S. Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1988) p.76.

⁴⁴⁸ Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann, *Production and Consumption*, p.13.

in chapter nine, is Joan Harrison, widowed twice by men for whom inventories were drawn up (biography 31). Although technically her worldly goods became her husbands' on marriage, the two inventories are very different and it may be that Joan's possessions were unofficially recognized as 'hers' and omitted. Additionally there could be circumstances where people were living in a house with use of furniture and equipment therein but who did not own them and Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann also note that where the material environment was poorer there was less need for detailed description.⁴⁴⁹ Inventories were meant to omit heirlooms and real estate, including items such as ovens, wardrobes and windows, though oven doors, wooden 'seeling' and window glass are included in the Exeter inventories as moveables. In relation to clothing, the Exeter Orphans' Court inventories are especially valuable because some provide very detailed descriptions of 'apparel', as witnessed in Nicholas Glanville's and Thomas Gregg's inventories referred to in chapter six. They also, but not always, refer to the good and bad debts owed by and owing to the testator which can enable calculation of gross and net values. The analysis that follows bears all these caveats in mind and reveals that members of Exeter's chorus were by-and-large conformable with practice observed in other studies, but always with the occasional exception to the rule.

Ages and wealth

Tables 7.1 and 7.2 set out summaries of the fifty-nine wills consulted in respect of bequest types and recipients and table 7.3 summarises this evidence further and includes inventorial values where known. Where calculable, the men's ages range from around thirty-two to seventy-one years old with an average (mean) of forty-four-and-a-half and median of forty-three, which reflects the wills of freemen in their prime with younger children. In contrast, the women's ages are unknown, although one might reasonably assume they were relatively older because they were all widows, and because of the presence of children and the amount of accumulated goods,

⁴⁴⁹ *ibid*, pp.13-18, 28, 31, 84, 100 and 171.

although none of these factors excludes a younger woman. For instance, widows Joan Heathfield and Joan Redwood both died with underage children still living. There is no direct correlation of men's age to net inventorial value; older men did not necessarily accumulate more wealth, rather the five highest net inventorial values are all associated with men at or under the median age of forty-three.

Bequests and gender

It is not possible to be entirely accurate about the number of types of bequest by gender because some wills do not refer to beneficiaries' gender but gather them together as 'my children' or 'my godchildren'. Where gender is specified, individuals are divided into wife, daughter/son, other female/male relatives, female/male acquaintances, god-daughters/sons, menservants and maidservants. Charitable bequests are represented by 'poor/church/prison' and 'projects' refers to specific city projects such as the building of the Bridewell. In respect of types of bequest, 'property' covers transfer of real estate as well as the residue of leases or the use of property for the rest of a beneficiary's life or other specified term, 'goods' refers to all specified moveables including animals but excluding clothes, 'clothes' refers to existing clothes and cloth out of which clothes were to be made and 'cash' refers to sums of money bequeathed and also debts forgiven. The '1/3 part' refers to bequests referring to one-third or one-half parts of the testator's goods and chattels, 'bread' refers to gifts of bread to the poor and 'exec' covers the appointment of executors and executrices.

The fact that wives, as opposed to widows, could not make bequests to their husbands, is taken into account by omitting husbands' bequests to their wives from the following calculations. Tables 7.1, 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 reveal that Exeter women distributed their estates to a wider circle of kin and acquaintances than did men, which corresponds to Erickson's finding in her work on women and property.⁴⁵⁰ Compared with men, a greater percentage of their bequests were of specified goods and clothes whilst for men, the greater proportion

⁴⁵⁰ Erickson, *Women and Property*, pp.212.

related to cash, property and the gifts to the poor, findings which again are very similar to Erickson's.⁴⁵¹

There are 610 bequests where gender is specified. Women gendered a slightly greater proportion of their bequests than did men and slightly more of their bequests were to women, including maidservants. These figures seem overall to support Erickson's, Lansbury's and Whittle's arguments that women generally favoured female beneficiaries, but only just; it appears that in Exeter, there was generally not a significant bias in favour of women.⁴⁵² It is striking, however, that only 15% of the 53 property related bequests made by men (this time including to wives) concern the transfer of real estate - seven to other men and just one to a woman - the rest relate to the residue of leases or uses of buildings. It would seem that either these particular chorus men owned very little real estate or it had been previously gifted.

However, 62% of the lease residue/usage bequests by men were to women and out of the 29 bequests relating to property made by women, only one (3%) concerns real estate, all of which supports Erickson's and Lansberry's arguments that women bequeathed less land because they relatively rarely owned it, although this seems almost as true for the men.⁴⁵³

Family wealth distribution by gender

Erickson asserts that most parents tried to be equitable in the distribution of wealth though the eldest son was often slightly more favoured.⁴⁵⁴ She argues that where men had no sons, they gave preferentially to daughters rather than other male relatives and although because of common law they customarily, if not universally, gave land/property to sons over daughters, they endowed daughters with more movables. Erickson points out that these were relatively

⁴⁵¹ *ibid*, p.216.

⁴⁵² *ibid*, p.215; Lansberry, *Sevenoaks Wills and Inventories in the Reign of Charles II* (Maidstone: Kent Archaeological Society, 1988), p.xxviii; J. Whittle, *Consumption and gender in the early seventeenth-century household : the world of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.147.

⁴⁵³ *ibid*, p.213, p.216.

⁴⁵⁴ *ibid*, p.77.

far more valuable then, in comparison with the more polarized values of land and moveables today.⁴⁵⁵ This is broadly supported by the Exeter evidence, as of the men's wills, 30 out of 38 (79%) bequeathed daughters goods and cash but only one bequeathed property. The remaining 8 wills were of men whom other sources reveal had no daughters left alive or who simply left all their goods to their widows to be divided equally amongst all children.

In terms of types of bequests and their values, the picture is less straightforward, but equitable treatment is still evidenced, even when at first sight, it appears otherwise. For example, married daughters and other mature female relatives sometimes received less cash than sons, such as Henry Dabinet's daughter Agnes Smith (biography 17), and Nicholas Glandfield's stepmother (biography 26). However, the same is true for Joan Redwood's son Robert who had his own household in Bristol (biography 62). It seems it was felt not unreasonable to provide greater support to unmarried children of both sexes, assuming that the older children had already received support when they married or older married women were otherwise provided for. Some wives and daughters were not bequeathed real estate, even where there was no son living, such as merchant Hilary Galley's wife and daughters (biography 22) who would never directly own any of his land, though they would hold it during their lifetimes whilst his godson owned it. The very substantial residue of his goods and chattels, however, were equally divided between these women, including £245 of shop stock and he put his faith in them to execute his will. In contrast, Margaret, the youngest daughter of John Follett, was bequeathed land when her elder brothers were not. It may have been that they were given other land before John wrote his will, as he was otherwise at pains to distribute his wealth equally amongst the siblings, the girls receiving more linen items and the boys more furniture items. John recognised his eldest son's status through his seal-ring and a greater quantity of goods but left to his second son his heirloom 'greate brasse crock whiche was my greate grandfathers my grandfathers my fathers and now myne' (table 7.5).

⁴⁵⁵ *ibid*, p.64.

However, although the silver salts, goblets and alecup were perfectly accounted for in the inventory, there were only three silver spoons and no jewellery, despite his bequests, so perhaps the family had removed these bequests before the appraisers arrived. Unfortunately the descriptions in John Follett's will cannot be matched with certainty to inventoried goods and so relative values of his bequests cannot be calculated. It is not known why Thomas Stoning (biography 74) left four of his daughters cash plus a coffer, but left one daughter with no coffer, despite having five listed in his inventory.

Bequests with 'combined' families

Ensuring that a man's worldly wealth benefitted his children and not the children of his wife's or wives' previous or later marriage(s) seems part of consistent practice in Exeter. A straightforward example is that of upper chorus couple Stephen and Richard Vilvaine who appeared to be the joint parents of all the children mentioned in both their wills as there is a total overlap between the immediate family beneficiaries (biography 82 and table 7.6). Stephen bequeathed the use of property to his daughters and real estate to two of his sons (Thomas, yeoman of Hampshire and Peter, baker of Exeter), whilst three sons and his unmarried daughter were not bequeathed property. Andrew Gere appeared to hold son Nicholas Vilvaine's money on his behalf and likewise John Anthony for son David, but neither of these sons appears again in the sources, though their other son John became a tailor, apprenticed to draper Thomas Bird (biography 5). It seems that Agnes Vilvaine was treated less generously by her father, in comparison with her married sisters, but more generously by her mother. She remained unmarried and was buried in the parish of St Mary Major in 1572, never benefitting from the bequest of household goods. Returning to the Follett family, Margaret Follett was likely to have been the daughter of her father's second marriage (to Margery) as his will states that her sisters inherited their own late mother Agnes's linen. Margaret was nevertheless treated equally alongside her step-siblings in her father's will, which suggests he was the common parent between them all.

In complete contrast, Thomas and Beatrix Cary's wills, provide an example of how a 'combined' family (though not one of chorus status) kept its inheritances clearly separated, summarized in table 7.7.

Gentleman Thomas Cary of Heavitree wrote his will in March 1583, bequeathing property to his sons and only to his daughter as a very last resort. She instead inherited cash on her impending marriage, plus jewellery and quality household goods. None of his bequests were to his widow Beatrix's children by her first husband whose surname appears to have been Gere. Beatrix wrote her own will nearly twenty-one years later in January 1604 and none of the children to whom she made bequests were Thomas's. Her bequests were monetary ones, save one of linen, and women received more than men in her bequests to other families and servants. Andrew Gere may have inherited in his mother's will residue most of the goods left to her by Thomas, with the exception of her bed which was cautiously bequeathed to the apparently nomadic George. The only common name between the two wills is that of John Sampford (biography 67), Thomas's executor, whose children were left monetary bequests by Beatrix. Thomas and Beatrix may have been man and wife, but when it came to bequests they were not joint parents.

Bequest descriptions

Lansberry, in his study of Kent wills, suggests that women tended to be more careful in their descriptions than men and the Exeter evidence supports this up to a point.⁴⁵⁶ Joan Heathfield (biography 33) mentions colours, materials and use of clothes, as did many other women. Gertrude, Marchioness of Exeter bequeathed many furred gowns which were separately described.⁴⁵⁷ Ellery Westcott of Dunsford (though her will is in the Exeter Orphans' Court archive) even named individual pans ('the panne namd the Pyttyed Panne').⁴⁵⁸ Margaret Lake marked all the beds destined for her sons with the names of the individual recipients (though her daughters' beds were unnamed

⁴⁵⁶ Lansberry, *Sevenoaks Wills and Inventories*, p.xxix.

⁴⁵⁷ TNA, PROB 11/40, image ref 5.

⁴⁵⁸ DHC, ECA, Exeter Orphans' Court Loose Wills Box, [n.f.]

– perhaps they just knew which ones were which) and she wrote out the inscriptions on her finger-rings; ‘be carefull to please’ and ‘god doth ioyne let no mane put a sonder’.⁴⁵⁹ Elizabeth Bricknoll was careful to allocate clearly her first, second and third best petticoats and Alice Martin made it clear she wanted her best carpet to be kept for her son Henry ‘and not to be souuld’.⁴⁶⁰ An exception is Joan Redwood (biography 62) who was precise in her allocations but her descriptions were not noticeably more careful than men’s. However, to each of his sons, tailor and alderman Richard Prouze left ‘all suche lynnyn and naperie as shalbe bunndeled up and his name thereon written or fixed at the tyme of my deathe’, so careful description is not exclusive to women.⁴⁶¹

The above testators were attempting to ensure that individuals received specific goods but some testators and administrators were keen to ensure that particular individuals did *not* receive more than they should. Henry Dabinet’s widow (biography 17) argued that her sons should have been left more money, but the Orphans’ Court were having none of it. A more detailed example is that of unhappily married alien Arnold Reynolds (biography 64) whose soured marital relations were discussed in chapter six). In August 1570 when he made his will, his wife Julian was still very much alive and he acknowledged that she was due to receive goods ‘by reason she ys my wyff’. However, Arnold was clearly anxious that after his death his goods were quickly made safe from her (or someone’s) potential grasp; ‘chardgyng & requyringe [his overseers] ye in gods name to take all my sayde goods cattalls & detts into there safe custodye and kepyng presently upon my deathe...’. This is also reflected in his inventory, which it would seem he appraised himself in advance of death because he wrote it in the first person. It includes a list of pawnbroking loans such as the £6 ‘lond to master Robert Hunt upon a goblete duple gelt’ and details of bags and shirt sleeves containing a very substantial total of £332 of both gold and silver coins of

⁴⁵⁹ TNA, PROB 11/48, image ref 509.

⁴⁶⁰ DHC, ECA, Exeter Orphans’ Court Loose Wills Box, W14; TNA, PROB 11/93, image ref 622.

⁴⁶¹ TNA, PROB 11/110, image ref 789.

various denominations, all carefully described. Moreover, these coins were received by the Chamber *before* Arnold's death, if the dates of the documents are correct, so there does seem to be detectable a real concern that Julian might acquire his substantial ready money against his express wishes and a consequent desire to see it in safe hands at the earliest opportunity. At least one of his overseers, Henry James (biography 39), was experienced in legal matters as a notary public and he and the other overseer Hugh Wilson were both members of the Chamber. Arnold's anxiety may have been heightened by the fact that he wrote his will at the height of a serious plague outbreak. He was not alone in his difficulties; John Pyne the elder of Heavitree appeared to share his troubles in 1574 and in his will makes clear one course of action available to a dissatisfied and thwarted widow:

and farther my mynde and will ys that yf my saide wife be not contentyd and satisfied wth my saide legacies and bequeathes a foresaide in manner and forme aforesaid, or dothe molest troble or caule in to lawe or doth cause to be cawled into lawe my executor hereafter to be named or doth not holde her selfe contentid with the saide legacies aforesaide pretendinge that they are not so myche in value as she wolde have or ptendithe to be dewe to her by custome or lawe that then my will ys that all my former legacies and bequeathes wthe pencon aforesaid to her geven to be utterlye voyde and not geven and of none effect. And my will is to leave her to the lawe to gett and recovr what she maye thereby and not otherwise....⁴⁶²

The value of bequests

Because of the accuracy of inventory descriptions it is sometimes possible to match inventoried items to bequeathed items with a degree of certainty. Joan Redwood was not the most descriptive will writer, but it is possible to match her bequests to inventoried items, although she is the only woman for whom this is possible in this study (see biography 62). She was particularly

⁴⁶² TNA, PROB 11/56, image ref 255.

egalitarian in the *type* of bequests, as both her sons and her daughters were left furniture, bedding, kitchen equipment and household linen. The only items left just to her daughters were curtains and unsurprisingly, their mother's gowns, petticoats and wearing linen and the only item left just to a son was her best salt cellar. The total value of her specified bequests was c.£37 which meant the residue of the estate was £105 which was left to John, her baker son. Robert, the son who appeared to have his own household in Bristol, was bequeathed a total value of c.£5, mostly taken up in the £4 salt cellar and, as noted above, presumably felt by Joan not to need household goods or cash in the ways his siblings might. She nevertheless appeared to fire a warning shot over his bows about being 'good and carefull for the reste of his brothers and sisters'. Her next three sons, Richard aged twenty-five, Lawrence aged twenty and Hugh aged eighteen, all received bequests totalling between c.£7 and c.£9 each, though her youngest child, Nicholas, aged eleven, received c.£21. It seems, however, that Joan privileged her daughters, as the value of her bequest to Elizabeth (aged twenty-two) was just over £25 and to Suzanne (aged fourteen) £15, although we do not know what their father left them.

It is far more difficult to undertake the same exercise for men's wills and inventories because they describe items less fully and because they bequeath goods less often. William Lant, however, is associated with a slightly different form of inventory, one in which his legacies are embedded together with a bill of sale (discussed in chapter four), so the administrators of his will appear to have been particularly careful to match descriptions, presumably to ensure they did not accidentally sell an item that was bequeathed. His male acquaintances were greater in number and received goods, which, in total, possessed greater value than those received by his women acquaintances, but the average bequest value for the men was 8s whilst for the women it was 30s. His younger sons all received exactly the same (their portion plus an equal part of the estate residue) though his eldest son John the elder, had his status highlighted by the addition of a gold signet ring worth 27s. It is William's daughters who were bequeathed the greatest values as his younger daughters received their portion but also received 40s each and his eldest daughter

received an additional £37 representing her (presumably late) mother's portion.

Will planning and administration

How well planned in advance were these wills? In addition to one nuncupative will, there are twenty-eight men's wills where there is both a will writing date and a burial or a probate date, which reveal longer time periods than between will writing and death. The shortest time interval is two days, the longest three years and four months, the average (mean) interval is just under seven months and the median one-and-a-half months. Seven wills were made over a year before death struck and nine only days before, so it is difficult to draw any conclusions about preparedness or panic. As noted earlier, Arnold Reynolds was buried in October 1570, towards the end of one of the larger-scale plague outbreaks in Exeter and his will was written the August before. This was exactly the point at which the death toll rose significantly across the city, and may indicate a man only too well-aware of the likelihood of being killed by virulent disease in an urban environment. Sure enough, his servant, Laurence Matthew never received the £4 bequeathed to him by Arnold after thirteen years' service in the Reynolds household, as he was buried in September 1570 just days before Arnold himself. Merchant Thomas Cook had even less time to prepare and his nuncupative will of 1606 provides a picture of friends hastily enquiring about the disposal of goods, the answers to which were repeated in front of neighbours (biography 14).

For the sixteen women's wills for which writing and burial or probate dates are available, the time range between will writing and death is much greater, running from 8 days to ten years and eleven months. The average (mean) timespan is one year nine months and the median seven months. It would seem Exeter's women generally had their affairs planned further in advance, but perhaps just as likely is that then, as now, older people tended to have written their wills when younger ones had not yet done so. After all, Richard Mawdett, who died aged around sixty-five, wrote his will three years and three months before his death, the longest period between writing and dying in this

selection of men, but there is no overall correlation between age at death and the length of time before death that a will was written.

Executors, witnesses and overseers

Erickson claims that most ordinary men made their wives their executrices and this is supported by the Exeter evidence (noting there were more executors than wills because some wills had joint executors) but, contrary to Erickson's findings, it was more common in this selection of wills for women to make their sons, male relatives or acquaintances their executors, even when they had daughters and female acquaintances.⁴⁶³ For most it is impossible to tell whether this was because the son was the oldest child (although generally it was not necessarily the oldest son who was executor), the daughters were too young or unable to carry out the task or because men were intrinsically deemed more suitable. Only three women made their daughters their executrices and even here two of them (Christian Drew and Mary Castle) simply appear to have no sons and the third, Julian Gunstone's executrix, was a female acquaintance who held a joint executorship with Julian's son. It is therefore hard to argue for any kind of early feminism in this respect, as women mostly appeared to be handing control over the distribution of their estates to men. All wills in Exeter were overseen by men only, though both genders employed female and male witnesses.

Material culture

The focus in this study is not on material culture *per se*, but it is referred to where it sheds light on how individuals functioned and related to others – in particular in chapters six, eight and nine. Juddery provides helpful context in her broad analysis of Exeter's household spaces, room settings and contents, of which there is much repetition between households, though with variance in quantity and condition (and with a noticeable preference for green colour schemes, found elsewhere in Sevenoaks and Bristol).⁴⁶⁴ The range of goods is reflected in the commentary provided by Harrison in 1577 who noted that in

⁴⁶³ Erickson, *Women and Property*, p.34.

⁴⁶⁴ Juddery, *Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories*, pp.v-xvii; Lansberry, *Sevenoaks Wills*, p.x; Barry, 'Introduction' in *Bristol Probate Inventories*, p.xiv.

the houses of merchants and other wealthy citizens there was 'great provision of tapestry, Turkey work, pewter, brass, fine linen, and thereto costly cupboards of plate' and that even the 'inferior artificers ... have for the most part learned also to garnish their cupboards with plate, their joint beds with tapestry and silk hangings, and their tables with carpets and fine Napery...'.⁴⁶⁵

Some items stand out from the mass of bedsteads and napkins, either through their relative infrequency or their variety and a small selection is examined in table 6.11, sufficient to make a few more observations on similarities and differences within the chorus in respect of weaponry, religious beliefs, educational levels and tastes of individual chorus members. Forty-three inventories are examined, which include all those accompanied by a will, plus the addition of three bakers with just an inventory.

Statutes of 1558 (not repealed until 1603) determined that persons taxed on certain lands or goods had to keep arms, mentioned in chapter four. The rates for armour show that, for example, the bottom rank of those valued on lands (value £5) were to provide one almain rivets or corslet (light body armour), one long bow, one sheaf of arrows, one steel cap and one bill or halberd. The bottom rank of those valued on goods (value £10, twice the Exeter average for 1557) had to provide the same less the almain rivets/corslet. Persons at all taxable levels had to provide long bows and different levels of wealth provided greater or lesser quantities of armour, with the untaxed relying on publically-owned armour stores.⁴⁶⁶ The effects of these statutes can be seen in both upper and middle chorus inventories; out of forty-three documents, twenty-nine (67%) include weaponry. Some possessed the bare minimum, such as William Lant whose appraisers listed a pike and a corslet plus Welsh hooks, and some weaponry was distinctly neglected, such as Thomas Gregg's rusty two-handed sword and almain rivet. In her summary of Exeter's inventories, Juddery describes mid sixteenth-century armour and this study

⁴⁶⁵ G. Edelen (ed.), *The Description of England: The Classic Contemporary Account of Tudor Social Life by William Harrison.*, (Washington and New York: The Folger Shakespeare Library and Dover, 1968 repr.1994), p.200.

⁴⁶⁶ Boynton, *Elizabethan Militia*, pp.11 and 27.

extends her observations into the early seventeenth century and reveals a decrease in almain rivets and an increase in corslets and firearms.⁴⁶⁷ These, and their associated accessories (calivers and muskets with touchboxes, match, powder, flasks and shot/bullets) become commonplace and only two upper chorus members did not possess a gun or two. Bows and arrows are present up until the 1590s, the point at which the use of the bow was 'quietly dropped' from the militia. Bows still had to be provided by law, as the government remained keen to discourage illegal games.⁴⁶⁸ It appears that this was unenforceable as only Henry Dabnet possessed one between then and 1606, although they may have been removed before the appraisers arrived. More alarmingly, Walter Horsey seems to have sequestered 6lb of gunpowder in one of his chambers, but this might be related to the fact that the Chamber owed him 40s for 40lb of powder delivered to the Guildhall. Inevitably weapons were used in domestic incidents such as that where John Biddicombe ran through Matthew Abbot with his rapier in Bonhay fields with such vigor it snapped; and all over an argument about the washing of ruffs.⁴⁶⁹

Fourteen out of forty-three inventories (35%) mention a Bible, likely to be the protestant Geneva Bible, the first mass-produced Bible available to the general public and printed in affordable sizes in England from 1575.⁴⁷⁰ This may explain the inventorial descriptions of 'little/small/great bible/in English' and in the later inventories, 'old' bible. They were owned by both the upper and middle chorus. There are two occurrences of the protestant polemic *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, and one listing of two psalmbooks, which contained the preferred form of music for reformed worship.⁴⁷¹ Ten inventories (23%) mention other books and one lists maps, re-emphasising that some of the chorus at least were interested in matters beyond the city walls. In addition to these inventories is that of Henry James (biography 39) which lists what

⁴⁶⁷ Juddery, *Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories*, pp.xiv-xv; Boynton, *Elizabethan Militia*, p.xv.

⁴⁶⁸ Boynton, *Elizabethan Militia*, p.171.

⁴⁶⁹ HMC, *Report on the Records of the City of Exeter*, Letter 90, pp.59-60.

⁴⁷⁰ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geneva_Bible [accessed 4/1/2015].

⁴⁷¹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exclusive_psalmody [accessed 4/1/2015].

appears to be the whole of his impressive library, discussed in detail in chapter eight.

Guardrobes are not mentioned in the inventories because they formed real estate, but twelve inventories (28%) mention close stools, chamber pots and bedpans, although the latter could be what might now be termed a warming pan. Seventy-one per cent of upper chorus inventories included these portable forms of waste disposal (as did one leading actor's inventory) as opposed to only 22% of the middle chorus documents, so it would appear that a greater degree of personal convenience was enjoyed by the socially superior. Whether more of the middle chorus made use of the common jakes in the city or minded less about pottering out to the potentially chilly and noisome wardrobe, is not known.

