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‘Wide Wandring Weemen’: the nature and variety of travel by English women to continental Europe (1558-1630)

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A thesis submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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September 2023

Author’s declaration

The work presented in this thesis is the candidate’s own.

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Chris Higgins, July 2023

Abstract of Thesis

This thesis aims to challenge long-held preconceptions that travel by women in the early modern era was limited in scope and variety. Central to this work is the formation of a new database of 2,075 women travellers to Europe during the later Tudor and early Stuart periods.

Chapter 1 reviews the historiography of early modern women's travel, and aims to position this thesis within the current discourse. Chapter 2 and 3 explain how the database of women travellers was constructed and reaches some significant new prosopographical conclusions on the nature of travel as well as recurring motives for mobility by women across the period. Chapter 4 explores contemporary responses to the notion of women's overseas travel found in a variety of literary sources. It suggests attitudes change over the period as a consequence of the growing numbers of journeys being made. In addition, it examines female-authored accounts of travel to explore how women themselves responded to greater prospects for travelling. Chapter 5 provides a detailed case study of one of the most popular and best documented destinations for overseas travel by women, Spa. It explores both the inter-confessional nature of travellers to the town, and also the varying motives for travelling there. Finally, the role of the ambassadress is highlighted in Chapter 6, as an example of the way foreign travel afforded women new forms of agency.

In summary, this thesis aims to demonstrate that continental travel by early modern women was not only more common but more complex in its character than previously imagined, affording them opportunities to fulfil a variety of new roles which have hitherto been overlooked or undervalued.

Abbreviations and Conventions

Original spellings have been used in all quotations, except where for clarity 'j' has been replaced with 'i' and 'v' with 'u'. Dates are as recorded, but 1 January is taken to be the start of the new year.

APC, *Acts of the Privy Council*

BL, British Library

CRS, *Catholic Records Society*

CSPD, *Calendars of State Papers Domestic*

CSPF, *Calendars of State Papers Foreign*

HOPO, *History of Parliament Online*

LMA, London Metropolitan Archives

LPL, Lambeth Palace Library

ODNB, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

SO, Signet Office

SP, *State Papers*

TNA, The National Archives

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Chapter one: ‘*She* is not mentioned in the sources’: introduction to the history of early modern travel by women

1. Introduction

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were a transformational period in the history of travel. The English Reformation had ostensibly impeded movement in a variety of ways. Tighter government restrictions, such as the Statute of Confinement (1593) and closer scrutiny of licences to travel made both internal and overseas journeys problematic for men and women. Once abroad, the growing menace of religious war, illustrated by the Massacre of St Bartholomew (1572) or the threat of arrest by the Inquisition, made the prospect of travel seem unachievable for all but the most determined or foolhardy. Set against this backdrop, were contrasting events which notably widened the scope for international exchange. The Edict of Nantes (1598) promised greater tolerance for Protestants living in or moving through France, whilst the eventual ending of hostilities with Spain formalised by the Anglo-Spanish Treaty (1604) ushered in a period of political détente between the two nations, to the extent that by the 1620s, the Anglo-Spanish Match seemed a very real prospect. Commerce between England and Europe flourished, helped by The Twelve Years’ Truce (1609-1621) and the expansion of ambitious commercial operatives such as the Merchant Adventurers. Alongside these geopolitical changes, diplomatic activity grew apace, aided by the renewal of permanent overseas ambassadorial residences, among them Venice (1604) and Spain (1605) and Turin (1613).[1] Within the space of a generation, the political context of Europe had changed to such a degree, that the prospect of international travel which had long been precarious, was gradually becoming a very real possibility for all sorts of individuals and most significantly for women as well as men.

[1] See Stoye, John, *English travellers abroad, 1604-1667: Their influence in English society and politics* (New Haven and London, 1989), p.324.

The changing patterns of mobility which characterised this age have been the subject of considerable historiographical debate. As shall be seen, much of the focus has been on travel associated with diplomatic or cultural activity, and an even greater proportion of the literature has centred on the male experience, assuming that women travellers were so numerically insignificant or so poorly documented as not to merit serious consideration. However, clearly there was a long tradition of female overseas travel. As far back as the fourteenth century, Margery Kempe made three overseas journeys to Jerusalem (1413-14), Spain (1417-18) and Germany (1433-34), whilst fictional accounts of travel such as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1387), which include women pilgrims travelling as far as the Holy Land, were clearly recognisable figures to contemporary readers.[2] Even in the aftermath of the Reformation, the *Acts of the Privy Council* and port records such as the *Remembrancer Records* of the Exchequer attest to the transit of English women overseas in their thousands.[3] A more collaborative approach to the available archival material, and re-reading of sources thought to be incidental or marginal, is allowing modern researchers to bring instances of travel by women more sharply into focus than ever before and understand its complexity more clearly.

This thesis has several objectives. At its heart, lies the creation of an extensive new database of women travellers, which aims to collate previous examples of female mobility, such as the QMUL website *Who were the nuns?,* with other instances of secular travel, for example by wives of military officers or overseas merchants, so-called ambassadresses and women travelling overseas for personal reasons related to health or family. This database is now viewable as a searchable website, entitled *Wide Wandring Weemen*.[4] The chronological framework principally covers the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, a period that has been largely overlooked by other scholars. Constructing a register of female overseas travel presents several methodological challenges. As will be explained in Chapter 2, traditional sources for research into mobility such as licences to travel issued by the Privy Council, have significant gaps and frequently record the names of male heads of households without naming accompanying women. In addition, they are useful in identifying legitimate travellers, but are often silent on those who fled abroad for religious or political motives. With this is mind, could a more imaginative approach to the available material,

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[2] See Kalas, Laura and Varnam, Laura, *Encountering The Book of Margery Kempe* (Manchester, 2013).

[3] *Acts of the Privy Council*, Vols. VI-XLIV (London, 1890-1964); TNA, E157, *Exchequer: King's Remembrancer: Registers of Licences to pass beyond the seas*, Vols 1-33 (1573-1677).

[4] *Who were the nuns?*: https://wwtn.history.qmul.ac.uk/ (last accessed Jan 2023); *Wide Wandring Weemen, English Women Travellers to Europe (1558-1630)*: https://travellers.thedevroom.co.uk/# (last accessed Aug 2023).

one which aims to collate well-trawled records relating to travel with other instances from less well-known or overlooked sources, shed new light on women's mobility from the period? Can other records of travel such as customs records or government censuses of overseas residents be constructively used for this purpose? Do diplomatic records, such as the correspondence of ambassadors and government agents based in Europe help us identify women who would otherwise have been under the historical radar? In addition, can local records, such as *Returns of Aliens* or antiquarian and genealogical sources read in conjunction with other evidence furnish us with additional biographical details and help fill in the gaps regarding women's mobility from the period.[5]

Assisted by the evidence from this new database, a second major aim is to pose and hopefully resolve important demographical questions regarding the nature and variety of travel by early modern women, by utilising some of the methodologies developed in recent years by prosopographical researchers. Prosopography is a well-established basis for quantitative analysis of large datasets, and with the advent of new associated techniques such as network analysis, it is ideally suited to the focus of this thesis.[6] It is frequently employed to analyse large quantities of demographical data, and given that licences to travel often include references to ages of travellers, sizes of parties and details on destinations, the approach lends itself particularly well to analysing patterns in mobility. Furthermore, the amalgamation of information drawn from a wide range of sources helps to ensure that quantitative irregularities are smoothed out, for instance where there are gaps in the archives, sometimes known as the 'dark number' or where there is an atypical surge in evidence for a particular time period or destination.[7] Prosopography also helps us to identify and analyse mobility amongst those who are less well-documented and are never likely to provide enough material for individualised biographical studies. As the editor of *Prosopography Approaches and Applications* (2007), Katharine Keats-Rohan succinctly puts it, we are 'not

[5] Kirk, R. E. G., and Kirk, Ernest F, *Returns of aliens dwelling in the city and suburbs of London from the reign of Henry VIII to that of James I* (Aberdeen, 1907).

[6] A useful starting point is https://prosopography.history.ox.ac.uk/course_syllabuses.htm (last accessed Dec 2023). See also, Keats-Rohan, K.S.B (ed.) *Prosopography Approaches and Applications A Handbook* (Oxford, 2007) and Ankoud, Rajae, 'Prosopography: An Approach to Studying Elites and Social Groups' in *Al-Muntaqa* 3, no. 1 (2020), pp.70–85, both of which provide succinct and wide-ranging surveys of the current state of play.

[7] See Verboven Koenraad & Carlier Myriam & Dumolyn Jan, 'A short manual to the art of prosopography' in Keats-Rohan, *Prosopography*, p.58.

interested in the unique but in the average'.[8] This approach is especially suited to a project focusing not just on early modern women's history, but which is especially interested in those women who formed part of overseas households or travelling communities who have either left only limited archival footprints or who have long been overlooked by male-centred historians of mobility.

Prosopography as a historiographical methodology is not without its pitfalls. The findings of any research need to be fully contextualised; for instance, changes in patterns of movement to the Continent need to be understood against other prevailing factors. These might include the impact of institutional reforms, such as changes to licensing systems, the effects of political or military unrest on the flow of overseas traffic, or other broader demographical events which either hindered or facilitated international movement. Careful thought needs to be given to the sorts of questions we want to pose and whether the sources chosen and the evidence gathered will be able to furnish us with the desired outcomes. A successful prosopographical study needs sufficient range in order to produce balanced and meaningful results but equally not be so ambitious that the timeframe or resources available to the researcher make it prohibitive. With these considerations in mind, the decision was taken quite early in the process to restrict the focus of this research to English women and in particular those travelling to continental Europe during the latter part of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, an area significantly unchartered by historians of early modern travel.[9]

As digital methods for visualising findings have improved, another valuable analytical tool for exploring large datasets is social network analysis.[10] In many respects this approach is closely akin to prosopographical analysis. In fact, it is sometimes known as network prosopography.[11] The approach is particularly relevant to mobility studies, as Kate Davison acknowledges in her review

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[8] Verboven Koenraad & Carlier Myriam & Dumolyn Jan, 'A short manual to the art of prosopography', in: Keats-Rohan K.S.B. (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications. A Handbook* (Oxford, 2007), p.37.

[9] For discussion of the global dimensions to women's travel at this time see Akhimie, Patricia & Andrea, Bernadette (eds.), *Travel & Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World* (Nebraska, 2019) or 'Immigrants, expatriates, exiles and world travelers' in Levin, Carole, et al (eds.), *A Biographical Encyclopedia of Early Modern Englishwomen. Exemplary lives and memorable acts, 1500-1650* (London, 2017), pp.57-87.

[10] See for example, Wetherell, Charles, 'Historical Social Network Analysis' in *International Review of Social History*, vol. 43 (1998), pp. 125–44; Davison, Kate, 'Early Modern Social Networks: Antecedents, Opportunities, and Challenges' in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 124, Issue 2 (April 2019), pp.456–482; Brinkley, Leanna T.P., 'Understanding the Early Modern English Coastal Trading Community: A case study of network prosopography' in *Journal of Historical Network Research* 6 (2021), pp.126-160 and Ahnert, Ruth and Ahnert Sebastian E., *Tudor Networks of Power* (Oxford, 2023). See also, https://tudornetworks.net/ (last accessed Dec. 2023).

[11] Brinkley, 'Understanding the Early Modern English Coastal Trading Community', p.154.

of the state of development of this new methodology.[12] The use of big datasets, the stock in trade of prosopography, enables us to visualise links between individuals and places, and analyse the connections between them. Network analysis helps to complicate our understanding of mobility, and provide, as Davison puts it 'a picture of complexity, diversity, and dynamism'.[13] The advantages for this research are clear. For instance, it can help us to identify convergence points of women travellers, make links within the database between otherwise disparate individuals and foreground the prominence of key figures who might otherwise be overlooked. Network analysis is not only useful in helping to identify associations between people beyond conventional boundaries based on kinship or community, but also those based on shared intellectual, religious or political identities. As an example, it could help us to identify the interconnectedness of women associated with the movement of postulants to overseas convents or the interrelationship between communities of English exiles located across Europe at this time. In addition, it again allows us to spotlight peripheral women within the history of travel, among them ladies-in waiting or household staff serving overseas. The connections between these women are not often easy to see, but as with a giant historical jigsaw puzzle, by patiently joining together the lives of these women, a far clearer collective picture of their reasons for travelling abroad emerges. Groundbreaking work into mutual reliance networks has been undertaken by, among others, Jeremy Bouton, in helping to unravel the interdependent familial and professional relationships among residents of London's commercial districts.[14] This could equally be applied to the women frequently named in the *Remembrancer Records* who though based in London regularly plied their business between the capital and trading hubs on the Continent. Network analysis would help us to see the interconnectedness of these women and their families and the nature of the journeys they were undertaking with far greater clarity than ever before.

As with conventional prosopography, we must proceed with caution. By its very nature network analysis looks for convergences. The risk is that this process exaggerates the links between individuals rather than their disassociations, which in itself may be meaningful. In addition, it sometimes overlooks the challenges of early modern communications and transport infrastructure, which may explain the apparent lack of contact between certain individuals or groups.

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[12] Davison, 'Early Modern Social Networks', pp.456-457.

[13] Ibid, p.459.

[14] See Bouton, Jeremy, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987).

Ultimately, no methodology is flawless, but used wisely and selectively, the pioneering approaches of prosopographical and network analysis provide highly effective strategies for evaluating the information provided by the new database of women travellers. As Keats-Rohan observes, the two methodologies work well both in tandem and alongside more conventional investigative approaches, providing the historian with a 'diversified research strategy, integrating various techniques and methods.'[15]

In addition to considering how this research relates to current trends in prosopographical and network analysis, it is also worth considering where it sits with regard to debates over gendered or women's history of travel. Focused as it is on the motives and actions of women travellers, either individually or collectively, this thesis is clearly rooted in the traditions of women's history, whilst giving some consideration to gender discourse when looking at the evolution of public attitudes towards women's travel. For leading gender historians of the early modern era such as Lyndal Roper, language and behaviour play a crucial part in shaping sexual difference, and should not be underestimated in terms of the impact they had on women seeking to travel at this time.[16] In Chapter 4, for example, I examine how popular perceptions of women's travel in printed literature evolve as the incidence of overseas journeys by women increases. Likewise, Chapter 6 explores how the etymology of the term 'ambassadress' runs parallel to the growing prominence of this figure at court and in permanent residences abroad.

This duality of approach should not be viewed as contradictory. In her essay for the *Oxford History of Historiographical Writing*, 'Women's and Gender History' (2015), Julie Des Jardins admits that whilst not the same, these two approaches are frequently used interchangeably due to their shared historiographical parentage.[17] However distinctions can be drawn. What she and other historians argue make women's history different is the manner in which it seeks to foreground the actual experiences of women rather than explore the ideological mechanisms that shaped them.[18] Gender clearly played a part, as will be seen in Chapter 2 and 6 in the construction of the licensing system, making it harder for women to acquire the necessary permissions to legitimately travel overseas, but women still did travel in large numbers in spite of and sometimes because of

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[15] Verboven Koenraad, Carlier, Myriam and Dumolyn, Jan, 'A short manual to the art of Prosopography', in: Keats-Rohan K.S.B. (ed.), *Prosopography Approaches and Applications. A Handbook* (Oxford, 2007), p.69.

[16] Lyndal Roper, https://www.history.ox.ac.uk/growth-gender-and-womens-history (last accessed Dec 2023).

[17] Julie Des Jardins, 'Women's and Gender History' in Schneider, Axel and Woolf, Daniel (eds.), *Oxford History of Historical Writing. Volume Five. Historical Writing Since 1945* (Oxford, 2015), p.137.

[18] Ibid, p.137.

patriarchal opposition. Gender also circumscribed the power and authority of women within diplomatic households to ensure male preeminence in this field, but that did not preclude women from making up ever larger proportions of ambassadorial households or exerting their agency through informal avenues. As Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks (2023) writes in a collection of essays, which includes one by the present author, exploring women's and gender history:

> 'Yes, patriarchal expectations and/or institutions were a powerful force, but in whatever case the author is examining, the woman or these women successfully resisted, and wrote, composed, painted, ruled, migrated, lived alone, had sex and often children out of wedlock, worked, ran businesses, and so on'.[19]

Gendered mechanisms of travel were clearly a common feature of the period and an obvious product of patriarchal reluctance to countenance greater female mobility. Whilst acknowledging the significance of these practical and ideological barriers to women's travel, this work redirects its focus on the complex motives for women wanting to journey overseas in the first place and the types of experiences and opportunities travel afforded them. Underpinned by a database which grandstands for the first time the ambitious scope and diversity of women's travel in the early modern era, this work should clearly be viewed as a history of women's travel rather than a specifically gendered one. The approach is neatly summarised by Rosemary Sweet, a leading historian of women's travel history, when she writes in *Cities and the Grand Tour*, 'gender was not consistently the most important factor in shaping a visitor's experience: birth, education, wealth and age all had a bearing for both sexes'.[20]

A women's history of travel does not come without well-recognised methodological pitfalls. By foregrounding the lives of individuals who left only limited archival imprints of their lives, we risk overplaying their importance in historical narratives. Likewise, is it not contradictory to on one hand champion the marginalised and oppressed whilst at the same time celebrating their influence? Indeed, does accentuating the agency of women in informal, domestic settings unwittingly acknowledge accepted notions that conventional patriarchal centres of power were preeminent? Are we rehearsing similar prejudiced arguments when we contrast the agency of wealthy, well-educated women with that of ancillary women within their households? By distilling out women's experiences we risk oversimplifying our understanding of the past or even worse relegating the study of women in history to a subcategory of mainstream historiographical discourse. A female-

[19] Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E., 'Women's Agency: Then and Now' in *Parergon*, Vol.40, No.2 (2023), p.15

[20] Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, p.280.

centric view of the past solely championing the achievements of women, seems as myopic as a male-centred one and can produce histories which Julie Des Jardins describes as 'unproblematized celebrations of women'.[21] Whilst remaining within the camp of women's history this thesis seeks to address some the historiographical challenges accordingly.

Firstly, it seeks to decentralise but not silence the involvement of men in the history of travel, by exploring the numerous ways in which overseas mobility afforded women opportunities to act either autonomously or in partnership with men. This will be seen most notably in Chapter 6 exploring the role of both the ambassadress and members of her household staff in exploiting many of the new opportunities overseas travel afforded them both. Secondly, whilst it acknowledges there were spheres in which female agency was intensified, such as the domestic setting, it recognises that the boundaries of these spaces were often far more fluid than imagined. This is an approach with a long-established history, modelled by among others Natalie Zemon Davis, Julie Hardwick and more recently Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben in their work on European female households.[22] Spaces like ambassadorial residences were clearly managed on a practical level by ambassadors' wives and their female attendants, but they also served as places of political theatre, where petitioning and mediation might occur facilitated by the presence of women. Finally, this research seeks to bring into focus the marginalised women in early modern travel history, notably in Chapter 3 where the findings of the database are trawled to reveal the motives and actions of women travellers across the full social gamut. Used in conjunction with prosopographical approaches outlined above, it is hoped this methodology will amplify rather than exaggerate the achievements of women sidelined by previous narratives.

