13. Exchange of books between nuns and laywomen: three surviving examples

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In his thesis Ian Doyle pointed out the rewards that an exploration of women’s book patronage and ownership might yield, and his subsequent work has continued to examine that subject, notably in his discoveries relating to BL MS Harley 1706 and Bodleian MS Douce 322. These investigations revealed, in his phrase, ‘a wide if fragmentary hinterland of social and intellectual relations’.¹ Such book-centred exchanges between relatives and friends constitute a significant element in the intellectual history of the late Middle Ages. Assessment of women’s place in this landscape, in particular, depends heavily upon knowledge of these connections. In ‘Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey’, Ian Doyle demonstrated the interplay between the manuscripts mentioned above, the female religious houses of Barking and Dartford, and a group of women both lay and religious, the most central of whom was Elizabeth, Countess of Oxford. This essay will provide three instances of similar exchange of books between laywomen and female religious institutions.

A good deal of testamentary evidence survives for women’s legacies of books to female houses,² but in most cases the books have perished. In the following narratives, however, it is the surviving books themselves that bear witness to the circulation of texts, and hence of ideas, among secular and religious women. Two of these books were gifts from laywomen to religious houses. In the third instance a book that once belonged to a house of nuns made its way at the Dissolution into another female reading community, this time a secular one.

In the first two instances, secular women’s gifts of books to nuns form part of a broader tradition of familial patronage, a tradition that can include elements of local pietas, or of particular religious devotion. In the third example, family is defined more broadly. Here a nun, incorporated into her sister’s household at the Dissolution, gave a book formerly owned by her monastic community to a member of this smaller, largely female, familia. In this transfer from monastic refectory to lay household, the communal nature of female reading nevertheless remains visible.
The protection that institutional ownership afforded these volumes is responsible for their characterization as ‘nuns’ books’. Indeed for much of their history they have been owned and read by religious women, and the stability of collective rather than individual ownership is in part the reason for their survival. Sometimes, however, their original or earlier owners were secular women. The reading tastes of these owners did not differ very much, perhaps, from those of religious women, but their greater freedom and greater wealth may suggest that in some cases laywomen acquired books and nuns preserved them.

Such a process is suggested by the extra-textual evidence found in BL MS Harley 2254, which contains versions of Walter Hilton’s *Mixed Life* and of the *Prickynge of Love*, the fourteenth-century English translation of the *Stimulus Amoris* doubtfully attributed to Hilton. By the middle of the fifteenth century this manuscript was in the possession of Dartford, the only female Dominican house in England, as its inscriptions testify. On its front flyleaf is written ‘Thys boyk longyth to Dame alys braintwath the worchypfull Prioras of Dartford’. The first mention of Dame Alice as prioress occurs in a document of 4 July 1461. Below this inscription is written ‘Orate *pro anima domina* Elizabeth Rede huius loci’; this person has not been identified. Finally we read: ‘Orate *pro anima Johanne Newmarche*’.

The manuscript also bears an armorial shield at the foot of its table of contents (fol. 1). An eighteenth-century hand has written below it, ‘Shirley & Brewes, or. Brewes quarterd’. Perhaps basing his view on this note, C. E. Wright suggested that the arms belonged to Beatrice Brewes Shirley (d. c. 1440), wife of Sir Hugh Shirley (d. 1403), and sister and heir of Sir John Brewes (d. 1426). Ian Doyle, however, following E. P. Shirley, identified these arms as belonging to the daughter of Sir Hugh and Beatrice Shirley, that is to Joan Shirley Newmarche (though the shield does not record the arms of her husband Robert Newmarche). He added that Joan Newmarch was a gentlewoman of Isabel, Countess of Warwick, who in 1439 bequeathed to Joan ‘cc mark in gold, And I to bere all Costes as for her bryngynge yn to seynt Katrens [hospital, London], or where ever she woll be elles’. Doyle noted that Joan Newmarch was a tenant in St Bartholomew’s hospital close until her death, probably in 1453, and may have been related to the bibliophile John Shirley.