Conclusion

Barry points out that inventories are best understood, and best used, when they are combined with other sources because this not only helps to allow for, and to some extent overcome, the limits in inventory data, but also helps to understand the inventories themselves better by placing each document in the context of time, place and the family circumstances in which it was created.⁴⁷² This has been achieved to a limited extent in this chapter, through combining information from inventories and wills and revealing that this selection of Exeter inhabitants attempted to achieve fairness in the distribution of the value of their estates and largely conformed to cultural norms for the time. However, this study also makes possible a much broader data combination and such an approach forms the substance of chapters eight and nine where in-depth biographies combining all available data for individuals are created to bring together as detailed a set of portraits as possible of some of Exeter's chorus characters.

⁴⁷² Barry, 'Introduction' in *Bristol Probate Inventories*, p.viii.

Chapter 8: The Fullest Biographies – craftsmen, merchants and tailors

In contrast with the ‘crowd portrait’ of chapter three and the ‘group portraits’ of chapters four to seven, this chapter and chapter nine concentrate on individuals and individual families. They do so by drawing mostly, but not exclusively, on the relatively rich evidence for chorus members who both drew up a will and for whom an Orphans’ Court inventory was appraised. Drilling down into an individual’s life provides insight into the everyday challenges and decisions they faced and, given the nature of the sources, how death focused theirs and others’ minds. Their shops, craft processes, warehouses and households are partially viewed, their families, groups of friends, acquaintances and competitors discerned, the scale of financial risk taken and support given to and received by individuals highlighted, alongside strategies devised for helping to ensure that a family business or skills survived to the next generation. Personal links within and between the chorus and the leading actors become clearer, characters who surfaced in previous chapters make another appearance in a fuller context and the context of chapters three to seven are seen in the light of individual lives.

As noted earlier in this chapter, however, the personal touch is missing, as there are no documents providing direct voices to listen to. Even wills, the most personal kind of document, are not *intimate*; they are couched in legal terms and largely formulaic. The experience is akin to observing the ‘man over the road’ over a number of years but never speaking to him. In this chapter it is men who are referred to – those who are described as craftsmen, merchants and tailors, reflecting the relative importance of these trades to the city economy noted in table 3.3. Chapter nine focuses on families and households whose fortunes are viewed through sources which refer primarily to women.

Craftsmen and bi-employment

A soapboiler, a cutler, a brewer, a weaver and a goldsmith form the first group of craftsmen to be examined in this study, of whom the last four engaged in different types of bi-employment, or at least income generation, alongside

their stated occupation. This is detectable from their inventories and on occasion reveals them to be people of wider significance to their fellow citizens than their ascribed occupation initially suggests.⁴⁷³ **Humphrey Gilbert** (biography 25) was a soapboiler whose father John seems likely to have been an alien associated with St Mary Major in 1557. Humphrey, too, was associated with this parish, where he may have leased a house from the Speke family, or possibly another 'new tenement', and from his inventory the process of soapboiling comes to light. He leased land, kept hay and oats in a barn and owned four cattle. From these beasts he may have derived the tallow to accompany the lime and ashes needed to make the 'half wrought' soap, all found on his premises. Alternatively, or additionally, he could have purchased tallow from city butchers. His premises boasted a soaphouse with a furnace plus a shop with beamscale and weights. He appeared to make tallow candles as these too were appraised along with his candlemould and some butter. In Worcester, Dyer notes a reversed situation where men described as chandlers made soap. He does not mention soapboilers as an occupation there, and soap was a key import from Bristol.⁴⁷⁴ Palliser likewise finds York and Hull importing soap from London and the Netherlands, and Pound notes only one soapboiler mentioned in the freedom records of Norwich between 1501 and 1675, so it may have been that this was a relatively specialist occupation, unless it was generally disguised within the activities of chandlers.⁴⁷⁵ Humphrey's only direct competitor found in the sources is his contemporary Ellis Flea/Flay who is described as a soapboiler/chandler from outside the Westgate and who is similarly valued in the lay subsidies, although there were at least fifteen other chandlers. Their soap may have been the kind which Harrison found had an 'unkindly savor' and which provided a basic laundry alternative to the more luxurious castillian soap and sweet soap available from Richard Mawdett and other merchants mentioned later in this chapter.⁴⁷⁶ Humphrey's property comprised a four-

⁴⁷³ Amussen, *An Ordered Society*, p.78; see also Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann, *Production and Consumption*, pp.10-11 and 65-86.

⁴⁷⁴ Dyer, *City of Worcester*, p.131.

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid*, p.61; Palliser, *Tudor York*, pp.193, 196 and 284; Pound, *Tudor and Stuart Norwich*, p.179.

⁴⁷⁶ Edelen (ed.), *Description of England by William Harrison*, p.312.

roomed dwelling with shop and lower hall at ground level and forehall and chamber over the hall at first floor level, plus the soaphouse and a hayloft.⁴⁷⁷ He was regularly valued in the lay subsidies at £3, he provided surety and his net worth was just over £142. This suggests a successful business, though of his £118 of debts owed to him, £49 (42%) were desperate, a situation Hoskins suggests was the norm for merchants.⁴⁷⁸

Turning to his family life, having buried one wife shortly after gaining his freedom, his unrecorded next marriage appeared to result in the baptism of seven children, four of whom may have died, two of them possibly felled by the 1590 plague along with an unnamed household servant who certainly died of the disease. He was buried aged around 54 years old in 1605, leaving a widow and three children aged 21, 20 and 18. He did not live quite long enough to become a grandfather and the half-made soap and the brevity of his will followed by his death in a matter of days suggests that his demise was swift. Whilst Humphrey appeared to engage solely in his occupation of soap-and candelmaking, this was not so for other craftsmen.

Richard Mogridge (biography 52), cutler of St Mary Major, was valued at £5 in the 1557 lay subsidy, well below the average valuation for that year and his net value in 1576 was a relatively modest £9. According to his inventory, he owed just over £57, but appeared to be owed nothing by others to offset this. Nevertheless his shop contained almain rivets, moryans (helmets), calivers, bucklers (small round shields), daggers, swords 'greate and smalle readye trymmed', blades, hilts, pommels, handles and knives and his inventory reveals that he forged them on his coal-fired premises. He was at an early stage in his career when in 1562, he was ordered, like all cutlers, not to make or sell any weapons contrary to proclamation by the Queen, part of the sumptuary laws reducing the length of rapiers and swords in peace times. Any weapons so manufactured or worn rendered the maker liable to

⁴⁷⁷ Portman, *Exeter Houses*, p.30. Portman finds having two halls in a relatively small property an unusual arrangement.

⁴⁷⁸ Hoskins, 'Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', p.155.

imprisonment and fines.⁴⁷⁹ Nevertheless, Hooker notes that every inhabitant was to have his weapon, armour or club in his house or shop ready to use in defence of the realm.⁴⁸⁰ He appeared to have been producing decorated goods as, in his hall, there was stored 'the ende of an Olefants tothe 16d' which probably translates as an ivory tusk used for inlay work on pommels, hilts and handles, set in place with the 'glewe' in his workshop. His premises appear to have consisted of a two-storey building with two chambers over a hall containing another chamber (the 'Chamber within the Hall'), which contained a considerable amount of large furniture pieces and a poleaxe. The kitchen is likely to have been a separate building, and it is perhaps unsurprising that this was particularly well appointed with wrought and forged metal goods. His shop with a loft over it is listed as adjacent to his forge. Mogridge's premises sound very similar to the cutlers operating in Worcester whose market Dyer deduces to have been soldiery when required but also the wealthy classes of the countryside alongside urban dwellers who commonly wore swords and daggers.⁴⁸¹

Richard was married to Joan and they apparently neither baptised nor buried any children, although the record coverage for the parish of St Mary Major is relatively full. They shared their house with his 'cousins' Jane and Edmund Bonamy and all four of them participated as a household in the Queen's Lottery operating in the parish in 1568, discussed further in chapter three. Joan, Jane and Edmund alongside Edith Bonamy were the main beneficiaries of Richard's will, written seven months before his burial in 1575. A cousin, John Wharton, received Richard's sword and dagger, which might have been much prized coming from such a source. Joan and Jane were appointed joint executrices and all the Bonamys received property leases on Joan's death or at her remarriage. The leases had been a significant additional source of income for Richard in his second 'occupation' as a landlord; one brought in

⁴⁷⁹ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.177; P. L. Hughes and J.F Larkin (eds.), *Tudor Royal Proclamations* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), 2. pp.189-91; Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper, *Description of the Citie of Excester*, p.946.

⁴⁸⁰ *ibid*, p.946.

⁴⁸¹ Dyer, *City of Worcester*, pp.125-6.

rent of over £2 a year, the other £3 and both made a profit over and above rent due by Richard to the freeholder – when the repairs noted in chapter six were not needed.

In his will Richard states that if Joan remarried, his bequests were to be delivered ‘to my said children or Jane Bonamy, Edmond Bonamy, Edith Bonamy...’. There were no other children mentioned so it appears that he meant Jane, Edmund and Edith Bonamy were those he regarded as his children. His inventory then reveals that Edith and Edmund were the children of Nicholas Bonamy and parish burial register shows that he had been buried in 1571, though Jane’s parents are not revealed by the sources. This appears to indicate that some kind of adoption had taken place as Edmund, as well as Jane, were already living as part of the Mogridge household in 1568. Nicholas was still alive at this date, although their sister Edith was not yet born, so they cannot be the children of Joan as a widow of Nicholas Bonamy. Other Bonamy siblings (Nicholas, Honor, Matthew and Berckbek) are not referred to at all by Richard. With the exception of Nicholas, who was buried in 1582, there is no other reference to any of them in the sources, so it is not known if they were still living –though all of them were baptized before the 1570 plague outbreak. According to his inventory, Richard also died owing £15 for the legacies of John Way’s children, which again may imply some form of adoption which involved the holding of these legacies made by others, as there are no legacies made by Richard to these children in his own will.

Richard was a modestly civically active citizen, acting as an inventory appraiser for fellow parishioner Richard Taylor and also as a churchwarden. He requested ‘my bodie to be buried wthn the church dore of St Marie the more... wheras the berers doe nowe stande’. He may have harboured the old catholic faith in his heart as in his hall there was ‘one little tablement of a face’ – possibly a small portable altar front, described differently from the four ‘pyctures 8s’ that were also found there.⁴⁸² Alternatively, it may have been a

⁴⁸² OED online, <http://0-www.oed.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/Entry/196801?redirectedFrom=tablement#eid> [accessed 20th August 2014]

woodcut as it was listed together with 'Round Trenchers & a litle stoole' the lot totalling just 4d. He appears also to have been a literate man, possessing 'a bible & other Bokes 5s' and 'certaine Bookes 6d' and perhaps appreciated the particular comforts of his two close stools and one close chair.

Richard's widow Joan subsequently married wealthy butcher Richard Gifford on 28 September 1577, but the leases relating to Edith and Edmund did not pass to them as intended and Richard Gifford received the rents instead. Once this had been discovered, the Chamber ordered the tenants to pay no more rent to either Richard or Joan but only to the Chamber until Richard Gifford put in sureties sufficient for them to be convinced that Edith and Edmund would receive what was due to them as Richard Mogridge's 'orphans'. The resulting account of rents reveals how the letting, subletting and maintenance of these premises worked, outlined in chapter six.

Henry Gandy (biography 23) was a beer brewer associated with the parish of St Paul. He was married to Alice, his mother Hilary was still living and he oversaw a busy household full of seven children aged between twelve and one years old at his death, which came in early March 1609 despite the employment of an apothecary. He had been a juror and will witness and had also trained apprentice Richard Jess who had gained his freedom in 1606 and subsequently married and started a family in the parish of St Mary Steps. Like Richard Mogridge, he was a literate man with a bible and other books, and an unusual variety of footwear, including boots with spurs, three pairs of shoes and two pairs of pantofles, which were either high-heeled, cork-soled indoor shoes or outdoor galoshes.⁴⁸³ He may have just missed his opportunity to be a musketeer in the musters of 1609, but he had a musket, rapier and dagger ready for action in his hall. Henry was valued on a relatively modest 20s in land in 1593 and 1602 and he did not appear to operate a separate brewhouse on his premises, although the twelve brass pots and cauldrons in his kitchen, the £24 worth of malt outside and the £50 received for beer debts

⁴⁸³ OED online <http://0-www.oed.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/Entry/137024?redirectedFrom=pantofles> [accessed 21st December 2014]

suggests he was operative. As for other brewers, his malt was to be ground only at the city mills and the 'good' and 'small' beer he was permitted to brew in his cauldrons, was 'to be well boyled'.⁴⁸⁴

His house consisted of a hall and parlour with two rooms over, a two-storey kitchen building and what appears to be a two-storey 'loft' (perhaps a gallery) connecting the house with its kitchen across a courtyard. This feature of early seventeenth century houses may mean his was newly built.⁴⁸⁵ The six eldest children and some of the servants may have been distributed across the four bedsteds and five trucklebeds upstairs whilst Henry, Alice and the baby downstairs occupied the fire-lit parlour alongside his writing desk on the folding table. The joined furniture was softened by nineteen cushions of various stitchwork, including a window cushion and a decorative scheme primarily of green and he owned five silver bowls and one silver salt. Outside, like other city households, he kept pigs large and small and 3 gallons of butter were found in the hall. The average (mean) funeral cost for all men in table 6.11 was just over £5 and his funeral cost a relatively modest £3 but his wealth was far less modest. His inventory reveals that his net worth was around £391, including £74 of money and gold, and he was able to bequeath £40 to each of his children and to reward his servants and the poor of his parish. He seems to have been a shrewd businessman, as only £10 worth of debts owed to him were deemed desperate and his own debts were all paid, except for one due to a knight of Norfolk. Over £200 of his wealth was owed to him as good debts and his inventory reveals that the usual surety required by him for such loans was approximately double the loaned amount. It is not clear from his inventory whether he could therefore expect £20 income from sureties attached to the £10 of desperate debts. If so, it might explain his wealth if, as a regular source of substantial loans, he had accumulated such sureties over a number of years. His borrowers were not all local men – they came from Barnstaple, North Molton, Topsham, Crediton and Newton St Cyres as well as Exeter, and included his former apprentice Richard Jess.

⁴⁸⁴ Harte, Schopp, and Tapley-Soper, *Description of the Citie of Excester*, p.880.

⁴⁸⁵ Parker and Allan (eds.), *West Country Households*, p.51.

Henry Taylor (biography 75) is described both as weaver and innholder in two different versions of the same inventory. Married to Joan, he died between 1605 and 1606 aged around forty-nine with his children aged twenty-one, sixteen and ten. Associated with the parish of St John, he was a member of the Tuckers, a churchwarden and juror and was twice assessed on 20s land in that parish. His inventory reflects most strongly his innkeeping occupation, including barrels of beer and cider in the cellar and 'bearers for drincke', a furnace, a brewing keeve and other little keeves, a malting shovel, malt in his shop, 48lbs of pewter (presumably tableware in the inn) eight beds and four chamber pots. His premises were complex with most beds concentrated around and above the kitchens and in the roofspaces and, like other innkeepers in the city, he would have been required to keep a light burning outside until 9pm during winter.⁴⁸⁶ His weaving activities are not visible, unless the presence of a 'spinning tourne', trendles, a 'thread tourner' and wool in the chamber next to the hall are considered, though all these items are associated with yarn spinning (usually by women) rather than cloth weaving. It may be that his innkeeping which had started as a sideline, had grown to be more important than his weaving, or that his weaving equipment had been recycled to other Tuckers since his death. He appeared to enjoy a relatively modest standard of living – no plate was mentioned, unless it had already been removed - he was owed £2 by others, and yet he was able to bequeath £6 each to his two daughters together with the lease of his house to his son after the death of their mother. He appeared to live a life ostensibly not very different from that of his former master, weaver **William Flay** (biography 20) whose life had very similar milestones, though William appears to have been financially more successful. There is evidence in his inventory too of both spinning (trendels and four pairs of woolcombs) and brewing (brewing vessels and a furness with various cauldrons and barrels in his courtyard, though no kitchen is mentioned) so perhaps Henry acquired both textile and brewing skills from his master.

⁴⁸⁶ Harte, Schopp and Tapley-Soper (eds.), *Description of the Citie of Excester*, p.883.

By 1601, at the age of about thirty-four, goldsmith **Thomas Withycombe** (biography 94) son of the long-lived John referred to in chapter six, had written his will and appointed his wife Mary and son Thomas joint executors. Perhaps they acquired the best items in his wardrobe as nearly all his clothing items were described as 'old', though amongst his bequests his maidservants received the promise of a bespoke petticoat and waistcoat respectively. He enabled his father to be free of his debts to others by bequeathing him 'so much goods out of my shop yf it please god to call'. It is not known what John might have chosen but buried amongst the contents of the premises were gold balances, silver rings, buttons and weights, broken silver and some form of goldmaking equipment stored at a Mr Laits (of whom no more is known). There is no Exeter inventory for another goldsmith by which to judge to what extent Thomas was practising his original occupation, but the inventory of merchant William Seldon includes goldsmithing tools such as gold files, gilt scissors, goldsmith's hair brushes and hammers and even cutler Richard Mogridge possessed '2 paier of goldsmiths Belloes 2s'.⁴⁸⁷ None of these are visible in Thomas's inventory, so either he was not operating as a prominent goldsmith, or perhaps he was but had sold or given his tools away – perhaps to Mr Lait or William Seldon - after all, both of his overseers were of that trade: his father John and Christopher Easton. Like William Flay's inventory, no kitchen is listed but kitchen-type implements are listed in the hall, as Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann state they often were, and there appears to be just one other chamber.⁴⁸⁸ Dyer finds in Worcester that the economic fortunes of goldsmiths varied widely, so it is not surprising to find a goldsmith in less than opulent premises, but Thomas appears to have branched out in other directions.⁴⁸⁹ It seems he was operating as a merchant, as his shop stock included over 700 yards of various cloth, worth just over £50 or 75% of his total stock value, alongside haberdashery, dried fruit (some bad), spices, grey soap and castillian soap amounting to c.£16 or just over 25% worth of stock.

⁴⁸⁷ Juddery, *Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories Electronic Files*, OCI 23.

⁴⁸⁸ Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann, *Production and Consumption*, p.133.

⁴⁸⁹ Dyer, *City of Worcester*, pp.127-8.

The export role played by Exeter cloth merchants involved the purchase of locally-made cloth, which MacCaffrey tentatively suggests was mostly exported directly overseas. This is as opposed to being sold first in London, and then exported overseas which Dyer describes as the route taken by Worcester merchants' and clothiers' goods. In return, merchants imported a wide variety of other goods which they sold wholesale to smaller merchants and further afield in Devon and the south west and occasionally retailed themselves.⁴⁹⁰ In his study of Exeter's Elizabethan merchants, Hoskins states that 'nearly every merchant at this period carried on a retail business through a shop on his premises' but that by the early seventeenth century the keeping of a shop was regarded as 'beneath the dignity of a big merchant, and he was beginning to leave that to others'.⁴⁹¹ Hoskins also distinguishes merchants' retail customers from wholesale by the individual amounts they owed deceased merchants in their inventories - the former owing pence and shillings, the latter pounds.⁴⁹² Although the value of his goods was £116, there is no breakdown of Thomas' debts, other than £18 in good debts owed to him, so it is impossible to know which type of merchant he was operating as, though his shop suggests retailing, and this study suggests that perhaps he, together with the first set of merchants discussed below, represent some of these smaller shop-based retail businesses which can be seen operating alongside the second set of more substantial wholesale merchants.

Merchants operating through shops: net inventorial worth below £200

In Northgate Street, St Kerrian, though formerly of St Petrock, lived **William Totell** (biography 78) described in his lengthy inventory as a merchant but who dealt in a range of poisons, antiseptics and emetics which made up 100% of his £80 worth of shop stock kept in his shop and higher shop, which suggest that he could have been an apothecary.⁴⁹³ Ill-health and frequent

⁴⁹⁰ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.165-8; Dyer, *City of Worcester*, p.105.

⁴⁹¹ Hoskins, 'Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', pp.153-4.

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*

⁴⁹³ William Totell's stock included: quicksilver (mercury, used for syphilis) wormseed (for curing intestinal worms) brimstone (sulphur) and treacle (in the sixteenth century sense used as medicinal compound for poisons and malignant diseases) licorice (in stick form thought good for the voice and

early death meant the nineteen other apothecaries identified in this study needed to acquire raw materials for cures, as might good housewives, so the demand for such goods was probably robust. William, however, does not appear to have been relatively the most successful businessman. Although his inventory was worth a substantial £161 net in 1609, the snapshot of his debts that his inventory provides shows that his good debts were outweighed by his bad debts together with his own debts to others (table 8.1).

Hoskins finds that there is no uniformity about the relative proportion of individual merchants' good and bad debts and points out that accidental circumstances, and being at war with a country where debtors lay, must have made an impact upon bad debts although many such debts were local.⁴⁹⁴ As shown in table 8.1 William's debtors were almost equally split between wholesale and retail transaction, though a greater amount of his debt was wholesale and most of his debtors were local as opposed to distant.⁴⁹⁵

In terms of risk, his local customers seem to have been a greater liability in that a greater amount of their debt was bad than good and a greater proportion was bad in comparison with that of distant debtors. A closer examination of his local debtors (table 8.2) reveals that 69% of his good debtors were tradesmen or individuals successful enough to be identifiable in this study.

In contrast, only 23% of his bad debtors were likewise identifiable. These results suggest that William Totell had granted too much credit to too many local but less well-established tradesmen and individual customers who

loosening flem) spermaceti (a kind of whale fat used in medicinal preparations and candles) sanders (sandlewood, used as a genito-urinary antiseptic) ratsbane (white arsenic used in rat poison) and tobacco.

<http://web.archive.org/web/20050216215916/http://www.indiana.edu/~poynter/sas/lb/syphilis.html> [accessed 31/12/2014]

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibid*, p.155-6.

⁴⁹⁵ In this study, a distant customer is defined as someone whose identity is clarified by a geographical place that is not Exeter and William's customers included one as far away as Launceston. A local customer is defined as being 'of Exeter' or by not being distinguished by a place name of any kind.

appear to have been a greater financial risk. The impact of his unhealthy balance between good and bad debt plus debts owed was that he could not leave his two children, aged fourteen and fifteen the £100 he had willed them but only £17 in addition to their children's one-third part worth around £53. Whilst his home was not sparsely furnished, it does not appear to contain the luxury goods of John Trosse, a potential competitor described below, with perhaps the exception of six 'turkey carpets'. He was aged around thirty-four when he died but his son John was not destined to follow in his father's footsteps. A footnote to William's hurried nuncupative will (presumably nothing in his shop stock could save him) sets out how John was to be apprenticed for seven years to William Paddon, a weaver of Ide. Ten pounds of John's portion was to be delivered to the Paddon household to be returned at the end of the apprenticeship or John's death.⁴⁹⁶ Perhaps William felt that weaving was a more stable option than merchandising or that, business being what it was, he could not afford to set his son up in merchandising.

Like William Totell, merchant **John Trosse** (biography 79) stocked curative materials in his shop plus haberdashery, sweets and spices, including gilded nutmegs, and castillian and 'sweet sope', but he also dealt in cloth, carrying over 500 yards of various types worth 54% of his total stock which, in 1605, was valued at just over £100. Unfortunately, his debtors and creditors are not listed so his retail/wholesale balance and balance of good and bad debt cannot be compared with William Totell although, being worth around £165 net at his death, they were similarly valued. His biography gives the impression that he was more successful and that it may have been who he knew and associated with across his lifetime that made a difference. He jointly held shops by the West Gate (P69, map 8) with Robert Midwinter, one of the sons of leading actor John Midwinter into whose family he appeared to have married as his wife was Portsey Midwinter. John's own apprenticeship was served under leading actor Eustace Oliver and he knew Henry James (biography 39), another leading actor, well enough to witness his will, so he enjoyed good links with the upper echelons of local society. His dwelling

⁴⁹⁶ The procedures of the Orphans' Court are summarized in Juddery, *The Exeter Orphans' Court Inventories*, p.i.

appears to have consisted of a well-appointed hall with a chamber over and possibly a connecting chamber, or gallery, between this and a two-storey kitchen which may, as for Henry Gandy, indicate a newly built house. He was a man who both dealt in, and personally enjoyed, luxuries; his own table napkins were wrought with silk, his andirons had copper knobs, his cupboards had locks and he perhaps sealed his deals with a silver and bone seal. He also possessed four china dishes, one with a glass foot, when Chinese porcelain or 'china' was rare and special enough for some to imagine it had magical properties - although it could have been imported or English tin-glazed earthenware, much of which imitated Chinese porcelain.⁴⁹⁷ In these respects he was no puritan, although in his youth he was protestant enough to have been found psalm-singing in a shop (and asked to stop) and was awaiting payment for a 'book of martires' sold to another. He was a fully active citizen: a pikeman, a surety provider, a churchwarden, a signatory to the Bond of Association and a ship money subscriber. He was also a family man as although he mentions only four children in his will, he appears to have baptized at least thirteen with two different wives before he died aged approximately seventy-one.