In summary, this is a women's history of travel focusing on the nature and extent of their experiences. It is preoccupied with the daily practices of women travelling and living overseas and the interplay between them and those around them. Judgements will be founded on empirical analysis of a new database of women travellers, highlighting different motives for travelling and the confluence of women at different places and times across the period. The prosopographical nature of the study affords unique opportunities to spotlight the activities of marginalised women either individually or collectively and examine their role in international mobility. The work seeks to

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[21] Des Jardins, 'Women's and Gender History', p.146.

[22] See works such as Davis, Natalie Zemon, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth Century Lives* (Cambridge, Mass., 1995); Hardwick, Julie, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (Philadelphia, 1998); Akkerman, Nadine and Houben, Birgit, *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2013). A very useful discussion of current tensions between the two approaches can be found at Rebecca Wolf's blog, *Out of the Tower*, https://outofthetower-rebeccadewolf.com/?p=1105 (last accessed Dec 2023).

amplify women in historical narratives but not place them on a pedestal, to contextualise their experiences but not exaggerate their contributions. Rather than diminishing the part played by men, it aims to explore ways in which they worked as counterparts or in partnership with them. Taken together, it aims to illustrate that alongside the well-documented male encounter with early modern travel, is an undervalued story of women travelling overseas. They performed this action either independently or in concert with men to a far greater extent and for a far wider variety of reasons than earlier than previously acknowledged.

Having considered the principal methodologies underpinning this thesis it is worth briefly surveying the aims of each chapter. Chapter 2 sets out how the database of women travellers was constructed. It shows how traditional sources of evidence such as licences to travel in the *Acts of the Privy Council* as well as less well-known sources such as the *Remembrancer Records* may be read and re-read. It highlights the benefits of adopting an interconnected approach to both published and unpublished sources to provide a more detailed and extensive picture of women travellers than previously imagined. Chapter 3 focuses on the database to articulate some of the core conclusions that may be drawn relating to the nature and scope of female mobility at this time. It begins by attempting to unravel the workings of early modern licensing systems and how they impacted on travel by women. Among the many questions it poses and hopes to resolve is the degree to which regulations governing travel or the terms of licences differed for women. Many of the women in the database clearly travelled regardless of having any sort of licence at all, so can we find any evidence of how this was possible, or even if there was any government collusion in this process? Added to this, is it possible to detect whether women had any agency over the nature of their journeys? For instance, where women travelled independently of men, did they follow particular itineraries or seek out destinations that were distinct from male travellers? Is there evidence that female sociability circles were used to prepare women for travel or support them on their journeys or whilst they lived overseas? As Chapter 3 suggests, there is emerging evidence that women were central figures in conveying prospective nuns to overseas convents. Were these networks used in relations to other activities associated with secular travel by women?

Chapter 3 aims in particular to unravel the complexity of travel by women travel at this time, identifying and quantifying the various forces driving English women to journey abroad. Do certain forms of travel increase or diminish in popularity over the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and what factors might explain this? For example, the registers of port officials at harbour towns like Yarmouth point to an expansion of overseas trade in the first half of the seventeenth century, but little work has been conducted into the extent of female participation in

this phenomenon.[23] Likewise the *Remembrancer Records* hint at a growing number of women travelling overseas for highly personal reasons, connected with finance or changing family circumstances. It may be possible to contextualise these instances of travel and see if they were prompted by wider political events, such as overseas conflicts or changing economic fortunes. In addition, what does the movement of women to and from northern Europe reveal about the interdependence of families on either side of the Channel? How far were families and the economic activity which supported them interconnected at this time and what part did women play in fostering and upholding these ties?

Having established that greater mobility by women was indeed a feature of the early modern era, Chapter 4 seeks to examine how contemporaries responded. Were attitudes towards women travelling abroad uniformly censorious or do we hear some voices who accept or even endorse such changes in behaviour? Did commentators distinguish between different types of travel and were some women travellers, historic, literary or actual, ever lauded as models of virtuous behaviour? The accepted position is that authors of travel literature and guides, the so-called *ars apodemica*, were uniformly hostile to all notions of travel by women, condemning such behaviour as 'wide wandring' in a punning reference to their geographical and moral libertarianism.[24] I hope to show that even if such views existed in some quarters, there was a growing acknowledgement publicly and privately that women's travel could bring wider benefits to society. Additionally, it has long been assumed that until the late seventeenth century, women had little to say themselves about travel. Even the aforementioned account of Margery Kempe's journey to Italy was the product of a male amanuensis.[25] It is true that we have to wait under the late seventeenth century for the first published travelogues by women such as those of Margaret Cavendish and Anne Fanshawe, as this chapter sets out, but it is hard to believe that these were the only written accounts of travel by women since the Middle Ages. Is it possible, by using accounts of travel more imaginatively, such as newsletters and descriptions of travel in contemporary correspondence, to hear the views of women on this subject once more? In addition, by reading these documents 'against the grain' is it possible to understand the responses to travel by women who might never be afforded the opportunity to travel abroad themselves?

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[23] Stoye, *English Travellers*, p.173.

[24] Turler, Jerome, *The traveiler of Jerome Turler …* (London, 1575), p.9.

[25] See Hirsh, John C., 'Author and Scribe in the Booke of Margery Kempe' in *Medium Ævum*, vol. 44, no. 1/2, (1975), pp. 145–50. Also, Lewis, Katherine, 'Margery Kempe, oral history, and the value of intersubjectivity' in Kalas and Varna, *Margery Kempe*, pp.120-139 in which she discusses the collaborative nature of Kempe's writing.

Recent historiographical research, as shall be seen in Chapter 5, has focused on the popularity of Spa as a destination for women travellers. Whilst much is known about the town as a centre for health tourism in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, its emergence as a travel hub, particularly for women from the late sixteenth century is less well understood. This thesis aims to unpick the reasons for this phenomenon, building on recent research, notably that of Liesbeth Corens (2022).[26] Was the evolution of travel to Spa motivated primarily by women seeking out the health-giving benefits of its waters, or did the town attract them for other reasons? It is hoped that the prosopographical evidence furnished by the database will enable us to identify trends in both the sociological make-up of visitors to the resort as well as their motives. Chapter 5 also examines evolving public perceptions of Spa. What changing attitudes can be detected from either popular printed literature or personal correspondence to the development of the town as a fashionable destination for women travellers? Were male authors consistently horrified by this trend or does the period witness a growing acknowledgement of the benefits for women seeking out its therapeutic springs? Corens in particular notes the inter-confessional nature of life in Spa in the mid-seventeenth century, but was this characteristic evident earlier and if so how was it exploited by female tourists and visitors?

Overseas travel presented women with opportunities to exercise agency on a scale never encountered before. Women found themselves in situations where they were removed from normal societal constraints and also where they were required to be supremely self-reliant, whether that involved living among frontline troops serving overseas or fleeing religious persecution at home. New and unfolding opportunities were the stock-in-trade of the ambassador's wife, the so-called 'ambassadress'. Chapter 6 draws on the database once more to link changing public perceptions of this figure with the growing numbers of such women travelling abroad and chart the ever-growing complexity of the work they undertook. The names of ambassadorial wives of the later seventeenth century are relatively well-known, such as the diarist Anne Fanshawe, wife of the English ambassador to Portugal and Spain (1662-66), Sir Richard Fanshawe. Earlier ambassadors' wives are less familiar to us, in spite of an equally rich archival record. Building on the work of Gemma Allen (2019) and other historians of early modern diplomacy, this thesis aims to identify the full range of the work they undertook.[27] Allen identifies gendered activities such as gifting and intelligence-

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[26] Corens, Liesbeth, 'Seasonable Coexistence: Temporality, Health Care and Confessional Relations in Spa, C.1648–1740' in *Past & Present* (2022), pp.129-164.

[27] Allen, Gemma, 'The Rise of the Ambassadress: English Ambassadorial Wives and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 62 (2019), pp.617–638.

gathering and notes the linguistic skills of ambassadresses in facilitating these roles. Can we see from the database a wider range of roles performed by these women and also what part did female ancillary staff play in oiling the cogs of English diplomacy? The Jacobean era was a time when permanent residences were reemerging across Europe, affording women unrivalled new authority over spaces which were both public and private. They required enormous resourcefulness in how they were managed, especially as their husbands were often absent on diplomatic business. How adept were women in meeting these new challenges? Can it be argued that during this period ambassadresses carved out a niche for themselves within the ambassadorial household which became difficult to replace in future years? In addition, due to the rich nature of archival evidence relating to women associated with diplomatic travel, it asks whether it is possible to understand more about the identities and activities of women on the peripheries of this sphere. What was the nature of the relationship between the ambassadress and other women within the household? Were these women just as invested in the work of the embassy as the ambassadress and does the evidence that survives reveal anything of their agency, however informal, within the world of early modern diplomacy?

In short, this thesis is driven by a desire to reshape debates over early modern mobility. Drawing on the evidence of a collaborative new database of female English overseas travellers to the Continent during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, it is hoped to position women more firmly in the history of travel in all its complexity. It aims to understand the part they played not just as silent, pillion passengers but as individuals who had agency and engaged in the mechanisms, opportunities and experiences afforded by travel just as actively as their male counterparts.

2. Historiographical themes

The following historiographical survey has two principal intentions. Firstly, to review key debates and methodologies that have shaped our understanding of early modern travel with specific reference to the involvement of women. Secondly, to highlight some of the limitations of earlier historiography, which has often assumed that women were purely marginal figures and explain how this thesis aims to address some of those lacunae. The review has been organised thematically, beginning with the historiography of travel for recreational or educational purposes and culminating with perceptions of travel, to mirror subsequent chapters in this thesis addressing similar themes.

2.1 Recreational travel

The primacy of the Grand Tour has preoccupied generations of travel scholars since the term was first coined by Richard Lassels in his *Voyage of Italy* (1670).[28] Conventionally, this event has been viewed as a quintessentially male experience, enjoyed by wealthy elites, whose chief aim was to participate in a recreational and loosely educational tour of Europe, with Italy as its ultimate goal. The close association between the Grand Tour and male recreational travel continued for much of the last century, sustained by blockbuster exhibitions like the Tate's *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (1996) and popular histories such as Christopher Hibbert's *The Grand Tour* (1987).[29] Even in the earlier part of this century, Jeremy Black's *Italy and the Grand Tour* (2003) spoke to an accepted narrative of early modern travel as a highly gendered, elitist venture, largely centred on Italy.[30]

Outside the history of the Grand Tour, there has been a greater willingness to 'problematise' the history of travel, wresting it from the hands of cultural historians to explore other forms of travel and international exchange which grew in scope and frequency across the early modern era. Historians of travel have steadily broadened their focus to consider areas such as international commerce, overseas exploration and religious exile, themes which will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 2. Among these, George B. Parks, *The English Traveller to Italy* (1954) provided a valuable catalogue of travellers up to 1525, which he attempted to categorise different motives for travel, including diplomatic, religious and military.[31] This work was supplemented by Kenneth R. Bartlett's *The English in Italy, 1525-88* (1991) which provided a similar register of travellers for the latter half of the Tudor period.[32] Although focused on Italian cultural travel in the eighteenth century, John Ingamells' *Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy* (1997) provides a valuable template with its meticulously researched entries, replete with biographical details, itineraries and archival sources.[33] Ingamells does include women travellers in his *Dictionary* but

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[28] Lassels, Richard, *The voyage of Italy, or, A compleat journey through Italy in two parts …* (Paris, 1670).

[29] Bignamini, Ilaria and Wilton, Andrew (eds.), *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century* (London,1996); Hibbert, Christopher, *The Grand Tour* (London, 1987).

[30] Black, Jeremy, *Italy and the Grand Tour* (New Haven and London, 2003).

[31] Parks, George B., *The English Traveller to Italy, First Volume, The Middle Ages (to 1525)* (Rome, 1954).

[32] Bartlett, Kenneth R., *The English In Italy, 1525-1558. A Study in Culture and Politics* (Geneva, 1991).

[33] Ingamells, John, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701-1800* (New Haven & London, 1997).

they amount to around 100 or so entries among the 6,000 men who are listed. Closer to the timeframe of this thesis, Jonathan Woolfson's *Padua and The Tudors* (1998) includes a similar biographical register of the 350 English visitors to Padua during the Tudor era.[34] He draws on archival sources such as the records of full-time and 'dilettante' students at the university of Padua to compile his register. Though unremittingly male in their focus, these registers provided an invaluable methodological starting point for the database of women travellers underpinning this thesis.

Catalogues of women travellers are disappointingly few in number. Jane Robinson's *Wayward Women* (1990) includes a biographical register of 400 women travellers, principally drawn from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, arranged in thematic chapters loosely connected with the motives for their journeys.[35] Although Robinson's primary purpose is to engage her readers with an 'array of characters' rather than provide a scholarly analysis of women's mobility, her contribution to the field is no less welcome.[36] More recently, Carole Levin et al have produced a collection of biographical sketches of significant women across the period 1500-1660 entitled *Exemplary Lives* (2017), which includes the section 'Immigrants, expatriates, exiles and world travellers'.[37] The authors adopt an intersectional approach to women's travel, examining the experiences of women from a wide variety of contexts to challenge the age-old assumption 'few women traversed the borders of England'.[38] Entries range from Teresa Sampsonia Shirley (c.1590–1668) the Persian wife of an English silk merchant to the daughter of a Powhatan chief, known to history as Pocahontas (1596-1617). Whilst the authors acknowledge that travel for recreational purposes is hard to locate in the early modern era, travel for personal, political and professional reasons is clearly visible. Most significant of all the recent attempts to compile registers of women travellers is James Kelly and Caroline Bowden's online database *Who were the nuns?,* a searchable website recording the names of 3,900 English women who entered European convents between 1600 and 1800. Whilst the primary focus of the project is confessional exile, once more the manner of its construction, including biographical details and family trees of leading Catholic families,

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[34] Woolfson, Jonathan, *Padua and the Tudors: English Student in Italy, 1485-1603* (Cambridge, 1998).

[35] Robinson, Jane, *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers* (Oxford, 1990).

[36] Ibid, p.10.

[37] Levin, Carole, et al (eds.), *A Biographical Encyclopedia of Early Modern Englishwomen. Exemplary lives and memorable acts, 1500-1650* (London, 2017).

[38] Ibid, p.57.

proved invaluable in constructing my own broader database and confirming the identities of many of its entries.

Arguably the most significant work aiming to problematise travel history was John Stoye's *English Travellers Abroad* (1989), which challenged the idea that early modern mobility was preoccupied solely with cultural enrichment.[39] To Stoye's mind, the Grand Tour was part of a wider social phenomenon connected with European expansionism and motivated by a range of factors, among them commerce, diplomacy and religious exile. He also contested the notion that travel for personal gratification was a product of the Enlightenment, establishing clear grounds for believing travellers of the late Elizabethan and early Stuart periods shared many of the same motives as their Grand Tour descendants. Michael Brennan's *The Origins of the Grand Tour* (2004) builds on Stoye's work, to critique the idea that travel for pleasure or education was purely an eighteenth century invention, arguing that its roots date back to at least the mid-Tudor period.[40] This view has also been advanced by Edward Chaney in several important works, among them *The Evolution of the Grand Tour* (1998) and *The Jacobean Grand Tour* (2014), written jointly with Tim Wilks.[41] Although this latter work primarily focuses on two continental journeys undertaken by Robert Cecil's son, Lord Cranbourne and his chaperone Sir John Finet, the book provides tantalising glimpses of female involvement in travel, notably the connoisseurship and political agency of the Countess of Arundel, Aletheia Talbot (1582-1654) and the wife of the English ambassador to Venice and The Hague, Lady Carleton (1586-1627).

Another positive development in the historiography of travel has been a growing awareness of the involvement of women in collecting and connoisseurship in the early modern era. Initially tentative and peripheral, the focus of scholarly work on this subject has grown in ambition in recent years. Among the most notable contributions has been David Howarth's *Lord Arundel and his Circle* (1985).[42] Though focused on the travel and connoisseurship of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, it sheds valuable light on the contributions of his wife, Aletheia Talbot and her highly cultivated sister, Elizabeth, Countess of Kent (1582-1651). Research by Jennifer Fletcher and Elizabeth Chew has attempted to reposition Aletheia more centrally as a collector and patron of note

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[39] Opus cit.

[40] Brennan, Michael, ed., *The Origins of the Grand Tour: The Travels of Robert Montagu, Lord Mandeville, 1649–1654, William Hammond, 1655–1658, Banaster Maynard, 1660–1663* (London, 2004).

[41] Chaney, Edward, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour* (London, 2000); Chaney, Edward and Wilks, Timothy, *The Jacobean Grand Tour: Early Stuart Travellers in Europe* (London, 2014).

[42] Howarth, David, *Thomas Howard and his Circle* (New Haven and London, 1985).

and both stress the importance of travel in shaping her taste and values.[43] Fletcher argues that Aletheia was just as discerning as her male contemporaries, commissioning works of art from Rubens and Van Dyck and facilitating the sale of the Gonzaga collection to Charles I. She praises Aletheia's sophistication as an art connoisseur and argues she was 'more socially adept, more Catholic and just as fluent in Italian as her husband'.[44] Elizabeth Chew believes that the experience of travel directly informed Aletheia's choices in architecture and the objects she chose to decorate her properties with, which included works of art from China, India as well as continental Europe. The work of Fletcher, Chew and others raises important questions of just how far women within these highly-cultivated circles were able to use the experience of travel to acquire works of art or shape cultural tastes on their return.

The association between travel and commerce provides another interesting new avenue of research. In her book *Consuming Splendor* (2005), Linda Levy Peck argues that whilst men like Arundel and the Duke of Buckingham were incontestably the main patrons of 'high art' in this period, the increased desire for decorative arts and household items sourced from abroad or brought back as souvenirs from foreign travels can be often be attributed to women.[45] Material consumption, she argues, was both 'fruit and stimulus of expanding travel and trade networks'.[46] Peck sees a direct correlation between travel and consumerism but concedes 'the travels of individual women in the seventeenth century have been less well-documented'.[47]

The expansion of travel to spa towns in Britain and overseas is one feature of female recreational travel that has received increased attention in recent years. Phyllis Hembry's *The English Spa* (1990) charts the enduring popularity of springs and spa towns, beginning as sites of medieval pilgrimage and transforming into centres of therapeutic healing in the post-Reformation era.[48] Although her work focuses on English spa towns like Holywell and Bath, she makes valuable references to overseas counterparts, raising questions about the interplay between the two. Others have noted the growing importance of spa towns as places of social interaction and networking.