Doyle’s final suggestion, that Joan Newmarch might have given the manuscript to Dartford in her lifetime, perhaps directly to Alice Braintwath, is supported by evidence of family connection with the Dominican house. In his account of Dartford’s 1346 founding and
subsequent endowment, John Dunkin notes that Piers de Braose, or Brewes, who can be identified as Joan Newmarch’s maternal grandfather, was a substantial, if indirect early benefactor of the monastery. ‘In consideration of one thousand marks paid to the prioress of Dartford, by Sir Peter de Braose, the king granted to him and Joanna his wife . . . six Kent manors’. C. F. R. Palmer dates this transaction 7 November 1357 and says, ‘the king made over to [Dartford] 850 marks, out of 1000 marks’ paid by Sir Peter and his wife for these manors.

Whether the Dartford subsidy was provided at the king’s initiative or that of the knight, it appears that Sir Peter’s grand-daughter may have retained an interest in the foundation. It seems likely that the widowed Joan Newmarch gave her manuscript to the Dominican community, where its significantly reliable text of Prickynge of Love, together with its version of Mixed Life, influenced several generations of female readers.

The marks of another such gift, made about fifty years later, survive in the notable manuscript that Agnes Scrope Ratcliffe gave to Marrick priory in Yorkshire. An English prose translation of Deguilleville’s Pèlerinage de l’Ame, the manuscript (New York Public Library, MS Spencer 19) contains 26 miniatures of great gaiety and charm made by an English artist, probably about 1430. The manuscript was owned, and probably commissioned, by Sir Thomas Cumberworth of Somerby, Lincolnshire, whose name is found on the first flyleaf’s verso. His will of 1451 evidences a high degree of connoisseurship. MP for Lincolnshire in 1420, 1421, and 1424, high sheriff of the county in 1415 and 1431, Cumberworth was a substantial patron of religious art, and the will lists a notable collection of books and religious objects. He apparently had two copies of Deguilleville’s book: ‘I wil my chaunte preste he of the trinite auter haue my boke of grasdaw & he of owre lady ater my boke of g’dedew of the sowde to yam and ther sucessores’.

From Cumberworth’s anonymous chantry priest, the manuscript had passed by the end of the fifteenth century to Dame Agnes Ratcliffe. She was the daughter of Henry, fourth Baron Scrope of Bolton, and his wife Elizabeth Scrope, a distant cousin. She first married Christopher Boynton of Sedbury, Yorkshire, and second Sir Richard Ratcliffe, K.G. A knight of the body to Richard III, Ratcliffe was killed at Bosworth on 22 August 1485.

It might perhaps be through the Percies, earls of Northumberland, that Cumberworth’s book reached Dame Agnes. Cumberworth died childless, leaving much of his wealth to his great-nephew and heir Robert Constable, a serjeant-at-law and man of business to Henry Percy, the
fourth earl. Constable served as executor both for Cumberworth and for Lord Percy. The latter did not die until 1489: his will requested that ‘Sir Robert Constable, knight, be paid his fee during his life, he doing his service under my heirs as he doth unto me’. The earl’s sister, Elizabeth Percy, was married to Henry Scrope, the son of John, Lord Scrope of Bolton, and both John and Henry Scrope, Agnes Ratcliffe’s brother and nephew, were Lord Percy’s feed men. Some such Constable–Percy–Scrope connection may account for the manuscript’s passage into Dame Agnes’ hands.

About a month after her husband’s death Agnes Ratcliffe took the vow of perpetual chastity. The commission to veil was issued on 20 September 1485. Since her brother the heir, Sir John Scrope, was born in 1435, and since she appears in the pedigree of Scrope of Bolton as the eldest daughter, she too was probably born in the 1430s. If so, she might have been about 50 at her husband’s death. She may have continued to live in her own home or, like other vowed women, have retired to a religious institution. Whichever choice this vowess made, she did give her beautiful manuscript to the Benedictine house of Mairick, in the North Riding, near Richmond. The inscription on fol. 3v, which records the book’s gift, was written by her daughter: ‘Here beginnith the boke cald Grace dieu Giffin vnto the/ Monestarye of Marrik By Dame agnes Radcliffe on/ Whose sowle Jhesu haue mercy Amen/ Per me Isabell Lumley’. The form of words suggests that after the mother’s death, the daughter may have been carrying out instructions that do not survive in testamentary form. Agnes Ratcliffe was still living, however, on 28 August 1498, when her sister-in-law, the well-known lady Anne Harling, widow of Agnes’ brother John, fifth lord Scrope of Bolton, left ‘to my suster Radcliff a litell coffer of ivery’.