Richard Mawdett's (biography 51) inventory was worth approximately £194 net and his will provides an exceptional view of an Elizabethan merchant's retail activities. His outlet appeared to be a colourful place with stained cloths 'about the shop', which implies painted cloth hangings festooned around it as opposed to being for sale, several pairs of balances, beam scale and weights, tressel tables, shelves and a chest. His business involved trading in spices, dried fruits and nuts plus treacle and salt. He also possessed 'one dosen of playenge cardes 3s' and over 100lb of fine Castillian soap, and although his total stock was worth a relatively modest £28, £18 (64%) comprised cloth. Richard appears to have been a well-dressed man who owned black cloth gowns lined with lamb's wool and velvet and sported ornamental lace upon his jerkin, breeches and his angora wool (chamlett) cassock. Even his old

⁴⁹⁷ Chinnery, 'Initial Proposals for Panelling the Parlour at St Nicholas Priory', p.4; Overton, Whittle, Dean and Hann, *Production and Consumption*, p.103.

doublets were faced with satin, and a visit to his shop sounds as if it would have been a sensual treat. His customers included both Exeter dwellers and those in small towns and villages surrounding Exeter. He carried less debt than William Totell, but like him, he carried more wholesale debt than retail, and although a similar proportion of his debtors were local people, a greater proportion of them were retail customers and the good local debts amounted to more than the bad ones, so he seems to have attracted a less risky local customer base (table 8.3).

In 1562 he was also a member, albeit a recalcitrant one, of the Society of Merchant Venturers, yet despite what appears to be his shrewd business acumen, he appears never to have risen above the level of middle chorus, even though he lived to the age of approximately sixty-five in 1592.

In his domestic domain, his first wife Welthian died after nineteen months' marriage though it would seem from his will that she gave birth to George. There is no record of Richard's second marriage to Mary but it resulted in eleven births (but ten baptisms) according to parish records, plus another son, Otes, according to property records and another daughter (Mary II) who appears for the first time in her father's will. Five children seemingly disappear from the records, leaving eight surviving children at his death. He held a garden in Friernhay, which he enlarged, and land in St Petrock but lived in St Mary Arches, as did his father of the same name until his death in 1559. He was a feoffee of parish lands there and acted as a juror at the city quarter sessions in 1578. His will lacks deep detail because, as he says many times in this document, 'the writings thereof is in the skibbett in my countyng house in a littell boxe' and on one occasion '... the one payre is in Latten and the other in Englyshe'. His will has a rambling, verbatim touch to it, with many occurrences of 'I pray god geve them joie thereof' and repetition of amounts of money bequeathed with a double emphasis; 'twenty poundes of money I saye xxLi', as if to be quite sure the scrivener had written down his desires correctly. Although it may be a legal convention, it is not a feature of any other will consulted for this study.

Mary his widow and executrix was to live in the house where Richard dwelled although the building was bequeathed to his son Otes. This was not for the more usual 'as long as she so long shall live' but 'for the terme of ffyve yeres fully to be complete and ended' after which Otes received all the wall panelling and attached benches, regarded as moveables and therefore Mary's in the first instance, providing he gave his mother 20s. Hoskins suggests that the building was a medieval hall house from its room arrangement, with a double-height hall plus an adjacent parlour with a chamber over and a separate kitchen building.⁴⁹⁸ Mary remarried two months' after his death. Her new husband, Lewis Martin, was described as a gentleman when he gained his honorary freedom of the city on the same day as his marriage and they appeared to remain in the parish of St Mary Arches where he was valued on £3 goods for the lay subsidy in 1602 .

Merchants operating without shops: net inventorial worth £200 or more

Roger Phipps (biography 56) of St Petrock died aged around thirty-four in 1605. He was in a position to repay all his debts and still be worth £243 net to his widow and two surviving sons aged approximately six and two years old. He operated an overseas trading concern with a factor in St Malo, and he owned two maps, one framed, alongside other books. He also had contacts in London and Wales who owed him a substantial £19 in total alongside another £119 of debts due to him. Unfortunately these are not broken down into individual debtors, but their overall size suggest wholesale transactions. He carried £44 worth of stock although it is not possible to determine the percentage that was made up from cloth. Amongst the financial information were 'thinges lying in paune', a feature also found in Henry Gandy's inventory, though it is not clear whether they were lending money on pawn or pawning their own goods: the former seems more likely.

Roger Phipps did not enjoy observably close relationships with leading actors, but merchant **John Pley** (biography 58) may have taken advantage of the prestigious start to his trading life as the apprentice of leading actor Richard

⁴⁹⁸ Hoskins, 'Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', p.160.

Bevis, gaining his freedom in 1600 and quickly amassing an estate with a net worth of £372 by 1610, though again with no debtors, creditors or stock value listed in his probate account. Perhaps he would have progressed to the upper chorus or leading family group, but his too was a short life. Following the deaths of his first child and wife in 1603, he remarried to nineteen-year-old Elizabeth in 1605 and baptized son John in 1608. Three months later, aged around thirty-four, John senior wrote his will. This reveals recovery from an earlier illness bringing out the zealous protestant in him. He clearly knew Ignatius Jurdain, to whom he owed £50 and he also owned property in Lyme Regis from where Jurdain originated and which Stoye describes as a town with 'an old radical tradition.'⁴⁹⁹ From this property arose a £5 yearly rent which John instructed be used to employ a 'lecturer or preacher of God's Word' for morning and/or afternoon prayer in the cathedral or elsewhere; his own prayers were for the Lord to come quickly. For reasons that are not clear, he desired his body to be buried as close as possible to that of leading actor Richard Dorchester who had been buried in March 1609, or possibly his son, also Richard, who died around 1599.

Having gained his freedom of the city in 1603, **John Webber** (biography 86) died aged approximately thirty-two years old in 1610 but despite his relatively short life, he amassed a considerable fortune worth £843 net plus other inherited property. It seems he would have been a natural candidate for Chamber membership, being actively involved in regional trade from Bristol to Bodmin and national and international trade with Morlais, La Rochelle and London where his three factors kept watch on his goods; perhaps he oversaw their work from the desk in his study. At his death, he certainly had more distant debt than local on his books in terms of both debtors and the amount they owed (table 8.4).

He carried c.£400 worth of stock of which 70% was made up of cloth, and his own debts were calculated in pounds, suggesting a wholesale operation. This is supported by the majority of debts owed to him being likewise calculated in

⁴⁹⁹ Stoye, *Deliverance to Destruction*, p.20.

wholesale pounds. Both his local and distant good debts considerably outweighed his bad debts.

He too enjoyed luxury goods back in his substantial house which consisted of three parlours, a hall, four chambers, a study and a kitchen. He possessed a looking glass, a leather-covered 'London chair' and a pair of virginals, perhaps made by Exeter's own virginal-maker, John Punchard who operated between 1577 and at least 1590.⁵⁰⁰ He appeared to lease a furnished second home in South Molton where perhaps two of his daughters were baptized, unless, like the Hurst family, his country property was his main home and he maintained a second home in town. He appears to have enjoyed the wealth and lifestyle of a minor gentleman.

Richard Reynolds (biography 65) did live long enough to become a member of the upper chorus, and is associated with the parish of St John where he was valued for tax at £6 in 1586, the second highest valuation in the parish. He leased, and may have occupied, part of the 'common hall' and a house on the west side of Tuckers Hall. Described as a mercer in a lease, he mustered as a caliverman in 1587, was exceptionally well-armed, with nine different types of weapon stored in his three-storey house, and contributed generously to the Armada ship money subscription. He was buried in 1592 and his inventory reveals that his stock (totalling £45 of which 55% related to cloth), leases, the contents of two houses and his debt position left a net value of c.£1651, of which £263 was ready money, the third highest sum from this selection of inventories. The majority of debt owed to him was wholesale and local, in contrast to Dyer's assertion in his study of Worcester that the mercer relied more than most tradespeople on supplying to surrounding wealthy countryside dwellers – although some of his debtors did come from North Devon and Somerset.⁵⁰¹ His distant bad debts were greater than his distant good debts but in total his distance debts were much less than his local debts, and his local good debts amounted to much more than his local bad debts.

⁵⁰⁰ Rowe and Jackson, *Exeter Freeman*, p.94; DRO, ECA N13-09 Quarter Session Rolls, Eliz 33 image 7.

⁵⁰¹ Dyer, *City of Worcester*, p.88.

Therefore, although his distant trading operations seem to be more risky than those of other merchants, his local wholesale business operations, and his few retail transactions, were relatively low risk (table 8.5).

He did not run the Tudor equivalent of a department store, as Dyer's Worcester mercers did, his only other stock being made up of lace and a variety of pins.⁵⁰² Instead, Richard specialised in importing 'Levan' or 'Levein' taffeta, originally from India, Persia, Bengal or China, which may explain why his distant debts seem more risky.⁵⁰³ In this he does conform with Dyer's assertion that mercers were suppliers of expensive imported textiles, and his cloth colour range was wide and included 'changeable taffeta', where warp and weft were of different colours. He appears to have been a walking advertisement for his wares, owning several gowns faced with a variety of furs, a taffeta cloak and jerkin, satin and rash (silk) doublets, coats and jenkins with silver buttons, breeches guarded with velvet and two hats. His will shows his wife Ann was still alive, and that three children, John, William and Elizabeth would each inherit £33 6s 8d when they reached twenty-one, plus their child's portion which could have amounted to around £500 each. His son John became a seventeenth-century prose fiction writer, well known in his own time.⁵⁰⁴

Walter Horsey (biography 37) too was a member of the upper chorus whose biography suggests that he strongly aspired to become a member of the Chamber, though he never attained that status before his burial in 1597. Having gained his freedom as a merchant in 1581, he married into the family of leading actor Eustace Oliver in 1582 and was substantially supported by him for the first two years of his marriage to Eustace's daughter Elizabeth, as detailed in Eustace's will. The couple baptised six daughters, the last two of whom died as little girls and three of whom went on to marry at relatively young ages to other merchants, discussed below. In 1589 he became a bailiff

⁵⁰² *ibid*, p.86.

⁵⁰³ <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/traded-goods-dictionary/1550-1820/leech-lewkes-hemp> [accessed 6/1/2015]

⁵⁰⁴ J. Walmsley, *John Reynolds, Merchant of Exeter, and his Contribution to the Literary Scene 1620-1660* (Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991).

and was also a frequent juror, one of the most generous contributors to the Armada ship money (at £3 for his tax band of £6) and actively mustered as a caliverman. By 1591 he possessed a merchant's mark and his wealth was accumulating as, by 1593-5, he was valued on £8 in goods. His complicated house, with its chamber over the chamber within the hall, its buttery, cellar, gallery, kitchen and stable was comfortably furnished and, like John Trosse, he boasted '2 chyna' dishes.

Walter Horsey appears to represent a cross-over between the retailing and wholesaling merchants as, despite being one of the wealthiest of them all, he possessed an operative shop with chests, shelves, three pairs of balances, cloth and other stock within it. Cloth, in particular dowlas, tregar and white and coloured kersies, seems to have been his mainstay, forming 90% of his considerable stock value of £923. Like John Webber, his debt situation suggests a successful wholesale operation to distant customers with more distant debt than local and good debts that amounted to more than those deemed bad, but he participated in more retail transactions than John Webber who operated without a shop (table 8.6).

With his leases, shop stock and good debts, Walter's estate was worth net just over £2,464, the second largest total of all the Exeter inventories. He also had a very ambitious apprentice, John Gupwill for most of whose apprenticeship Walter was alive. In January 1593, John already appeared to be dealing in France (Brest) and by February was licenced by the Society for Merchant Adventurers to trade for himself 'beyond the seas'. Walter Horsey made his will in 1597 and was buried in October that year and John gained his freedom of the city in September 1598.

In April 1601 the act books reveal that the Orphans' Court agreed a marriage between Elizabeth, Walter's daughter and John Gupwill. At this point in time, Elizabeth was fourteen and a similar marriage was agreed for her sister Joan, aged fifteen to Nicholas Spicer. In September 1601 Elizabeth, aged fifteen, married John and in 1602 Joan, aged sixteen, married Nicholas. The third surviving sister, Ann, aged twenty, married a John Reynolds (not the writer

son of Richard) in January 1611. Even if Walter never graduated to the leading actor layer, his daughters attained it through their marriages. John Gupwill became a member of the Chamber, and although there were three Nicholas Spicers and it is difficult to know which one Joan married, it is not impossible that her husband became Mayor in 1603. Walter's widow Elizabeth was left the profit and occupation of the house where he lived, presumably in St Petrock where he was taxed, and another in St Martin. Once Elizabeth died the lease of the St Petrock property passed to Joan and that of the St Martin property to daughter Elizabeth. All four surviving daughters received over £300 orphans' money, plus a legacy of £100 and other bequests involving clothing. His wife Elizabeth was executrix and received the residue of his estate having spent £100 on what would have been a splendid funeral. There was a sting in the tail however. Walter stated in his will that if any adventure failed or good debts became bad, they would be deducted from his wife and children's portions, though there is no clue as to how long it was before they knew their fortunes were safe or otherwise. Walter's adventuring seems to refute Hoskins suggestion that large sums of ready money in the house indicate a lack of investment opportunities, as he kept £764 of ready money at home, the largest sum of all in the inventories used in this study.⁵⁰⁵ Perhaps, as a shrewd businessman, he felt that most investment opportunities were too high a risk and kept a tight hold on his purse.

As the above examples show, the individual operations and aspirations of these particular merchants reflect trading interests in a mixture of wholesale and retail local and distant markets. The following section examines who some of the local customers might have been.

Tailors, Drapers and Haberdashers

As the above biographies show, many, though not all, merchants dealt in cloth and overall the above individuals bound up an average (mean) 68% and median 67% of their inventoried stock in that commodity. Though much may have been exported, some was needed for local purposes. Linen goods and

⁵⁰⁵ Hoskins, 'Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', p.156.

neckware were made by seamstresses and household women who purchased their materials from both chapmen, who sold linen door-to-door or from inns, and from retail merchant shops like that of John Trosse and Thomas Withycombe.⁵⁰⁶ Other clothing was made by the 229 tailors identified in this study. Dyer suggests that tailors worked either with the customer's own materials or that bought from the mercer or draper with a specific customer in mind.⁵⁰⁷ A robust market for new clothing is seen through the significant amounts and varieties of cloth, the sewing, measuring and pattern making accoutrements (ell measures, chalk and soap for marking cloth, paper for patterns) inkell or linen tape, starch, threads, pins, thimbles, points and buttons, the occupations of tailor, needlemaker, pinner, pointmaker, embroider, cuff dresser, glovemaker and hatmaker, the hundreds of hats in stock (see below) and some individuals' own apparell. This market operated alongside bequests of previously-owned clothing in wills and recycling of worn-out garments for those who could not afford new.

Like merchants, tailors flourished to different degrees. Agnes Hill was pregnant with her fourth child when her tailor husband **John Hill** wrote his will (biography 36). John is not a clearly individuatable person, but his inventory reveals that he was wealthy enough to be valued net at £43 in 1604 and that he could leave each of his living children £5 plus a silver spoon each and 40s to his as yet unborn child. Their household, in the parish of St Lawrence, was not ostentatious; the rooms are not distinguished, apart from the hall, and most items remaining there are described as 'old', although without a burial date, the delay between burial and appraisal is unknown and much may have disappeared. The only items of value, appropriately enough, were those making up his apparell, valued at £6, and, rather harder to explain, eighteen barrels of herring – possibly an indication of some form of bi-employment.

⁵⁰⁶ J. Arnold, *Patterns of Fashion: The Cut and Construction of Clothes for Men and Women c. 1560-1620* (London, MacMillan, 1985), p.3; N. Mikhaila and J. Malcom-Davies, *The Tudor Tailor: Reconstructing Sixteenth-century Dress* (London: Batsford, 2006), p.45; Dyer, *City of Worcester*, p.91.

⁵⁰⁷ *ibid*, p.129.

Robert Prouze (biography 61) appears to have been reasonably successful in business. An active member of the tailoring trade, his workshop contained a workboard, shears and a pressing iron and he took on three apprentices, all of whom gained their freedom. He was Single Master of the Tailors' Guild in 1579 and 1580 and Master Warden in 1586, although he appears never to have held the position of Master of the Guild. He possessed one of their scarlet hoods, which his inventory appraisers noted should be returned. In 1607, he loyally left the Guild 5s in his will, though it owed him over £2 and he was in debt to other tailors. His dwelling included a cider house with apple shelves and a still in the chamber over it, although it did not appear to be operative, being full of 'olde things', and he stored 'at St Nicholas house', or the building that once comprised St Nicholas Priory, hard wood, hay, straw, five cattle and two pigs, plus haymaking equipment. His gentry debtors included Francis Courtney, who married widow Mary Hurst, Mary Hurst's father Sir William Pole and Gilbert Weare, Francis Courtney's servant, all of whom had a direct connection with St Nicholas Priory. Robert was behind on the rent, on beer bills with two brewers, and tithes due on more land at Heavitree. Nevertheless he appeared to be approximately £55 in credit and owned a modest amount of plate.

His family life was, however, full of personal loss. Robert's marriage to Tamsin is not recorded but his first recorded child Agnes was baptized in 1572, so they may have been married for over thirty years at her death in 1604. Of thirteen baptisms, seven have recorded burials (in winter 1582 a baby and toddler within two days), three disappear from the records, one possibly lived to be married before he died leaving just two, Joan and Samuel, as beneficiaries of his will. Robert died aged around fifty-nine in 1607 and Joan, aged either thirty-three or twenty-four and unmarried, was left with the care of her nineteen-year-old brother Samuel for three years until he was twenty-two. She inherited the lease of Robert's house and his goods and debts but only one gown and coat of her mother's, as all else had been given away before she died. Robert, it turns out, was more than just a tailor, as he owned tinworks which he bequeathed to Samuel via the guardianship of his

cousin John Miller of Bovey Tracey. In April 1610, just after Samuel came of age in January, Joan married Robert Newton of Lewes, East Sussex.

In Dyer's study of Worcester artisans, he finds no tailors possessing a significant stock of cloth and this is true of Robert Prouse who stored none and John Hill who stored but two yards of kersey.⁵⁰⁸ However, other tailors in the city participated in both the productive and distributive aspects of cloth-related trade. **Thomas Bird** (biography 5) despite one brush with the law in his youth related to illegal pig keeping, appeared to live a very respectable life as a one of the upper chorus: a freeman, bailiff, juror and provider of armour for the military musters. He was also twice Master of the Tailors Guild. He made his will in June 1576 and his inventory reveals that his net worth was £135, which was to be divided between his widow Grace and his two daughters. The fifteen-roomed property they occupied in 1567 seems to equate to 'the chamber over the Eastgate and others newly built on the south side of the Eastgate' and indeed, Stoye notes that the Eastgate 'formed an impressive complex of buildings' which 'must have also have been regarded as prestigious places to live.'⁵⁰⁹ These were located in the parish of St Lawrence, where Grace was assessed for tax as a widow in 1577. His inventory lists substantial material wealth and he operated from a wool shop, for storing and carding wool, a 'working shop' and separately a cloth shop, which both possessed shop boards and presses, the latter containing also his pressing irons and shears. The appraisers also noted that some of the wall hangings were 'household made' which may imply hangings of crude and low quality or quite the opposite, given his occupation and status within it. He is also described as a draper, and one of his will overseers was a London merchant draper. There was £67 worth of wool cloth in one of his shops which fits Dyer's finding that drapers sold more utilitarian textiles than did mercers.⁵¹⁰ Very noticeable in his inventory is the number of gentlemen who owed him money. Out of 169 debtors listed, 39 (23%) were identified as gentlemen who owed him £88 (41%) out of the £214 owed to him in total, an

⁵⁰⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁰⁹ Stoye, *Circled with Stone*, pp.16 and 41.

⁵¹⁰ Dyer, *City of Worcester*, p.89.

average individual debt of £2. If these debts related to clothing and cloth for gentry households, he seems to have been a valued tailor to the better sorts, two of whom were his will overseers. Of his non-gentry debtors, only 4 (3%) had debts expressed in pounds, the other 116 (97%) owing on average 16s. These figures reflect Dyer's observation in Worcestershire that drapers and tailors operated amongst a wider socio-economic set of customers than did mercers.⁵¹¹

In 1569, upper chorus tailor **William Lant** (biography 42), after some complicated calculations, was worth net £182 despite, like Thomas Bird, carrying significant debts owed by high ranking individuals and their servants, including a Mr Water Rawley – possibly the father of the famous namesake. Although only ever described as a tailor, he was a man with a keen eye for colour and his two shops housed a rainbow of kersies and other cloth worth £22, plus 22lbs of wool. In his own rooms he broke away from the overriding green interior colour schemes and branched out into green and red stripes. His tables were covered with carpets (one of tapestry, one of red frieze) and his cushions had roses, all of which must have glowed in the candlelight of his chandelier along, perhaps, with the flowers in his twenty flowerpots.⁵¹² However, with his shop piled high with kersies, a kersey press and a looking glass in his adjacent cloth-hung parlour, it is possible, perhaps, to envisage him draping his customers with their choice of coloured kersey cloth and fetching the parlour mirror in which his customers could view themselves, even if, during this era, it was probably quite small. There is no evidence of tailoring equipment in his inventory, but it is possible it had been removed. He was one of the few men to bequeath clothes to others, perhaps eagerly anticipated from this particular source – especially the taffeta-faced gown, the velvet-guarded jacket and the satin-edged coat. One of his two sons called John may have progressed to membership of the Chamber as a merchant and to burial in the Cathedral nave, his flagstone still visible today.

⁵¹¹ *ibid.*

⁵¹² *ibid.*, p.86. Here, Dyer notes that cushions belonging to a wealthy mercer were made from church vestments, which may also be the case with William Lant, though it cannot be proved.

William Lant's apprentice **John Hundaller** (biography 38), to whom William left his riding coat fared not so well. A tailor of St John Bow, he wrote his will in September 1599. Conventional at the start, it transforms into an inventory of his debts but without individually listed goods. In this he is estimated to be worth net £226 although the calculations are very confusing. There is then another inventory of goods for a John Handall which total in value £8. There is no other John with this or a similar name encountered in the sources and this second inventory was appraised in October of an unstated year. Here, it is assumed that they refer to one and the same John Hundaller. He fathered two daughters but left all his goods to wife Mary. He was known to the quarter session court as accused then as juror and surety provider, so he may have been regarded as sufficiently financially stable to do this, even though over £91 of desperate debts were owed to him, a third of which were denied. Moreover, he had overcalculated profits on a venture in Morlais which 'made not soe much as was put downe' and he owed nearly £70 to men in Jersey. In 1570, he owed money for poor-relief contributions. Between 1592-3 and 1597-8, he was also the Watergate's porter which netted him income of a modest 6s 8d a year. At the end of his life, and despite his apparent net wealth, his remaining worldly goods were valued mostly in pence, though many possessions may have been removed by his debtors or sold by his wife before the appraisers started work. Back in 1573 he could afford to lease a garden in the parish of St John from Thomas Prestwood (P344, table 10.2) at death, he appeared to live in a house comprising only a hall, a 'chamber wthin the hall' and a shop, with no plate or ready money and with Mary asking the city just 8s for his funeral.