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[43] Fletcher, Jennifer, 'The Arundels in the Veneto', *Apollo*, Vol.144, (1996), pp.63–69; Chew, Elizabeth, 'The Countess of Arundel and Tart Hall' in Chaney, Edward, ed. T*he Evolution of English collecting: The reception of Italian art in the Tudor and Stuart periods* (New Haven and London, 2003), pp.285-314.

[44] Fletcher, 'The Arundels in the Veneto', p.67.

[45] Peck, Linda Levy, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge, 2005).

[46] Ibid, p.18.

[47] Ibid, p.135.

[48] Hembry, Phyllis, *The English Spa, 1560-1815 : A Social History* (London, 1990).

Liesbeth Corens, in a fascinating article ‘Confessional Relations in Spa c.1648–1740’ (2022), sees a convergence between those who went to spas for practical and religious reasons. The Belgian town of Spa was especially adapted to such travellers, enjoying as it did a long tradition of religious tolerance and neutrality, where ‘differences were put on hold’ and visitors of all nationalities and faiths could converge in ‘a place of peaceful coexistence’.[49] Corens work underlines the importance of Spa as a place of social and cultural intersection, begging the question was this solely evident from the mid-seventeenth century? In the tense political atmosphere of Europe before the onset of the Thirty Years War, when according to the database Spa grew exponentially as a destination for English travellers, did the town operate in a similar fashion. The peculiar appeal of the town to women merits further attention, as do wider questions concerning the extent to which gendered spaces were a feature of women’s mobility of the time.

A final new current in the historiography of travel for recreational purposes has been the increased tendency to see tourist travel as a pan-European phenomenon, rather than something exclusively focused on Italy. In a ground-breaking book, *Europe within Reach* (2015), Gerrit Verhoeven adopts a multi-disciplinary approach using what he terms ‘ego documents’ - sermons, journals, letters and other highly personalised accounts - to identify overlooked instances of travel from which patterns of movement among northern Europeans can be mapped.[50] Significantly, this approach draws attention to the participation of women in travel, particularly those associated with trading missions and military households in Holland and Belgium. His work includes valuable prosopographical research from which wider demographic trends can be detected, and calculates that in the Netherlands, numbers of women travellers involved in tourism or short journeys rose from around 4% of all travellers to just over 20% between 1600 and 1750.[51]

2.2 Education and self-improvement

The evolution of recreational tourism is closely allied to the emergence of educational travel in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The common assumption once more is that this was primarily a

[49] Corens, ‘Seasonable Coexistence’, p.162.

[50] Verhoeven, Gerrit, *Europe within Reach. Netherlandish Travellers on the Grand Tour and Beyond,1585-1750* (Brill, 2015).

[51] Ibid, p.125.

male enterprise. Verhoeven found that 36% of the journeys in his study of Northern European travellers were motivated by men seeking educational improvement.[52] In 'Across Europe: Educational Travelling of German Noblemen' (2010) Matthis Leibetseder uses, among other sources, lists of students enrolled at European universities to track their progress across the Continent.[53] From this he concludes that whilst the make-up of northern European travellers was drawn from a far wider class base than their French, Italian or even English counterparts, the profile of the typical educational traveller was still male. Although Leibetseder adopts a more interdisciplinary approach than many historians of early modern travel, the use of university rolls, a technique adopted by Woolfson for English students at Padua University, immediately precludes women connected with educational travel. What is required, is a more imaginative approach to the available sources, a view endorsed by Woolfson himself in a later reflection on his earlier work 'Padua and English Students Revisited' (2013). He argues for a more ambitious approach which unites both English and European archival material 'to reveal the true dimensions of the English educational diaspora across the whole of a long Tudor sixteenth century'.[54]

The role of religion in helping to foster an intellectual interest in European culture has provoked considerable debate among historians of travel. Catholic kinship networks clearly played an important role in providing practical support for overseas travellers as well as serving as a highly effective conduits for information and ideas. As Edward Chaney suggests in his essay 'Quo Vadis? Travel as Education' (2000), Catholics communities more than any other helped to sustain intellectual exchange by keeping continental 'lines of communication open in these years'.[55] Crypto-Catholics such as the Arundels played a key role in fostering an interest in overseas travel, as did their recusant overseas agents, men such as the ubiquitous Tobie Matthew (1577-1655) and George Gage (c.1582-1638).

Given the barriers to travel women faced, the issue of vicarious mobility is of relevance to this thesis. If women were prohibited from travelling in a physical sense, were they still able to reap the benefits of travel through imagined or alternative means? Marie-Louise Ehrenschwendtner in her article 'Virtual Pilgrimages?' (2009) has demonstrated that some German religious communities fostered a thriving culture of imaginary travel, which allowed them to undertake virtual pilgrimages

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[52] Ibid, p.125.

[53] Leibetseder, Mathis, 'Across Europe: Educational Travelling of German Nobleman in a Comparative Perspective' in *Journal of Early Modern History*, 14 (Oct 2010), pp.426.

[54] Woolfson, Jonathan, 'Padua and English Students Revisited' in *Renaissance Studies* (Sept 2013), p.574.

[55] Chaney, Edward, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour* (London, 2000), p.79.

to Rome by praying at images and specially constructed shrines within the confines of the convent, whilst receiving all the same privileges and indulgences as conventional pilgrims. The culture of virtual travel was not unknown in England too, especially after the Statute of Confinement (1593) restricted recusant men and women from travelling more than 5 miles from their homes. As shall be seen in Chapter 4, Anne Dacre, Dowager Countess of Arundel (1557-1630) actively participated in the experiences of her daughter-in-law, Aletheia via correspondence and news networks. The nature and extent of these written interactions merit closer attention, not least because they expand our understanding of how early modern women responded to the opportunities afforded by greater mobility either as actual or virtual travellers.

One of the most important contributions to the debate on the intellectual dimensions of travel has been Sara Warneke's *Images of the Educational Traveller* (1995), in which she highlights growing misgivings among the English ruling classes about the benefits of overseas travel as an educational experience.[56] For generations the Continent had been viewed as a vital training ground for a life in government, but in the tense, uncertain atmosphere of Counter-Reformation Europe members of the English establishment feared that young travellers might return religiously or morally corrupted. Travel to Italy, the home of 'papistry' was especially cautioned against, especially she argues, after the publication Roger Ascham's book, *The Scholemaster* (1570). Travellers to that particular destination were prone to unseemly cultural appropriation, summed up by the common jibe, 'il diavolo incarnato e l'inglese italianato'.[57] Warneke briefly considers contemporary attitudes to travel by women, but is largely dismissive of its prevalence due to a perception that travel among this group was so scarce: 'they were rarities and their numbers formed only a tiny minority of travellers'.[58] However, by broadening the manner in which travel is viewed and acknowledging new types of mobility by women, the extent and variety of educational travel for women is rendered more visible. Among the women in this category are those who travelled either as religious exiles or postulants, for whom the prospect of a Catholic education was an essential constituent of their journeys. Women attached to commercial or diplomatic households, would also have been exposed to an international upbringing and all the cultural and linguistic benefits that entailed.

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[56] Warneke, Sara, *Images of the Educational Traveller in Early Modern England* (Leiden, 1995).

[57] Ascham, Roger, *The scholemaster or plaine and perfite way of teachyng children …* (London, 1570), p.26.

[58] Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller*, p.5.

There has been significant interest in recent years in women who transcended conventional borders through the republic of letters. Among these, the most notable was the educationalist Anna Maria van Schurman (1607-78) whose writings were the focus Anne Larsen's study, *Anna Maria van Schurman The Star of Utrecht* (2016).[59] Larson's work suggests that in addition to correspondence, Schurman made connections with English women living abroad, notably Utricia Ogle, English daughter of the governor of Utrecht. Much progress has been made towards collating and transcribing the work of women associated with travel and international communities of correspondence. Nadine Akkerman's two volume collection *The Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart* (2011 and 2015) is amongst the most significant and places an English woman at the centre of a European hub of cultural and political exchange.[60] The work of Julie Campbell and Anne Larsen, in *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (2009) have advanced our understanding of the importance of female correspondents in forging international news and communication networks when opportunities for travel were limited.[61] The central role that women played in the creation and sustenance of these hubs, exposes the potential for new ways of viewing the intellectual agency of women connected with European travel or overseas residence. As James Daybell argues in 'Gender, Writing Technologies, and Epistolary Communications' (2016), 'women were not excluded from cultures of correspondence, but were immersed within networks in which gender could play a significant role'.[62] Petitioning, mediating and even intelligence-gathering found a natural home within these gendered correspondence networks and clearly gave educated women travelling or residing overseas greater agency than has been credited.

The connection between education and travel is also exposed by the work of John Gallagher, who examines contemporary attitudes to foreign language-learning in *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* (2019).[63] Although he largely focuses on men as learners of European languages and consumers of travel literature, his work opens up the prospect of further research into extent to which women shared in this enthusiasm. Elizabeth I and Anne of Denmark were preeminent

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[59] Larsen, Anne, *Anna Maria van Schurman The Star of Utrecht: The Educational Vision and Reception of a Savante* (Abingdon, 2016).

[60] Akkerman, Nadine, *The Correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia, Volume I, 1603-31* (Oxford, 2015); Akkerman, Nadine, *The Correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia, Volume II, 1632-42* (Oxford, 2011).

[61] Campbell, Julie and Larsen, Anne (eds.), *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (London, 2009). See also Pal, Carol, *Republic of Women. Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 2012).

[62] Malcom Smuts, R. (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 2016), p.511.

[63] Gallagher, John, *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2019).

exemplars of female polyglots, but how far did this interest percolate down through the rest of female society and what proportion of women travelling overseas were accomplished language-learners? The emergence of the first language-learning textbooks specifically tailored to female students, such as Pierre Erondelle's *The French Garden* (1605) suggests there was clearly an appetite for such studies and even that such books were meeting a new market for overseas travellers.[64]

Alongside the growing demand for language-learning texts, the enthusiasm for newly-translated works of European literature has been the subject of several important studies, notably Michael Wyatt's *The Italian Encounter with Tudor England* (2005) and Soko Tomita's invaluable *Italian Books Printed in England* (2009). The focus of these works is once more on male interest in foreign literature, but tentative research into female book ownership and reading habits would suggest that the impetus for reading foreign works in translation was shared by both sexes. John Guy has even argued that the Countess of Pembroke helped popularise so-called 'trashy Italian novellas' due to her interests in foreign travel and language-learning.[65] Historians of material culture provide useful methodological templates. Graham Parry's (1993) brilliant analysis of Jan van Belcamp's *Great Picture of Lady Anne Clifford* (1646) revealed that half of the books shown in the painting are translations of foreign texts, among them Thomas Hoby's 'Englishing' of Castiglione's *The Courtier* and Giovanni Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays*.[66] Ownership marks, such as Anne Clifford's monogram have been used by Heidi Hackel in *Print, Gender and Literacy* (2009) to identify other texts in her possession, among them translations of French and Spanish works. Such scholarship suggests there was a healthy appetite for continental literature among early modern women, prompting the question to what extent the women who feature in the database were the chief consumers or even the agents for this new interest?

2.3 Diplomacy and political agency

[64] Erondelle, Pierre, *The French garden: for English ladyes and gentlewomen. Being an instruction for attayning the French tongue* (London, 1605).

[65] Guy, John, *Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years* (London, 2017), p.44.

[66] Parry, Graham, 'The Great Picture of Lady Anne Clifford' in Howarth, D. J. (ed.), *Art and patronage in the Caroline Courts* (Cambridge, 1993), p.210.

Garrett Mattingly's *Renaissance Diplomacy* (1955) has long been central to any discussion of the role of the ambassador in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and their part in shaping international relations.[67] Mattingly equated the emergence of permanent overseas residences with the foundations of the nation-state and consequently much of his work is concerned with the institutional features of early modern diplomacy. Not only does his work overlook the less formal elements to an ambassador's work, but even more problematically, in all of its three hundred pages, no reference is made whatsoever to the role of women be that as wives of ambassadors residing for extensive periods of time abroad or the female household staff employed in the day-to-day upkeep of the embassy. G.M.Bell has produced a useful *Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives* (1990) as a follow up to an earlier guide by D.B.Horn, *British Diplomatic Representatives* (1932).[68] Both works usefully catalogue Tudor and Stuart diplomats, but as with Mattingly, make no reference to the presence of ambassadors' wives or other female diplomatic staff. The omission is all the more baffling given the substantial archival footprint these women left behind.

Biographical studies of individual ambassadors have helped us appreciate the increasing complexity of their roles. Foremost among are Sonia Anderson's 'Biographical Sketch of William Trumbull' (1993) and Robert Hill's unpublished PhD, *The career of Sir Dudley Carleton* (1999).[69] Taken together, these works suggest that far from being technocrats, early modern ambassadors were masters of everything from advocacy to art collecting, facilitated by pan-European patronage networks which they skilfully manipulated. In *Double Agents* (2011), Marika Keblusek suggests that due to their wide-ranging skills in negotiating, brokering and connoisseurship, coupled with their freedom of movement, 'ambassadors were vital agents in the migration of ideas and content'.[70] In an important contribution to the debate, 'Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe' (2008), John Watkins called for a multidisciplinary reevaluation of

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[67] Mattingly, Garrett, *Renaissance Diplomacy* (New York, 1955).

[68] Bell, Gary M., *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives, 1509-1688* (London, 1990); D.B.Horn, *British Diplomatic Representatives, 1689-1789* (London, 1932).

[69] Anderson, Sonia 'The Elder William Trumbull: A Biographical Sketch' in *British Library Journal*, Vol 19, No.2 (Autumn 1993), pp.115-132; Hill, Robert, *Works of art as commodities : art and patronage : the career of Sir Dudley Carleton, 1610-1625* (Unpublished PhD, Southampton Solent University, 1999). See also, Hill, Robert, 'Ambassadors and art collecting in early Stuart Britain: The parallel careers of William Trumbull and Sir Dudley Carleton, 1609-1625' in *The Journal of the History of Collections*, Vol 15, (2003), pp.211-228.

[70] Keblusek, Marika, 'The Embassy of Art: Diplomats as Cultural Brokers' in Keblusek, Marika and Noldus, Badeloch Vera (eds.), *Double Agents: Cultural and Political Brokerage in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2011), p.25.

approaches to this topic.[71] He acknowledged the importance of Garrett's work, but proposed a broader interpretation of diplomatic activity. This willingness to expand our perception of diplomacy and explore a wider range of occasions where it conceivably occurred has been picked up and developed by Helen Jacobsen in *Luxury and Power, The Material World of the Stuart Diplomat* (2011).[72] Writing primarily about the later Stuart age, she argues that women played a crucial if overlooked role within diplomatic households. Far from being mere 'housekeepers', ambassadors' wives were increasingly called upon to gather information and local intelligence and maintain the appropriate social environment in which political negotiations could occur. She underlines the significance of embassies as places of 'cosmopolitan convergence and international politics' and concludes that 'the ambassador's wife was at the centre of it all'.[73] Equally important is a collection of essays edited by Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben, *The Politics of Female Households* (2013).[74] One of the authors' central propositions is that the period witnesses the emergence of a new-found confidence among women associated with political settings such as embassies, acting as intermediaries, translators, recipients of petitions and patrons. As Cynthia Fry states, in her contribution to the book, 'Perceptions of Influence', by already being prominent figures at court and within embassies, women 'were aptly suited to the unofficial and covert inner-workings' of Stuart diplomacy.[75] Interest in where female political agency might occur, particularly the ambiguous cross-over between private and public spaces, is also explored in James Daybell's *Women and Politics in Early Modern England* (2004). Daybell and other contributors argue that the ability of women to act across both these spheres afforded them unrivalled opportunities for agency.[76] This, of course, has particular relevance for the ambassadress, who operated as both keeper of the embassy household whilst also enjoying privileged access to Europe's most important power-brokers.

Although much of the focus of recent work on the agency of the ambassadress has concerned periods outside the timeframe or geographical context of this thesis, the topic is clearly

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[71] Watkins, John, 'Toward a New Diplomatic History of Medieval and Early Modern Europe' in *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern* Studies, 38 (2008), pp. 1-14.

[72] Jacobsen Helen, *Luxury and Power, The Material World of the Stuart Diplomat* (Oxford, 2011).

[73] Ibid, pp.54 and 56-57.

[74] Akkerman, Nadine and Houben, Birgit, *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2013).

[75] Fry, Cynthia, 'Perceptions of Influence: the Catholic Diplomacy of Queen Anna and her Ladies, 1601-1604' in Akkerman and Houben, *Politics of Female Households*, p.267.

[76] Daybell, James, *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (Aldershot, 2004).

beginning to gain some scholarly traction. In her book *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome* (2015) Catherine Fletcher notes the growing presence of women in diplomatic households and how 'they sustained the embassy's work'. [77] In an important contribution to the so-called New Diplomacy, *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World* (2017), Tracey Sowerby and Jan Hennings bring together a reassessment of the culture and practices of early modern diplomacy, including the contributions made by women.[78] In his essay, entitled 'Minister-like cleverness, understanding, and influence on affairs' Florian Kühnel focuses specifically on the emerging and polymorphous nature of the ambassadress' role. Kühnel argues the ambassadress could play several crucially important, gendered roles that supplemented the work of her husband, including hosting meetings and receiving foreign representatives in her husband's absence. He concludes that 'ambassadresses acted together with their husbands as well as on their own'.[79] Whilst the focus of his research is the eighteenth century, it offers up the prospect that even in earlier periods, ambassadresses may have been recognised as collaborative partners, exercising gendered skills in networking, mediation and household management for the benefit of the diplomatic mission as a whole. As Sowerby notes in her own contribution to the book: 'ambassadresses helped with household affairs, from financial administration to the choice of the house for the embassy; they hosted courtiers and other ambassadors (and their wives); and their behaviour could help to maintain the honour and dignity of the ambassador and by extension his prince'.[80] She agrees that gender facilitated their role, affording them greater latitude compared to men when navigating the rigid expectations of traditional diplomatic protocols.

The most important new work on the role of the ambassadresses in the Tudor and Stuart periods is Gemma Allen's article, 'The Rise of the Ambassadress' (2019).[81] She argues that the growth of permanent overseas diplomatic households provided wives of ambassadors with unprecedented new opportunities for agency. Far from being spectators, ambassadresses could be key players in diplomatic activity, exploiting their unofficial status to intervene or be the recipient

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[77] Fletcher, Catherine, *Diplomacy in Renaissance Rome: the Rise of the Resident Ambassador* (Cambridge, 2015), p.98.

[78] Sowerby, Tracey and Hennings, Jan (eds.), *Practices of Diplomacy in the Early Modern World c. 1410–1800* (London, 2017).