In what might seem a parallel to his sister’s bequest, John left two printed books, a Bible and a Chronica Chronicarum, to Easby, a Yorkshire Premonstratensian house, less than ten miles from Mairick, with which the Scropes had long been associated. Speaking of the male Scropes, Joel Rosenthal says, ‘They did what was natural to and expected of wealthy families: they patronized the institutions of their corner of the world, and they obviously chose to enrich those [religious] houses within which many of them would rest’. This strong sense of local obligation perhaps characterizes both brother’s and sister’s gifts of books.

At the Dissolution Grace dieu remained for a time in local hands. It contains a sixteenth-century inscription ‘by me John Cowpper awe thers buke’. An investigation of the leases granted by Christabel Cowper,
Marrick's last prioress, reveals that among these was a grant of 1 April 1538 made to two men, one of them a John Cowper – probably a relative of the prioress. From the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century, the manuscript appears to have been owned by Henry Percy, ninth earl of Northumberland (1564–1632), the 'Wizard Earl', book-collector, and friend of Raleigh's, in whose family the volume remained until it was sold at Sotheby's in 1928.

Agnes Ratcliffe's gift of her book to Marrick must stand for many such instances in which laywomen, either aristocratic or gentry, took the vow of chastity, spent their final years in or near a female religious house, and brought books to the house. Such cases imply a cross-fertilization in which lay wealth and class membership made available to religious women spiritual texts in manuscripts that might, as in this case, represent a high level of artistic accomplishment.

The book-owning female Scropes, as Dr Doyle early pointed out, would repay further study, and indeed the woman who played such a central role in his examination of Harley 1706 and Douce 322, Elizabeth, thirteenth Countess of Oxford (d. 1537), was born a Scrope. She was in fact the niece of Agnes Ratcliffe, the daughter of Agnes' brother Sir Richard Scrope and Eleanor Wasbourne. A second woman whose book ownership was mentioned by Dr Doyle, Margaret Scrope, was also a niece. He noted that after the Dissolution this woman, a nun of Barking, gave to a Mistress Agnes Goldwell a Barking copy of Nicholas Love's *Mirror of the Life of Christ* (Beeleigh Abbey, Maldon, Essex, MS Foyle), which had been signed by Sibilla de Felton, abbess of Barking from 1394 to 1419.

Mistress Goldwell has been identified as the gentlewoman of Margaret Scrope's sister, Lady Elizabeth Peche. It seems that at the Dissolution Margaret Scrope left Barking to live in the household of her widowed sister at Lullingstone, Kent. Her sister's husband, Sir John Peche, (born c. 1473) had been a glittering figure at the courts of both Henry VII and VIII. Accounts of the royal jousts in 1494 and in 1501, and of court revels in 1515 and 1516, contain descriptions both of his prowess and his attire. He was sheriff of Kent, lord deputy of Calais, keeper of the royal park at Eltham, and knight of the body to Henry VIII. He died on 1 January 1522 while in Ireland. For the completion of his unfinished chapel his will directed his wife, Elizabeth Scrope Peche, to sell the gold chains worth £220 that he had with him, so that 'my chapell at Lullingstone aforsaide shalbe made vp and fynysshid of my costes as I haue shewid vnto my frendes'.

Both this chapel and Lullingstone church itself contain much
remarkable sixteenth-century stained glass. Particularly significant is the east window of the chancel, which shows three female saints carrying books: St Agnes, St Anne, St Elizabeth (Plate 60). C. R. Coucner has identified these figures as the work of Anglo-Flemish glaziers. The best-known examples from this school survive at King’s College Chapel, Cambridge, and at Fairford, Gloucestershire, but other examples of such Flemish glass can also be cited. Coucner mentions, for instance, the windows at Cranbrook, Kent, which commemorate Sir Richard Guildford, controller of the household to Henry VII; at least some of this glass is by the same hand as that at Lullingstone. 29 To this may be added the glass at West Wickham, Kent, commissioned by Sir Henry Heydon (d. 1503/4) and that at Thornhill, West Yorkshire (1499), donated by Robert Frost. In each case the gaver, like Sir John Peche, moved in the court circles that would have provided access to this sophisticated work. Heydon was steward of the household to Cecily, widow of Richard duke of York and grandmother of Henry VII’s queen, while Frost was chancellor to Henry’s eldest son, Prince Arthur. 30