In complete contrast, **Thomas Greenwood** (biography 27), upper chorus haberdasher, was married with children, and one of the city's most civically active men. He was buried in November 1592 with an estate valued net at approximately £1448. As wealthy as most leading actors, and his extensive inventory reveals that his substantial house, with at least seventeen rooms – a challenge for the appraisers to describe - was dominated by trade goods, although the inventory may reflect the sorting out of his goods rather than the arrangement of them during life. Many of the upper rooms were furnished

unremarkably, much as other inventoried houses were, with beds, coffers, tables, chairs and cushions, the kitchen and buttery had the usual household implements and the parlour and lower hall likewise, with the addition of a 'littell payre of virginalls' and 'a trumpett'. Unlike the haberdashers of Worcester, whom Dyer found to be uniformly small traders with little stock, his inventory reveals him acting as a milliner. His upper chamber was stuffed with many dozens of 'felts' or felt hats for both sexes, coloured and with bands, and, if the order in which the goods were appraised is significant, underneath all these felt hats were several old pieces of furniture and 'very olde & bad paynted Clothes about the Chamber' which suggests the felt hats were piled high.⁵¹³ The higher forehall was filled with various cushions and the higher cockloft with yet more untrimmed felt hats and hundreds of yards of cloth including velvet and taffeta, underneath which were old chairs, an old harness and a pan for a close stool. The purpose of the fabric stocks becomes clear in the middle forechamber which was stacked with 286 hats of various types including taffeta ones lined with velvet. Another close stool was buried in here, although whether with or without its pan is not noted. A third close stool was in the lower forechamber but this time, it would appear, easily reachable. However, this hat stock was nothing compared to the 616 hats in his shop alongside the caps, girdles, stays, hatbands and feathers, and he was clearly a hatter for all purses as the range of prices per hat ran from 40s to 10d. Correspondingly, his debtors included those distinguished by 'Mr' and those who were not, though on average the former seem to have owed less individually than the 'ordinary' debtors (table 8.7).⁵¹⁴

⁵¹³ *ibid*, p.88.

⁵¹⁴ At the end of the inventory is the line 'The old mans goods prayed amountheth to the sum of £15 14s 2d', a sum which was subtracted from Thomas's greater than average funeral expenses of £32. It is difficult to explain this entry unless it was of another inhabitant of the house. It cannot be a description of Thomas himself.

Branching out and joining up: ‘industrial’ craftsmen

As some of the above biographies demonstrate, not all sons followed in the occupational footsteps of their fathers. As Hoskins points out, the subdivision of estates amongst several children could effectively end a family business.⁵¹⁵ This was not the case, however, with **Richard Wills the elder** (biography 92) a wealthy brewer who was buried in the parish of St David in 1571, held land in All Hallows on the Wall and had a sister Margery (biography 85). He fathered five sons, John, Nicholas, Zachary, Richard and William plus daughter Margaret, and provides a good example of how children both continued the family business and branched out into other occupations.

Richard’s eldest son **John Wills** (biography 90) became his apprentice, gained his freedom by succession and appeared to operate as a brewer. He was certainly still alive in 1600, although exact details of his life are difficult to distinguish from the three other John Wills of Exeter. Of Nicholas and Zachary more is known. **Nicholas Wills** (biography 91) became a plumber, the apprentice of John Moore, who lived in property leased from Nicholas’s brother Richard Wills the younger. Nicholas’ plumbing may have included work associated with the portable organ pipes at the church of St Petrock and, alongside other metalworkers Benjamin Lynn, pewterer and William Knowles the cutler, he was responsible for casting and firing the city weights. He married Jane Thomas in September 1587 in the parish of Holy Trinity and between 1589 and 1602, baptized eight children, one of whom, James, succeeded his father as a plumber.⁵¹⁶ Their tenement was in South Street, where Nicholas was valued in 1602 on £3 goods. He stood in for John Moore on more than one occasion but he did not succeed to John’s position as city plumber in 1612, though he still carried out city work.⁵¹⁷

If **Zachary Wills** (biography 93) obtained the freedom of the city, the fact does not survive in the sources, but he operated as a tucker in the parish of St Edmunds. There, in 1592, he married dyer’s daughter Alice Holder, and they

⁵¹⁵ Hoskins, ‘Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter’, p.164.

⁵¹⁶ Stoye, *Water in the City*, p.120.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid*, pp.115 and 118.

baptized ten children, none of whom are subsequently recorded as being buried and one of whom, Dunes, married John Pearse in the same parish in 1609 aged sixteen. Zachary held a tenement for 4s rent from the Chamber, described as adjacent to the mill leat running towards Cricklepit Mill and other tucking mills in the west and also paid rent for two bridges, presumably over mill leats in Exe Island. He appeared to remain close to his brothers, being joint godfather with his brother John to Nicholas's son Richard in 1600 as well as to others. He would have inherited his brother Richard the younger's dyeworks if Richard's widow Thomasine and his daughter Dunes had both died, in which case Alice's family background would have been useful. Dyer observes that in Worcester there are instances of the trades of fuller and dyer being combined.⁵¹⁸

In 1573, **Richard Wills the younger** (biography 92), a dyer, was living in Knife Lane in the parish of St Edmunds, a tenant of Thomas Prestwood and by 1577 he was valued on a considerable £10 in goods in the parish, though this dropped to £5 in 1586. A signatory to the Bond of Association, he was also master to apprentice Edward Rendell who gained his freedom in 1582. Although there is no marriage record for Richard, he baptised a daughter, Dunes in May 1589. It was then recorded that he buried his wife Thomasine in 1589 and his wife (*sic*) Dunes in 1591 when, in fact, they were both alive and mentioned in his will and inventory of 1593, showing just how unreliable parish records can be in times of plague. Thomasine and Dunes stood to inherit a substantial property with panelled rooms, window glass and a garden, three furnaces, three wood vats, two lead cisterns, dyestuffs and other implements that related to Richard's trade as a dyer. However, it appears that he may have had a son, or if not, another relative, also called Richard who does not appear in Richard's will. This third Richard Wills gained his freedom as a dyer with master John Ashley just months before Richard the younger wrote his will. The third Richard Wills cannot be one of the sons of Nicholas or Zachary with this name as they had not yet been baptized.

⁵¹⁸ Dyer, *City of Worcester*, p.103.

Richard the younger's net worth was £430 and his final wish was to be buried in the cathedral graveyard with a tombstone commemorating his family (perhaps revealing a desire to emulate the gentry).⁵¹⁹ Two of his overseers and inventory appraisers were influential men. His uncle **Gilbert Smith** (biography 71) was a leading actor, a wealthy, active citizen involved with the St Mary Major church tower incident and a fellow signatory to the Bond of Association. **William Tickell** (biography 77), his brother-in-law, was the apprentice of town clerk Richard Hart. He gained his freedom of the city in 1573 and by 1601 was the city Chamberlain. Of **William Wills** and **Margery Wills**, virtually nothing is known.

The Maddock family appears to have been closely entwined with the Wills family. **Richard Maddock** (biography 44) was a tucker/fuller who baptized six children with two wives between 1583 and 1591 and one more after his death. He was an active citizen, who provided surety for young tuckers to enable them to gain their freedom of the Tuckers and acted as a feoffee for the Tuckers alongside Gilbert Smith. He leased racks in All Hallows on the Wall from the Chamber in 1589-1590 and in 1586 he was valued on £4 in goods in the parish of St Mary Major and was active in parish affairs there. Joyce Youings provides a summary of his substantial house and workshop based on his inventory.⁵²⁰ A musketeer in the military musters of 1587, he subscribed to the Ship Money levy too, but in 1591 it would seem the plague struck his household, carrying him away, probably in his early thirties, together with an unnamed apprentice and leaving his pregnant wife Thomasine alone with their young family of six children, aged between seven and two years old. His youngest daughter Thomasine was born just a few months after her father's death and his youngest son was Gilbert, just two at the time. There is no record of Thomasine Maddock remarrying. However, Richard Maddock's family was a beneficiary of Richard Wills the younger, as Thomasine Maddock was bequeathed the rest of the lease on the premises in which the plumber John Moore lived and Andrew and Dorothy Stabback, the children of John Stabback (biography 72), who were owed £42 pounds by Richard Maddock,

⁵¹⁹ Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth*, p.96.

⁵²⁰ Youings, *Tuckers Hall*, p.70.

had their debt partially covered by Richard Wills. Richard Maddock's son, also Richard, was the 'servant' of Robert Maddock and was bequeathed Robert's tucking equipment. His faith in the younger Richard was amply rewarded as he appears to have been a churchwarden of St Mary Major at the age of sixteen, according to his baptism and appointment dates. In 1606, aged twenty-one, he gained both his freedom of the Tuckers and the freedom of the city, becoming later a recipient in trust of some of the Tuckers' property and, as Youngs notes, Master of the Company in 1621-1622. He died in 1639 with goods valued at £434.⁵²¹

His benefactor, tucker **Robert Maddock**, whose relationship to Richard Maddock the elder is not known, married tanner's daughter Joan Hayne in St Thomas in 1586 eight months before gaining his city freedom followed by freedom of the Tuckers (biography 45). He mustered as a musketeer alongside Richard Maddock the younger, perhaps also following in his harquebusier father-in-law John Hayne's footsteps. John was buried in 1588 leaving £50 to Joan, together with his *Book of Martyrs*, and Robert, in due course, seems also to have had puritan leanings, leaving 40s to a 'minister of God's word' at his death in 1605. Earlier in their married lives, they had baptized and buried two children in St Thomas, one a plague victim in 1591. Thereafter Robert and Joan prospered, being valued on £6 of goods in the parish of St Mary Major with which they were associated from at least 1595, perhaps leasing their premises from dyer Richard Wills the younger, as listed in his inventory. A man of some standing, Robert was civically active and became master of the Tuckers in 1594-1595.⁵²² His household was a busy one with, between 1595 and 1604, four small children and three apprentices but, aged around 43, he wrote his will and was buried just over a week later. His inventory reveals that he owned five tucking mills and millstones wherein lay the greater net value of his substantial £500 estate. The Hayne family were around him as he wrote his will, his brothers-in-law Henry a witness and Philip, a cordwainer, a beneficiary.

⁵²¹ *ibid*, p.80.

⁵²² *ibid*, p.48.

Comparison with a leading actor

The inventories of upper and middle chorus craftsmen, merchants and tailors often reveal significant wealth, despite not being in the very top layer of local society. To set this wealth in context, and to enable comparison with a leading actor and one occupied in providing a service, the biography of Henry James notary public, is compiled (biography 39). Henry James was a widower at his death in 1576. His wife's first name is unknown but her surname had been Hazelwood. She may have been the widow of Richard Hazelwood who married Agnes Parsons in 1557 and who was assessed for tax in St Stephen's parish the same year, the parish in which Henry James also paid tax. There is no record of Richard Hazelwood after 1566, but Henry James gained his freedom in 1565 and may well have been searching for a suitable wife.

We know almost nothing about Henry James and his family other than through his will written in 1576 and a very substantial inventory, as there are no surviving parish records for the period for St Stephen, and the only civic roles he took were bailiff and Chamber member. His will reveals that he and his wife had baptized four children, the first called Agnes, then Judith, Robert and Mary. There was a step-daughter, Elizabeth Hazelwood and a grandfather Nicholas James (Henry's father), aunts Agnes, Ann and Margaret, uncles William, James and possibly John, and at least one cousin called Joan. Henry James' 'trusty friend' and executor was Eustace Oliver, so he undoubtedly knew Walter Horsey.

Rather like John Follett, his children were treated equally in terms of bequests, with Robert his son perhaps encouraged in the direction of inheriting the business as he was left the lease of 'my Chamber in the churchyard whiche I doe nowe kepe my office in'. All four children were bequeathed a substantial sum of money and property leases and his brothers and sisters all received cash. The net value of Henry's estate was £1,369 18s 11d and so the one-third portions were £456 12s 11 1/4d with the children receiving another £423 between them, and he was creditor to a substantial number of people whose debts totalled £1014, of which only £217 were

written off as bad. Eustace Oliver may have been the executor, but it appears to be Eustace's wife who undertook the administration involved. At the end of the inventory was 'The abbreviat of Mrs Olyvers accompt' which details the income and expenditure she managed. This included Henry's funeral which had originally been estimated at £39 11s 2d, but in the end, Mrs Oliver paid out £64 11s, an impressive outlay, but relatively restrained in comparison with Walter Horsey.

It is in Henry's home where a real difference between even upper chorus wealth and the leading actor level is observed. His family lived in a twenty-eight roomed home of considerable comfort, plus a garden. The hall was draped with painted hangings depicting stories, it possessed a 'greate glasse', six cushions with the Kings Arms, and crooks 'to hange the maiers swords and maces on 6d'. There was a 'greate Courte' which seems mainly to house barrels and carpentry tools as opposed to the Back Court, which contained two shovels and a dung pick. This household had its own breadmaking equipment (in the bunting house) and brewhouse. The forechamber possessed window curtains, painted cloths, carpets and a roaring fire, judging by the pair of dogs, old tongs and pair of billows. In the little chamber by the Fore Chamber, alongside two more beds was a close stool. There were also five horses, the greatest number found in one place in this study.

Henry James himself can almost be pictured. The inventory lists his apparel; not for him rough fustian cloth. He owned several doublets of silk, satin and taffeta, a silk hat, a velvet nightcap and several gowns including ones with lambswool linings and velvet features. Even his kersey breeches sported 'a billiment lace upon them', but it is his business premises which are described in intimate detail, though whether these were additional to his office in the churchyard or the same rooms is not clear. There was a shop, outer office and inner office. In the shop were two lockable chests and the obligatory weapons, in this case a corslet, pike, helmet and sheaf of arrows, together with a bow (as a notary public, he presumably knew the law). In here Henry also kept a parchment roll of twenty skins and twelve reames of writing paper

'great and smale', together with two pairs of balances and weights and six shelves. So far it appears that this space may have appeared not dissimilar to that depicted in Pieter Brueghel the Younger's famous *Village Lawyer* painting of 1618, though perhaps less chaotic.⁵²³ His outer office had two 'square fframe of seeling', which may be boxed room dividers, one of which had a fixed bench, the other was 'lik to a spence' or a walk-in cupboard which also had a bench and shelves 'round aboute the same' which possibly describes a small consulting room with a waiting area. There was also a small table, a joined chair, a stool, a little desk and a 'carde' or map of 'Constanttinoble'. In the inner office was a walnut table, more wood wall panelling but this time with 'the whole frame of shelves about the same' and finally 'a mappe of the whole wourlde'. This room appeared to be his personal library and inner sanctum, although there is no seating mentioned. His inventory also lists the 155 books on those shelves which included bibles, dictionaries, chronicles, *The Paraphrases of Erasmus*, *Aesopp's Fables*, books in Latin, catechisms, *The Rule of Reason*, many texts with comments, *The Abridgement of Statutes*, Statutes from the reign of Henry VIII, a book for Justices of the Peace, 'olde law books', 'boks for scollers' and on a lighter note, '4 singing books'. It is a strange twist of historical evidence that for a man for whom it is almost possible to paint a portrait at work and, through his books, to know what ideas he considered, there is next to nothing discovered about his life in the city other than as a major creditor to many and a Chamber member.

Conclusion: an interconnected society

To conclude this chapter, it is possible to view more of the interconnections between this handful of individuals who did not share a common position in society, such as alien, nor a single occupation like baker. Even without a complete sample of all their interactions, it is clear that in Exeter there was a high degree of connectedness on many different levels. John Withycombe oversaw John Hill's will and Thomas Withycombe and his brother-in-law joiner Ferdinando Callendar were both debtors of Walter Horsey whose servant and

⁵²³ <http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2011/old-master-british-paintings-evening-111033/lot.11.html/> [accessed 21 July 2015]

future son-in-law John Gupwill was a customer of Richard Mawdett. Lewis Martin, the second husband of Mary Mawdett, Richard's widow, was also a debtor of Walter Horsey, as was Zachary Wills. When Ferdinando Callendar was bound over to keep the peace, one of his surety providers was John Vilvaine, tailor and former apprentice of Thomas Bird. John Trosse was the apprentice of Walter Horsey's father-in-law Eustace Oliver and witnessed Henry James' will. William Flay provided surety for Ellis Flay, possibly a relation and one of Humphrey Gilbert's soapboiling competitors. John Webber's late friend was Robert Maddock whose wife Joan Hayne seems likely to have been the sister of Elizabeth Hayne, John's wife, making them brothers-in-law. Robert mentioned in his will both John Webber and John Hayne (Joan and Elizabeth's brother) as his 'good friends' and John Gupwill knew Robert Maddock well enough to witness his will in 1604.⁵²⁴

According to MacCaffrey, evidence for how individual merchants organised their business is disappointing: he states that, for example, it is impossible to know the overall volume of trade merchants engaged in and how much of that an individual merchant handled in a year.⁵²⁵ Hoskins tacitly agrees when he focuses largely on the lifestages and material culture of those merchants who were leading actors.⁵²⁶ This chapter does not solve the issues that MacCaffrey highlights but it does extend Hoskins' study to more of those merchants further down the social structure and to a selection of the craftsmen with whom they associated and sold their wares, and it does reveal a little more about how they organized their business, how they made their profits (or at least managed their debts) and enables a glimpse of their relative successes as businessmen. There is also evidence to distinguish differences in their home lives, beliefs, tastes and interests which adds colour and shading to the otherwise all-purpose descriptions of 'craftsman', 'merchant' and 'tailor'.

⁵²⁴ The Hayne siblings and the Maddocks are explicitly connected in their father's will, TNA, PROB 11/73, image ref 128.

⁵²⁵ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.160.

⁵²⁶ Hoskins, 'Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', pp.148-167.

Chapter 9: The Fullest Family biographies

There are four families for whom there is exceptional record preservation. Their stories are best told through the women of these households, not least because three of them, Joan Harrison, Joan Redwood and Joan Heathfield, had inventories appraised in their own names as widows and effectively heads of their households, not (or not yet in Joan Harrison's case) re-absorbed by marriage. The fourth, Agnes Reed, is associated with property records that provide evidence connecting her marriages. For Agnes Reed and Joan Redwood, it is possible that their homes can be identified in the cityscape.

Joan Harrison (biography 31) is an example of a woman who survived two husbands and lived to see some of her children reach adulthood. Her date of marriage to alien cordwainer Warnard Harrison is unrecorded but he became a freeman in 1557, and took on apprentice Nicholas Hatch who gained his own freedom in 1568. Warnard baptized four children (Walter, William, James and Wilmot) between 1561 and 1569 and in his inventory other names, Thomas, Henry and Grace, are mentioned immediately alongside Walter and his siblings and may be the only record of other children born before the family enter Exeter parish records. They lived in the parish of St Mary Major, probably in a leased tenement in Bull Hill Street, now the top of South Street, paying a 20s yearly rent. Although the Harrisons did not risk a flutter on the Queen's Lottery, their servant Clement Owlborough did. Joan was widowed in June 1571 and left with up to seven children of various ages. When Warnard died his shop stock consisted of finished footwear and the materials for more, plus furniture housing further shop stock including a lockable glass-topped desk containing silk buttons. He lent and borrowed money, and although he was valued in 1557 at only 20s land, the net value of his estate fourteen years later was c.£130. Joan's home reflected this success, being comfortably furnished with much joined furniture, wood panelling, window glass, flowerpots, a bible 'of the small volume' and, not seen in other houses in this study, 'a sestorne of led to washe hands to 12d'. Their silver spoons and a ring bore Warnard's initials (a mixture, perhaps, of both pride in

achievement and a theft deterrent – in 1576, a silver spoon was bought by goldsmith's wife Katharine Osborne but the seller, servant Agnes Barrett may have stolen it from her employer.)⁵²⁷ Despite these refinements and the presence of a shop, Joan appeared to live, at least temporarily, with several dozen hides or 'skynes' from Flanders and Spain in her parlour. More intriguing in the cellar were 'in a baryll sertayne gre soxe 10s'.

What would usually be described as the deceased man's inventory was, in this instance, described as 'Widow Harrysson of Exeter's' inventory. Notes at the end of it indicate that she was very much alive and capable of taking over the cordwaining business, if she was not already running it. There were (*my italics*) 'good dettes declaryed *by her* with owte specyalltyes whose name *she* wyll not declare £28' and 'Item *she* hathe Rsd of the detts dew upon *her* booke syns the deathe of her late hosband the some of £3 1s 4d' and 'Item *her* booke amonts to £128 12s 8d besyds the some above wryten which *she* accomptes to be desperate detts bot *shee* wyll be countable for that *she* maye recover therof £128 12s 8d'. These quotations seem to indicate that Joan had been for some time well versed in the skills required as Warnard had only been buried some nineteen days before.

Within the inventory there was a promise of the lease of the house in which she and Warnard had dwelled, which appeared to be honoured. Within seven months she had remarried to Nicholas Carpenter, another cordwainer who had gained his freedom through his alien father only a few months before. He married into an established business that had been operating for fourteen years, complete with stock in hand and a wife who could apparently deal with money and debts. She gained an active new husband and their financial success was such that they were valued at £7 in the 1586 lay subsidy. Nicholas became a bailiff like his good friend and benefactor baker Nicholas Erron, and appeared to be fully involved in civic and neighbourhood issues, working as an inventory appraiser and, as a churchwarden, involved with the collapsing tower of St Mary Major. He also baptised six, possibly seven more

⁵²⁷ DHC, ECA, Chamber Act Book B1/4, p.384.

children with Joan between 1574 and 1584, making a grand total of between thirteen and fourteen children. One, Nicholas, may not have lived long – only his burial record survives and Joan's last, Gilbert, died within three months in 1584, but by then, Joan would have been a significantly older mother. There are no burial records for her sons by Warnard (James and Walter) but in their stepfather Nicholas's inventory, Walter is stated as being deceased and Nicholas appears to have been holding the portion of both Walter and James's natural father's legacy to his two sons, which may suggest that both had died before reaching an age to inherit it. Nothing more is known of Wilmot and William.

There is no burial date for Nicholas senior but his inventory is dated July 1595 and Joan Carpenter was a widow again. No will survives but it is assumed that Joan was his executrix and inherited the residue of his estate, so it is informative to compare the inventories of Warnard and Nicholas and to see that most of the contents listed in Warnard's inventory were not mentioned in Nicholas's (appendix 12). By common law, Joan's goods became the property of her husband on marriage and should, therefore, have been included. One explanation of this omission might be that Nicholas and/or the appraisers had recognised that Joan 'owned' the goods she brought to her second marriage and therefore they were left out. Most of the 'missing' goods are substantial pieces of household furniture, such as joined tables and benches, so another explanation may be that both she and Nicholas had been downsizing and had given away, to their possibly ten surviving children, unrecorded gifts of much of their 'stuff'. If so, they had given away almost everything *except* the kitchen sink. Had all her children lived, the youngest would have been thirteen and the oldest over twenty-seven, all old enough to have left home for other households or, if married, set up their own. In support of this, the inventory suggests that much of the remaining material goods were found in the shop, mixed up amongst much reduced shop stock, almost as if awaiting collection – not at all the picture of a thriving business left behind by Warnard. This is something that Hoskins also observes in merchants' wills as they shifted to

being country gentlemen.⁵²⁸ In the same year, Joan assigned a lease on premises in Holy Trinity, previously held by Nicholas, to John Norris. By around this date she was valued on 20s only (as opposed to £7 previously) so it does seem that the premises she wished to hold and the value of her goods were reducing, even allowing for undervaluation. In the inventory of 1595, Joan was not listed as 'Widow Carpenter' which implies that she was not running her second late husband's business in the same way she did for the first. He was still being referred to as an apprentice master nine years after his death, when, in 1604, a Nicholas Carpenter, cordwainer, was apprentice master to new freeman William Taylor, possibly the son of Richard Taylor, cordwainer of St Mary Major whose inventory Warnard had appraised. It seems unlikely that this refers to a second son named Nicholas, baptized in May 1581 and aged 23 in 1604, as he would have had to have gained his freedom at an exceptionally early age and taken on an apprentice of his own, none of which is recorded. Another possibility is that the apprentice master is in fact a Richard Carpenter, one of Nicholas' apprentices, who gained his freedom in 1579 and would have been aged around fifty in 1604. Nicholas senior's 'assigns' continued to be associated with their 20s rent on property in St Mary Major at least until 1599. Even by 1610, there is no burial record for Joan, so perhaps she did move away or alternatively lived to a good age.