[79] Kühnel, Florian 'Minister-like cleverness, understanding, and influence on affairs: Ambassadresses in everyday business and courtly ceremonies at the turn of the eighteenth century' in Sowerby and Hennings, *Practices of Diplomacy*, p.440.

[80] Sowerby and Hennings, *Practices of Diplomacy*, p.11.

[81] Allen, Gemma, 'The Rise of the Ambassadress: English Ambassadorial Wives and Early Modern Diplomatic Culture', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 62 (2019), pp.617–638.

of intelligence or gifts that might be too politically sensitive for the King's official representative to accept. Allen argues that their skills in languages and their extensive sociability networks made them perfectly suited for this task, carving out a valuable new role for themselves as brokers of information. She underlines the significance of gift-giving in fostering these bonds, and that items which might be denied to a male ambassador, could comfortably be offered to his female counterpart due to her politically ambiguous status.

The role of ambassadresses and other women travellers as gatherers of valuable information in the service of foreign relations is also gathering interest among researchers. In an essay for *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (2011) entitled 'Gender, politics and diplomacy', James Daybell argues that though excluded from formal positions within diplomacy, women were nevertheless at the centre of extensive sociability networks.[82] Their friendship and familial ties were just as useful to the state and became 'integral to the lubricating of socio-political relations'.[83] Gender could gainfully be used to their advantage, allowing women to operate 'below the radar of surveillance'.[84] Outside diplomatic circles and in the murky world of espionage, interest in gendered intelligence-gathering is also growing. Recent works such as Stephen Alford's *The Watchers* (2012) or Nadine Akkerman's *Invisible Agents* (2018) have served to emphasise how expansive early modern intelligence networks were.[85] In some instances, as Akkerman suggests, women were an essential element in these operations. The playwright Aphra Benn is perhaps the best-known example of a female spy from the period, who worked out of Antwerp for the English government during the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665). However, the role of women in gathering news and intelligence earlier in the Stuart or even Elizabethan ages is less well understood. Travel afforded unrivalled opportunities to gather information from the frontline, and women, who were less suspected of undercover activity, were even better placed to do so.

Our understanding of what constitutes early modern diplomacy has moved on significantly since Mattingly's seminal work. There is a growing sense that political agency occurred in both public and private spheres and took on a variety of forms. Women were crucial in the exercise of this agency, although the precise nature and extent of their involvement remains unclear. Careful

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[82] Daybell, James, 'Gender, Politics and Diplomacy: Women, News and Intelligence Networks in Elizabethan England' in Adams, R. and Cox, R. (eds.) *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke, 2011), p.102.

[83] Ibid, p.102.

[84] Ibid, p.115.

[85] Alford, Stephen, *The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 2012); Akkerman, Nadine, *Invisible Agents: Women and Espionage in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2018).

analysis of references to such activity within the database should help us to identify how the role of the ambassadress grows in prominence and complexity over time.

2.4 Commerce and trade

Fig. 1.1. Van Dyke, Anthony, *The Madagascar Portrait* (c.1639-40). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

The connection between commerce and travel, particularly with regard to women's mobility has received relatively little attention. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a seismic shift in Britain's mercantile ambitions, characterised by the expansion or formation of trading companies like the Merchant Adventurers, the Muscovy Company (1555) and the East India Company (1600). Together they helped to establish staple towns and trading communities on the Continent that became a haven for English traders, and their families. Antoni Maczak's classic work *Travel in Early Modern Europe* (1978) helped to reconfigure debates, challenging the view that travel was an exclusively recreational event enjoyed by highly-cultured and wealthy elites, and arguing that it was pursued by a far wider section of society as a result of the expansion of international commerce.[86]

[86] Maczak, Antoni, *Travel in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1978).

Maczak examined the experiences not just of the privileged and powerful, but also those marginal players whose roles are less well documented. Among them were the chaperones, the innkeepers, the factors and merchants, indeed all those who together helped to facilitate travel. In addition, he further extended the geographical parameters of travel history to include travellers to his Polish homeland and parts of Eastern Europe, then still under Communist control. Paradoxically, in spite of Maczak's desire to provide a broader socio-economic exploration of travel, his book contained only a short section on travel by women, due, he argues, to the inherent 'misogyny' of the early modern period and the fact that 'she is not mentioned in the sources'.[87]

More recent works have come closer to examining the gendered dimensions to international commerce and trace. In *The Web of Empire* (2008) Alison Games examined the social impact of global trade and cosmopolitanism on English merchants and explorers during the early modern era.[88] She argued that compared to their European counterparts, English merchants, travellers and diplomats were especially adept at forging sociability networks that facilitated commercial expansion. These 'webs' explain the ease with which English travellers were able to extend their international reach and lay the foundations for British imperial expansion in the modern era. Sadly, the primary focus of her work is the part played by men in this. As Games puts it, 'there is insufficient evidence to speculate in any systematic way on the experience of women travelers in this period'.[89]

The contribution made by female elites to the development of international commerce is foregrounded in a valuable new collection of essays edited by Nandini Das, entitled *Lives in Transit in Early Modern England* (2022).[90] Reviewing the commercial interests of the Countess of Arundel, Lauren Working, one of the book's contributors, highlights the fact it was not uncommon for women to invest in commercial enterprises, noting that her sister Elizabeth held shares in the Virgina Company and that other female contemporaries such as Katherine, Lady Conway, expressed a keen interest in overseas ventures. The Countess' own ambitious plans to colonise Madagascar were celebrated in a famous Van Dyck portrait commissioned to commemorate her involvement (Fig. 1.1) where, as Working notes, 'it is the countess who holds the compass so essential to

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[87] Ibid, p.144.

[88] Games, Alison, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford, 2008).

[89] Games, *The Web of Empire*, p.37.

[90] Das, Nandini (ed.) *Lives in Transit in Early Modern England: Identity and Belonging* (Amsterdam, 2022).

navigation'.[91] Similarly, Katie Hickman's *She-Merchants, Buccaneers, and Gentlewomen* (2019) explores the impact of women in shaping the regulations governing overseas trading companies.[92] She examines the part played by Maryam Towerson, wife of an East India Company captain, who helped fund some of the organisation's early trading missions. Towerson's financial involvement strengthened her hand when it came to calling for the rights of women like herself to accompany their husbands when travelling and living abroad.

Broadening the geographical parameters of study has afforded opportunities for exploring women's mobility in new contexts. Amrita Sen's essay 'Travelling Companions: Women Trade and the Early East India Company' (2015) examines the agency of English women living in Mughal India.[93] She argues that in the more conservative cultural climate of the region, female partners could sometimes find it far easier to gain access to the courts of ruling elites and form sociability networks with their daughters and wives by virtue of the fact they were women. In common with diplomacy, women associated with overseas trade and commerce encountered new opportunities for involvement in the work of their partners. Women might be called upon to liaise with local people in the procurement of goods and services, or gather information that helped increase the profitability of the enterprise. Women associated with northern European commercial households feature readily in the database, but the nature and extent of their involvement in commercial activity remains to be explored.

Recent work exploring the connection between commerce and intellectual exchange is helping to expand our understanding of the nature of early modern mobility. Paul Arblaster's ground-breaking *Antwerp and the World: Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of Catholic Reformation* (2004) showcased the importance of certain Northern European towns as centres not just of commerce but cultural and information exchange, though sadly his work overlooked the role of women in these activities.[94] Lisa Jardine's *Going Dutch* (2008) highlighted the role of transnational family networks in facilitating not only trade but the free exchange of material culture and ideas.[95] Most recently, Stephen Alford's *London's Triumph: Merchant*

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[91] Working, Lauren, 'Aletheia Howard, Countess of Arundel (1585–1654)' in Nandini *Lives in Transit*, p.92.

[92] Hickman, Katie, *She-Merchants, Buccaneers, and Gentlewomen. British Women in India* (London, 2019).

[93] Sen, Amrita in 'Travelling Companions: Women Trade and the Early East India Company' in *Genre*, 48 (2015), pp.193-214.

[94] Arblaster, Paul, *Antwerp and the World: Richard Verstegan and the International Culture of Catholic Reformation* (Leuven, 2004).

[95] Jardine, Lisa, *Going Dutch. How England Plundered Holland's Glory* (London, 2008).

Adventurers and the Tudor City (2017) and John Guy's biography of Sir Thomas Gresham, *Gresham's Law* (2019) have confirmed the cosmopolitanism of members of the English mercantile classes at this time.[96] Significantly, both authors hint at the role of female partners in cultivating transnationalism as well as the value they attached to material culture in projecting their growing status as partners in commercial enterprises. Alford notes that Lady Gresham regularly accompanied her husband on business trips to the Low Countries, whilst Guy draws attention to the portraits the couple commissioned by Anthony Mor (c.1560-5), one of Europe's leading portrait artists as an indicator of their increasing social ambitions.[97] In common with ambassadresses, wives of merchants and traders were clearly a much more visible presence among overseas communities than has until recently been recognised. A reevaluation of their importance as channels for material culture and ideas is clearly overdue and something which this thesis can help to address.

2.5 Religious exile

The association between travel by women and religious exile has a long historiographical tradition, which can be traced back to important antiquarian works such as Adam Hamilton's, *Chronicle of English Augustinian Canonesses* (1904-6) and Peter Guilday's *The English Catholic Refugees* (1914).[98] More recent work into medieval travel, in particular relating to pilgrimage, provides some useful transferable methodologies when considering women's mobility in the early modern age. In *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England* (2000), Susan Morrison examines the gendered dimensions of medieval pilgrimage, exploring the associations between female health and travel as well as public perceptions of women pilgrims in art and literature.[99] In another fascinating contribution to the debate, Caroline Barron's *Pilgrim Souls: Margery Kempe and Other Women Pilgrims* (2004) has attempted to identify itineraries and destinations which particularly appealed to

[96] Alford, Stephen, *London's Triumph: Merchant Adventurers and the Tudor City* (London, 2017); Guy, John, *Gresham's Law: The Life and World of Queen Elizabeth I's Banker* (London, 2019).

[97] Alford, *London's Triumph*, pp.59-60; Guy, *Gresham's Law*, p.140. Guy estimated that together they made more than 40 trips.

[98] Hamilton, Adam, *Chronicle of English Augustinian Canonesses* (London, 1904-6); Guilday, Peter, *The English Catholic refugees on the continent 1558-1795* (London, 1914).

[99] Morrison, Susan Signe, *Women Pilgrims in Late Medieval England. Private Piety as a Public Performance* (Abingdon, 2000).

women.[100] Similarly, Einat Klafter has argued in 'Margery Kempe's pilgrimage to Rome as an imitatio Birgittae' (2019) that Kempe's journey was a deliberate attempt to reenact an earlier one undertaken by her heroine St Bridget of Sweden, raising the question of whether comparable gendered journeys are discernible from the evidence of the database. Laura Kalas and Laura Varnam's *Encountering The Book of Margery Kempe* (2021) draws together new assessments both of the writings of Kempe and ways of viewing her journeys.[101] In particular, Susan Maddock's contribution, 'Margery Kempe's hometown and worthy kin' along with Anthony Bale and Daniela Giosuè's, 'A women's network in fifteenth century Rome' underline the importance of domestic and international networks in facilitating the experiences of women travellers.[102]

The religious turmoil caused by the Reformation curtailed the frequency of pilgrimage, but clearly did not dampen the willingness of women to travel overseas for reasons of religious conscience. Christina Garrett's *The Marian Exiles* (1966) catalogued the lives of nearly 800 English Protestants who fled to the Continent in the mid-sixteenth century to escape persecution under Queen Mary.[103] Garrett identified at least 125 women amongst the fugitives, most notably Catherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk (1519-80), who became a focal point for English Protestants living in exile in Germany.[104] Among the sources used were references to these travellers in contemporary printed literature, including 'The Most Rare and Excellent History of the Dutchess of Suffolk' published in Thomas Evans' *Old Ballads* (1784). References such as this raise important questions about the way in which women's journeys were depicted in popular printed literature of the time, something that will be considered in Chapter 4.

Protestant and non-conformist communities overseas are the focus of Keith Sprunger's magisterial work, *Dutch Puritanism* (1982), which identities around 40 English-speaking reformist congregations scattered across the United Provinces in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[105] Drawing on local records such as Church registers and published sermons, Sprunger presented not

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[100] Barron, Caroline, *Pilgrim Souls: Margery Kempe and Other Women Pilgrims* (Confraternity of St James, 2004).

[101] Kalas, Laura and Varnam, Laura, *Encountering The Book of Margery Kempe* (Manchester, 2021).

[102] See Maddock Susan, 'Margery Kempe's hometown and worthy kin' and Bale, Anthony and Giosuè, Daniela, 'A women's network in fifteenth century Rome: Margery Kempe encounters Margaret Florentyne' in Kalas and Varnam, *The Book of Margery Kempe*, pp.163-204.

[103] Garrett, Christina, *The Marian Exiles, A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism* (Cambridge,1966).

[104] Ibid, pp.32 and 50.

[105] Sprunger, Keith L., *Dutch Puritanism, A History of English and Scottish Churches in the Netherlands* (Leiden, 1982).

only a rich picture of the daily lives of reformist exiles, but also the interconnectedness of Anglo-Dutch communities at this time. However, the historiography of Protestant and Dissenting exile remains dominated by patriarchal narratives. Champlin Burrage's *Early English Dissenters* (1912) is invaluable in helping us to identify the names of women who formed part of overseas communities of reformist exiles, but their role is incidental and briefly recorded. Mable Richmond Brailsford's landmark *Quaker Women* (1915) foregrounded the agency of dissenting women, among them Mary Fisher who travelled to Smyrna in 1657 with 2 other women to convert the Turkish 'Grand Seignior', but little comparable work has, at least until recently, been conducted on Protestant women travellers or exiles of the later Tudor or early Stuart eras.[106] The significance of women such as Alice Stubbs (d.1617), sister of the controversialist John Stubbs and wife of the Puritan preacher Thomas Cartwright, who lived overseas with her husband until 1585 and appears to have played an active role in supporting his ministry, still await their time in the sun. The most significant modern champion of this group has been Stefano Villani, who has published a fascinating series of articles on English evangelical activity in the Mediterranean among them 'I quaccheri contro il Papa' (1998).[107] Villani's research highlights the benefits of using local archival material in understanding indigenous perspectives on English travellers. His use of Italian inquisitorial records provide a fresh perspective on the activities of two Quaker missionaries, Sarah Cheevers and Katharine Evans, who until previously had been known largely through letters and accounts of their experiences published as *A short relation of some of the cruel sufferings (for the truths sake) of Katharine Evans and Sarah Cheevers…* (1662). The focus of these studies again is the latter part of the seventeenth century, but once more reveals the value of a pan-European approach to the study of mobility and closer analysis of local sources to challenge traditional perceptions of travel by women.

Work on religious exile has furnished us with some of the most valuable new avenues of research into women's mobility. Katy Gibbons' *English Catholic Exiles in Late Sixteenth-Century Paris* (2011) has sought to complicate our understanding of exile and explore the way in which English Catholic communities worked alongside foreign governments and actively contributed to religious and political culture though activities such as patronage and printing.[108] More recently, in her essay 'Religious and Family Identity in Exile' (2014) she has examined the way in which

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[106] Brailsford, Mabel Richmond, *Quaker Women, 1650-1690* (London, 1915).

[107] Villani, Stefano, 'I quaccheri contro il Papa: Alcuni pamphlet inglesi del '600 tra menzogne e verità' in Studi Seicenteschi, Vol 38, (1998), pp.165-202.

[108] Gibbons, Katy, *English Catholic Exiles in Late Sixteenth-Century Paris* (Woodbridge, 2011).

female exile was deliberately misrepresented by the authorities.[109] Gibbons argues that the famous flight of the Countess of Northumberland and her associates to the Continent in the aftermath of the Northern Rebellion (1569), was primarily motivated by conscience. Her decision to live overseas was portrayed 'as a sign of her obduracy and rebellious nature' rather than a true desire to pursue her Catholic faith freely abroad.[110] Gibbons' work reminds us once more of the pertinency of contemporary perceptions of women's travel and how they have been used to shape historiographical narratives.

One of the most important new approaches to the study of religiously motivated travel has been proposed by Liesbeth Corens. In *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe* (2018), Corens argues that conventional notions of religious exile are too circumscribed and ignore the dynamism of religiously motivated migration.[111] She prefers the term 'confessional mobility' rather than 'exile', which has inherently negative connotations, and argues that those who travelled abroad were not necessarily victims of persecution, but individuals who often consciously chose to move abroad. Likewise, she seeks to overturn the perception exiles were remote and isolated, but that through extensive communication networks and the freedom of movement they enjoyed, they were able to exercise considerable agency. Material culture could sometimes help to cement the connections between disparate communities and in another pertinent article, 'Saints beyond borders: relics and the expatriate English Catholic Community' (2014) Corens demonstrates how the acquisition and exchange of relics, often brought from England to the Continent, helped to forge links between exiles as well as providing additional clues to the locations of their hubs.[112] Relics she argues had a long tradition of mobility and 'that inherent potential for mobility gave shape to a community that was scattered all across Europe'.[113] The movement and exchange of material culture may well prove reap further results in tracking the itineraries of other communities of overseas residents and exiles, especially where the documentary trail is thin on the ground.

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[109] Gibbons, Katy, 'Religious and Family Identity in Exile: Anne Percy, Countess of Northumberland in the Low Countries' in Waite, Gary K., *Exile and Religious Identity, 1500-1800* (London, 2014), pp.39-50.

[110] Ibid, p.42.

[111] Corens, Liesbeth, *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation Europe* (Oxford, 2018).

[112] Corens, Liesbeth, 'Saints beyond borders: relics and the expatriate English Catholic Community' in Waite, *Exile and Religious Identity*, pp.25-38.

[113] Corens, 'Saints beyond borders', p.97.

This more positive assessment of the agency of refugees and exiles is gaining traction with other historians. Diego Pirillo in *The Refugee Diplomat* (2018) argues emigrés working in partnership with official overseas representatives were 'dynamic actors in the transformation of European society', often serving as brokers of information in tandem with conventional diplomatic channels.[114] Lauren Working (2022) argues that living abroad as part of the Spanish court and communicating freely with Catholic dissidents across the Continent afforded Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria (1538–1612) far greater agency than she had enjoyed within the household of Mary Tudor.[115] It is also worth underlining that such agency was not always hell-bent on subverting the state. As the work of Katy Gibbons and others noted above has shown, far from fomenting religious dissent, English overseas recusants focused their energies on gaining acceptance within mainstream religious and political life. In summary, perceptions of religious exile are being reappraised by historians. The motives for confessional mobility and the contributions made by refugees to their adopted communities are being reevaluated. Central to this debate is the nature and scale of female agency in this process.