The choice of subjects for such windows sprang partly from specific religious devotion, partly from a strong sense of family. This double impulse is illustrated in Sir Henry Heydon’s windows at West Wickham, where surviving figures represent Sts Christopher, Anne, Catherine, and Dorothy. Heydon’s will speaks of the first two (together with Sts John Baptist and Mary Magdalene) as ‘avowers’, or patrons, of his family, which included his wife Anne and daughters Catherine and Dorothy. Only part of the original glass remains, but Coucner suggests a rearrangement that might have been completed by images of Sts Bridget and Elizabeth, the names of his remaining daughters. 31 Such familial piety may have inspired the Lullingstone windows also, where the figures of Sts Elizabeth, Agnes and Anne perhaps allude to the three Scrope sisters: Lady Elizabeth Scrope Peche, Agnes Scrope (unmarried), and Anne Scrope Redmayne.

Lady Elizabeth Peche’s will of 1544 casts some light on this widow’s household in the 1520s and 1530s. Her sister Agnes was bequeathed a white silver goblet and a hanging. Her sister Anne Redmayne, who was one of the executors, received a great deal of plate and linen, all carefully specified. The bequest’s size perhaps indicates that, unlike Agnes, she was mistress of an independent household. The third sister Dame Margaret Scrope, sometime nun of Barking, was bequeathed five pounds. The household position of Agnes Goldwell, wife of James, is not specified, but she was given a gilt cup with a rose in the top of the cover and a lion in
the bottom, six silver spoons, a silver goblet, and a great many domestic items. She is the will’s largest recipient, and is one of its witnesses. Her sons John and George each received 40s, while her daughter Elizabeth was bequeathed a silver goblet and £6 13s 4d, to be delivered on her wedding day, the money to be assigned to her brothers’ schooling should she die.\textsuperscript{32}

Agnes Goldwell’s central position in Lady Peche’s household perhaps accounts for Margaret Scrope’s gift. The book is inscribed ‘Mistris Agnes Gowldewell me possider ex dono Margarete Scroope quondam monache Monasterii de Berckynge’ (fol. 181r) and ‘Mystris Gowldewell me possidet teste Scroope’.\textsuperscript{33} Both donor and recipient were alive on 27 May 1544 when Lady Peche added a codicil to her will and altered some bequests. Margaret Scrope does not appear in the 1556 Barking pension list, and so she perhaps had died by this time. The book did not long remain in Agnes Goldwell’s family: it bears the signature ‘Henry Elmy’ with the date 1620.\textsuperscript{34}

The suggestion of a female reading community comprising the former nun, her widowed sister, and her sister’s gentlewoman can be enlarged through the evidence of another manuscript, a copy of Lydgate’s \textit{Siege of Troy} (Bodleian MS Rawl. poet. 144). Carol Meale has recently noted the appearance in it of Lady Elizabeth Peche’s name.\textsuperscript{35} On fol. 1r is written ‘thys boke heys meyn my lady/ elyszabeth the peche – A whom god preserue Amen’\textsuperscript{36} (Plate 61). The hand is a fluent and able one, quite different from the awkward signature at the bottom of fol. 6r: ‘Elyshabeth the Peche’ (Plate 62). This latter hand uses an anglicana \textit{a}, instead of the previous hand’s italic \textit{a}, and it seems likely, especially in the absence of a title, that the second hand may represent the signature of John Peche’s sister Elizabeth, rather than his wife Lady Elizabeth Peche. About 1495 this sister married, as her first husband, John Hart, and in the absence of Peche children, her son Sir Percyval Hart inherited his uncle Sir John Peche’s estates.\textsuperscript{37}

A further female signature is found in the Lydgate manuscript on fol. 247r: ‘myne owne good lady peche I pray yow to pray For me yowr owne mayde Jane page’\textsuperscript{38} (Plate 63). The same inscription appears on fol. 294r and 403v, the latter, at least, perhaps a copy by someone else. Finally, the presence of one of Agnes Goldwell’s children is attested by a marginal drawing of a male courtier with fashionable hat and sleeves; above it is the signature ‘John golldewell’ (fol. 386r) (Plate 64).