Agnes Reed (biography 89 and illustration 3) married merchant Edmund Whetcombe in February 1551 in the parish of St Mary Arches. Although not all the baptism records survive for this parish, between 1551 and 1565 at least three of their five children were baptized there, one son Peter and four daughters Margery, Alice, Jane and Elizabeth. Both of Agnes's parents-in-law were alive and remained so for the duration of her marriage to their son, possibly living in Colyton. Edmund gained his freedom as a merchant in 1556, his late master being John Hurst, father of William Hurst III the occupant of St Nicholas Priory. Just one year after gaining his freedom, he was valued at £11 in goods when the average (mean) value for this, the most wealthy of Exeter's parishes, was £14 in 1557 and the median £10.5. In the

⁵²⁸ Hoskins, 'Elizabethan Merchants of Exeter', p.157.

same year he was for the first time named as the tenant of a 'newly built' tenement (built at least by 1499) in the west part of the Shambles meat market which is identified as P32 on Map 6 and in illustration 4.

The date at which the building was considered new supports Hoskins's suggestion, based on the number and arrangement of rooms, that the premises were possibly a medieval hall-house.⁵²⁹ There is some confusion between various lease descriptions but it would appear that he leased a plot with a house on which he built an adjacent new standing, also described as a shop. He continued to hold the lease until his death in Bristol between July 1564 and June 1565 aged approximately thirty-three.

Agnes was Edmund's executrix, and inherited the right to live in Edmund's other house in North Street, the fee simple of which he left to his infant son Peter. Their daughters were all bequeathed money and Agnes, as both wife and administrator, inherited two thirds of the residue of goods and chattels, totalling approximately £462. The parish in which Edmund's inventory was taken is not stated. However Boynton states that if an individual possessed property in more than one place 'he was legally liable to pay [tax subsidy] only where he chiefly resided'.⁵³⁰ Edmund Whetcombe only paid tax in the parish of St Mary Arches, not St Kerrian where North Street lies and therefore the evidence suggests that the inventory is of his St Mary Arches property by the Shambles.

As it appears in the inventory, the house consisted of eight rooms and the appraisers seem to have started in the shop next to his house, then covered the downstairs rooms, then upstairs and then the back of the property where lay the kitchen. The house was comfortably furnished; Edmund had his almain

⁵²⁹ *ibid*, p.160; This plot is no.2 on Richards' plan 15 where the accompanying rental states 'which premises are welle describ'd and plans of the several stories thereof inserted in the reversionary lease, granted to George Carwithen, dated 17th September 1754'. More research is needed to see if this lease survives and if so, to establish whether this building is the same or a more recent replacement of the late fifteenth century Whetcombe house.

⁵³⁰ Boynton, *Elizabethan Militia*, p.72.

rivets and half a sheaf of arrows (but no bow) to hand and owned a horse. He appears to have operated both a retail and wholesale business (table 9.1) and although many of his local retail customers were defaulters, his good debts outweighed his bad debts and his own debts to others. Textiles formed £232 (91%) of his £255 of shop stock, most of which was being sold off by Agnes. The rest comprised dried fruit and fish, brown paper, stoneware cups, seed, soap, iron and alum all found alongside the essential tools of his trade: a pair of scales, three balances and weights.

There are three inventories for Edmund Whetcombe, two of which are concerned wholly with debts and the complicated calculations relating to his children's legacies. The three one-third portions each consisted of £231 9s 10d. However in his will Edmund left a total of £369 to his children and other beneficiaries – less than needed to cover their one-third parts in total. The explanations as to how this was to be resolved are difficult to follow and the fact that the third inventory retraces previous calculations suggests that the appraisers also found it challenging. There was clearly confusion in Edmund's mind as his inventory is rounded off with a statement that 'Edmund Whetecumbe the testator was & by hem declired att Bristawe in his deyth bedd that he dyd by good coniecture thincke he hadd geven the 3rd part of his goodds to his sayde children ...by the custome of the Citie which the order of which custome was to hym then unknowen' The matter seems to have been settled by agreeing that the children would be satisfied with slightly less.

Agnes was not mentioned in any of these discussions but was left with possibly five children under the age of ten plus a niece. However she was a wealthy widow with the occupation of two substantial properties, and so it was that she remarried only eight days after the inventory appraisal. Her second husband was merchant John Pope, who gained his freedom just three months after the wedding. He became a leading actor; a member of the Chamber, a Governor of the Society of Merchant Adventurers, a provider of armour at the general muster in 1569 and served as a juror. The couple baptized John nine months later and an unnamed daughter in 1571, both in the parish of St Mary Arches and John senior took over the lease of Plot 32 and also plot 80,

previously leased by Edmund. Not only did Agnes find a rich and influential husband and stepfather for her children, she found a master for Edmund's servant and apprentice Richard Jurdaine. Richard successfully gained his freedom as a merchant in 1575 the day after he married Elizabeth Webber in the parish of St Mary Arches. Between 1577 and 1586 Elizabeth and Richard baptized six children in the same parish, five of whom appear to have survived early childhood.

However, on 10 December 1576, John Pope wrote his will and was buried twelve days later in the parish of St Mary Arches. Frustratingly, his will is extremely brief, simply naming his wife as his executrix and leaving his entire estate to her, save for 20s to the poor. Given his status, it seems reasonable to assume that his estate was of some considerable value. If so, it left Agnes a wealthy widow for the second time, with four or five children in their teens and two more under ten. Agnes, widow, was named as the lessee on the same plots that Edmund and then John had held and she continued to be so until 1588. She was also valued at £3 goods in the parish of St Mary Arches in 1577 and 1586, surely a good example of being undervalued.

Assuming she was between twenty and twenty-two at marriage in 1551 making her aged between fifty-five and fifty-seven in 1586, Agnes was well into middle age, when her daughter Elizabeth Whetcombe married Robert Sherwood in 1584. The very latest Elizabeth could have been born was the last half of 1564, so it is likely she was in her early twenties. Robert gained his freedom as a merchant in 1580, aged around 28, his master having been leading actor Richard Bevis. The couple lived in the parish of St Mary Arches where he was valued at £3 in 1586. He became the city's map-maker, and his cartographic work includes, it is thought, a map of Exeter in around 1630 (see chapter ten).⁵³¹ Robert Sherwood also knew the Hurst family. He leased P76, a garden in Friernhay, with the lease length of three lives, those of Robert himself, Nicholas Hurst (William III's son) and John Peter (related by marriage to the Hurst family). This is explored further in chapter eleven.

⁵³¹ Stoye, *Circled with Stone*, p.16; Ravenhill and Rowe, *Devon Maps and Mapmakers*, pp. 38-40, 180 and pl.3.

In November 1586, Elizabeth, wife of Richard Jurdaine, was buried in the parish and before the end of that year, Richard had another wife described in the Receiver's Account Rolls as 'the now wife of Richard Jurdaine' who held plot 32. As the parish burial records reveal that in February 1589 Agnes Jurdaine, wife of Richard was buried, it seems highly likely that Agnes Pope, widow married Richard Jurdaine, apprentice to both her previous husbands, and continued to lease the same property. In at least her mid-fifties, and having raised seven children of her own, she may well have been in a good position to look after Richard's children, all of whom were under ten and the youngest of whom was a baby, born to the late Elizabeth only the previous June. She was also extremely wealthy and Richard went onto become a Chamber member and to be valued on £8 in the parish in 1586.

Meanwhile, Robert and Elizabeth Sherwood baptized daughter Joan in 1585 and it would seem that they too were associated with plot 32 because, from 1588 (just before Agnes' death) into the next century, Robert held the lease as 'the assign of John Pope'. Whether they actually lived there is not clear as the property was sublet to William Harpin, locksmith in 1594, but this may have been the shop rather than the house. It is impossible to determine who *leased* the property and who *occupied* it but it is possible that Agnes and Edmund lived there, plus their children and his niece, then Agnes, John Pope and all her children by Edmund and John, then Agnes and Richard Jurdaine, joined by all his children. It would seem that as Agnes approached death, Robert Sherwood took over the lease and by 1599 had 'converted into his tenement' the standing or shop adjacent to it. It is not clear whether Richard Jurdaine continued to live there with his children and new wife Susan, whom he married seven months after Agnes' burial or whether he moved out and Robert Sherwood, his wife Elizabeth and their daughter Joan moved in.

Richard Jurdaine was buried in St Mary Arches in June 1597 and although his will does not survive his inventory does. He left legacies to all his children by Elizabeth and Susan but no stepchildren were mentioned. Unfortunately, his inventory does not state in which parish the property to which it refers was situated and makes no mention of house or household goods, merely reciting

that the 'housholde stuffe' was worth £284 5s 5d, which suggests a very substantial household. After several recalculations, he was stated to be worth net just over £87 and at £5 his funeral was a relatively modest affair. It would seem that his widow Susan moved out at some point in her widowhood as twenty years later, in a bargain and sale of 1616, Susanna Jurdaine, widow, was the occupant of a house in North Street, owned by a William Pope. She may have been there as early as 1604 as it is noted in the St Kerrian parish records that a deceased French boy had been living with Mrs Jurdaine.⁵³² This house has been identified as no.18 North Street, although documentary evidence connected with its earliest history demonstrates conclusively that this is not the North Street house left to Peter Whetcombe (of whom nothing else is known), despite the co-incidence of the surname Pope. Archaeological investigations conclude that the house was substantially rebuilt c.1600, though retaining some of its medieval features, so widow Susan may have been one of the earliest occupants of an Elizabethan house make-over.⁵³³

The family of **Joan Redwood** (biography 62) can be viewed within the general context for Exeter's bakers, discussed in chapter six. Joan probably married baker John Redwood and produced their first two sons in the mid 1550s. They lived in St Kerrian where John was a churchwarden in 1563. They baptized nine children and were prosperous enough for John to be valued on £5 goods in 1557 and on £3 in 1586, although these amounts were well below the parish average and amongst the lower assessments for known bakers (table 6.9) - it is likely they were undervalued. This argument is supported by the fact that they appeared to have the largest number of rooms in their premises for a baker of those recorded in table 6.10 and in due course Joan's inventory was above the average and median value for baker's inventories.

⁵³² Nesbit, St Kerrian Parish Register Marriages, Baptisms and Burials, p.9.

⁵³³ R. Parker, P. Bishop, A.G. Collings and R. McNeilage, 'No.18 North Street, Exeter: A 17th century Merchant House with Painted Panelling', *PDAS*, 71 (2013), 129-30.

Joan was widowed in 1581 after around twenty-five years of marriage and was left with eight children aged from their late twenties down to eleven. At what appeared to be the relatively late age of approximately twenty-nine, son John achieved the freedom of the city as a baker in 1586 with his deceased father quoted as his master. It may have been Joan who taught her baker son John his trade – unless she found other expertise to help - as his father had been dead for five of the seven years of his apprenticeship. If so, as might be expected in Exeter, her role is invisible in the records of freedom. The same year, Joan was assessed at £3 goods in the parish of St Kerrian and described as a widow. She wrote her will in May 1587, requesting to be buried in the cathedral churchyard and leaving thirty shillings to the poor ‘to be given unto them in breade’. She nominated her son John as executor and beneficiary of the residue of her estate and she was buried later that month. No residue of any lease is mentioned but ‘lands’ are bequeathed to John, so it may be that, unusually, Joan owned the property in which she lived.

The following year John married Agnes Taylor but was buried in February 1593, apparently without issue. It is possible that John and Agnes inherited and occupied in Joan’s house continuing the family bakery trade. Matthew Down, referred to as Joan’s servant in her will, gained his freedom between 1606 and 1607 with his master stated to be John Redwood, deceased – at least thirteen years after John the younger’s death. Perhaps it was Agnes who taught him for part of that period, although he may not have lived with her, having married Mary Dowdall in 1600 in the parish of St Paul and baptized six children there before 1610.

It may be possible to locate the Redwood household in the cityscape, though the evidence is not conclusive. A lease, referring to an unrelated property made in June 1593, includes the wording ‘lane leading from the back gate of Agnes Redwood widow called Bewlye lane ...’ (P368, table 10.2). Bewley Lane is clearly identifiable on the Coldridge Map and there are two or three properties which could have possessed a back gate at the end of Bewley Lane. Some could have been in St Mary Arches running down to Fore Street but equally, others could lie entirely in the parish of St Kerrian and run to

North Street (illustration 5). There is no documentary evidence specifically linking any of them to the Redwood inventory, but if Agnes lived in Joan's St Kerrian property, the plot outlined in red contains a building footprint that provides a good fit to Joan's inventory, bearing in mind that this footprint references buildings of the early nineteenth century. However, earlier medieval house layouts influenced and were adapted by, rather than destroyed by, subsequent alterations, for example at 36-38 North Street, recorded over a number of years before its demolition.⁵³⁴ Moreover, the rooms featuring in Joan's inventory not only fit the plan of a medieval hall-house, a type of high-class merchant's house built at the beginning of the fifteenth century but also mirror the mid sixteenth-century alterations discovered at 36-38 North Street.⁵³⁵ The probable candidate for Joan's plot on Hedgeland's model is shown in illustration 6, although it is curious that house roof is parallel to the street, as all map evidence, comparable buildings investigations and extant building evidence suggest the gable-end was presented to the street.

Numbering the rooms in the order in which they appear in the inventory suggests the order in which the inventory appraisers inspected the property. They appeared to follow a logical route that makes sense with this particular plot and house layout (illustration 7). The main difference between the 'usual' hall-house layout is that the Redwood property possessed both a bakehouse and a kitchen rather than a kitchen alone. The evidence on Coldridge's map of a gallery linking the main block to the kitchen is misleading as these are seventeenth-century additions at both 18 and 38 North Street, so may not have been present in Joan's house in 1587.⁵³⁶ The gallery chamber referred to in her inventory could just as well be an internal gallery that ran across the two-storey hall connecting front and back rooms, but which did not ceil it, one of which was recorded at no. 38 North Street. Reconstruction drawings of 38

⁵³⁴ J.Thorpe, 'The Construction, Appearance and Development of a Merchant's Town House, c.1500-1740, 38 North Street', *PDAS* 70 (2012), 220-228 and 232-242.

⁵³⁵ *ibid*, p.172; Portman, *Exeter Houses*, pp.24-36.

⁵³⁶ Parker and Allen, 'Transformation of the Building Stock of Exeter', p.41.

North Street and 36 North Street with its cellar, provide an impression of the interior and exterior appearance of the Redwood house.⁵³⁷

The Redwood bakehouse contained essential bakery equipment and there was a 'darkhouse', appraised immediately before the bakehouse, which also appeared to contain bakery related possessions, but it is difficult to position this space on the ground plan – it may have been the unlit floored-out roofspace of the bakehouse itself (a similar arrangement was once above the kitchen at St Nicholas Priory and the kitchen at 38 North Street was extended upwards in the mid sixteenth century). The kitchen was well furnished with equipment for open hearth cooking and there may have been a well in or nearby the property for a 'bucket & a roap & chayne' are listed in the yard and stable area (and a well is present at 36 North Street). There were also several animals – three pigs, five chickens and, inevitably, a dung heap.

Inside, the house itself was colourfully and comfortably furnished. The hall, which in a medieval hall-house was a double-height room up to the roof, possessed bench-lined panelled walls with a 'portole' or portal - a cupboard built around one of the doorways as a draught excluder. It was hung with painted cloths and contained joined tables, forms, chairs and stools, softened by green cushions and a carpet and accompanied by flowerpots. Its internal walls may also have been colourfully painted, as 38 North Street was with its colour scheme of blues, oranges, greens and scrollwork.⁵³⁸ There was plentiful pewter in the buttery or walk-in cupboard built into the hall and hands were washed in a basin supplied by a ewer and dried with hand-towels or by the open fire with their fire-dogs. This must have supplemented the light provided by the candles by which the bible could be read. Storage elsewhere around the house comprised shelves, chests, presses, coffers and cupboards, the latter decorated with cupboard cloths, and food was kept warm at the table on chafing dishes. The panelled downstairs parlour was also warmed and lit by an open fire, and perhaps a little repair work was underway when

⁵³⁷ Thorpe, 'The Construction, Appearance and Development', pp.173 and 222.

⁵³⁸ Thorpe, 'The Construction, Appearance and Development', p.183.

the appraisers found 'a hand sawe a payr of pincers & other olde trashe' there.

There were nine bedsteads of various kinds, two trucklebeds and accompanying (better quality) feather and flock bedding with blankets and coverlets which were bequeathed to, and enough to house, Joan's six unmarried children, as well as servant and apprentice Matthew Down plus John and Agnes once married. Joan's married son Richard who lived in Bristol, could also have been accommodated, though he was not bequeathed a bed. Joan owned a few silver pieces, including two stoneware cups with silver feet and covers, nine silver spoons and a partially gilt salt and goblet. Intriguingly there were '3 litle bells over the haule', perhaps an early form of calling Matthew Down.

Stored up in the little chamber, which may have been up over the forechamber, were two pairs of almain rivets and two bills amongst much 'olde' bedding and beds. John Redwood senior is not listed as a billman in the 1569 musters, but his armour may represent the residue of that requested by statute when John was valued at £5 of goods, although the long bow was again missing. John junior was a musketeer in 1587, but his musket is not listed. The appraisers may then have crossed back to the rear of the building at first floor level via the gallery chamber. In here appear to be two more beds with bedding, a chest and a table with trenchers (wooden dishes). Yet more beds appear in the back chamber and the brandloft overhead was full of storage barrels. More of these could be found down in the cellar and entry, some with beer in them and in the shop were two chests to put bread in. Right at the end of the inventory, in the parlour, was 'a desck', presumably a writing desk which sat on the folding table listed there. As it is the last item in Joan's inventory, perhaps the appraisers were using it.

It is possible to compare the contents of Joan's will with the subsequent inventory. All of her bequests can be seen in her inventory and one can speculate about discussions that may have occurred over her collection of hats which were dutifully listed but bequeathed to no-one. Perhaps none of

her daughters were interested in the previous generation's old fashions, or as one hat was 'new', perhaps it was simply not to their taste. Another explanation might be that only married women wore hats indoors, others going about bare-headed, and therefore Agnes would be the only suitable recipient.⁵³⁹ The hats in fact became part of the residue of the estate bequeathed to Joan's resident son John. He married the following year, so it seems likely that his new wife Agnes had her late mother-in-law's hats bestowed upon her.

It is possible to discern a small circle of friends around the Redwood family. John and Ann Sampford (biography 67) were witnesses to Joan's will. John was also an overseer with Edmund Cook (biography 13), whose will and inventory John also oversaw in 1599 with William Tickell (biography 77). In 1573 John held a lease from Robert Way for a tenement newly built in Waterbeer Street, St Kerrian, just around the corner from Joan. Ann, nee Gere, was servant to Margaret Drake (daughter of William Hurst I and aunt of William Hurst III of St Nicholas Priory) who left her cash and clothes five months before Ann's marriage to John in 1570.⁵⁴⁰ John was a merchant, who gained his freedom in 1569 and became a Chamber member. He was frequently a juror at the Exeter quarter sessions and was valued on £6 in 1577, twice that of the Redwoods. He was unusual for a Chamber member in mustering as a pikeman in 1569. He also signed the Bond of Association and was an inventory appraiser for notary public Henry James (biography 39) and merchant Richard Sweet. They appeared to be a generation in between Joan and John Redwood and their son John and his wife Agnes. As discussed in chapter six, they baptized and buried their first two children but thereafter followed nine more who appeared to survive, the last being baptized in 1589. Ann was buried in 1603.

Edmund Cook (biography 13) was one of the middle chorus, assessed on £3 of goods in 1577 in St Kerrian, where his daughter Agnes was baptized in 1578. He was the Mace Sergeant and a furrier/skinner by trade. A juror at the

⁵³⁹ Palliser, *The Age of Elizabeth*, p.73.

⁵⁴⁰ TNA, PROB 11/52, image ref 105.

Exeter quarter sessions in 1579, one of the years in which John Sampford also served, 1580 and 1597, he was buried in St Kerrian in October 1599, having written his will in June of that year. He left his heirloom copper kettle to Mary his wife for her life then to Agnes his unmarried daughter aged twenty-one and after that to his grand daughter Margaret Way, the daughter of his other daughter Grace, wife of Edward Way (who was the son of Robert Way, known to John Sampford). Grace inherited his partially gilt goblet, and other bequests likewise attempted fairness between the daughters. One lease residue was bequeathed to Elizabeth Windeatt, daughter of the late David Windeatt whose sexual encounters were discussed in chapter five, but both his legitimate daughters of that name had apparently long been dead of the plague. Perhaps not surprisingly the very first item on Edmund's inventory was a 'gowne fured wth budge and lined wth lamb' and in one of his two shops there were 'one wolverine skinne, half a wolfes skinne and a bares skinne'. His apprentice and perhaps relative was the John Cook whose son Vanswyll's birth was discussed in chapter six, though here called Hamswill. His net inventory totalled around £213 and amongst the luxury goods were tapestry carpets and a pair of virginals.

Finally, **Joan Hayfield/Heathfield** (biography 33) was the only other chorus woman apart from Joan Redwood with both a surviving will and inventory in her name, the only records of her existence. In terms of describing her lifestyle, her inventory, appraised on the last day of May 1603, was brief in the extreme 'Imprimis all her houshold stufe napy [napiery] apparrell and plate £27 6s 0d' and her net worth was c.£51. In her will there were twenty beneficiaries of whom thirteen were women and it provides a picture of the female social circle of one chorus woman. There were [blank/document crease] Beare her god daughter, Elizabeth Trumpeter's daughter who was her husband's god daughter, her sisters in law (step-sisters?) Dorothy Driver and Agnes Driver, her gossips Joan Risdon and Philippa Beale and Alice Risdon, possibly Joan's daughter. Winny and Syble were her maidservants and Emlin Palmer, Elizabeth Way, Joan Talman and Joan Lyle widow were of unknown relationship to Joan. Some received money, others items from her wardrobe

and household stuff. In this she conformed with the wider pattern observed in chapter seven.

It is also clear from her will that Joan Heathfield had some connection with the baking trade. She left to 'my cousin' Hugh Redwood's two sons a silver spoon each and to Hugh, Richard, Nicholas and Lawrence Redwood £10 each. It can surely be no coincidence that bakers John and Joan Redwood had four sons with the same names. Moreover the name Heathfield had baking connections through bakers Christopher and John Heathfield who were both operational in the 1590s. It may be that one of them was Joan's last husband and predeceased her, but there are no burial records for either man. There is one last rather poignant footnote. Joan Heathfield's first bequest was to John Pitford's son John, who seems likely to have been the infant son of the family from All Hallows Goldsmith Street devastated by the 1604 plague outbreak. Baptised on 24 June 1602, he would have been nine months old when Joan wrote her will, but he never lived to see his second birthday.

Conclusion

Undoubtedly women are underrepresented in the sources so it is refreshing, even on relatively few occasions, to be able to equal the detail obtainable for men's lives. As in the case of men, their personal voice is missing and it is impossible to tell to what extent these women determined their futures for themselves or how much they had imposed upon them, in particular whether they had a say in their choice of husbands. If they did, they chose wisely in terms of material wealth creation and procreation. They certainly appear to have been adroit multi-taskers, administering businesses and supporting apprentices all whilst occupied most of their lives by prolific child-bearing and child- and step-child raising and burying – often in what seem to be quite crowded households. They all conformed to expectations in their marriage track records. Craftsman's widow Joan Harrison/Carpenter rapidly remarried and in so doing shifted from being a middle chorus alien's wife to an upper chorus wife. Very wealthy but relatively young widow Agnes Whetcombe also remarried quickly and in so doing increased her status to that of a leading

actor's wife, maintaining this status in her third marriage. By contrast, Joan Redwood, a relatively older wealthy widow, who enjoyed economic independence and property ownership, did not remarry. Judging by their wills they valued the company of other women, who were not always of the same social status or age, and employed some as maidservants. Their friends included near neighbours and co-workers in their husband's occupations and they looked out for one another through their bequests – although whether gifts of clothing items were a source of delight, dread or amusement will never be known.