2.6 'Imagined' and literary travel

The late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw an outpouring of new types of travel literature in response to growing interest in overseas travel and exploration. Among the most popular forms were the instructional guides focused on preparing the traveller for later public service known collectively as *ars apodemica*. Justin Stagl's *History of Curiosity* (1995) is a core work in this field, attempting to rationalise the different elements of this complex genre.[116] Stagl argued that such guides emerged in the wake of declining interest in pilgrimage and a parallel growth in the merits of acquiring of knowledge. Curiosity gained social acceptance and *ars apodemica* were intended as a helpful aid to travellers in knowing what questions to ask about the sites they visited and how to record and rationalise the information they gathered.

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[114] Pirillo, Diego, *The Refugees Diplomat: Venice, England and the Reformation* (Ithaca and London, 2018), p.3.

[115] Working, Lauren, 'Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria (1538–1612)' in Das, Nandini (ed.) *Lives in Transit in Early Modern England: Identity and Belonging* (Amsterdam, 2022), pp. 26–34.

[116] Stagl, Justin, *History of Curiosity: The Theory of Travel 1550-1800* (London, 1995).

Many of the works itemised by Stagl have become more readily available through newly published collections and digitalisation projects such as *Early English Books Online*. The relevance for students of women's travel may initially seem minimal as important recent contributions attest, notably Karl Enekel's *Artes Apodemicae and Early Modern Travel Culture* (2019) or Elizabeth William's useful chapter 'Fishing after News and the *Ars Apodemica*' in Raymond and Moxham's *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (2016).[117] Although *ars apodemica* are relentlessly male in their focus, they raise important questions about whether comparable literature did exist for women travellers, given the enormous increase in women's travel at the same time. Are these guides entirely silent on the relationship between women and travel and can anything be extrapolated from the few passing references that exist, such as the moral benefits of women accompanying husbands overseas to ensure marital vows could be upheld?

If the *ars apodemica* seem frustratingly bereft of references to women's travel, other genres of popular literature appear to be more forthcoming. Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michele Willems' *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (1996) explores the depiction of travellers in works like Ben Jonson's *Eastward Ho* (1605) as well as lesser-known plays such as *The Travels of Three English Brothers* (1607).[118] The authors explain how such works helped to shape public perception of travel and frame narratives about overseas experiences. They leave open the use of texts which specifically reference women travellers such as Middleton's, *No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's* (c.1611) which literally places them centre stage in the drama. More recently, Patricia Akhimie and Bernadette Andrea in *Travel & Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World* (2019) refer to a growing interest in women's travel in plays and other forms of performance from the period but acknowledge the 'gendered lacunae' in research in this area, which will be explored in Chapter 4.[119]

The work of Andrew Hadfield has done much to pioneer new methodologies for using contemporary literature to explore societal responses to early modern mobility. In works such as *Amazons, Savages and Machiavels* (2001) and *Literature, Travel and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance* (2007), he argues that travel narratives can be held up as mirrors to the social

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[117] Enekel, Karl, *Artes Apodemica and Early Modern Travel Culture* (Leiden, 2019); Williamson, Elizabeth, 'Fishing after News' and the Ars Apodemica: The Intelligencing Role of the Educational Traveller in the Late Sixteenth Century' in Raymond, Joad and Moxham, Noah (eds.) *News Networks in Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2016), pp. 542–62.

[118] Maquerlot, Jean-Pierre and Willems, Michele, *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge, 1996).

[119] Andrea, Bernadette (eds.), *Travel & Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World* (Nebraska, 2019), p.2.

and ethical concerns of Tudor and Stuart society.[120] In his view, travel writing 'often possessed a political content … [and was] … frequently caught up in the turbulent political history within which they were produced'.[121] Sadly, in common with previous authors, when he addresses the response to travel by women, he concludes the volume of material available is insufficient to make any significant comments: 'There are, so far as I know, virtually no records of women travellers'.[122]

The benefits of interdisciplinary approaches to the study of mobility are particularly well demonstrated by R.C.Bald's masterful book *Donne and the Drurys* (1959).[123] Superficially, this is a literary biography, exploring the relationship between the metaphysical poet turned priest, John Donne and his patron Sir Robert Drury, but Bald's use of previously unpublished correspondence in the archives of Chicago University, coupled with evidence from Donne's known literary output, provided fascinating new insights into a nine-month European tour the poet made in the company of Sir Robert and his wife Anne Drury between 1611-12. Bald's skills as a literary historian exposed the complex interrelationship between the three travellers, and the centrality of Anne as an intermediary between the English travellers and the Europeans they encountered along the way.

One of the most innovative new approaches towards the history of travel has been to explore it from the perspective of an imagined than an actual experience. Leading the way are Jaś Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés in their collection of essays, *Voyages and Visions: Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (1999).[124] Drawing on the skills of a diverse range of scholars from literary historians to anthropologists, across a variety of historical and geographical settings, the authors explore the persistent disparity between the processes of travel and its depiction in travel literature. Similarly, Chloe Chard in *Transports: Travel, Pleasure and Imaginative Geography* (1996) argues that studies into the history of travel should move beyond the convention of asking what was encountered to the more complex question of how it was encountered.[125] In Chard's view, the actual experience of travel, and the traveller's perception of it, what she calls the 'imaginative geography', are often two

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[120] Hadfield, Andrew, *Amazons, Savages and Machiavels: Travel and Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630: An Anthology* (Oxford, 2001); Hadfield, Andrew, *Literature, Travel and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance*, 1545-1625 (Oxford, 1998).

[121] Hadfield, *Travel and Colonial Writing*, p.2.

[122] Hadfield, *Amazons, Savages and Machiavels*, p.2.

[123] Bald, R.C., *Donne and the Drurys* (Cambridge, 1959).

[124] Elsner, Jas and Rubiés, Joan-Pau (eds.), *Voyages and Visions. Towards a Cultural History of Travel* (London, 1999).

[125] Chard, Chloe, *Transports: Travel, Pleasure and Imaginative Geography, 1600-1830* (New Haven and London, 1996).

entirely different entities.[126] The idea is developed further by Susan Lamb in *Bringing Travel Home to England* (2009), which examines the interplay between travel and popular literature, and how common gendered tropes associated with romantic literature were used to describe and explain the experiences of the traveller.[127] Rosemary Sweet's *Cities and the Grand Tour* (2012) goes further by contesting that the study of travel is as much about the perception of people as the places visited.[128] She argues that at least in the eighteenth century travel was a largely urban experience, and English visitors to cities like Rome and Naples judged them by the standards of urban life they were familiar with back home. Although the focus of these latter authors is on the eighteenth century, by drawing upon a wider variety of travel accounts and documents, many of which place fresh emphasis on the female experience, they provide a valuable methodology which could be transposed to the Elizabethan and Stuart eras.

3. Where does this thesis fit in the debates?

The Grand Tour casts a long shadow over the historiography of travel, leading to a skewered belief that early modern mobility was an exclusively male preserve while women travellers like the Countess of Arundel were curious exceptions. The central purpose of this thesis is to reposition women's travel more centrally within scholarly debate. Up until very recently, historians of travel have largely viewed it through the prism of male encounters leading to a distorted perception that for women it was largely an imagined or even imaginary experience. However, the evidence of 2,227 journeys made by women recorded in the database would suggest the reverse. Between the late sixteenth and the first decades of the seventeenth centuries, women were travelling overseas with ever greater frequency and for an increasingly complex variety of reasons, ranging from highly personal motives connected with health or religious conscience to travel by association within military, commercial or diplomatic households.

This thesis aims to address a number of significant gaps in our understanding of women's travel revealed by the historiographical survey. Firstly, the absence of a database which brings together instances of both secular and religious travel. Previous registers of travellers, such as those

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[126] Ibid, p.20.

[127] Lamb Susan, *Bringing Travel Home to England: Tourism, Gender and Imaginative Literature* (Newark, 2009).

[128] Sweet, Rosemary, *Cities and the Grand Tour: The British in Italy, c.1690-1820* (Cambridge, 2012).

developed by Garrett and Woolfson have provided an invaluable starting point, but their focus has been too narrow and, with the exception of the QMUL website *Who were the nuns?,* their primary concern has been male travellers. Secondly, the chronological focus of this new database will be the latter years of the Tudor era and the beginnings of the Stuart age (1558-1630), a period largely uncovered by previous research. The manner in which this database has been compiled will be outlined in greater detail in Chapter 2, but it is principal objective will be to challenge the long-held misconception that women rarely travel abroad, and when they did they had little agency or wider social impact.

The scale of the data gathered will enable us, as shall be demonstrated in Chapter 3, to make far more accurate conclusions about the nature and variety of women's travel than previously supposed. This will include a more detailed understanding of the processes of female overseas travel, such as the gendered licensing requirements, the times at which women travelled and the size and make-up of travelling parties. It will demonstrate that in spite of all the barriers placed in their way, women were incredibly resilient and resourceful in engineering opportunities to travel abroad, either independently or as part of family households. The data will also enable us to provide a more nuanced understanding of the reasons why women travelled overseas. Until now, much of the literature has discussed confessional exile as a primary opportunity for travel, but evidence provided by diplomatic correspondence and the newly digitised *Remembrancer Records* reveal that women were travelling abroad for a variety of personal and professional reasons as well, among them as partners in commercial activities or accompanying bands of professional soldiers fighting in the United Provinces. Mapping this data will also help us to understand the principal geographical hubs of women's travel and the extent to which professional interests or religious conscience dictated the nature of their itineraries.

Building on the assumption that female overseas travel was far more common than previously acknowledged, Chapter 4 will examine the way in which contemporary writers responded to this new phenomenon. It challenges the trope that women's travel was uniformly condemned and argues that contemporary correspondence and printed literature reveals a growing acknowledgement of this new reality. Whilst some authors such as Jerome Turler and the Protestant sermoniser Joseph Hall remained diametrically opposed to all notions of female overseas travel, in other quarters there is a detectable change in tone. For instance, in some works of popular literature the notion of independent travel by women was clearly recognisable to contemporary audiences. Similarly, the issue of whether its was morally appropriate for women to accompany partners on long-distance expeditions surfaces as an issue at this time, one which the directors of overseas

trading companies would grapple with. Cross-referencing changes of opinions in the literary record against fluctuations in patterns of movement revealed by the database, will show that changes in social attitudes were in line with the increase in numbers of women travelling abroad.

Hearing the authentic voices of women is a recurring challenge of early modern feminist history, as Suzannah Lipscomb points out in her recent essay ‘How can we recover the lost lives of women?’ (2021).[129] Not only have elite women been silenced for centuries by patriarchal narratives, but the voices of ordinary women, often illiterate who left few recorded traces of their lives and who ‘appear to us, only fleetingly, through the eyes of others’ seem impossibly difficult to hear.[130] However, by adopting some of the best new methodological practices such as reading ‘against the grain’ or pursuing an interdisciplinary and interconnected approach to the evidence that survives we can go some way towards restoring the experiences of women to their rightful place within the history of travel. Though limited in number, first-hand accounts of women's travel from this period do survive but have been sidelined by earlier historians shaped by the Grand Tour mind set. Correspondence, newsletters and even male accounts read against the grain, open the door to an understanding of the female response to travel that has until now been largely ignored. Additionally, the correspondence which survives between women who had first-hand experience of continental travel and women in their sociability networks constrained to remain at home, reveals a deep-seated interest in mobility that has been previously underestimated.

One of the principal side effects of this new mobility was the greater agency that it afforded women. Chapter 5 and 6 will use two richly documented examples of women's travel to illustrate how the experience of living abroad permitted women to challenge domestic conventions regarding their traditional roles and involve themselves in activities that were normally considered solely male preserves. Building on the work of previous historians, notably Corens, it will show how even in period before the focus of her work, Spa provided a uniquely accessible arena in which women could perform a range of roles normally denied them, among them gathering and exchanging information vital to the state. Likewise, the well-documented but largely overlooked role of the early modern ambassadors' wife, the so-called ambassadress will allow us to explore in greater complexity the new opportunities travel was presenting women. The role of the ambassadress was still in its infancy, and intelligent, highly-cultured women like Lady Carleton, wife of the much better-known English ambassador to Venice and The Hague, Sir Dudley Carleton, were aware that

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[129] Lipscomb, Suzannah, ‘How can we recover the lost lives of women’ in *What is History Now?* (London, 2021), pp.178-196.

[130] Ibid, p.178.

prolonged time spent abroad and their status as wives of the most senior overseas representatives of their countries, afforded unparalleled opportunities for agency. They forged new roles for themselves as deputies and intermediaries, as well as a new reputation as sophisticated connoisseurs, who deployed gifting and patronage in the service of the state and those within their kinship circles. Further to this, these chapters will attempt to lift the lid on the lives of marginal women within elite travelling households, such as ladies-in-waiting or wives of secretaries, and the extent to which travel afforded them additional agency and opportunity for self advancement.

In short, this thesis aims to challenge the narrative of historians of travel characterised by the comments of Maczak or even more recently Hadfield, who for too long have advanced the narrative that 'she' does not appear in the sources by the construction of a database that conclusively and overwhelmingly demonstrates she does. Through a combination of extensive empirical analysis, and the exploration of detailed cases studies it will provide a far-more nuanced and complex understanding of the scope and variety of women's travel than has previously been imagined. Women travelled not just as hapless victims of events outside their control, but for a host of self-initiated reasons both personal and professional. Once abroad, they were in an unrivalled position to challenge the gendered conventions of domestic life and explore new and unparalleled opportunities for agency in traditionally male spheres. The late Tudor and early Stuart eras were a critical time for the evolution of overseas travel, not just for men but more significantly for women whose voices will now be heard as result of this research more loudly and clearly than ever before.

Chapter Two: 'Trotting up and down': constructing a database of women travellers

1. Introduction & historiographical context

Against the dramatically changing political climate outlined in Chapter 1, the numbers of men and women 'trotting up and down' abroad grew in pace and frequency.[131] As noted in the introduction, some attempt has been made by earlier historians to chart the growth of this new social phenomenon, through the construction of databases of travellers, but often they have focused on particular types of travel, regions or timeframes outside the timeframe of this thesis. This chapter sets out to explain how a database of women travellers for the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries has been constructed to plug this gap in our knowledge. In particular, it will explain how perceived limitations in the archival evidence may be addressed by a more joined-up approach towards the available sources. As will be seen, cataloguing instances of travel by women comes with some methodological health warnings. Variations in the quantity of data can easily skew our perception about the scale and nature of journeys undertaken, and issues such as establishing the precise confessional identity of travellers are riddled with difficulties. However, taking all these issues into consideration, it is hoped to be able to show how a foundational new database of women's travel to the European continent has been forged, which will allow scholars to explore the extent and variety of their mobility in far greater complexity than heretofore. A searchable online version of this database, *Wide Wandring Weemen* is now freely available to scholars.

2. Constructing a database of early modern women travellers

Constructing a database of early modern women travellers required a wide-ranging and imaginative approach to the available primary material and secondary sources. The initial phase of research involved the construction of a biographical index, in the style of Ingamells (1997) with biographical entries including maiden names, DOBs and family relationships as well as brief references and citation notes on their travel destinations.[132] Collating *State Papers* along with Church records, as

[131] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.433.

[132] Op. cit.

Antonie (or **Anthony**), **Elizabeth** (1582). Wife of John Anthony 'musician'. Received a licence to travel to Vlissingen (Flushing) on 3 Jul 1624. Travelled with family members, Anne Antonie and John (aged 3) (TNA, E 157/13 folio 22), as well as two sisters, Elizabeth and Abigail Baker. May be the same John Anthony, 'moor and musician' who appeared at the Middlesex Quarter Sessions in Sept 1615 in connection with the theft of cloth and sugar (*London Metropolitan Archives*, LMA MJ/SR/S53, nos. 112, 113).

Gascoigne, **Catherine** (1601-1676). Daughter of Sir John Gascoigne of Barnbow, Yorkshire. Entered Our Lady of Consolation, Cambrai in 1623, professed in 1625 and eventually became abbess in 1629 (*Miscellanea*, VIII, p.1; Bowden, Caroline & Kelly, James, *The English Convents in Exile, 1600-1800. Communities, Culture and Identity* (Farnham, 2013), p.40-1). Catherine appears in a list entitled *The Names of certaine Recusants at St Omer, Malines & Brussells* dated after 1605 (SP 77/7 f.348). A woman named Catherin [sic] Gasgoine is granted a pass to travel to Spa along with Mary Bacon on 12 Aug 1623 (*Acts of the Privy Council* (1623/25), p.79). Her sister Justina, joined the house at Cambrai before becoming prioress of a Paris convent Katy Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles in Late Sixteenth-Century Paris*, Woodbridge (Suffolk, 2011), p.164).

Fig. 2.1. Example entries in the initial biographical index.

well as local history and genealogical sources helped to identify instances of female travel which otherwise might have gone unnoticed. For instance, matching entries in the *King's Remembrancer Records* (E157) with published entries from the *London Metropolitan Archives* provided new biographical details on Elizabeth Anthony (Fig. 2.1), the wife of a black travelling musician along with extended female members of her family.[133] Likewise, entries in the *Catholic Records Society, Miscellanea* series used in combination with lists of recusants contained in the *State Papers* and licences to travel within the *Acts of the Privy Council* for Catherine Gascoigne helped to trace her movements across the Continent along with those in her kinship circle.[134] This interconnected approach to archive and antiquarian material proved to be richly rewarding and shone new light not just on the experiences of individual travelling women but also helped provide fresh insights on those with whom they were associated.

Information from each biographical entry was then further sub-categorised and transferred to a spreadsheet (Fig.2.2), which could then be uploaded to the searchable online database. Key data relating to names, DOBs, destinations were extrapolated along with additional information relating to other towns and cities visited on journeys, time spent abroad, and details on the names of fellow travellers and size of travelling parties. Principal motives for travel were categorised from a selection of diplomatic, health, military, personal, commercial or religious. The religious identity of

[133] TNA, E 157/13 f.22; LMA MJ/SR/S53, nos. 112, 113.

[134] *Miscellanea*, VIII, p.1; TNA, SP 77/7 f.348; *ACP* (1623/25), p.79.