We know at least one more book that is likely to have circulated in the Lullingstone household. In 1500 the will of Master Gilbert Carleton left ‘to my lady Pecche my booke of Legenda aurea’, perhaps at this date a
printed edition. Carleton was vicar of Farningham, Kent, approximately five miles from Eynsford, where Lullingstone parish was located.

Evidence of this female reading community comes from what may have been, particularly after Sir John Peche’s death, a largely female household. In the 1537 will of Anne Clements of Lullingstone, the names of Lady Elizabeth Peche’s household surface once more. The testator, perhaps herself one of Lady Peche’s gentlewomen, leaves ‘too my Ladie a sufferan of golde’. ‘Mastres Scrope’ (probably her mistress’s sister Agnes) receives a bequest of money, while Mistress Page is given ‘ij of my best carcheffes’ and Mistress Goldwell receives ‘my coffer a bonnett of veluett and a fruntlett of veluett’.

In the case of the Barking manuscript, this female household reading community replaces an earlier female religious reading community. The usual direction of the gift, from laywoman to institution, is here reversed in Margaret Scrope’s gift of the Barking library book to Agnes Goldwell. The communal nature of women’s reading, however, and its reciprocal character, can be seen in both situations. At Lullingstone during the fifty years or so after 1490 the Lydgate manuscript reveals the identities of its readers: Lady Elizabeth Peche, the mistress of the household; her unmarried sister-in-law Elizabeth Peche; her gentlewoman Jane Page. The Barking manuscript, which came to Lullingstone after 1539, allows us to enlarge this group: Margaret Scrope, former nun of Barking and Lady Peche’s sister; Agnes Goldwell, Lady Peche’s principal gentlewoman. In addition, after 1500 we know that Lady Peche owned her deceased friend’s Legenda Aurea. Strangely it is the adolescent drawing of Agnes’ son John Goldwell in the Lydgate manuscript that brings together the beginning and the end of this fifty-year period of readership as, perhaps after Lady Peche’s 1544 death, he carelessly signs the pages which in the 1490s had received her formal statement of ownership.

It seems at present impossible to say whether Sir John Peche’s stained glass at Lullingstone, with its three women carrying books, was completed before or after his 1522 death. Hence we do not know whether, or to what degree, his wife and widow Elizabeth Peche was involved in the selection of its subject-matter. Certainly, however, it stands as a symbol for the continuance of women’s reading in one family household.