Chapter 10: Occupied topography

As a parallel exercise to creating human biographies, this chapter attempts to create tenement/plot biographies which merge the human landscape with the cityscape in the four parishes of the west quarter which surround St Nicholas Priory, comprising St Mary Arches, St Olave, St John Bow and All Hallows on the Wall. This quarter encompasses the least densely inhabited city parish of All Hallows on the Wall as well as the richest in terms of lay subsidy values of St Mary Arches, with St John and St Olave positioned between (map 1).⁵⁴¹ It aims to reconstruct detailed topographical plot patterns within the quarter, to discern land use patterns within the parish of St Olave and St Mary Arches and finally sets out how far cross-referencing plots with people in these parishes is able to create a sense of neighbourliness. Throughout it discusses the significant challenges inherent in all these exercises.

Occupied topography methodologies

The issues surrounding the study of early modern city topography referred to in chapters one and two need exploring in greater detail. There appears to be only a handful of towns/cities fortunate enough to have had considerable effort devoted to their detailed occupied topographical reconstruction, that is, to the extent that people and individual plots can be linked. It might be argued that one reason for the side-stepping of early modern plot-level topography is the focus on the causes and consequences of 'crisis' and 'transition' in this era, which has led to the neglect of topography and its arguably more static nature.⁵⁴² However, it seems more likely that what lies at the heart of the

⁵⁴¹ Keene's two-volume publication on Winchester, discussed below, derives from his D.Phil thesis, which covers just one quarter of Winchester. Therefore this study follows his more geographically restricted approach and focuses on the west quarter of the city in order to understand the immediate surroundings of St Nicholas Priory.

⁵⁴² P.Clark (ed.), *The Transformation of English Provincial Towns 1500-1700* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976); P.Clark and P.Slack (eds.), *Crisis and Order in English Towns 1500-1700* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972); *ibid*, *English Towns in Transition 1500-1700* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976); D. Sivier, *Bridgewater: Personality, Place and the Built Environment from its Anglo-Saxon origins to the 17th century* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2014), p.5.

issue is the lack of a connective type of document referred to in this study as a SPIT or 'single-point-in-time' document. SPITs connect people to individual plots of land and connect those occupied plots to each other and to fixed points in the cityscape at one point in time and thereby enable the peopling of a cityscape. One of the most famous contemporary examples is Ralph Treswell's London survey.⁵⁴³ The analysis of a SPIT can then be compared with patterns of relationships detected in prosopographical and collective biographical work to detect degrees of neighbourliness. Neighbourliness is defined in this study as reasonable numbers of people living close together and interacting in ways unrelated to property occupancy.

Four seminal urban topographical studies focus on Winchester, Alnwick, Hull and Bristol.⁵⁴⁴ They provide explicit methodologies for creating urban occupied topographies that result in systematic and detailed pictures of streets, plots and holders and/or occupants for whole or substantial areas of towns and cities. They reach the conclusion that it is the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries that possess the most comprehensive evidence but also that it is possible to project forward into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and beyond, or backwards to that time from twentieth and nineteenth century documents. These four studies are able to be extraordinarily thorough because they all make use not only of property sources such as deeds and leases, but also draw heavily on SPIT surveys that cover the entire city/town, or significant areas of it. All of them are also fortunate enough to have more than one SPIT, providing evidence of change over time. Beyond these studies, the principle of SPIT documents also applies to seventeenth-century London studies such as those by Power, who uses hearth taxes and Boulton who uses sacramental token books which list

⁵⁴³ J. Schofield, ed., *The London Surveys of Ralph Treswell* (London: London Topographical Society, 1987).

⁵⁴⁴ M.R.G Conzen, *Alnwick, Northumberland: A Study in Town-Plan Analysis* (London: The Institute of British Geographers, 1960), p.25; R. Horrox, *The Changing Plan of Hull 1290-1650: a guide to the sources of the early topography of Hull* (Kingston upon Hull: Kingston upon Hull City Council, 1978); D.Keene, *Survey of Medieval Winchester*, R.Leech, *The Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol: parts 1 and 2* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 1997 and 2000).

households street by street.⁵⁴⁵ Sivier's recent study of Bridgewater from Saxon times to the seventeenth century is able to utilize two series of SPIT documents: the twelve parish tallage lists running from 1400-1468 which he feels contain tenement location descriptions sufficiently detailed to enable their probable location to be found on the town's 1806 tithe map, and nineteen surveys and rentals dating from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Amongst other sources, these are supplemented by a series of corporation lease bundles each containing documents relating to a single property from the sixteenth century onwards.⁵⁴⁶

Surveys, maps, plans and plots

There are three key approaches used in the four seminal studies. These are first, establishing the relative positions of plots to each other and then to established fixed points within the townscape from written plot descriptions and/or accurate early maps, second, discovering who held and/or occupied them over time and third, defining actual boundaries of tenements, including alterations. It is the first two points with which this study is mostly concerned.

For Winchester the key document is the 1417 tarrage survey, which covers the area subject to the jurisdiction of the city with very few properties omitted. Keene regards it as being 'of fundamental importance' because it provides a comprehensive record of the topography of the city and of land-use and property-holding there at a single moment when other sources are also numerous.⁵⁴⁷ His methodology for Winchester is worth reiterating. He begins by establishing relative tenement positions through abstracting medieval deeds which are then:

grouped according to the properties to which they referred, or if that was not immediately possible, according to the streets in

⁵⁴⁵ M.Power, 'The Social Topography of Restoration London' in A.L Beier and R.Finlay (eds.), *London 1500-1700* (London and New York: Longman, 1986), pp.192-223; J. Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: a London suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp.168-205.

⁵⁴⁶ Sivier, *Bridgewater: Personality, Place and the Built Environment*, pp.10-11.

⁵⁴⁷ Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, p.29.

which those properties lay. Once a suitable number of properties had been identified, an attempt was made for each street block to sketch in outline the topographical relationships between the properties within it. Individual tenements were assigned positions in these rough plans by means of their abutment relationships in much the same way as pieces are fitted into a jigsaw puzzle. The sketch plans were continuously revised as further material was collected. The rectangular blocks defined by the principal streets are particularly well suited to this exercise and it was possible to assign more than half the medieval deeds to specific properties at a relatively early stage ... Properties recorded in the deeds were then identified in the 1417 tarrage survey and this enabled the relationships between them and gaps in the sequences of properties to be further defined. The outline descents of some properties could then be established from abutment clauses alone, and by combining these with the evidence for successions of ownership derived from rent receipts and payments it was possible to assign virtually the whole of the medieval source material, including deeds lacking abutment clauses, to individual tenements. The entries in the tarrage survey formed the basis of a numerical system for identifying the properties.⁵⁴⁸

Having made sketch maps of the relative positions of medieval tenements, Keene converts these to properly scaled maps. He does this by drawing onto the 1869-1871 OS 1:500 map for Winchester those tenement boundaries which can reliably be reconstructed from post-medieval records and the principal boundaries shown on Godson's 1750 map of Winchester. Sixteenth- and seventeenth-century versions of the tarrage are used to establish how many properties lie between fixed points such as churches and street corners and if the number is the same on Godson's map, then Godson's boundaries are taken as representative - if not, they are conjectured.

In Alnwick, Conzen demonstrates that it is possible to link, visually, modern plots to accurately surveyed older maps and thence to even older text-based rentals and surveys which include plot descriptions and people associated with those plots. He states that his essential tools are the Ordnance Survey 1851 series, Wilkin's 1774 map and his SPIT documents, a series of borough surveys from 1774-1567. These allow a correlation of modern present property boundaries with the units of land tenure in the Tudor period through a

⁵⁴⁸ Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, pp.37-38.

three-fold check of holders' names, rentals and the topographical sequence employed in the recording of the different surveys.⁵⁴⁹ Likewise, key to Leech's Bristol studies are his SPIT documents comprising a series of annual corporation rent audits from 1532, some effectively providing street directories, together with more rentals and surveys from the early seventeenth century. There are also other similar SPIT-type documents from other institutions, such as the St Augustine's Abbey compotus rolls of 1492 and 1512. Not only can these SPITs be linked to undated deeds but continuity in institutional property holdings runs sufficiently close to the present for there to be in most instances plans or street numbers giving precise locations.⁵⁵⁰ Leech also makes use of individual plans attached to deeds and Ashmead and Plumley's Bristol map of 1828, the earliest to show individual house plots and, it would appear, more accurately surveyed and produced than its Exeter equivalent (Coldridge's map).⁵⁵¹ Together with references to abuttals in individual deeds, this rich mix of widely spread sources means that 'in only a few instances are 'probably' or 'possibly' introduced as elements of uncertainty' in tenement location – a far cry from the situation in Exeter, discussed below.⁵⁵²

For Hull, the essential SPIT document is the fee farm rental of 1347. Horrox states that her work would have been virtually impossible or certainly much less conclusive without it. Not only does it list all the plots existing in the town at that date but provides details of their boundaries and frontage measurements and forms the link between the medieval plots with their modern counterparts. It made it possible for Horrox to plot the medieval boundaries directly onto a map of modern Hull and then to slot in other medieval archival sources to reconstruct the medieval cityscape.⁵⁵³ Its enormous value lies in providing reliable evidence for both relative tenement

⁵⁴⁹ Conzen, *Alnwick*, p.25.

⁵⁵⁰ Leech, *Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol Part 1*, pp.xiii-xv.

⁵⁵¹ Leech, *Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol Part 2*, pp.5 and 7.

⁵⁵² Leech, *Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol Part 1*, p.xvi

⁵⁵³ Horrox, *The Changing Plan of Hull*, p.1 and p.4.

positions *and* absolute boundary tenements to the extent that the need for intermediary eighteenth century maps is deemed unnecessary.

The first fundamental barrier to reconstructing an occupied topography for Exeter is clear. There is nothing like a SPIT document for the whole of Exeter to connect the disparate property documentation that the city does possess and, crucially, to 'fill in the gaps'. There is a reference to tallage in a charter of 1259 which refers to the city having control of tallage when the King wills it, but no tallage/tarrage survey survives. Exeter's fee farm was commuted to 'an annual sum paid to the King in lieu of various rents and services due to him...' so there are no associated fee farm rentals.⁵⁵⁴ Without a SPIT document, it is impossible to recreate an occupied topography in the same manner as the four studies above and so alternative strategies need deploying. The first of these involves investigating whether any of Exeter's early plans and maps can be used to recreate a plot pattern into which can then be slotted descriptions from other sources. As a double check, the 1671 hearth tax returns are then used to calculate an approximate number of houses/plots per parish and compared with plot patterns to see if those patterns are at least numerically plausible.

Key to success in Alnwick are good quality, accurately surveyed mid-eighteenth century or earlier maps of sufficient scale to include individual plots which can be linked to both modern Ordnance Survey maps and to topological maps of plot relative positions derived from written SPIT surveys. For Winchester, Keene uses Godson's map, the first plan of the city which appears to have been accurately measured along the street frontages and provides the first comprehensive record of the physical boundaries between houses and gardens and of the extent of buildings within them.⁵⁵⁵ In Bristol,

⁵⁵⁴ A. Ballard and J. Tait, *British Borough Charters 1216-1307* (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 1923), p.lxciii; H. Lloyd Parry, 'The Fee Farm of Exeter', *TDA* 81(1949), 197-199.

⁵⁵⁵ Leech, *Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol Part 2*, pp.3-9; Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, p.5; J.W.R. Whitehand (ed.), *The Urban Landscape: historical development and management - papers by M.R.G. Conzen* (London: Academic Press, 1981), pp.25-53.

Leech refers to Ashmead and Plumley's plot-based Bristol map of 1828, and numerous earlier individual plans, mentioned above. They are important because as Leech points out, working only from medieval deeds when defining tenement boundaries means results will inevitably be based more on speculation. Keene agrees, acknowledging that in his reconstruction, few of the medieval tenement boundaries are established from contemporary sources.⁵⁵⁶

Frustratingly, Exeter does not have a city-wide map of this accuracy and detail for the eighteenth century or earlier to help reconstruct plot patterns. The city is not alone in this. Conzen notes that larger cities are less associated with high-quality, large-scale plans than some smaller market towns, where major landowners occasionally had good surveys compiled for their own purposes.⁵⁵⁷ The earliest complete Exeter city map depicting individual plots is that of 1818 -1819 surveyed by John Coldridge (illustration 8) described in chapter two. On his map, some plots are represented as whole when in fact they may well have been subdivided and there are identification errors. For example, in the 1662 Hearth Tax returns, 195 High Street appears to have comprised two distinct properties and this was still the case in the 1838 valuation. However, it is depicted as one property on Coldridge's map.⁵⁵⁸ St Lucy's Lane is clearly Friernhay Street in the parish of St John (see table 10.1, P116 entry 544 and P121, P stands for plot number) but is shown in the parish of St Olave on the map.⁵⁵⁹ The wooden model of the city by Caleb Hedgeland (illustration 9), also described in chapter two, is difficult to use in that the relative proportions of his property boundaries differ from Coldridge's map

⁵⁵⁶ Leech, *Topography of Medieval and Early Modern Bristol Part 1*, p.xv; Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, p.33.

⁵⁵⁷ Conzen, 'The Use of Town Plans in the Study of Urban History' in (ed.), H. J. Dyos, *The Study of Urban History* (London: Edward Arnold, 1968), p.116.

⁵⁵⁸ C.G. Henderson, *Archaeological Assessment of the Guildhall Centre, Exeter*, Exeter Archaeology report no 99.12 (Exeter: Exeter Archaeology, 1999), p.12.

⁵⁵⁹ P or plot numbers are explained later in this chapter and the sources to which they refer can be found in the appendices and tables relating to this chapter.

and the OS maps. With care, however, they can be made to match up, for example in illustration 6, concerned with Joan Redwood's house. The model also provides an unparalleled impression of the compactness and crowding of a sixteenth-century cityscape.⁵⁶⁰ The only earlier sources revealing any plot pattern are the plans depicting the plots owned by the Chamber in 1756 surveyed by John Richards.⁵⁶¹ They omit all other plots within the city walls (illustration 10) but are nearer in date to 1600 than any other cartographic source.

Despite their limitations, the maps and plans are used together with the OS 1:500 plans of Exeter surveyed in 1876 in an attempt to try and recreate the city's sixteenth century plot pattern. It is judged to be worth attempting because it has been argued on several occasions that like many other urban centres, Exeter's cityscape was very slow to change.⁵⁶² Therefore, mid eighteenth century to early nineteenth century plot patterns might reasonably represent sixteenth century plot patterns, especially if married with professionally surveyed maps like the OS 1:500 to help mitigate inaccuracies.

Map regression

However, map regression techniques need first to be applied, that is, the reinstatement of cityscape features which have vanished since the end of the sixteenth century and the removal of anachronistic features added since that time. Helpful in this respect is Gray's proposal of seven periods of short intensive topographical change for Exeter, four of which are relevant to this study. These are:

⁵⁶⁰ Bhanji, 'Caleb Hedgeland's Model of Exeter', pp.206-7.

⁵⁶¹ Ravenhill and Rowe, *Devon Maps and Map-makers*, pp.184-190 (Exeter Chamber Map Book).

⁵⁶² Hoskins, *Industry, Trade and People*, p.11; Newton, *Victorian Exeter*, p.10; Portman, *Exeter Houses*, p.2; D. M.Palliser, 'Sources for Urban Topography' in M.W. Barley and D. M Palliser (eds.), *The Plans and Topography of Medieval Towns in England and Wales* (London: The Council for British Archaeology, 1975) p.5; Conzen, *Alnwick*, p.6; T.R.Slater, 'The Analysis of Burgage Patterns in Medieval Towns', *Area*, vol 13 (no 3), (1981), 211.

- 1) the 1530s
- 2) 1642 to 1646
- 3) 1769 to 1784
- 4) the 1830s

These phases, described in more detail below, incorporate observations made by earlier authors such as Jenkins and Freeman.⁵⁶³ In relation to the west quarter, the first period, bought about by the dissolution of the monasteries, affected only St Nicholas Priory in the parish of St Olave, as the church and chapter house were demolished and the remaining wings turned into domestic accommodation. The site and its surrounding two-and-a-half acres were sold to Sir Thomas Dennis. He resold it to William Isham who, in turn, sold it to Robert Mallett in 1562 and it remained in his family for at least a century. However, Youings notes that 'by the middle of the seventeenth century it was surrounded by the poverty and overcrowding of an industrial quarter [and was] rather unsalubrious'.⁵⁶⁴ At what point the surrounding lands were divided into plots is not entirely clear. The likely existence of what is now the section of Mint Lane running from Fore Street to the Priory buildings is possibly seen in a 1562 lease P139 (table 10.2) which refers to 'the gate of the late Priory of St Nicholas'. A 1564 rental entry in respect of P37 (table 10.1) mentions the 'orchards of the late dissolved priory' and a rental entry for P114a (table 10.1) in the same year mentions a 'close of land containing by estimation one acre of land adjoining to St Nicholas'. In 1578 a Bargain and Sale in relation to P206 (table 10.2) less helpfully describes its neighbour as 'land formerly of St Nicholas' but a counterpart lease of 1586 referring to P288 (table 10.2) describes the 'garden of the dissolved house of St Nicholas in Exeter'. Hooker's plan of 1587 shows no subdivision of the lands surrounding the priory building at all, and even in December 1607, Robert Prouze stored 'at St Nicholas house', hard wood, hay, straw, five cattle and two pigs, plus haymaking equipment (biography 61). This implies

⁵⁶³ Gray, *Lost Exeter*, p.xxiii.

⁵⁶⁴ J. Youings (ed.), *Devon Monastic Lands: Calendar of Particulars for Grants 1536-1558* (Torquay: DCRS, 1955), pp.14-15; *ibid*, 'The City of Exeter and the Property of the Dissolved Monasteries', *TDA*, 84 (1952), p.132.

open land still existed, or at least enough to graze a few animals. However, on Coldridge's maps this area of land is subdivided into plots. These plot divisions would therefore seem to have been created between c.1608 and the mid-seventeenth century.

The second period, the English Civil Wars, involved the wholesale destruction of buildings outside the city walls on all sides, and although the western suburbs escaped relatively unscathed, houses near Westgate, for example, needed to be demolished because of the battering they received from Royalist artillery.⁵⁶⁵

However, close matching of sixteenth-century plot description to eighteenth-century plot depiction on Richard's map for the Friernhay area of All Hallows on the Wall (map 14) seems to show that if widespread destruction occurred in this area, and Stoye states that the 'places of easement' at Snayle Tower certainly were demolished when new defences were built, the plot pattern may have remained unchanged, much like London after the Great Fire.⁵⁶⁶

The third period (1769-1784) is concerned with public improvements and included the demolition of All Hallows on the Wall church and surrounding wall section, the raising of New Bridge Street and the construction of a new Exe Bridge so that it was possible to travel directly into Fore Street. The other major change was the demolition of the medieval gates, although the West Gate was not removed until 1815.⁵⁶⁷ All these changes are reflected in Coldridge's map and need to be 'reversed', although of these, only the construction of New Bridge Street seems likely to have had an immediate impact on plots as it scythed through those immediately outside the Westgate in All Hallows on the Wall.

In addition to early demolitions, alterations made between 1818 and 1876 need to be taken into account as anachronisms which appear on the 1876 OS

⁵⁶⁵ M. Stoye, 'Whole Streets Converted to Ashes: property destruction in Exeter during the English Civil War', *Southern History*, 16 (1994), 72; *ibid*, *From Deliverance to Destruction*, p.137.

⁵⁶⁶ Stoye, 'Whole Streets Converted to Ashes', p.74.

⁵⁶⁷ Hoskins, *Two Thousand Years*, p.89.

1:500 map. This period includes Gray's fourth period (the 1830s) when more traffic relieving measures were taken, as well as moves to open up the cityscape, following the cholera epidemic of 1832. The Lower Market (1835) was built, removing small market places and street markets and demolishing sixteenth-century buildings in Butcher Row. Fore Street was fundamentally changed with buildings demolished or 'projections' removed such as porches, windows or archways.⁵⁶⁸ Fore Street also had its previously steep gradient moderated by raising Lower Bridge Street and digging the hill out by up to four feet.⁵⁶⁹ It would seem likely that the main alteration to plot pattern here was plot front truncation on Fore Street.

Exeter's sixteenth-century plot pattern

Maps 2, 3, 4 and 5 show the plot pattern reconstructions for the parishes of the west quarter. These include the plots identifiable from John Richards' maps which are matched to likely boundaries on the OS map and marked out in red, such as those on the corner of St Mary Arches Lane and Bartholomew Street East. All other plots are based on plot boundaries that are detectable on both Coldridge's map and the OS map, and are marked in pink. Of these, plot boundaries that run directly between street frontages are marked in green as these could be some of the earliest boundaries which Slater, in his study of burgage plots, calls 'Primary Plot Boundaries' (PPB's).⁵⁷⁰ The red, pink and green boundaries are those which are most likely to be correct for the eighteenth and early nineteenth century and therefore, *perhaps*, most reflective of the sixteenth century. However, there are pitfalls with the PPB approach. The green plot subdivisions in what were the grounds of St Nicholas Priory are indeed the earliest boundaries in that part of the cityscape, but as discussed earlier, are very likely later than 1608. In this particular case, these later plot boundaries are blanked out to reinstate the open space that seems likely to have remained at this time and the footprint of the missing parts of the former priory site are reinstated in white.

⁵⁶⁸ Gray, *Lost Exeter*, p.16.

⁵⁶⁹ *ibid*, pp.xi - xxix.

⁵⁷⁰ Slater, 'Analysis of Burgage Patterns', p.213.

Boundaries that appear on the Coldridge map but not on the OS map are depicted in brown, where it is reasonably clear where these might lie. This is not always easy to do as Coldridge did not draw his map to an exact scale and whilst shapes can sometimes be recognised from the OS map, their proportions are not the same (see illustration 11). An attempt was made to plot boundaries from the Hedgeland model but the exercise was abandoned because deciding where plot boundaries lay became entirely subjective; is what appears to be a garden with two buildings attached one plot or two? What illustration 11 does show is that plot boundaries do sometimes change. Whilst Hedgeland, Coldridge and the OS depict a wide plot running from left to right across the middle of Friernhay, Richards depicts this as being dissected by a plot running north to south (which fits with the plot descriptions in the sixteenth century rentals in map 14). Finally a handful of completely conjectural boundaries for the sixteenth century are added which are not depicted on either Coldridge or the OS maps, but which it is felt can be argued for as part of a wider surrounding plot pattern, and these are depicted in black. Likewise, some boundaries are surmised and redrawn in black where landscape features, such as the Shambles in St Mary Arches parish, disappeared before Coldridge's map.

One way of judging how successful this exercise is in recreating the sixteenth-century plot pattern is to compare the number of plots created with the number of households listed in the 1671 Michaelmas hearth tax.⁵⁷¹ 'Households' in the hearth tax were likely to exceed plot numbers because of subdivision of buildings and plots into more than one household in poorer parishes (table 10.3).⁵⁷²

In a very broad sense, the fact that far fewer plots than households are identified might mean that the number of plots is reasonably acceptable if it is assumed that more than one household lived on each plot. An alternative check is to look at the mathematics of land division, that is searching for

⁵⁷¹ Hoskins, *Industry, Trade and People*, p.112; Hoskins (ed.), *Exeter in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 65-86.

⁵⁷² *ibid*, p. xvii.

regular land division and subdivisions using contemporary land division measures that literally add up to reveal original plot dimensions and numbers. Both Conzen and Slater carry out this work successfully for Alnwick and Stratford-upon-Avon respectively, using a standard perch measurement. This approach has been tried for Exeter but no clear evidence of regular divisions is forthcoming that might help work out the number of plots. This may be because the plot pattern does not date back to the early medieval period but reflects the sub-division of wider properties since at least c.1450.⁵⁷³ The only other way to verify the likelihood of accuracy is to compare the plot pattern map with *topological* maps derived from surviving property documentation, and this is discussed below. Therefore, maps 10.2-10.5 provide *an* interpretation of what the sixteenth-century plot pattern may have looked like, although with less certainty than Keene *et al* could command overall.

Creating topological maps

The next exercise brings together the significant quantity of disparate sixteenth-century sources concerned with owning and/or occupying property in Exeter to create topological maps linking people to property and to each other on a *relative* basis. The small city parishes defined by identifiable streets and fixed points like churches help make this more realistic than it might be in larger rural parishes. In general, these sources have their own challenges. On occasion, it appears to be no mean feat if the sources can first be found; Palliser finds unpublished material and unsatisfactorily listings a significant hindrance.⁵⁷⁴ Where they are accessible, Keene and Harding state that 'records of property holding comprise one of the bulkiest, and most intractable, categories of written sources for the history of medieval and early

⁵⁷³ Conzen, *Alnwick*; Slater, 'Analysis of Burgage Patterns', p.212; J. Haslam (ed.), *Anglo-Saxon Towns in Southern Britain* (Chichester: Phillimore, 1984), p.402; Parker and Allen, 'Transformation of the Building Stock of Exeter', p.63.