Database of women travellers to Europe, 1558-1630

	Number of journeys	Day	Month	Year	Titled?	Licensed?	Source	Point of arrival or main destination	Country	Year of arrival or 1st recorded abroad	Years abroad	Age on arrival	Motive	Motive - simple version	Religion	Other destinations visited	Accompanied by	Total size of party	Servants?
Archer, Rebecca	1	29	March	1630		Y	TNA, E 157/15 f.79	Dordrecht	Netherlands	1630		21	Personal - to abode	P	Protestant?		Husband, Isack Wyld Archer		
Arne, Dorothy	1	20	September	1621		Y	TNA, E 157/27 f.43	The Hague	Netherlands	1621		21	Servant	C	Protestant?		Alone	1	
Arnfield, Alice	1						Burrage, C, Early English Dissenters, I (1912), p.244	Amsterdam	Netherlands	1607		Unknown	Religious exile	R	Non conformist				
Arnold, Ann	1	10	September	1629		Y	TNA, E 157/14 f.88	Goes (or Gouda)	Netherlands	1629		30	Personal - travelling to abode	P	Protestant?		Husband, Thomas	2	
Arnold, Elizabeth	1	5	May	1621		Y	TNA, E 157/27 f.43	Unknown	Unknown	1621		Unknown	Servant	C	Unknown		Joan & Katheryn Jarvace	3	
Arnolds, Elizabeth	1		June	1621		Y	TNA, E 157/27 f.43	The Hague	Netherlands	1621		24	Servant	C	Protestant?		Alone	1	
Arton, Elizabeth	1	9	June	1626		Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1626), p.4	Unknown	Low Countries	1626		Unknown	Personal - travelling to husband	P	Unknown		Husband and son, John Arton	3	
Arundell, Cycill	1						Who were the nuns?	Lisbon	Portugal	Unknown		Unknown	Nun	R	Catholic				
Arundell, Dorothy	1						Miscellanea, IX, p.176	Brussels	Belgium	1597		27	Nun	R	Catholic				
Arundell, Gertrude	1						Miscellanea, IX, p. 176	Brussels	Belgium	1597		26	Nun	R	Catholic				
Ashfaelis, Elizabeth	1		July	1624		Y	TNA, E 157/13 f.11	Unknown	Netherlands	1624		Unknown	Military wife	M	Protestant?		Alone	1	

Fig. 2.2. Example of spreadsheet underpinning searchable online database.

travellers, either recorded or presumed on the basis of family context or related activities, such as the purpose of their journey, was also categorised. This second phase of the database facilitated statistical analysis of entries, enabling the researcher to sort the data according to certain factors such as time of travel, destination or principal reasons for travelling. From this raw empirical data, wider prosopographical conclusions could be drawn on the nature and extent of women's travel across the period. In addition, the data could be entered into mapping software, to plot the destinations and patterns in the movements of women travellers over time (Figs. 3.7a & b and Figs. 3.8a & b.). Mapping journeys in this way helped to confirm patterns of movement over time, such as the attraction of particular regions of Europe with women of differing confessional identities, or the growth of key destinations like The Hague as a consequence of the arrival of Elizabeth Stuart at the onset of the Thirty Years' War.

In total, 2,227 separate journeys were identified using these techniques, relating to 2075 individual women travelling between 1558 and 1630. A limited number made more than one journey including women such as the Countess of Arundel, who travelled abroad on 2 occasions, in 1613-15 and 1620-23, which are entered as separate journeys. Numerous practical considerations needed to be taken into account in selecting which data should be included in the database. The focus was on English women, although women of other nationalities regularly appear in the archives, such as the foreign wives of travelling merchants and diplomats like the charismatic Leonora Virendeels, wife of the diplomat Sir John Bennet, MP (1553-1627). In addition, the names of Irish and Scottish families often appear in the *King's Remembrancer Records* but these have been excluded to make the quantity of data more manageable. Among them Catherine Mageniss, Countess of Tyrone, wife of Hugh O'Neill, 2nd Earl of Tyrone (c.1550–1616), who accompanied her husband to the Continent during the so-called *Flight of the Earls* in Sept 1607.[135]

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[135] McCavitt, John, *The Flight of the Earls* (Dublin, 2002), p.110.

The timeframe used for this database covers a 72-year period stretching from the start of the reign of Elizabeth I to the first five years of Charles I's reign. There were two principal reasons for focusing on this period. Firstly, to plug a chronological gap in research identified above. Secondly, extending the timeframe into Charles' reign made it possible to identify any fluctuations in women's travel in the immediate aftermath of his predecessor. The early years of Charles' reign witnessed a rationalisation of the licensing process and from 1630 all travellers required either, 'to have their Licence for travel or passport under his Majesties signature' or 'to be signed by one of the principall Secretaries'.[136]

In Europe two systems of dating were in usage during this period, the Julian (Old Style) and Gregorian (New Style) with ten days' difference between the two. For instance, 5 February (O.S.) was 15 February (N.S.). The Old Style system of dating was more popular with Protestant nations like England and Scotland but eventually was dropped in favour of the New Style in common with the rest of continental Europe. For clarity and consistency Old Style dates have been used to create the database as the majority of material relates to English archives. In addition, the tradition of commencing the new year on 25 March (Lady Day), has been ignored, and 1 January has been taken as the starting point of the new calendar year.

Dates of departure have been recorded as the date of issuance as in most cases there was minimal delay between the two. For example, when Lady Carleton received her pass for The Hague on 8 September 1623, barely 11 days later the Earl of Arundel was writing to her husband expressing his sorrow at the loss of her company.[137] Licences recorded in the *King's Remembrancer Records* are thought to be associated with records kept by port authorities, the so-called Port Books, and consequently are likely to provide a more accurate indication of the date of departure, issued as they were shortly after travellers presented themselves prior to embarkation. Where there is no clear date of departure or the absence of a licence, the first date at which an individual appears abroad in either personal or *State Papers* is used. For instance, an entry among the lists of English exiles living overseas includes the name of 'Mr Sheldon of Beelie, his wife' among 'persons of note' living in the Netherlands in 1607.[138]

Inconsistencies in the spelling of surnames occasionally make the process of identifying travellers problematic. Foreign surnames of married English women were frequently phoneticised.

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[136] *APC* (1630-1), p.106.

[137] *APC* (1623/25), p.86; *CSPD* (1623-5), p.81.

[138] TNA, SP 77/ 8 f.418.

Elizabeth Wagner (b.1605), who travelled to the Netherlands in 1621 and 1630, appears variously as Wagginer and Waggenner.[139] Maiden names have been used where information is available in order to distinguish between women who may have travelled either before marriage or as the wives of different partners following the death of a husband. Where no first name is known, individuals are recorded as 'Mistress' or 'Mrs' to provide an indication of age or marital status. Place names were prone to anglicisation. Cities like Vlissingen are transcribed as Flushing, and countries like Sweden as Swethland or Sweathland. It is not always possible to identify with accuracy the destination of travellers. Among the non-specific phrases used in contemporary documents are 'beyond the seas', 'forraigne partes' or 'overseas'.[140] Equally problematic is when the destination is recorded as a geographical area subject to change or interpretation such as the Low Countries or Flanders. To avoid confusion, the modern day names of countries are used, so for example Douai in Flanders is recorded as Douai in France and Antwerp in the Low Countries as Antwerp in Belgium. Some cities, such as Spa, which in the period were within the diocese of the Archbishop of Cologne and by some described as a German town, today resides within Belgium and is recorded as such in the database. Modern place names are used in the database, except where there is a widely accepted norm, such as Louvain for Leuven. Not all place names were instantly recognisable. For instance The Siege or Leaguer appears as a destination alongside some military licences. However, as nearly all of these date from 1629, and relate to travel to the United Provinces, it could be sensibly assumed these refer to the Siege of S-Hertogenbosch, an important counter-offensive undertaken by combined English and Dutch forces against Spain during the Dutch Revolt.

Destinations of women travellers are recorded in two ways. Firstly, the primary destination, in other words the town or city which was the main focus of their journey. Secondly, where known, principal towns and cities which were visited during the journey are also recorded. For example, Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke (1561-1621) spent two years travelling around France, Belgium and the Netherlands between 1614 and 1616. The original and arguably principal motive of her journey was to visit the springs at Spa and so this is recorded in the database as her primary destination. However, during her journey, she also visited among other cities Antwerp, Brussels, Amiens, Nevers and Orleans and so these towns are recorded as secondary destinations.

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[139] TNA, E 157/27 f.43; *APC* (1629/30), p.368.

[140] See for example, Mrs Mabella Griffith, who was granted a licence to travel in on 19 July 1611, 'to pass beyond the seas and live abroad, but not to repair to Rome' (*CSPD* (1611-18), p.61).

3. Sources used to construct the database

3.1 Licences to travel & other official records of migration

The acquisition of a licence to travel was an essential legal requirement for all those travelling overseas at this time, for men and women. Consequently, such licences or 'passes to travel' are the mainstay of the database. Between 1558 and 1630, 258 women were licenced by the Privy Council to travel abroad and another 1,080 by port authorities recorded in the *King's Remembrancer Records*.[141] Little comparable work has been done to catalogue male travel at this time, but John Ghazvinian in *'A certain tickling humour': English travellers 1560-1660* (2003) estimates that in total 1,900 licenses were issued to 'pleasure seekers' between 1560 and 1640, suggesting that nearly 14% were issued to women.[142] The *King's Remembrancer Records* which focuses largely on commercial or military traffic to the Continent, records the names of approximately 12,500 individuals between 1573 (when the records begin) and 1630, revealing that women amount to about 8% of the total. Taking all the sources of evidence we have, it is safe to assume that around 1 in 10 of all licenced travellers to continental Europe across this period were women.

It is worth acknowledging at this point that many of the datasets used for constructing these figures are incomplete and consequently the importance of casting the research net widely to ensure the accuracy of any prosopographical conclusions that are drawn. There are gaps in the Privy Council records between 1582 and 1585 as well as 1602 and 1613, whilst the *Remembrancer Records* begin in 1573 with gaps for the period 1580-1612 and the years 1615, 1626 and 1627. More significantly, early modern travellers for a variety of reasons, were extremely adept at sidelining the official licensing process and relying solely on licences to travel as a source of evidence of their movements risks missing certain groups. Over 800 women in the database, or around 40% of the total, have no licence records. This may be related to the confessional identities of travellers, who knowing their request to travel abroad would be refused chose alternative routes to the Continent. Out of 127 documented journeys to Spa, a destination as we shall see in Chapter 5 strongly associated with confessional exile, only 75 were formally certified by the authorities. Most

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[141] See *APC*, Vols VI-XLVI & TNA, E 157.

[142] Ghazvinian, John, *A certain tickling humour : English travellers, 1560-1660* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Oxford, 2003), p.111.

revealingly, none of the 422 women who travelled abroad to become nuns have licences to travel associated with their journeys.

An additional challenge presented by the licence records is accurately identifying the women to whom they apply. Often entries refer to women in parties simply as 'wife', 'daughter' or 'maid servant' in contrast to men who are normally named in full. In these instances, cross-referencing these individuals against genealogical sources, such *County Visitation Records* from the period can be highly productive. For example, on 24 April 1608, Sir Oliver Butler received a licence to travel, 'for three years to and from the Spa in company with his wife'.[143] Cross-referencing this family name against the *County Visitation Records for Kent* one discovers the identify of Butler's wife, (Anne Barham) and from that her place and date of birth (25 Feb, 1578 in Teston, Kent), marriage (26 Oct 1596, All Hallows, Honey Lane, London) and death (1639, Barham Court, Kent).[144] The couple's journey to the Continent is also picked up by an English government official in Belgium, who notes that Anne and her husband had been in Brussels for 3 weeks, prior to their journey to Spa.[145] Used together, *State Papers*, personal correspondence and genealogical sources can reveal a far more complex picture of travel by women than previously supposed. Even attendants and household staff can be picked out in this way. The identity of women who accompanied the Countess of Arundel on her 1620-3 tour of Europe was previously unknown, but widening the search to include lesser-known manuscript reveals that one of those who travelled with her was Frances Manners (d.1652), daughter of Sir George Manners (1573-1603) and Grace Pierrepoint. An entry in the *Losely Manuscripts* by George Chaworth (c.1568-1639), special envoy to Brussels notes in October 1623, 'my cosen Mis. F. Maners being newly cumd out of Italie wth the Countess of Arundell'.[146] Drawing together evidence from across a variety of sources into a unified database has helped to identify women who until now were shadowy, peripheral figures in the history of travel.

Supplementing the Privy Council records are the aforementioned *Remembrancer Records*, a division of the Royal Exchequer, which includes a register of licences to travel for the period 1573-1677. The records vary in nature from the Privy Council licences, covering a much broader range of motives for travel from commercial and artisanal, to women associated with men in

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[143] *CSPD* (1603-1610), p.424.

[144] Philipot, John, *The Visitation of Kent Taken in the Years 1619-1621* (London, 1898), p.224.

[145] *HMC Downshire*, II, pp. 61-62.

[146] LM/1327/9 transcribed in Kempe, Alfred J. (ed.), *The Loseley Manuscripts, Manuscripts and other rare documents, illustrative of some of the more minute particulars of English history ….* (London, 1836), p.472.

military detachments fighting overseas. The records are surprisingly rich in personal detail. For example, Katherine Deward, a seventeen-year-old servant was granted permission to travel to France in October 1624. She is described as a 'Cooke to Count Mansfield' and may well have been employed by the Count during his 1624 visit to London, whilst on a recruiting mission.[147] In the early 1620s many women were travelling to The Hague to work within the household of Elizabeth Stuart at The Hague. Among them, we find Katharine Durant, 'Servant to a gentlewoman attending on the Queen of Bohemia, at The Hague' and Elizabeth Hall, who was travelling to the same town 'To remaine with Sir John Ashburnham' a key member of Elizabeth's household from around 1622.[148]

Written largely in English with occasional Latin phrases e.g. 'ut uxor', 'ut filia' and 'ut soror' as well as commonly used abbreviations such as vizt (an abbreviation of videlicet - aforementioned) and vrss (or versus - towards), they help establish the relationships between travellers, their destinations and the size of parties. The identities of women travellers are almost without exception recorded with relation to male members of their family, i.e. was the wife, widow, daughter of the male head of the family. Even the identities of servants are usually confirmed in terms of their relationship to the male head of the household. For instance, Marie Ryder (b.1599) travelled to Middelburg in May 1621, 'to be servant to one Mr John Harper dwelling there' or Jane Orton travelling alone to the Netherlands in 1629, listed as 'servant to Mr Neale at Ye Hage'.[149] Although independent travel by women was clearly happening, every effort was made to maintain the patriarchal structures by which it was governed and controlled.

Details on the place of domestic residence along with the destination of travel contained in the *Remembrancer Records* allow us to infer the activities of travellers. For instance, Suzanne Dellanoy is entered in the records as travelling to Amsterdam in May 1629.[150] She travelled with her son and daughter. She also appears in the *Returns of Aliens* where she is listed as the wife of a merchant from Lille in northern France, attending the French Church in Aldgate.[151] The name Dellanoy, or de la Noye etc. is closely associated with the Huguenot community located in the area

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[147] TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

[148] TNA, E 157/13 f.22; TNA, E 157/14 f.88; Akkerman, Nadine, *The Correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia, Volume I, 1603-31* (Oxford, 2015), pp.441 & 895.

[149] TNA, E 157/ 27 f.43; TNA, E 157/14 f.88.

[150] TNA, E 157/14 f.88.

[151] Kirk and Kirk, *Returns of aliens*, p.405.

and centred on the church of St Olave's.[152] A few brief entries in the *Remembrancer Records* furnish us with a vital starting point in connecting women with their wider communities and possible motives for travelling.

Broadly speaking, higher status travellers were likely to apply for a licence to travel via the Privy Council whilst those of more menial status or travelling for professional rather than recreational purposes were registered in the *Remembrancer Records*. One of the few exceptions were wives of officers, who occasionally appear in the *Records*, for example Lady Ann Fagge (b. c.1594-1627), wife of the officer Sir John Proude, who travelled with her husband to Utrecht in 1624 shortly after their marriage, and whose name along with her family and household appears in the *Remembrancer Records*.[153] Sometimes the two sources work hand-in-hand providing new details on journeys overseas by women of differing status. For example, the *Acts* record that on 20 Oct 1629, Diana Cecil, Countess of Oxford (c.1603-54) received a pass to travel to the Low Countries 'to the Earl of Oxford her husband' then serving overseas.[154] Within the *Remembrancer Records* we are able to locate Elizabeth Field, aged twenty-four, who was granted permission to travel 'to the Countess of Oxford' a day later.[155] With her were three other servants Katherin Griffin (age unknown), Sybilla Steevens (25), Elizabeth Barker (36). Correlating entries in this way, provides greater clarity on the nature of travelling parties and casts new light on female household members who would otherwise be absent from view.

The *Acts of the Privy Council* and the *Remembrancer Records* are not the only official records that have been used to compile the database. A range of records connected with early modern travel and migration, many of which have been transcribed have also been used. Among these are *Letters of Denization* and *Acts of Naturalisation*, which help to identify the names of family members living abroad.[156] For example, Clara Raven, who in 1573 had travelled to Flanders described as the widow of Elizabeth I's cook, Edward Wilkinson appears in the *Letters of Denization* for 1579.[157] Below her name is an entry for John Raven, presumably her father, 'born in

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[152] https://www.huguenotsociety.org.uk/blog/peter-de-lannoy-a-southwark-huguenot-in-parliament (last accessed Aug 2022).

[153] TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

[154] *APC* (1629/30), p.155.

[155] TNA, E 157/14 f.88.

[156] See Page, William, *Letters of denization and acts of naturalization for aliens in England, 1509-1603* (Lymington, 1893); Shaw, William Arthur, *Letters of denization and acts of naturalization for aliens in England and Ireland, 1603-1700* (Lymington, 1911).

[157] *APC* (1571-5), p.130; Page, *Letters of Denization*, p.202.

Flanders under the dominion of the Emperor' on 13 May 1544. This suggests that Clara was possibly Flemish herself, following a visit to Europe in the aftermath of her husband's death, she returned to England to seek settled status as a naturalised citizen here. Not all those with offspring born abroad could afford to submit to this process, but where it was used, often among diplomats and military officers, the process provides considerable details about the make-up of travelling households and their domicile abroad.

The administering of the statutory Oath of Allegiance, prior to departure overseas or upon return, provides further detail on the itineraries and religious leanings of travelling women. In 1606, Henry Billingsly and Sir William Romney were issued with a commission specifically to administer the oath to all 'women and children passing the seas at the port of London, with similar commissions for other ports'.[158] Occasionally, women refused to cooperate, necessitating their arrest and the drawing up of a confession. These documents, many of them calendared in the *State Papers*, open up a tantalising window on their activities. Typical of many was Mabella Griffith, wife of Dr John Griffith who had spent 6 years abroad around the Catholic enclave of Malines.[159] On 8 August 1617, she returned to England due to her failing health, but was stopped at Dover by port officials. Her baggage was searched and various items of Catholic paraphernalia including a crucifix and liturgical texts were discovered. To compound matters she refused to take the Oath of Allegiance. Mabella was travelling within an exclusively female party. With her was Dorothy Forman, who had previously sworn an oath, but now refused, Ann Rootes, who had allegedly been to Spa but was also returning home due to ill health and Mary Greene, Ann's servant. As a consequence of their suspicious behaviour the women were imprisoned at Dover until eventually being brought to London for further interrogation. The seriousness of the charges against the women is underlined by the involvement of Archbishop Abbot, who wrote in person to the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports requesting they should be brought to London 'at their own charges for more ready maintenance'.[160] Though unfortunate for the women concerned, the whole incident provides a valuable window onto the identities and activities of unlicensed travellers.