Notes

1. A. I. Doyle, ‘Books Connected with the Vere Family and Barking Abbey’, Transactions of the
2. A useful recent summary of women’s gifts of books to other women, based both on manuscript and testamentary evidence, is provided by F. Riddy in “Women Talking about the Things of God”: A Late Medieval Sub-culture’, Women and Literature in Britain, 1150–1500, ed. C. M. Meale (Cambridge, 1993), p. 108.
3. Each text has been recently edited: S. J. Ogilvie-Thomson, ed., Walter Hilton’s Mixed Life, Edited from Lambeth Palace MS 472. Salzburg Studies in English Literature: Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies 92:15 (Salzburg, 1986). H. Kane, ed., The Prickynge of Love. Salzburg Studies in English Literature: Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies 92:10 (Salzburg, 1983), who takes MS Harley 2254 as his base text. Kane dates Harley 2254 c. 1400, on the authority of Professor S. Harrison Thompson. Ian Doyle thinks the manuscript may be assigned to 1420–40 on the basis of its illumination, perhaps favouring the 1420s, but he observes that an earlier date would be possible on the basis of the handwriting in J. P. H. Clark, ‘Walter Hilton and the Stimulus Amoris’, Downsides Review, ciii (1984), 79–118, p. 79.
4. C. F. R. Palmer, ‘History of the Priory of Dartford’, Archaeological Journal, xxxvi (1879), 241–71, at p. 259. The last mention of Margaret Beaumont, the preceding prioress, occurs in a royal licence of 20 November 1458; this sale of lands was effected 12 April 1459 and enrolled in chancery on 12 June.
5. C. E. Wright, Fontes Harleiani (London, 1972), which reproduces fol. 1 of the manuscript as Plate XVI. Sir Hugh Shirley was master of the falcons to Henry IV, justice of the peace for Warwickshire in 1400–1, and died at the battle of Shrewsbury in 1403. More information on the Shirley family is provided in C. Carpenter, Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Gentry 1401–1499 (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 99, 109, 111, 149.
6. A. I. Doyle, ‘More Light on John Shirley’, Medium Ævum, xxx (1961), pp. 93–101, and, summarizing this earlier work, in Clark, ‘Stimulus Amoris’, n. 6. Robert Newmarch’s death date is not known, but Joan Newmarch was widowed by the time she made her will, 10 July 1452.
7. E. Power, Medieval English Nunnuries c. 1275 to 1535 (Oxford, 1922), p. 18. The Countess was the second wife to Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick; for her will, see F. J. Furnivall, ed., The Fifty Earliest English Wills, EETS, OS 78 (1882), p. 119. The citation in Power to Testamenta Vetusta should be to pp. 239–40, but only a partial summary is given there.
8. J. Dunkin, The History and Antiquities of Dartford (London, 1844), p. 113. For further information on Sir Peter de Braose see VCH Buckinghamshire ii, 357 and iii, 148. BL MS Additional 5524, a seventeenth-century volume of pedigrees, gives the pedigree of Brewes on fol. 178v.
10. MS Harley 2254 may have served as exemplar for other manuscripts, particularly in view of Joan Newmarch’s residence in the bookish neighbourhood of St. Bartholomew’s close. Kane notes the ‘very close resemblance’ between the text of Prickynge found in this manuscript and that in Yale University, MS Beinecke 223 (formerly Borthwick MS), ‘there being many times several folios in succession without variation from the base MS’, pp. xvii–xviii. A.I. Doyle calls the Beinecke MS ‘a highly finished production’, assigns it to the mid-fifteenth century, and suggests that it may have been produced in London, and that its illumination might be c. 1440–60 (Clark, Stimulus Amoris, p. 107).
12. Cumberworth’s will is printed in A. Clark, ed., Lincoln Diocese Documents 1450–1544, EETS,
OS 149 (1914), pp. 44–57. The most notable of his book bequests was a manuscript of the 
Canterbury Tales which he left to Annes, wife of his heir Robert Constable. Manly and Rickert list several surviving manuscripts which might possibly have been Cumberworth's Tales: J. M. 
Manly & E. Rickert, The Text of the Canterbury Tales, i (Chicago, 1940), 413–14. He also left a 
copy of De vita Christi (probably a version of the Meditations vitae Christi), Walter Hilton's 
De vita contemplativa et activa, a Latin psalter, and, to the anchors at the 'grese steps', the 
stairs connecting Lincoln's upper and lower city, his roll of prayers.

13. N. H. Nicolas, ed., The Controversy between Sir Richard Scrope and Sir Robert Gros- 
vener...A.D. 1383–1390, ii (London, 1832), 58ff., pedigree of Scrope of Bolton.

Surtees, The History and Antiquities of the County Palatine of Durham (London, 1816–40), i, 
32, pedigree of Radclyffe, of Dilston and Derwentwater, lords of Hawthorn, (Co. Durham), 
W. N. Thompson, 'The Derwentwaters and Radcliffes', Transactions of the Cumberland 
and Westmoreland Archaeological Society, n.s. iv (1904), 288–322. See also DNB, Sir Richard 
Ratcliffe or Radcliffe.


16. The will of Henry Percy, fourth earl of Northumberland (ibid,) refers to 'my brother-in-law 
Henry Scrope, son and heir apparent to the lord Scrope of Bolton'. In 1489 when the will was 
written, the Lord Scrope of Bolton was John, Agnes Ratcliffe's brother; Henry Scrope was John's 
son, Agnes' nephew. Authority for the Percy-Scrope of Bolton connection is provided by 
Petworth MS MD 918, i, fol. 2v, cited by M. A. Hicks, 'Dynastic Change and Northern Society: 
the Career of the Fourth Earl of Northumberland, 1470–89', Northern History, xiv (1978), 
78–107, n. 66. See also R. Horrox, Richard Ill: A Study of Service (Cambridge, 1989), p. 64.