⁵⁷⁴ Palliser, 'Sources for Urban Topography', p.3.

modern towns' and Keene states that the very bulk of this evidence has in some cases inhibited systematic enquiry.⁵⁷⁵

However, as outlined in chapter two, electronic retrieval has improved matters in the last thirty five years since Palliser's comments and in Exeter, thanks to local historians, archaeologists and DHC staff, it is possible to retrieve and draw upon at least some of the nearest equivalent documents to those used in the Winchester, Alnwick, Hull and Bristol studies. They comprise two sets of sources: those relating solely to city-owned property, and those mostly in private ownership. The first includes the city rental surveys of 1564, 1585 and 1640-1652, which are the nearest equivalent to a SPIT survey in Exeter (table 10.1), the plans of city property surveyed by John Richards in 1756 (illustration 10 for example) and the Receiver's Account Rolls. The second includes other property documents (OPD's), for example, leases, deeds and bargains and sales, entries from Thomas Prestwood's rental of 1573 and feoffments relating to Tuckers Hall (table 10.2). The two sources are not entirely mutually exclusive as some deeds relate to city-owned property. Once the sources in the first set were connected to each other as far as possible, the second set were added into this framework.

Assigning to plots and parishes: the challenges

Starting with the city rentals, these were rearranged so that parish entries were grouped together to make assignment easier. Where neighbouring plots were mentioned (usually expressed as 'next adioynynge' or similar) these relationships were taken into account within the parish grouping.⁵⁷⁶ The process then continued with the creation of a database record for each occurrence of a property in the above sources. Within each parish, continuities were found between the four different rentals in terms of fixed landscape features, personal names, rents and rental sequencing. The degree of confidence with which it was possible to match rental entries across

⁵⁷⁵ D. Keene and V. Harding, *A Survey of Documentary Sources for Property Holding in London before the Great Fire* (London: London Record Society, 1985), p.xi; Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, p.442.

⁵⁷⁶ Keene and Harding, *A survey of Documentary Sources*, p.xv.

the years varied considerably, but from this work the first numbered plots of this study emerged, each of which were given a unique plot number (P).⁵⁷⁷ Some appeared in all four rentals (for example, in the parish of St Mary Arches, P32 and P35, table 10.1), some in less (P31, P33, P34 and P36) or in one only (P30, 34a, 35a, 37,37a and 37b). An early decision to investigate only those properties within the city walls was quickly abandoned as it became clear that it was sometimes impossible to decide which plots were inside, on or outside the walls, whilst remaining within a parish. Therefore, the entire parish of All Hallows on the Wall was included which covers areas without the walls and beyond the west quarter (map 1). Notwithstanding the above issues, seventy-three initial plots were mapped out through this part of the research.

The next stage connected these plots with those discernable from Crocker's transcriptions of the Receiver's Account Rolls which, for city-owned properties, fill in details of ownership and occasional alterations between the rental dates, at least on a ten year basis. For example, P32 has rental entries for 1564, 1585/1600 and 1594 which are now supplemented by information gathered every decade between 1559 and 1599.⁵⁷⁸ These additional entries helped confirm the links between those entries in the rentals for this plot. For example, the rentals displayed some confusion as to whether John Pope was Richard Sherwood's assign or *vice versa* (P32 entries 17 and 545, table 10.1) but the Receiver's Account Roll of entries between 1569 and 1599-1600 confirmed Robert as John's assign, as discussed in chapter five.

Following this, properties from the OPDs were likewise added to the emerging topological map. As the range of sources used widened, so the need to double-check that plots were not inadvertently duplicated grew. When property mentioned in a new source had a record created on the database it was checked against existing records using the parish and tenants' surname fields. The plot numbers that appeared connected with that individual's name in the correct parish were then checked for a 'fit' in terms of other

⁵⁷⁷ Keene, *Medieval Winchester*, p.33.

⁵⁷⁸ Crocker, *Exeter City Properties 1377-1721*.

consistencies such as plot description and rent. Where there appeared to be a definite or reasonable certainty match, the existing plot number was assigned. Where it was judged uncertain but perhaps not unlikely, it was allocated a plot number with a question mark. For example, in P34a, (table 10.1), the surname matches the entry in DHC, ECA Mayors Court Roll 17-18 Eliz, m.4. (table 10.2) and a shop on the High Street is not unlikely, so it was assigned to P34a? in table 10.2. Where there was insufficient certainty, separate plots were maintained. By comparing and contrasting in this way, a minimum number of separate plots arose. However, the judgment required as to what is or is not the same plot in space and across time is subjective, and despite arguing as logically as possible, some judgments are 'best match' rather than 'certain match' and this is an example of where a SPIT survey would help reduce uncertainty. As this process progresses, plot numbers are added, removed and subdivided, making a logical run of plot numbers within each parish impossible to maintain. It is clear that these plot histories are just one interpretation of the evidence and not as definitive a description as Keene *et al* could manage elsewhere.

Some plot matches are relatively straightforward. For example, in table 10.1, P116 is judged to have very strong matches between tenants, plot description and rent across five different documents and for P81, the tenancy runs from Richard Sweet to Richard Hawks, William Lancastell, Nicholas Martin, Elizabeth Martin and Edward Clements without problems. However, sometimes there are plot entries with nothing to connect them but the rent. For example, in P78 in Friernhay, nothing connects Andrew Gere with the Odam family, except that this is the only garden in Friernhay which has a continuous rent of 20d. There is another garden, P84, which has a rent of 20d, but this can be deconstructed into an earlier garden with a rent of 16d to which is added a piece of ground with a rent of 4d, making a total of 20d. Also less certain is P118b in the parish of St John. The first occurrences in 1552/3 and 1559 are as a neighbour to P118, the fixed point of Tuckers Hall, where it is described as 'lands of Thomas Speke Knt on the north' (north of Tuckers Hall). The final occurrence in 1618 is as 'lands of ... George Speke and John Peryman on the north'. So the judgement is made that because the

plot descriptions all refer to it being north of the fixed point of Tuckers Hall, they are one and the same plot and therefore George Speke is the heir of Thomas Speke. There are no sources used in this study that corroborate Thomas and George Speke's relationship, so this, and other occurrences like it, need further research.

Even assigning to parish is not straightforward. Map 1 uses as its basis the parish boundaries which appear on the map drawn up by the Devon and Cornwall Record Society (DCRS), and which are depicted on the 1876 OS 1:500 map of Exeter.⁵⁷⁹ However, Hoskins acknowledges problems with establishing the exact boundaries and it may be, therefore, that some properties are geographically misplaced.⁵⁸⁰ P32 for example is allocated to St Mary Arches in the written sources, lying opposite to and just below the entrance to St Mary Arches Lane on Richards' plan 15 (illustration 10, Richards' plot 2). The DCRS map, however, has the parish boundaries between St Olave and St Mary Arches above this plot, allocating it by default to St Olave. There is also a discrepancy in the DCRS map in that the Shambles, which Hoskins states was where Lower Market, now the Cornmarket, was situated, is shown as being opposite St Olave's church rather than opposite the entrance to Mary Arches Street.⁵⁸¹ It is also easy to forget that not all the plots mentioned as neighbours in the same document are necessarily in the same parish. P281 (table 10.2), which appears only once in a bargain and sale, is 'a house on the north side of the street called The Butcher Row near Stipecote hill in the parish of St John ...'. Its eastern neighbour, P281a, seems likely to be in the parish of St Olaves as it belongs to the feoffees of that parish.

Finally, property-related sources sometimes make reference to compass direction as a means of defining relative position, for example, P36 entry 133 (table 10.1) where John Blackaller 'holdeth two stables and too/ gardens in the ind of St Mary Arches lane/ in the est pte [east part] of the same lane'.

⁵⁷⁹ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, insert.

⁵⁸⁰ Hoskins (ed), *Exeter in the Seventeenth Century*, p.xii.

⁵⁸¹ Hoskins, *Two Thousand Years in Exeter*, p.65.

For most entries this conforms to an orientation of convenience, with north being in the direction of Northgate, rather than halfway between Northgate and Eastgate, as indicated on contemporary plans, such as Hooker's. It is crucial to understand this orientation in order to plot relative positions correctly. However, for some entries, what appears to be the same plot is described with both this and modern compass points in different rentals, for example P36 entry 549 where now St Mary Arches street is in the south. Whether this reveals a shift in mental orientation to modern mapping directions or happens for another reason is not clear, but both orientations must be checked for consistency.

The above plot matching processes starts to generate rough topological maps (maps 10.6 – 10.9) as plot spatial and temporal connections are checked against each other for consistency. Plots from the OPDs are depicted with rounded boundaries to distinguish them from those that appear in the Richards' plans of 1756 which are depicted with straight boundaries. Some plots are straightforward to connect between rental, rolls and plans, for example, P32 (map 6). Other rental entries cannot be matched to plots on Richards' plans and were, it would seem, disposed of by the Chamber between the date of the rentals and 1756, for example Agnes Whetcombe's stable on P37 (table 10.1, map 6). Other plots on the 1756 plans do not feature in the rentals and appear to be later acquisitions by the City such as plots 11 and 12 on Richards' plan 15 which seem likely to be P280 (table 10.2, map 7), but which were in private hands in 1611. Grouped sets are discernable, such as those on the corner of St Mary Arches Street, those clustered around the entrance to the Shambles in the same parish (map 6), those in Friernhay in the parish of All Hallows on the Wall and those running along the inside of the city wall between Westgate and All Hallows on the Wall church, plus one on the other side of the church (map 8). Others are solitary plots.

At this point a scheme depicting certainty about relative plot position is needed as follows:

- **Definite** (Red infill) = plot description includes a position immediately adjacent to a fixed point (usually a church, defined street corner or city gate).
- **Probable** (Orange infill) = plot description includes a position adjacent to definite plots and also plots which are described as being immediately adjacent to these probable plots. Both require a connection to be specifically stated.
- **Linked** (Green infill) = plot description provides some indication of where it lies within the parish, such as an unspecified relationship to fixed features (for example, having a frontage on the High Street). Plots without a stated relationship to a fixed feature but which have a stated relationship to a linked plot are also linked plots.
- **Floating** (Blue infill) = plot description does not locate it other than being within a particular parish. Floating plots can link to each other but never link to a specific built feature or a linked plot.

In addition, there are properties which are simply described as being 'in Exeter'. These are not incorporated into this plotting procedure.

To indicate connections between plots, black arrows are added running from the plot in which the connection is mentioned to the neighbour or feature being mentioned. For example, in St Mary Arches parish (map 6), P176 has an arrow running from it to Bartholomew Street, and from it to P31 as it references both of these in a Bargain and Sale of 1575 (table 10.2). P31 in turn references the same street in the rental of 1585 (table 10.1) and is referenced by P36 in a grant of 1591 which also references the corner of Mary Arches Lane in a lease of 1546 (table 10.2).

From topological to topographical

The topological maps are then 'fitted' (though sometimes shoehorned) to the plot maps drawn up from Richards' plans, Coldridge's map and the OS map to create *topographical* maps (maps 10, 11, 12 and 13). The combination of red infill and red boundaries provides an indication of the best evidenced plots. One of the more successful sets is P75-86 in Friernhay, All Hallows on the

Wall which, because of the combination of interconnecting references to each other and occasional fixed points such as Snayle Tower and street corners, can also be linked to plots depicted on John Richards' map 9 (map 14) with an unusual degree of confidence. The same is true of P67-70 by West Gate, including the shop of John Trosse referred to in chapter eight. Sometimes a good fit can be argued for but with curious omissions. For example, there are various groups of three or four connected plots between Butcher Row and Fore Street in St Olaves (P214-216; P199, P200, P201a, and P211, P211a, P212 and P213 (Map 11). These linked plot groups could each lie in various positions along this stretch of Fore Street, but none of them refer to Plow Lane which appears on the Coldridge Map running between Fore Street and Butcher Row. It seems more likely either that mention of the lane is simply omitted or these plots are misplaced. Less likely is that the lane was not there in the sixteenth century, but it is difficult to tell.

It is the linked, floating and 'somewhere in Exeter' plots that are most undermining for this exercise. For the linked plots, suggested positions at least can be made through connections to the cityscape features mentioned in the plot description, but there are always alternative possibilities. The floating plots can be depicted as filling in the unassigned plots on the topographical maps but at this point the exercise becomes dangerously blurred between verifiable or at least partially verifiable fact and total fiction. In any case there are, in addition to the floating plots, those plots which are simply mentioned as being 'in Exeter'. To try and infill 'gaps' with either of these is deeply misleading, and so the topographical maps contain only definite, probable and linked plots.

Neighbourhood around St Nicholas Priory and St Mary Arches

The original purpose of this study was to discern the immediate neighbourhood of St Nicholas Priory in the parish of St Olave. As it turns out, an analysis of maps 10.6, 10.7 and 10.9 appears to show that it was one mostly of open space yet to be encroached upon during the period of this study but with racks nearby for cloth stretching and drying and houses and shops along the nearby High Street frontage. Those who were associated

with inhabitable spaces included prestigious individuals who were leading actors, surgeons, merchants and minor gentry. However, no interaction can be detected between them and most of them were not apparently assessed for lay subsidy on these properties, so they may not even have been resident – an issue further discussed below. Table 10.4 summarises the evidence.

It is also possible to sketch a picture of broad land use for St Mary Arches, chosen because most plots appear to have some property documentation attached to them, although the chronological coverage of the whole parish is patchy (table 10.5). Some plots have almost complete coverage between 1550 and 1600, such as P31-P36, but for most others coverage is sporadic at best. In terms of land use description, some plots are only referred to as ‘the lands’ of an individual, with no further description. However, it is possible to glimpse changes in the cityscape over time and the beginnings of urban infilling. In P36, the property changes from two stables and gardens in the 1550s into Davy’s almshouse by 1600. John Clavell the carpenter, who worked on the city walls, rebuilt P35, next to the almshouses at around the same time.⁵⁸² Next door again, P30 changes from stables and a garden into a new dwelling house. In the 1550s in P32, Edmund Whetcombe occupied a house and by 1564 he held an adjacent shop which he had newly built, described in chapter nine. Also in 1563 in P33, Robert Hunt built a bay window and protruding first floor which sailed too far into the street. He was ordered to take it all down and build it again to be like the adjoining tenement.

Other descriptions of buildings include P178 which was a house with a shop and a hall with a solar above, plus a garden whilst P368a was a little tenement containing one low room and one loft over. St Mary Arches Church possessed a storehouse (P364), later described as a linney or stable, curtilage and garden, which appears to be linked to a parcel of land enclosed by a gate adjoining the church building - there is still a gate there today. Faint traces of building zones within the parish can also be seen. P176 through to P36 are all stables for most of the period, fronting onto Bartholomew Street

⁵⁸² Stoye, *Circled with Stone*, pp.149-152.

and forming an Elizabethan equivalent of today's Mary Arches car park. There are then several gardens mentioned along St Mary Arches Lane (or Street). However, the nearer to, or on, the High Street the plots are, the more shops there are, such as P32, P33, P34, P34a, P160 and P165.

Neighbourliness

Matching and plotting of property-related sources also provides a basis for interpreting the information they contain in terms of human relationships. The sources reflect the need for straightforward recording of likely income from property.⁵⁸³ Therefore, albeit inconsistently, they collectively reveal four main types of personal information; who had a property-owning or holding interest in which part of a parish, when they held it, who sold a property to whom and, as a means of identifying plots, who held or occupied neighbouring land.

The relationship of people to property is expressed in several different ways. There are those who 'hold' property, often of the Chamber, either with tenants (P33, Thomas Bruton) or without tenants (P32, Robert Sherwood up until the 1590s). Some individuals have rents asked 'of' them (P33, Thomas Bruton). Occasionally they are 'leased to' (P36, John Blackaller) or 'belong to' (P31, Roger York). There are those who buy property or acquire it by grant, and there are those plots which are only identifiable through being abutments to another plot, often described only as 'the lands of X', for example, P180 and P181.

It is therefore not always possible to identify who actually occupied a plot as their main place of residence. The only people it seems can be discounted as potential plot occupiers are those who clearly had subtenants such as Thomas Bruton. One way of helping to clarify the position is to compare the property sources with the contents of the lay subsidy rolls. These are a form of SPIT document in that they provide information about who, above a certain level of wealth, were considered to have their main place of residence in which parish at the same time, though not in which street. For this study it is

⁵⁸³ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, pp.58-59.

assumed that if an individual appears in the lay subsidies for a particular parish, has property documentation for that same parish that corroborates the subsidy entry within a few years (and that property is not an uninhabitable stable, garden, rack or linhay) and they do not appear in the subsidy for another parish, there is a strong likelihood, though no certainty, that this is their place of residence.

This said, there are also the individuals who are associated with a parish in property records who do not appear in the subsidies for that parish, such as Nicholas Bennett in P67 in 1558. If they appear in other parish subsidy records, then it can be assumed they had moved parish and lived there. Otherwise it is impossible to decide whether they had died, moved away from Exeter or were simply too poor to register in the subsidies. For the purposes of this study it is assumed that those who 'dwell', 'live' 'possess' or 'occupy' properties but do not appear in the lay subsidy rolls were just too poor to register in those documents, but did live in the plots with which they are associated. However, this is very uncertain ground. The lay subsidy rolls also highlight the 'missing people' from property documentation. Richard Davy and Richard Macey both appear in the subsidy rolls for 1593 and 1602 respectively, but neither appear in any property document. This exercise thus highlights the 'floating people', as opposed to the 'floating plots', which makes recreation of neighbourhood even less plausible.

Nevertheless, table 10.6 shows those individuals who are thought to be occupying properties in the parish of St Mary Arches. Individuals simultaneously living in definite or probable plots adjacent to each other point to the greatest likelihood of neighbourliness. Within this parish, the combination is rare. There are only Brice Hill, P161 in 1575 to 1587 and his (or her - the name appears as both 'gent' and 'widow') neighbours in P160 Joan Blackaller (1575) and George Perryman (1587) who form a small cluster. Richard Bevis P367 and Nicholas Spicer P364 appear to have been immediate neighbours around 1584 and John Davy and John Clavell were neighbours in P36 and P35 around the 1590's-1600's. There is also a little group around the Shambles entrance, namely John Smith in P33 in 1600, and

Agnes Pope, John Peter, Edmund Whetcombe and Robert Sherwood in P32 between 1557 and 1600. However, as revealed in chapter nine, several of these individuals were closely connected to each other by marriage so were family, not neighbours. In addition, a William Harpin, locksmith, must have known them personally as he appeared to be sub-tenant of Robert Sherwood's at one point, but that was the only apparent relationship. Agnes Pope almost certainly knew of widow Jane Hewett as a near neighbour over a number of years and through connections via her second husband John Pope, who was a feoffee of St Mary Arches from whom Jane leased property. No other connections between them and John Smith or John Peter could be found apart from the latter being amongst the Chamber members observing recognizances concerning payments arising from Edmund Whetcombe's inventory in 1563. There is no other evidence of interaction which indicated neighbourliness amongst this group. The same is true of the Joan Blackaller, Brice Hill and George Perryman group who appear only to be connected through property adjacency and, again, the same can be said for John Clavell and John Davy. However George Perryman was a debtor of Edmund Whetcombe and as a feoffee of St Mary Arches, a lessor with John Pope of other property (P367) to Jane Hewett in 1569. The only other detectable connection is that John Pope, George Perryman, John Smith and John Peter were all providers of armour at the 1569 musters and Robert Sherwood and John Clavell were both calivermen in 1587.⁵⁸⁴ It appears that neighbourliness is far more evident in single documents such as the churchwardens' accounts for St Mary Major, discussed in chapter four and from what Stoye describes as 'conduit communities' or those who clubbed together to raise funds to repair essential water supplies to points near their homes.⁵⁸⁵ Unfortunately, for a study of neighbourliness, all the confidently connected plots in Friernhay (P75 to P86) are either gardens or stables and therefore unlikely to be inhabited. In P67-P70, no people associated with their possible occupation appear anywhere in the lay subsidy rolls, except one

⁵⁸⁴ Stoaite and Howard, *Devon Military Musters*, p.246; DHC, ECA, Misc Roll 73, f.1.

⁵⁸⁵ Stoye, *Water in the City*, p. 103 and p.106.

(John James) and no apparent occupants in the only two adjacent definite/probable plots in St Olave and in St John are verifiable dwellers.

Although it is not possible to discern neighbourliness as such using the above approach, it is possible to assemble a sketch of the sorts of people who seem most likely to have been residents of St Mary Arches over the years, being lay subsidy payers with links to property there. Table 10.7 sets out brief biographies. Six are leading actors, five are from the upper chorus, and ten from the middle chorus. Fourteen are merchants, five hold other occupations, one or possibly two are widows and one is the Dean of Exeter Cathedral. Of those who paid the lay subsidy, four were valued at £3-4 but eleven more were valued at £6 or more, two of them at £20. The overall picture, though sketchy, is one of significant prestige and wealth. Of course, not all individuals associated with a parish can be connected with specific properties there, and these are the 'floating people' mentioned earlier. There are over 1,700 records associated with the parish of St Mary Arches, including references to a pinner, a carpenter and servants and, by 1569, twenty-five poor people in receipt of poor-relief.⁵⁸⁶

Conclusion

Overall, it does not seem possible to discern neighbourliness in the form of non-property interaction amongst people it is believed were living in properties adjacent to one another over periods of time using this set of property sources and approach. Nevertheless one can connect some people with plots, most convincingly where plots are 'definite' or 'probable' and with slightly more circumspection where plots are 'linked'. Although detailed work in this respect has been carried out for individual plots related to occasional field archaeology excavations, and for more 'public' plots, such as John Davy's almshouses (P36) which appear on the nineteenth-century OS maps, matching people to plots has not been attempted on a parish scale for Exeter before. The exercise does provide a clearer view of the human landscape of

⁵⁸⁶ DRO, ECA, Accounts of the Poor, Book 157, f.97.

one parish than the lay subsidy rolls or the property-related sources can do on their own.

This exercise could be carried out for other parishes beyond the west quarter, but it seems likely that the results would be similarly uneven, and it would seem that the doubts of MacCaffrey, Allan and Collings about the lack of connections quoted in chapter one are largely justified. However, this study does capture and explain more specifically why it is so difficult to create an occupied topography for early modern Exeter, and perhaps other towns and cities too.

Chapter 11: Evaluating the success of the study methodologies

Most of us are convinced that somehow, somewhere in those records, the truth lies. And anyway, even if it doesn't lie in the records, it exists (perhaps in a Platonic heaven) even if we cannot aspire to it. In such cases we are very naturally led to probability statements. And we are so led simply because we cannot, in any way available to us, determine what is true.⁵⁸⁷

This study argues that through the use of collective biography with basic descriptive statistics, a truncated version of SNA, an adapted version of occupied topography but an uncompromised underpinning database, it is possible to shed more light on Exeter's Elizabethan and Jacobean chorus. The extent to which this is true, however, is qualified at almost every turn and it is comparatively rare to be able to make a definite statement as opposed to a statement of probability or possibility. This final chapter analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the methodologies, demonstrates how achieving the aims of this study contributes to early modern urban studies and proposes a new model to describe MacCaffrey's 'chorus'.

Strengths

This study's strength lies in its individual and group biographies, created by assembling in one place all the known data about individuated people; it reveals lives not seen before. They enable the middling sorts to be valued and placed at the centre of this study, or, as Hitchcock puts it in his argument for the importance of history from below, they 'rescue meaningful lives from the ever-growing pile of historical 'debris' and from the silences, forgetting and revisions of modernity'.⁵⁸⁸ Its strength also lies in combining documents, a mainstream historical approach which, in this instance, is particularly important in lessening the impact of missing and fragmented data. Individual/family biographies, which have not before been created on a large scale for mostly the lower middling

⁵⁸⁷ Winchester, 'On Referring to Ordinary Historical Persons', pp.18-19.