Among the other sources used are *Returns of Aliens* and records of wills. The former provide important links to women connected with international communities of travellers and migrants living in London and other metropolitan districts. They enable us to build up a complex

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[158] 4, Jac. I, part 12 cited in Hotten, John, *The Original Lists of Persons of Quality, 1600-1700. Emigrants, Religious Exiles, Political Rebels* ... (London, 1874), p.157.

[159] *CSPD* (1611-18), pp.61, 479 & 495.

[160] Ibid, p.495.

picture of the interconnectedness between families involved in commerce and trade on both sides of the Channel. Among them, women such as Elizabeth van Dam, who married William, a Flemish 'thread dyer' who attended the Dutch Church in London and subsequently travelled abroad to Vlissingen with him in 1621.[161] Church records sometimes provide incidental evidence of travel by women, such as the parish records of the English churches at Leiden and The Hague or the *Index of Wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*, which occasionally record the names of women such as Margaret Barnard who in 1623 lived 'beyond the seas' or Mary Smyth, 'late servant to the most excellent princess, the Lady Elizabeth, Countess Palatine of the Rheyne' who died in The Hague in 1617.[162]

In summary, cross-referencing conventional licences to travel with other records of migration, allows us not only to identify individual women travellers, but also bring details of their journeys and their motives for travelling more sharply into focus than previously imagined.

3.2 Registers of overseas residents & exiles

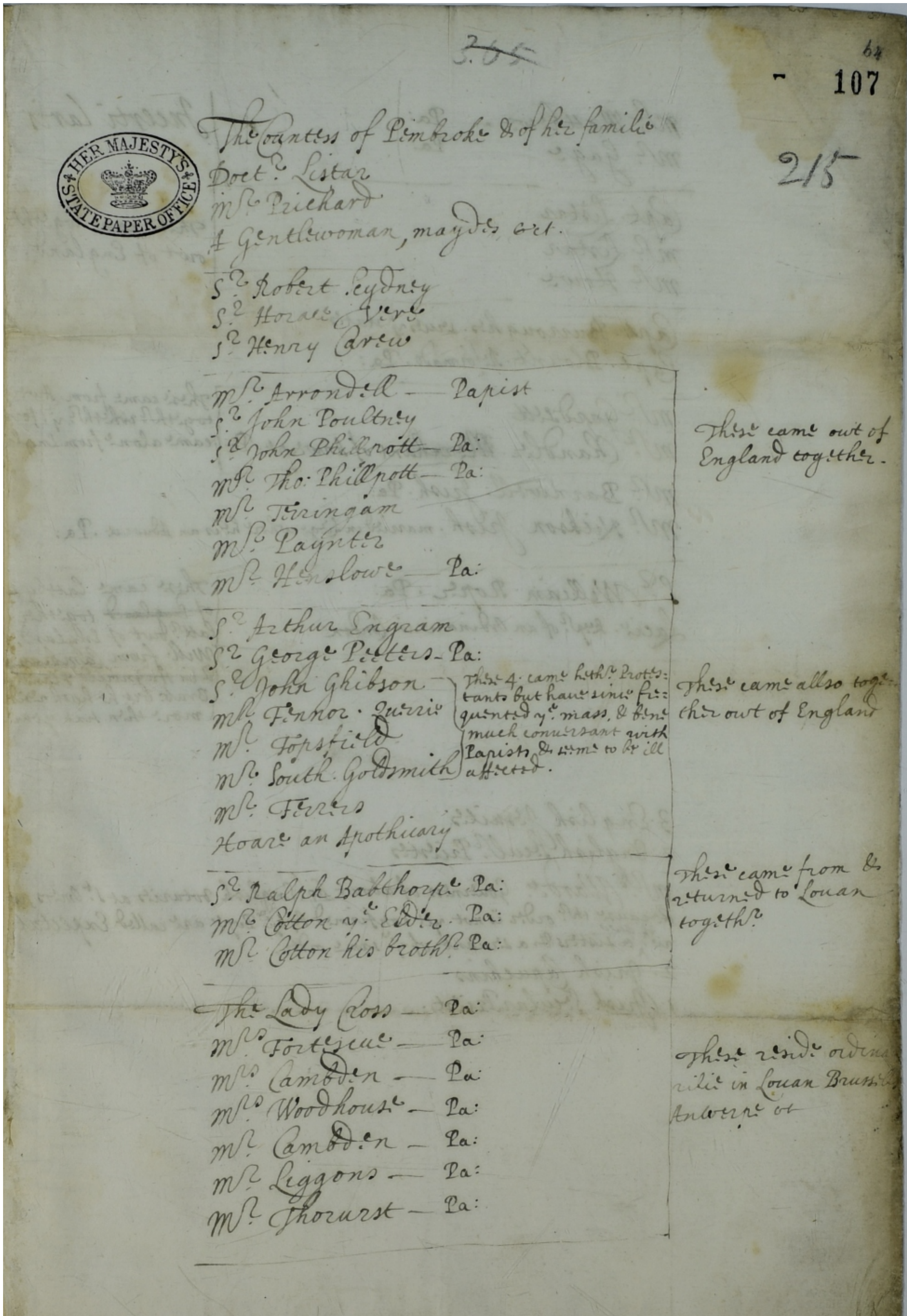
An overlooked but extremely useful source of evidence on early modern mobility is a series of censuses found within the *State Papers* listing the names and locations of English overseas residents and religious exiles (Fig. 2.3). Starting with 'Lists and particulars of licences granted to sundry noblemen and gentlemen to travel beyond the seas' (1573-82) they continue across the period covered by this thesis finishing with 'List of the English seminaries and monasteries in the Provinces of the Netherlands' (1625?).[163] They were probably compiled by diplomatic staff or overseas government informants and contain details of names and often locations and in some cases the religious propensities of the individuals concerned, which do not appear in the traditional licence records. A 'Catalogue of certayn English Catholicks' compiled in 1598 contains dozens of entries of overseas English men and women living in Flanders, France, Germany and Italy.[164] Among those living in Douai, a town strongly associated with Catholic refugees, the compilers

[161] Kirk and Kirk, *Returns of Aliens*, p.187; TNA, E 157/ 27 f.43.

[162] Ernest Hill, R.H., *Index of wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury* (London, 1968); *Index of wills*, VI, 1620-9, p.19; *Index of Wills*, V, 1605-19, p.413.

[163] TNA, SP 12/154 f.9-12 and TNA, SP 16/13 ff.45-6.

[164] TNA, SP 12/269 f.69.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HER MAJESTY'S STATE PAPER OFFICE

The Countess of Pembroke & of her familie
Doct.r Listar
Mr Prichard
4 Gentlewoman, mayds etc.

Sr Robert Sydney
Sr Horace Vere
Sr Henry Carew

Mr Arrondell — Papist
Sr John Poultney
Sr John Phillpott — Pa:
Mr Tho: Phillpott — Pa:
Mr Tiringam
Mr Paynter
Mr Henslowe — Pa:

These came out of England together.

Sr Arthur Engram
Sr George Petters — Pa:
Sr John Ghibson
Mr Fennor · Querrie
Mr Topsfield
Mr South Goldsmith
Mr Ferris
Hoare an Apothicary

These 4 came hither Protestants but have since frequented ye mass, & been much conversant with Papists, & seeme to be ill affected.

These came allso together out of England

Sr Ralph Babthorpe Pa:
Mr Cotton ye Elder Pa:
Mr Cotton his brother Pa:

These came from & returned to Louan together

The Lady Cross — Pa:
Mrs Fortescue — Pa:
Mrs Camden — Pa:
Mrs Woodhouse — Pa:
Mr Camden — Pa:
Mr Liggons — Pa:
Mr Thorurst — Pa:

These reside ordinarilie in Louan Bruss[els] Antwerpe etc

Fig. 2.3. 'List of the English who were at the Spa in July and August 1616, with notes of their residences and of such as are Papists', TNA, SP 14/88 f.107.

found 'divers artisans of sondry trades' including their wives and family members. Among them

were 'Mrs Fowler and hir 2 daughters' and the wife of Doctor Whyte, 'a civilia wife and many chidlrē'. In Brussels, listed as a 'pentioners' presumably of the King of Spain, are 'Radish a gent wife & children', 'Poole a gent wife and childre'. The author of the catalogue has a special entry of 'Wemen in all parts of Flinders', among them Lady Hungerford, Cardinal Allen's sister, Lady Berkeley, Lady Westmoreland, 2 'gentlewomen of the Pooles', Mrs Tyrell, Mrs Giles Sr Edward Stradling's sister.[165] The catalogue extends as far afield as Germany, where Mrs Norton lived at Frankfurt with her family. Aside from providing valuable details on the names of foreign residents, it also helps us to build up a picture of the socialisation networks they might be associated with based on their location.

Lists continued during the reign of James, as the establishment of new permanent diplomatic residencies coupled with extensive government spy networks made it possible to gather greater information. A list entitled 'Names of certaine Recusants at St Omer, Malines and Brussells' is likely to date from the summer 1606 as it includes the name of Lady Lovel (née. Mary Roper, 1564-1628), who we know from other correspondence in *HMC Salisbury* and *HMC De L'Isle* was living abroad by this time.[166] This list was shortly supplemented by another in 1607, targeting English exiles who were thought to be receiving Spanish pensions entitled 'The Names of such persons of note as live in the Provinces of the Netherlands, under the King of Spaines obedience being his Majesties Subjects'.[167] Among women mentioned were 'Mr Edmond Nevell, pretended Earle of Westmerland, wth his Lady … Sr Thomas Leeds, his Lady, The Lady Lovel, The Lady Didgby, widdow of Sr Everard Digby, Sir Edward Eston, his Lady…Mis Worthinton, Mr Sheldon of Beelie, his wife'. Many of these women were associated with the Gunpowder plotters, and so fled abroad in order to protect themselves from prosecution. However, many like Lady Lovel remained in contact with the English authorities, suggesting that their presence abroad was tolerated for their value in supplying the English government with valuable intelligence. 'The names of certaine principall members of the Englishe and Scottishe nations now residinge in the Archduke's provinces' (March 1614), again furnishes us with useful evidence on sociability and kinship networks as well as helping to distinguish English from Scottish residents, the focus of the database.[168]

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[165] Ibid.

[166] TNA, SP 77/7 f.348; *HMC Salisbury*, XVIII, p.420; *HMC De L'Isle*, IV, p.192.

[167] TNA, SP 77/8 f.418.

[168] TNA, SP 77/11 f.25.

Especially useful for the purposes of the database and the case study in Chapter 5, is the list of ‘List of the English who were at Spa in July and August 1616, with notes of their residences and of such as are Papists’ (August 1616, Fig.1).[169] Lists which were principally created for monitoring the political activities of male religious exiles, can be deployed to identify the presence of women living abroad, especially Catholics, as well as the kinship links between them. The inclusion of women among the names on these lists also suggests that their presence and potential agency was nevertheless significant enough to merit the attention of the enumerators, something which will be explored in later chapters.

3.3 Diplomatic & personal correspondence

Diplomatic and personal correspondence, largely though not exclusively authored by male contemporary observers, enables us to flesh out much of the information found in licences to travel and other government registers. Amongst the most useful are the letters pertaining to William Trumbull (bef.1580-1635), the English ambassador to Brussels (1609-25). Approximately half of his papers have been calendared and make up the first six volumes of *HMC Downshire*, the remainder are held by the British Library as the *Trumbull Papers.*[170] Aside from the light they cast on the machinations of early seventeenth century European diplomacy, the papers provide us with considerable and arguably overlooked detail on the activities of European women who travelled. They paint a particularly intimate picture, explored in Chapter 4, of his relations with his family, and among them his daughter, Elizabeth (b.c.1611-1624) with whom he corresponded whilst she was studying in France and again when she was back in England receiving medical treatment. The collection also contains correspondence between Trumbull and his wife, Debora Downe (d. in or after 1638), which casts new light as shall be seen in Chapter 6, on her role both as ambassadress and manager of the family estates in her husband’s absence.[171] The *Papers* are noteworthy too for the details they provide on less well documented women associated with elite overseas households, including ladies-in-waiting, wives of secretaries and female serving staff.

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[169] TNA, SP 14/81 f.53; TNA, SP 14/88 f.107.

[170] Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Marquess of Downshire*, Vols 1-VI (London, 1924-1995); BL, Add MSS 72242-72425.

[171] BL, Add. MS 72242–72621; TNA, TNA, SP 77/9–18 and TNA, SP 105/148.

Other well-known collections of personal and diplomatic correspondence from the period can be similarly mined for references to travel by women and cross-referenced against other sources to supplement the database still further. Among these the correspondence of Sir Dudley Carleton (1574-1632) English ambassador to Venice (1610-15) and later at The Hague (1616-1625). His letters have been calendared in the *State Papers*, whilst his correspondence with the newswriter John Chamberlain (1553-1628) has been transcribed by McClure (1939) and Lee (1972).[172]

The correspondence of military officers and governors frequently provide incidental references to women travellers, especially those passing through the Cautionary Towns of Vlissingen and Brill, where Sir Robert Sidney (1563-1626) was governor from 1588 on and off until his death. Relevant correspondence is calendared in volumes 2-5 of *HMC De L'Isle and Dudley* (1934-88) with additional material in *HMC Bath* (1904-80) pertaining to his wife Barbara Gamage (1562-1621) and the Sidney family.[173] Several other collections of letters have been equally useful in supplementing our understanding of women's travel. Among these the Cecil correspondence calendared in *HMC Salisbury* (1883-1976), the two volumes of *HMC Buccleuch* (1899-26), the collected correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia, transcribed and calendared by Akkerman (2015) and the correspondence of the courtier and newswriter, Rowland Whyte edited by Brennan, Hannay and Kinnamon (2013).[174]

Matching information on women travellers with entries from other sources, such as the licences to travel, provides a far more complex picture of women's travel. This approach is exemplified by the case of Margaret Steward, the wife of Sir Michael Everard (d.1622), sergeant major at Vlissingen. We know from the *Acts of the Privy Council* that she received a licence to 'goe over to her husband at Vlishing' along with four male and four maid servants on 21 February 1614.[175] Their relationship appears to have been a tempestuous one judging from a letter Sir Michael wrote to the deputy governor of Vlissingen recorded in the *HMC De L'Isle*, where he

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[172] McClure, Norman E., T*he Letters of John Chamberlain*, 2 vols, (Philadelphia, 1939); Lee, Maurice, *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain, 1603–1624: Jacobean letters* (New Brunswick, 1972).

[173] Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord De L'Isle and Dudley*, Vols 2-5 (London, 1934-1988); Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Bath, Preserved at Longleat, Wiltshire*, Vols 1-5 (1904-1980).

[174] Historical Manuscripts Commission. *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, Vols 1-24 (London, 1883-1976); Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, Preserved at Montagu House, Whitehall* (London, 1899- 1903); Akkerman, Nadine, *The Correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia, Volume I, 1603-31* (Oxford, 2015); Brennan, Michael, Hannay, Margaret and Kinnamon, Noel (eds.), *Domestic Politics and Family Absence: The Correspondence (1588–1621) of Robert Sidney, First Earl of Leicester, and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (Abingdon, 2018).

[175] *APC* (1613/14), p.349.

uncharitably describes her that same year as a 'great affliction' and states she 'is more punishment unto mee than any earthly else can bee'.[176] However, Lady. Everard was still a loyal petitioner for her husband and following a drunken brawl involving Sir Michael, she appealed to Sir Robert Sidney, to excuse his 'delinquency' which she claims was 'grew from distemperature of wine'.[177] On 12 May 1614, in a letter from Chamberlain to Carleton we learn more details about the incident during which Sir Michael had struck the deputy governor, Sir John Throckmorton and had to be brought into custody with a force of 500 men! Margaret Steward's representations on behalf of her husband were clearly frowned upon by commentators. Chamberlain describes her in one letter to Sir Dudley Carleton as 'Meg Steward, a fair, ill-favoured piece, who is come over to solicit his cause'.[178] In May 1614, Everard was court martialled and Lady Everard was given leave to return to him at Vlissingen.[179] However, we learn from *HMC Downshire* that her husband was sent back to England and his commission removed.[180] Surprisingly, this was not the end of his Sir Michael's military career or Margaret's journeys. The *Acts of the Privy Council* tell us that once again on 21 July 1615, Margaret along with her husband and their family received a licence to travel to the Low Countries.[181] Indeed, three years later she and her husband still appear among the pages of the *Acts* receiving yet one more licence once more to 'goe over in the Low Countries and there to reside, he having charge of a company of soldiers there'. [182] The story of Margaret Steward and her feckless husband shows that by imaginatively cross-referencing state papers with diplomatic and personal correspondence, we are able to construct a complex picture of the movements and agency of women travellers who otherwise would appear as footnotes in the history of early modern travel.

3.4 Travel accounts

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[176] *De L'Isle*, V, p.186.

[177] *De L'Isle,* V, p.187.

[178] McClure, Norman E., *The Letters of John Chamberlain, I* (Philadelphia, 1939), p.529.

[179] *De L'Isle*, V, p.203.

[180] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.404.

[181] *APC* (1615/16), p.271.

[182] *APC* (1617/19), p.166.

As discussed in greater length in Chapter 4, travelogues and other eyewitness descriptions of journeys, even those authored by men, are relatively rare for this period and initially promise little information relating to women's travel, least of all in helping to identify the names of individual women travellers. In spite of its scale and the best efforts of recent historians, Richard Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations* (1589 and 1598-1600) casts very little light on the experiences of women travellers and references to women are largely confined to comments on indigenous peoples rather than women from England.[183] However, as Mary Fuller was obliged to conclude writing in *Travel and Travail* (2019), 'questions like "are there women in Principal Navigations?" - ones that run against our own expectations, or against the ways fields, archives or discourses are shaped - have to be posed deliberately, persistently, and in multiple ways without taking "no" as a final answer'.[184]

Nevertheless, a handful of contemporary accounts, read selectively or against the grain have been useful in furnishing details on the itineraries of women travellers which may gainfully be recorded in the database. Among these notably Sir Thomas Roe's account of his embassy to Istanbul and subsequent tour of Europe collated and transcribed from various manuscript sources by Michael Strachan in *Sir Thomas Roe, 1581–1644: A Life* (1989).[185] From these valuable evidence can be found regarding not only the activities of Roe's wife, the ambassadress Eleanor Cave, Lady Beeston (d.1675), but of other travelling women within his kinship circle, such as Elizabeth Stuart and her lady-in-waiting, Anne Kelway (1549- May 1620), the mother of Lucy Harington, Countess of Bedford, in addition to women associated with commerce such as Lady Teresia (c.1590–1668), wife of the silk merchant, Sir Robert Shirley.[186]

Female-authored accounts of foreign travel are undeniably difficult to find, and re-reading well-known male sources against the grain remains one of the most productive ways of locating instances of women's travel. Margaret Hannay and Noel Kinnamon brought together all surviving correspondence between Sir Robert Sidney, English governor of Vlissingen, and his wife Barbara Gamage (1562-1621), uncovering 322 letters relating to the couple, but not a single one from

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[183] Hakluyt, Richard, *The Principall Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London, 1589).