Ratcliffe and Agnes Scrope had two children: Richard, and Isabel, who married Roger Lumley. 
According to T. Whitaker, however, Isabel was Agnes' daughter-in-law, wife of Sir Henry 
Boynton, Agnes' son by her first husband Christopher Boynton, see History of Richmondshire, 
i (London, 1823), 77. For further information on Marrick, see J. H. Tillotson, Marrick Priory: 
A Nunnery in Late Medieval Yorkshire, Borthwick Paper no. 75 (York, 1989).

20. Lady Anne Harling's much-quoted and book-filled will is printed both in Nicolas, Scrope-
Grosvenor Controversy, pp. 78–9, and in Test. Ebor. iv, Surtees Soc. 53 (1869), 149–45. Her 
first husband was Sir William Chamberlayne; her second Sir Robert Wingfield; her third John, 
Lord Scrope of Bolton.

21. Test. Ebor. iv, 94–7. He died between 8 August 1498, the date of his will's codicil, and 28 
August when his widow made her will. Only one Easyb book survives, an ordinal, according to 

22. J. Rosenthal, 'A Case Study of the Scropes of Bolton' in his Patriarchies and Families of Privilege 


25. Nicolas, Scrope-Grosvenor Controversy, ii, 58. Margaret Scrope was the daughter of Agnes 
Scrope Ratcliffe's brother Robert Scrope and Katherine Zouche.


27. W. M. Sturman, 'Barking Abbey: A Study in its External and Internal Administration from the 

28. W. A. S. Robertson, 'Peche of Lullingstone', Archaeologia Cantiana, xvi (1886), 227–40, 
summarizes very fully Peche's part in the royal jousters of October–November 1494 on the 
occasion of Henry's creation as Duke of York, and briefly describes Peche's jousting in 1516. 
The earliest evidence of his participation in court theatricals is found in BL MS Additional 7099,

‘All the valuable Kentish manors of the late Margaret [Beaufort] were leased to him from the Crown (in June 1511) for a period of sixty years at the nominal rent of 20 marks per annum’, W. A. S. Robertson, p. 234. W. K. Jordan comments on his charitable largesse, which included ‘a fund of £500 vested in the Grocers’ company prior to his death’ and notes that ‘the family was originally of merchant beginnings, John Peche, an alderman of London, having purchased the manor in 1368’. ‘Social Institutions in Kent 1480–1660: A Study of the Changing Pattern of Social Aspirations’, Archaeologia Cantiana, lxxv (1961), 116.


32. PRO PCC 12 Pynnyng, made 1 August 1541, proved 23 July 1544.


34. ‘More Manuscripts’, p. 310.


36. The inscription’s distinctive majuscule A appears also in the decorative carving of Sir John Peche’s tomb in Lullingstone church. Drawings by Herbert Baker of the tomb details accompany W. A. S. Robertson’s ‘Lullingstone Church of St. Botolph’, Archaeologia Cantiana, xvi (1886), 99–113, where the A is identified as the initial of Arthur, Prince of Wales. It appears on the north face of the tomb immediately above a pomegranate, Catherine of Aragon’s symbol, suggesting that the carving was done during the years 1500–2, before the death of Arthur.

37. For her life: W. A. S. Robertson, ‘Lullingstone Church’, p. 104 and ‘Peche of Lullingstone’, pp. 237–8. Elizabeth Peche Hart married as her second husband George Brooke, a younger son of John, fifth Baron Cobham. ‘It was a remarkable match because her daughter married... Thomas Brooke, sixth Lord Cobham’. In other words ‘she married the younger brother of her son-in-law’. She died 16 July 1544, at almost the same time as her sister-in-law Lady Elizabeth Peche whose death must have occurred between 27 May 1544, the date of her will’s codicil, and 23 July when it was proved.

38. Carol Meale has noted that Lady Elizabeth Peche’s will includes a bequest to ‘mystres Page’, ‘... Alle the Bokes...’ , p. 150, n. 27. Sir John Peche’s will left £10 to the heirs of Edmund Page, see W. A. S. Robertson, ‘Peche of Lullingstone’, p. 235.


40. Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone. Rochester Consistory Court, MS DRO/Pur. 9, fol. 263.