⁵⁸⁸ David Hitchcock, 'Why history from below matters more than ever', <http://www.manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/2013/07/22/david-hitchcock-why-history-from-below-matters-more-than-ever/> [accessed Dec 30th 2015].

sorts in Exeter, are able to refine our view of some of those in MacCaffrey's chorus from an anonymous, undifferentiated, nebulous crowd to identifiable inhabitants. They enable us to encounter more rounded individuals, sometimes even personalities, rather than decontextualised names on an official list. They allow us to view individuals with multiple interactions and interests as well as being one amongst a particular group and they personalise key study themes for this historical period such as immigration, plague, poverty and occupational practices. With the best examples it is possible to get to know 'the man/woman over the road' - to know in which parish they lived, sometimes in which house, the development, or otherwise, of their family and household, their occupation and other aspects of household economy and whether they lived a relatively long or short life. It is possible to know a few of their acquaintances, and how they encountered each other, generally how wealthy they were in relative terms, how they participated in civic life, what they kept in their bedrooms and shops, sometimes what they wore and, perhaps, what they would never wish to wear. They enable the observation of changes at household level within a lifetime or two, including marriage and remarriage, family growth, developing or declining fortunes and widowhood. They also provide much more of a sense of social cohesion than can be achieved by plotting people onto the cityscape. Collectively, these biographies provide an impression of what better documented individuals experienced as life-stages and 'everyday life'. Used collectively, they throw light on different groups within the city such as jurors, godparents and aliens, which in turn enable some of the processes associated with their activities to be viewed – how the bakery trade operated, how churchwardens may have passed on their skills and how mutual support manifested itself.

Weaknesses

The survival sample status of the data (explained in chapter two), extracted from sources of greatly varying completeness, filters out the use of properly statistical prosopography and prevents extrapolation of findings to the whole city. It is not possible to study the true frequency of events or connections between people (which negates the full use of SNA) nor is it possible to see large-scale changes in behaviour over time because of the relatively short timescale under

consideration - necessary with a high intensity of data collection. The least successful component of this study is the application of occupied topography to the Exeter sources. Because of the lack of an all-important SPIT document, it is not possible to recreate neighbourhoods of people simultaneously linked in space and time, at least not in the city's west quarter.

There are also limits on how far the biographies take us and it is true to say that it is not possible to know everything about anyone, although it is possible to know a lot about a few (for example those with both wills and inventories) and something about many (for example the 633 people represented in the SD). Moreover, the addition of just one new piece of information can completely change the constructed view of an individual. If, for example, Elizabeth Pope's baptism date had been unknown, it would not be apparent that she was a virtually a child-bride and if the property documentation identifying Agnes Pope as Agnes Jurdaine, 'the now wife of Richard' had not existed, an entire link in the long story of Agnes Reed/Whetcombe/Pope/Jurdaine would be missing. Although this is not a weakness as such, it highlights a need to be cautious about drawing conclusions on too little evidence. Another risk with this type of fragmentary data is circular reasoning in that specific sources reveal individuals fulfilling particular roles and therefore it is tempting to argue that those are the roles that people fulfilled. It is clear that these are only a *minimum* range of roles or connections or possessions that can be seen through the sources used. There is also the need to add data to this study from as yet untapped sources described in chapter two, and to analyse more groups and individuals already in the database. More such analysis will undoubtedly change and strengthen the study and ultimately refine its conclusions.

The study aims and their contribution to early modern urban studies

Returning to this study's aims, the first is to identify and describe some of the characteristics of MacCaffrey's chorus. Many observable characteristics such as civic roles, relative wealth, family structure, occupations, parish associations, misdemeanours and lifestages have been described in detail in chapters three to nine. ■ Whilst one can see why, on the basis of wealth or influence, MacCaffrey sharply subdivided Exeter's Elizabethan inhabitants into one group of

recognizable individuals and into another of anonymous people, it is now possible to challenge this view of the chorus as a group of undifferentiated lives. First, one can detect a series of graduations in roles, status, occupation, family type and civic activity within the chorus and also a degree of geographical zoning of them within and without the city walls. Second, it is now also possible to see that the chorus was not viewed by those in authority at the time as an amorphous mass. This is not only because so many of them were individually named and therefore noted as distinct individuals, but also because of *how* they were described. As mentioned in the introduction, this was never as 'the middling sorts' but by several different categories; their status within a household (family, servant, apprentice, godparent, 'out of the house of'), their wealth and corresponding dependency (taxes, levies, poor-relief recipient), their occupation and their geographical origins and current residence (stranger, alien, county, town, parish). However, one consistent identification was applied to both leading actors and chorus members - that of a citizen 'of the cittie and countie of Exon', a point returned to below.

Third, it is very occasionally possible to see how individuals self-identified to distinguish themselves from others. Only in their wills is their direct voice heard but they usually identify themselves as a citizen of Exeter and sometimes as a practitioner of an occupation or parishioner of a particular parish. The latter, French argues, was a major source of social identity and others have found this to be so too from sources unavailable in Exeter such as the 'Easter Rate' used in Chester.⁵⁸⁹ However, whether individuals self-identified by roles played, such as being a bailiff, a freeman, a juror or a churchwarden is not knowable from the available evidence. It might be argued that it is possible to determine something of an individual's self-expression and identity from an inventory of their goods, as households clearly did not contain identical sets of items. However, it must be borne in mind that time passing, human interference and the work of the appraisers with their own agenda of creating valuation lists means much is lost in translation.

⁵⁸⁹ H. French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England, 1600-1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p.27; Alldridge, 'Loyalty and Identity', p92.

Fourth and finally, there is a little evidence for self-determination and agency, but it is elusive. The most common direct evidence is, again, from individuals' wills where they were clear about who should receive which of their goods. Occasionally there is evidence that they grouped together to effect change, such as those demolishing the steeple at St Mary Major and there are hints which suggest that those not-of-the-gentry desired to emulate them, such as Richard Will's desire for a grand family tombstone. There is, however, evidence of chorus members determining elements of each others' lives. This study suggests that whilst many might marry for love, parents might still chose their daughters' future husbands or determine their sons' occupations. The status of freedom was not a given but depended on finances to pay for the entrance fine, if succession or *gratis* admission was not an option. What role one played in the compulsory musters probably depended on another assessing your personal attributes, and neighbours informing on your private activities might lead to indictment and even banishment from the city.

Beyond this, the buffer zones of social safety were narrow and circumstances could change rapidly and drastically curtail choice. Life's direction often seemed to be a matter of good or bad luck. In this study alone it can be seen that widows might need to remarry quickly into their late husband's occupation to ward off poverty or maintain status, regardless of emotional attachment. Plague did not pick and choose, children might not live for long, war might disrupt overseas trade, and consequently the choice of goods on sale which might drastically reduce profits. Poor weather might reduce the choice of food, the sumptuary laws the choice of clothes and local worries about disease the choice of lodger. Yet all this does not paint a picture of uniform suppression and subjugation. It would seem that some of those who made modest mistakes early on in life could still find themselves rising up the ranks or supported by the civic authorities later on. Money could be made, poverty though widespread and hard-hitting, was not inevitable, even for aliens. Upward, as well as downward, mobility was possible and there is no evidence in this study of bubbling revolution beyond, perhaps, inferences of furrowed brows, muttering and eyebrow-raising about paying up for levies, poor-relief and lay subsidies.

The second aim is to capture and analyse interactions and neighbourliness within and beyond the chorus, including through the use of occupied topography and in particular in relation to the parishes around the Hurst household in St Nicholas Priory.

This study makes it clear that the chorus was not a separate entity from the leading actors in terms of interaction. This is true even when it is only possible to see those interactions the data allows – and there must have been many more encounters. This study agrees with MacCaffrey's view that, on the basis of influence and wealth *alone*, the leading actors were clearly distinguishable from other inhabitants, but it also shows that they were inextricably bound together on a functional basis with interactions that were wide ranging, which extended throughout lifetimes and which undermine the concept of a functionally bi-partite community.

On a day-to-day basis, they interacted through shared parishes, civic, court and church activities and occupation, though no leading actor encountered in this study worked in the food trades and it is not possible to see directly how those producing goods interacted with merchants and day labourers. On paper at least, the leading actors and chorus pooled their experience on juries, as churchwardens and in appraising inventories, and although the leading actors were obliged to be more cautious in their financial support for those being hauled before the courts, they were on occasion themselves supported in this way by chorus members. In the other direction, some leading actors left funds for the provision of alms in various forms from which deserving, very old or disabled chorus members benefitted. The leading actors seem to have taken the lead with compulsory actions at civic level, such as the payment of lay subsidies, the ship money levy and mustering, even if they were less likely to become directly involved as soldiers. However there were tensions. When acting against state and commonwealth enemies, whether the Spanish, a fatal disease or poverty, it is not clear whether the chorus willingly pulled together with them, reluctantly participated or were coerced. The wealthier members of the chorus paid over the official rate for the ship money levy, perhaps so the poorer did not have to, but we cannot hear the grumbings that

may have accompanied their 'generosity'. Some of the chorus at least complied with removing their dead and dying to the pest house in times of plague but it would seem that it was harder for others to resist housing strangers, even when leading actors gave advance warnings of the risk of plague and refused re-entry to the city by their own members. On the other hand, the Chamber could break its promises to the chorus to come to their aid – such as in the case of the collapsing church spire of St Mary Major – that is, if it did indeed make promises to raise funds and that promise was not simply a piece of churchwardenly spin to justify considerable expenditure of parish funds on church repairs and improvements.

On more personal levels, credit provision was widespread judging from the Orphans' Court Inventories and this oiled the works of the local economy within and beyond the town, with the gentlemen in the surrounding countryside and with factors and merchants abroad (as Muldrew found for King's Lynn).⁵⁹⁰ It worked between the leading actors and the chorus, for example leading actor Ignatius Jurdaine lent middle chorus John Pley £50. In reverse, middle chorus Thomas Bird was creditor of leading actor Michael German for just over £5. Marriage between the chorus and leading families enabled the former to enter the realm of the latter, such as chorus member Agnes Whetcombe who married leading actors John Pope, then Richard Jurdaine and very active upper chorus bailiff Walter Horsey marrying first himself and then his daughters into the leading actor level. Sometimes the directional move worked the other way around, such as when Margaret, daughter of leading actor John Sampford married middle chorus Osmund Lane – although it may have been that subsequently her husband became a leading actor. Apprenticeships likewise saw two-way relationships between the chorus and leading actors and the latter also occasionally godparented the offspring of the chorus, though not *vice versa*. At the end of life, friendships across the chorus levels become visible through support given to each other in the witnessing and overseeing of wills, such as that given by gentleman Philip Bigglestone to middle chorus John Hill and leading actor John Sampford to middle chorus Joan Redwood and Edmund

⁵⁹⁰ Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, pp.56-58.

Cook. There were limits on the degree to which the chorus could move into the leading actor layer, however. In this selection of individuals, neither alien nor tucker could penetrate further than the status of bailiff. Another indication of the interconnectivity of the chorus with leading actors, is provided by leading actor *par excellence*, John Hooker, who gifted his pamphlets right across the upper and middle chorus, the only exceptions being aliens. It would appear he could see no reason to confine his thoughts and good wishes only to 'his' layer of society.

Interconnectivity within the chorus alone was just as strong, seen in the alien and baker groups of which the leading actors were never members. Although many cross-connections can be seen in what might be thought of as the separate community of aliens, it can be argued that they were no more or less interconnected than the baking community. Interconnectivity between people who were *not* of a single group appears to be just as strong – people just knew each other. The number of personal connections detectable from the sources can become overwhelming. One shortcoming of written biographies is that they become unweildy if every connection is added where an individual interacted with several people at once, for example all the members of a jury upon which one person sat or all the other men mustering with the same weaponry. However, it is possible to catch a glimpse of the complexities of interconnections of this sort amongst the chorus. Taking just one group, those who contributed to the ship money levy on 13 June 1588 (the second of three collections and a group ostensibly only connected by their relative wealth), Philip Yard's biography (biography 95) shows the range of ways in which these twenty four people actually met and also possibly shared similar outlooks on issues such as taking a chance on the Queen's Lottery or signing the Bond of Association. Not surprisingly, the two bailiffs in this group, Richard Body and William Mongwell encountered the greatest range of people within the group. From this it is clear that personal interconnection for this group was high – they met each other on several different occasions at least over the years, although this cannot indicate whether they felt themselves to be a group. Philip Yard, in MacCaffrey's scheme, a leading actor, appears central to almost every aspect of city life discussed in this thesis.

People also knew or at least knew of people from well beyond Exeter's city walls. Nicholas Glanfield was actively selling bakery products up and down the Exe estuary, but a further examination of references to other places embedded in descriptions of people on the study database reveal a far wider reach. Of 858 placenames that can be identified sixty-five (8%) are beyond the west country, half of those in London, 137 (16%) are in the westcountry beyond Devon, mostly Somerset and Cornwall and 656 (76%) are in Devon beyond Exeter, in particular Totnes, Topsham, Tiverton and Crediton. This seems a far cry from MacCaffrey's assessment that for an Exeter inhabitant 'the city precincts were the limits of a world, and the greater universe of England and Englishmen loomed hazily over its parapets'.⁵⁹¹

With regard to the cityscape, whilst it is not possible to recreate a fully occupied topography of the parishes around St Nicholas Priory, it is possible to map onto the cityscape those people who can be linked to specific plots, outline the general character of the area at parish and occasionally street level, to say a little about what types of building lay in what part of the parish and to glimpse some smaller scale urban landscape changes in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, such as the conversion of stables to houses in St Mary Arches. These findings have great potential to be maximized by being linked to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century artworks featuring earlier buildings, early photographs and maps referenced by Gray, Bahji's study of Hedgeland's model, Portman's studies of city houses and Exeter Archaeology's historic property surveys and excavation reports.

In this respect, Leech has recently published a study for medieval and early modern Bristol.⁵⁹² His study focuses primarily on the evidence for the form and fabric of houses, alongside which owners, occupiers and contents feature when known. An Exeter study, with a narrower timescale of around 1558 to 1611 and drawing both on this study and on MacCaffrey's and Hoskins' work on the

⁵⁹¹ MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640*, p.1.

⁵⁹² R. Leech, *The Town House in Medieval and Early Modern Bristol* (Swindon: English Heritage, 2014).

leading actors, might pivot primarily around the human aspect, with the buildings analysed as the accompanying environment in which they functioned, although not always connectable to individuals, and inevitably with a timescale extended back to accommodate the continuing use of medieval houses. The highlight would be to link the few richly documented households which it appears can be mapped onto the cityscape with the tangible evidence of material culture in RAMM's archaeological and decorative arts collections. This would make up for the difficulties in connecting the chorus to the Hurst family in around 1602 – the family who occupied St Nicholas Priory and who originally inspired this study. Appendix 13 reveals that the older members of this family did connect a little with the chorus, but that by 1602 their descendants' connections with the city appear virtually non-existent. However in the household of Robert Prouze (biography 61) for whom there is evidence of him knowing both the priory and possibly providing tailoring services to its later occupants, there is a route to connecting the site with the city's human landscape. In all, the combination of people, homes and material culture would enable for the first time a more thorough analysis of 'who lived there and what it looked like' for Elizabethan and Jacobean Exeter. It would also be ripe for alternative digital interpretation, for example in the manner of the app 'Hidden Florence' where the user/visitor is taken on an entertaining tour of a city through the eyes of a 'contemporary' guide whose tour is based on built heritage and quality documentary research about its inhabitants.⁵⁹³

The (closely connected) third aim is to provide fresh thoughts on how 'a whole book about Elizabethan Exeter' might be written, and whether it would be 'history from below'. Overall, the history of Elizabethan Exeter looks different now because this study makes a substantial contribution towards redressing the balance of knowledge between those with more wealth and influence and those with less. It opens the doors, just a crack, on the households of busy, interlocking, industrious, flawed, contradictory, largely obedient but not subjugated individuals as opposed to the city's procedures, mechanisms, 'big events' and 'key players' covered by MacCaffrey and Hoskins.

⁵⁹³ <http://calvium.com/client-case-study/hidden-florence/> [accessed 18th February 2015]

It makes it clear that there is more than enough data to write a book on Elizabethan Exeter. However, it would not be a 'history from below' in the manner that Tosh suggests, mainly because a substantial amount of the evidence does not come from below but from above, with the exception of wills. The sources are mostly civic in nature, written about the chorus, by the leading actors for their own purposes. Even inventories are compiled by civic representatives with the value of loan funds in mind. It is not necessarily the view the chorus would have of themselves but the lack of diaries and personal letters precludes any other outcome. Overall, it is also clear that still little is known about the majority of the chorus – perhaps just their baptism or death – though, notwithstanding the erratic survival of sources, this may suggest that most of them were not conspicuously wealthy, were unable (or unwilling) to participate civically, were largely conformable and formed no threat to the commonwealth – effectively they are defined by what we cannot see them doing.

Any new book would be, therefore, a history 'from the middle' to coin Barry's phrase; about the relative below *and* the above and their interlocking lives, and there would be many more of the middling sort in it than feature in Hoskins' existing works. As well as the characteristics and connections noted above, the group biographies would enable suggestions to be made about personal attributes, such as the comparative youth and 'roughness' of billmen in comparison with pikemen, the valuation skills of those appraising inventories, the toughness likely to be required of those undertaking the role of churchwarden or jury service and the fact that not every holder of those positions had an unsullied record of good behaviour. Using the practices of historical re-enactment, it might also be possible to draw out more personal inferences. Carle indicates how this can be done in her article 'And who are you supposed to be?' where she lists personality prompts such as disposition, vices, intellect and honesty.⁵⁹⁴ Although this study lacks direct knowledge of

⁵⁹⁴ K. Carle, 'And Who are You Supposed to Be?' in *Proceedings of the 2003 Conference and Annual Meeting*, Vol XXVI, (Ohio: Association for Living History, Farm and Agricultural Museums, 2004), p. 246.

individuals' most personal emotions, conversations and opinions except on very rare occasions and we cannot know what made them laugh, how much they worried about household credit or which route they took to market, we might be able to suggest some skeletons in their court cupboards and put words in their mouths which are based on the broader evidence of this study.

A new book could include this study's investigation of the baking trade and other occupations could receive similar treatment, especially the cloth trade through to the fashion trade, hinted at in chapter eight. It would be possible to describe the relative wealth of parishes, occupations and individuals and describe what the norms were for Exeter in terms of family and household formation and re-formation, size and composition and, in the face of death, how goods were bequeathed and family survival promoted. One could reflect upon the attitudes of the leading actors towards the unlawful sexual actions of the chorus, seeing here, perhaps, a tough but fairer outlook than might initially be supposed. In comparison with the studies of Tudor York, Norwich, Worcester, Rye and Maldon, there may be variations in what most exercised inhabitants (in particular alien immigration) or in the dominance of one occupation over others, but the picture we have now is one of much wealth and power in the hands of a few, very little information about most and in the middle, most individuals working to find themselves a trade, establish a household, build mutual support from friends and associates, creditors, godparents, customers and neighbours, survive the vicissitudes of plague, sexual encounters, public opinion, widow/erhood and incapacity, contribute financially to various taxes and levies and attempt to see friends and family provided for before death.

To summarise: the approaches used in this study have revealed aspects of the chorus unknown before now by focusing a range of spotlights into the darkness of its shadows. Its major contribution is to examine a large body of people rather than a few discreet individuals, and provide new ideas about how the human landscape of a whole early modern city functioned and something of how it saw itself. It works alongside the narrative histories of the city discussed in chapter one and in future will allow research into organizations or major initiatives to be supplemented with information on more of the characters

involved. Chronologically this study sits between the medieval studies by Kowaleski and the Civil War works by Stoye and contributes to the continuity of studies between and across the medieval and early modern periods in Exeter.

No other social structural study has been carried out elsewhere for the early modern period in a closely comparable manner. However, the methodologies used can be repeated for any city with early modern civic archives, and it would be very instructive to compare the results with Exeter's. However, whilst the approaches of this study have future significance in their application to other early modern urban settings, its present significance lies in achieving its aims in respect of Exeter.

Conclusion: a challenge to the notion of 'chorus'

Although this study has referred to 'leading actors' and 'the chorus' throughout for the sake of convenience, it is clear that it is possible to outline a new model to challenge the validity of MacCaffrey's construct of a bi-partite society, one side of which was a murky unknown quantity about whom no 'striking assertions' could be made.

As set out above, it is clear that these individuals were neither a chorus (anonymous, undifferentiated, unidentifiable) nor a class in the traditional sense (with a national identity, consciousness and revolutionary potential) nor functionally separate from those with power and influence. Rather they were 'categorised, connected citizens'. Exeter defined them all as a whole, although it did not contain them as MacCaffrey supposed. This chimes with French's observation that, '... by and large, the 'middling' seem to have conceived of themselves as 'inhabitants' not of the imagined communities of 'society' or 'the middle sort of people', but rather of a smaller fictive entity, 'the parish' or 'the town' - or city and county of Exeter in this study.⁵⁹⁵ There were geographical divisions and social status layers as there were in other cities such as Chester, where Alldridge describes the inhabitants as 'a mosaic of interlocking and overlapping communities, simultaneously independent and interdependent'.⁵⁹⁶ People were categorized as role players, status holders, family members etc. However, many of the divisions identified in this study are delineated by distinctions, not exclusions. To

⁵⁹⁵ H. French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England*, pp.19 and 24.

⁵⁹⁶ Alldridge, 'Loyalty and Identity', p.86.

borrow a late-medieval urban society analogy, the picture created is not of a highly baked impermeable layer cake of humanity, but a society which 'while undoubtedly stratified resembled a trifle rather than a cake: its layers were blurred and the sherry of accepted values soaked through them'.⁵⁹⁷ There is a dynamism within and between interdependent households and individuals which makes it very difficult to apply a static description of any kind. For every suggested rule there appears always to be an exception, especially once individual biographies are created and the nuances of different lives and circumstances become apparent. This echoes conclusions reached by others; both French, who points out how circumspect today's historians are about their attempts to categorize the 'middle sort' and Barry who feels that being unable to define them may not be a sign of failure but rather one of historians 'grasping something of the reality of social identity'.⁵⁹⁸ This study contends that a 'categorisable connected citizenship' allows for this dynamic but acknowledges the individuality and interactivity of Exeter's inhabitants.

Perhaps MacCaffrey's ambition to make 'striking assertions' about a whole mass of incompletely recorded people is not appropriate. It seems more fruitful with this fragmentary kind of data, to look for the more intimate observations, subtle differences and complex dynamics between individual lives – the very things that make them individuals – for example, the differences in the business success of Richard Reynolds and William Totell or the flourishing family of Warnard Harrison in comparison with that of Robert Prouze. This study hopes that the model of a categorized (yet dynamic) connected citizenship is a better one for achieving what Hitchcock describes as a contemporary goal for history, that of being able to choose to treat better 'people we don't understand' rather than dismissing them under the label of 'chorus'.⁵⁹⁹

Reflection

One thought summarises the overall impression gained of the individuals encountered through this study. In the RAMM collections are a small number of sixteenth century oil-on-wood portraits of leading actors including John Hooker,

⁵⁹⁷ Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p.82 (quoting Susan Reynolds).

⁵⁹⁸ H. French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England*, p.4; Barry and Brooks, *The Middling Sort of People*, p.24.

⁵⁹⁹ David Hitchcock, 'Why history from below matters more than ever', <http://www.manyheadedmonster.wordpress.com/2013/07/22/david-hitchcock-why-history-from-below-matters-more-than-ever/> [accessed Dec 30th 2015].

artist(s) unknown.⁶⁰⁰ At some point in the past, probably during the nineteenth century, they were crudely over-painted in an attempt to preserve them. Although perhaps not intended, this gives the impression of an inability at the time to countenance the uncertainty of the fading originals and the fulfilling of a need to make them look whole again. Yet uncertainty underpins our knowledge of all of Exeter's early modern inhabitants – sometimes they are akin to pencil sketches with very rough outlines and much rubbing out, sometimes they may graduate to being faded watercolours, but whilst they are never fully formed portraits in oils, they are very far from being blank canvasses.

⁶⁰⁰ RAMM Accession numbers: Joan Tuckfield, c.1560, 136/1998; Sir Thomas White, 1566, 137/1998; John Periam, 1616, 138/1998; Lawrence Atwill, 1588, 139/1998; John Hooker, 1601, 141/1988; William Hurst c1568, 163/1998; Nicholas Spicer, 1611, 166/1998.