[184] Fuller, Mary C., 'Looking for the Women in Early Modern Travel Writing' in Akhimie, Patricia & Andrea, Bernadette (eds.), *Travel & Travail: Early Modern Women, English Drama, and the Wider World* (Nebraska, 2019), p.332.

[185] Strachan, Michael, *Sir Thomas Roe, 1581-1644 : A Life* (Salisbury, 1989).

[186] Ibid, pp.45 and 36.

Barbara Gamage herself.[187] Reading Sir Robert's responses to her letters, however, we discover that she made at least three visits to the continent between 1590 and 1597, and was highly persuasive in making arrangements for travel and the education of their children, including their daughter Lady Wroth.[188]

Though strictly speaking not a travelogue but a newsletter, the account by Margaret Crofts of a sightseeing tour made by Elizabeth Stuart and female members of her household in 1625 of towns around The Hague helps position key individuals and their itineraries.[189] In a similar vein, the round-robin produced by members of the Edmondes household, including Elizabeth Devick, wife of the ambassador's secretary, again provides valuable information on the presence of female figures and their activities during a 1616 trip to Spa.[190] Though just outside the period of the database, the account of journey made to Holland with his family in 1634, Sir William Brereton provides useful incidental observations, for instance when he notes of notes 67 people on board the boat making the journey, of whom 2 were women and another 2 were children.[191]

Other travelogues may yet reap further evidence of travel by women as the database grows and further links to contextual evidence are made. As an illustration of this, the diplomatic visit by the Earl of Nottingham accompanied by 500 courtiers to Valladolid in 1605 to ratify the Anglo-Spanish Peace Treaty, shows how closer re-reading and contextualisation may reveal new names in the future.[192] The event was described in detail in Robert Treswell's *Relation* (1605), which includes a list of those present.[193] Although, no women are recorded in the entries, it seems unlikely that no partners or female household staff attended, and inferences can be made as to which women might have been there. The Earl himself reports that the Spanish Queen gifted his teenage bride Margaret Howard (c.1591-1639) a diamond chain and portraits of the royal couple worth nearly £4,000 in

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[187] Brennan, Michael, Hannay, Margaret and Kinnamon, Noel (eds.), *Domestic Politics and Family Absence: The Correspondence (1588–1621) of Robert Sidney, First Earl of Leicester, and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (Abingdon, 2018).

[188] Hannay and Kinnamon, *Domestic Politics and Family Absence*, p.31; Collins, Arthur, *Letters and memorials of state*, II (London, 1746), p.43; *ACP*, (1597), p.152.

[189] TNA, SP 81/33 ff.147–50.

[190] *HMC Downshire*, II, pp.73-5.

[191] Brereton, Sir Wiliam, *Travels in Holland, the United Provinces, England, Scotland, and Ireland, M.DC.XXXIV.-M.DC.XXXV* (Manchester, 1844), p.2.

[192] Stoye, *English Travellers*, p.233.

[193] Treswell, Robert, *A relation of such things as were observed to happen in the journey of the right Honourable Charles Earle of Nottingham, L. High Admirall of England* (London, 1605), pp.2-4.

addition to ‘gloves and many other things of perfume’.[194] He also lists chamber attendants among those remunerated for their services. In addition, we know that Sir Dudley Carleton travelled to Spain with Lord Norrys, leaving items belonging to himself and the newswriter John Chamberlain, who acknowledges receipt of Carleton’s ‘bagge of papers and your cabinet, of your sister Alice, and will take great as great care to keepe them safe as mine owne’.[195] This points to the suggestion that Carleton’s sister, who was a linguist and accompanied her brother to Venice 5 years later, was among the unrecorded women present at the deputation. It is highly likely therefore that this was not a male-only encounter, and quite probable that with future cross-referencing the identities of some of the women present may be confirmed at a later date.[196]

Conclusions

In summary, the database which underpins this thesis is the product of tireless trawling of primary and secondary sources for evidence of travel by early modern English women in all its manifestations. It was developed in three clear stages: a biographical index comparable to Ingamells, a spreadsheet organised around prosopographical categories and finally a searchable database made available on line. The database covers a 72-year period which had been largely overlooked by historians of mobility, and rather than specialising in travel relating to particular areas or motives, deliberately casts its net wide in order to support more substantive prosopographical judgements. Whilst acknowledging gaps in the data, for example the absence of licence records in the *Acts of the Privy Council*, it is hoped that the breadth of evidence drawn from other sources will help to aggregate these lacunae. Re-reading well-known sources as well as deploying overlooked ones, allows us to produce a far richer picture of the nature and variety of women's travel than previously supposed, as will be examined in Chapter 3.

[194] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.424.

[195] *Chamberlain*, I, p.206.

[196] Ibid, p.425.

Chapter Three: ‘Galloping gurles’: the nature and variety of overseas travel by English women

1. Introduction

Having established how the database was constructed, this next chapter aims to test and hopefully resolve some of the key questions raised in the introduction regarding early modern women's travel. Among these, given the significant bank of empirical evidence we now have, can we detect certain prosopographical trends in the nature and extent of their journeys? For instance, did women travel at certain times of the year or to particular destinations? Were the mechanisms for travel identifiably gendered with regard to licensing requirements? Is it possible to speak of a ‘typical’ woman traveller for this period based on factors such as age, status or confessional identity and if so, how does the profile of this individual evolve in response to contextual factors such as war or changing religious attitudes? Secondly, whilst remaining wary of oversimplification, is it possible to identify distinct motives for travel by women and to what extent do these alter over the timeframe of this thesis?

2. Nature and extent of women's travel

2.1 Frequency and variety of journeys

Among the most striking conclusions to be drawn from the database is not just that continental women's travel grows in frequency but that it also expands in variety, too. Whilst it could be argued that this is simply the result of better record keeping, the fact that data drawn from widely different sources produces very similar results would challenge this assumption. Fig. 3.1 compares the number of women travelling ‘legitimately’ to the Continent recorded in licences to travel (shown in blue) and those who are identifiable from other sources such as diplomatic correspondence, but for whom no licence to travel survives (shown in green). Both confirm the same upward trend. Annual variations in the quantity of data have been evened out by examining instances of women travelling

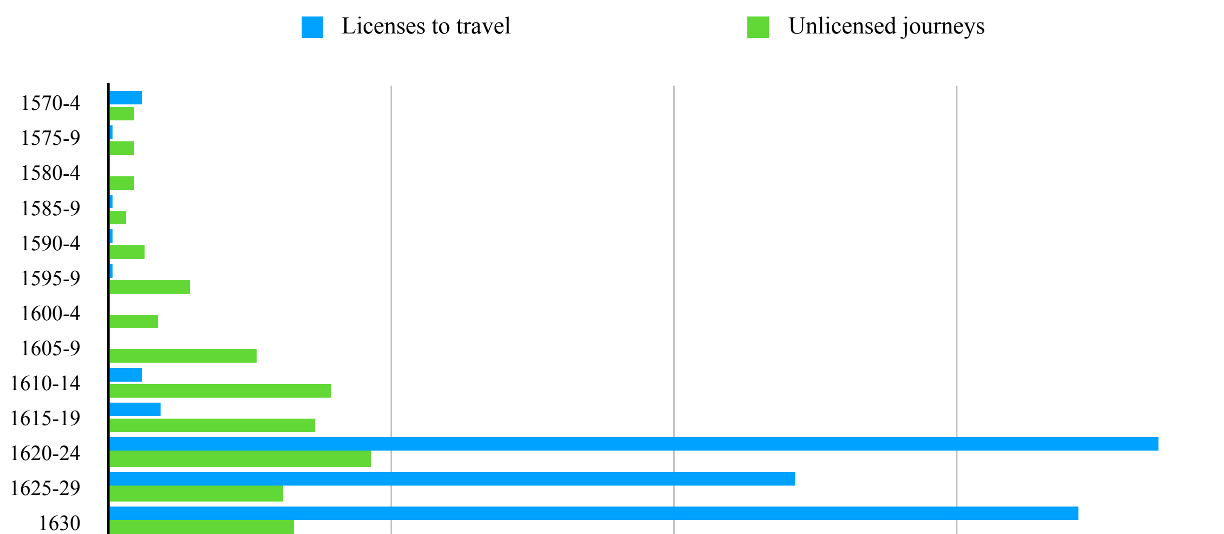

Fig. 3.1. Average number of licensed and unlicensed journeys across 5-year periods.

across 5-year periods and recording the average number of journeys for each period. Applying this process across the entire 72-year period of this thesis confirms the same upward movement. For much of Elizabeth's reign and the early years of James', the flow of traffic by women to the Continent is relatively stable, among both types of travellers. However from the middle of the second decade of the seventeenth century things change dramatically. Between 1615 and 1619, 155 women travelled abroad, a number very similar to the previous 5-year period. However, between 1620 and 1624, the numbers increase dramatically to 622, reducing to 451 between 1625-9. Only 1 year's data is available for 1630, showing 130 journeys by women to Europe, as this was the cut-off point for this study, but if the same rate of travel were maintained across a full 5-year period, the figure would amount to 650 journeys.

Whilst overseas travel by women as a whole clearly expands across the timeframe, certain motives increase with particular intensity (Fig. 3.2). The nature of these motives will be discussed more closely in Section 3, but statistically they are worth considering here. Comparing licenced and unlicensed journeys, travel for different purposes often draws on different sources of data. Whilst travel for health or diplomatic purposes, is largely documented in the *Acts of the Pricy Council* and the *State Papers*, travel for commercial or military reasons is often drawn from the *Remembrancer Records*, whilst religious exile is best documented using contemporary correspondence, such as *HMC Downshire* and convent chronicles. What all this data suggests is that women's travel was expanding into a variety of new areas and this change was happening with particular intensity during the first quarter of the seventeenth century. This increase in frequency is not solely

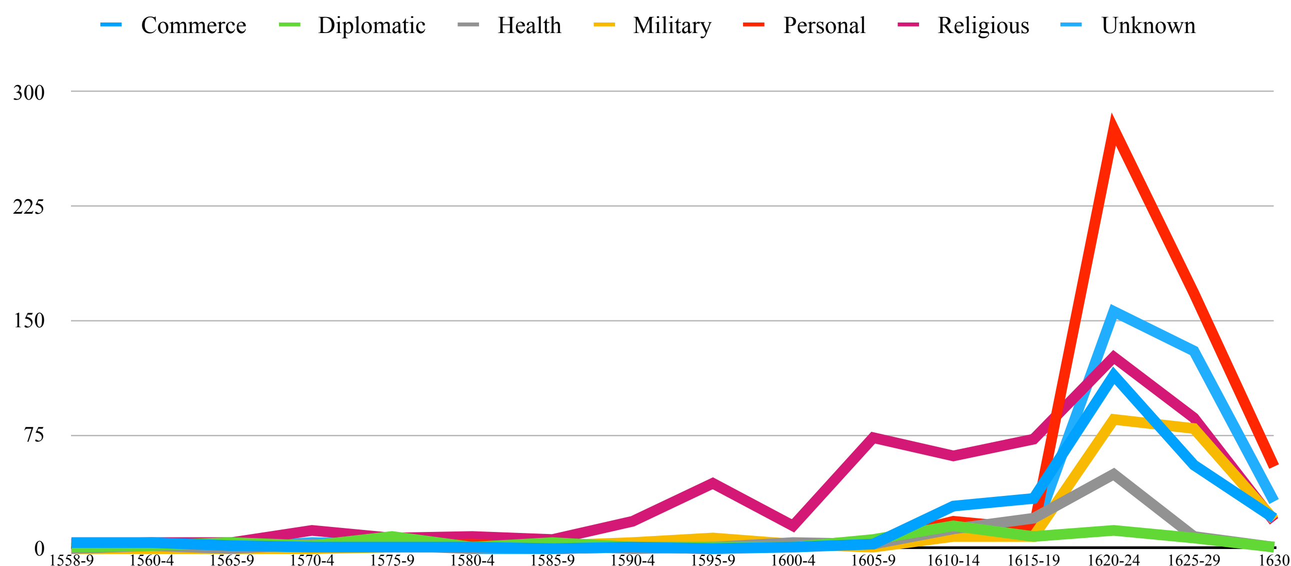

Fig. 3.2. Frequency of travel according to motive.

attributable to more evidence being available in particular archives, as the same expansion in travel is visible across a range of different motives identified from very different sources.

The reasons for this expansion are manifold and complex. Contextual events clearly play a significant part. For instance, the end of the Twelve-Year Truce (1621) and the onset of the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) arguably explains the growth in numbers of women travelling overseas as part of military households. Similarly, periods of relative political stability in Europe, partly explain why leisure and health travel by women increases. When tensions caused by the onset of war ramp up, traffic to Spa declines. Fluctuations in the movement of women abroad for confessional purposes are also clearly the product of wider religious and political issues. The growth in anti-Catholic policy in the aftermath of Elizabeth's excommunication (1570) or the Gunpowder Plot (1605), coupled with the emergence of English-speaking convents in Europe, go far to explain the growing popularity of this form of mobility. The frequency of travel for trade and diplomatic purposes also clearly develops as new trading companies and settlements are established and permanent diplomatic residences appear across Europe. Changes in the mechanisms of licensing, something which will be examined in Chapter 5, may also explain fluctuations in patterns of movement. The death of Sir Robert Cecil (1612), chief overseer of the early Stuart licensing processes, may be linked to the surge in applications for passes to travel in the latter part of James' reign.

Although it was less common for women to make more than one journey overseas, in their lifetime, the occurrence was not unknown (Fig. 3.3). As one would expect, women associated with diplomacy or commerce were most likely to make multiple journeys. Debora Downe, wife of the

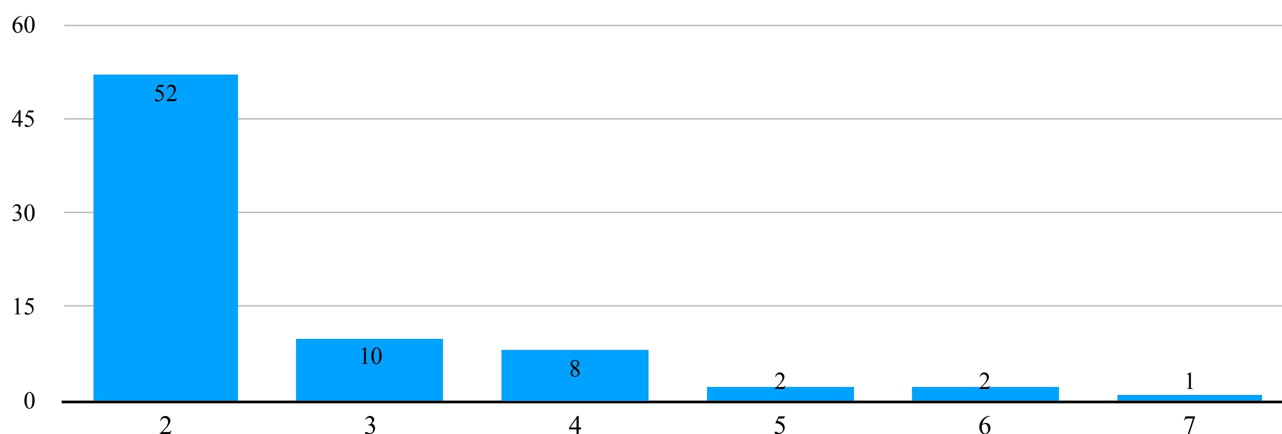

Fig. 3.3. Numbers of women who travelled overseas on multiple occasions.

ambassador William Trumbull is known to have travelled to the Continent on at least 6 occasions, whilst Lady Margaret Leveston, a gentlewomen attached to the household of Elizabeth Stuart made 7 separate journeys to the Netherlands between 1622 and 1630.[197] Joan Lack was the most frequent traveller in the database, and across the period undertook at least 9 continental journeys, 7 of which occurred within the timeframe of the database.It seems her husband initially served in the army and then moved to Middelburg for commercial reasons, where he became a resident. Joan plied so regularly between the family's London residence and their Dutch business she was issued with a special certificate from the Customs House in London sanctioning her journeys.[198] Similarly, Alice Murray, wife of a Scottish cloth merchant based in London, travelled to Vlissingen, Middelburg and Rotterdam on 10 separate occasions between 1621 and 1634.[199] It is likely she was collecting supplies from continental markets to sell from her family business in London.[200] In most cases she

[197] Debora Downe: *HMC Downshire*, II, p.366 (1610); *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.229 (1613); *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.12, (1616); *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.467 (1618); BL, Add MS 72425 (1622); BL, Add MS 72439 f.139 (1624). Margaret Leveston: *ACP* (1621/3), p.26 (1621); *ACP* (1621/3), p.119 (1622); *ACP* (1621/3), p.500 (1623); *ACP* (1623/5), p.292 (1624); *ACP* (1625), p.22 (1625); *ACP* (1628/9), p.82 (1628); *ACP* (1630/31), p.17 (1630). Joan Lack: TNA, E 157/27 f.43 (Oct 1621); TNA, E 157/27 f.43 (Nov 1621); TNA, E 157/27 f.43 (Dec 1621); TNA, E 157/13 f.22 (1624); TNA, E 157/14 f.88 (1628); TNA, E 157/14 f.88 (Jul 1629); TNA, E 157/14 f.88 (Oct 1629); TNA, E 157/16 f.62 (1632); TNA, E 157/20 f.116 (1635).

[198] *CSPD* (1633/4), p.451.

[199] Alice Murray: TNA, E 157/27 f.43 (May 1621); TNA, E 157/27 f.43 (Jul 1621); TNA, E 157/27 f.43 (Oct 1621); TNA, E 157/13 f.22 (Jun 1624); TNA, E 157/13 f.22 (Oct 1624); TNA, E 157/15 f.79 (1630); TNA, E 157/15 f.79 (Aug 1631); TNA, E 157/16 f.62 (Jan 1631); TNA, E 157/16 f.62 (1632); TNA, E 157/ 20 f.116 (1634).

[200] Records of the London Livery Companies record James Murray was a cloth merchant in 1630. For descriptions of clothiers in Long Lane see Wheatley, Henry, *London, Past and Present* (London, 1891), p.439.

undertook the journey abroad alone, but is occasionally recorded as travelling with 'a dutchboy in her care'.[201]

Gaps in the official records, should not necessarily prevent us from concluding that women travelled more frequently overseas than it would seem. As mentioned in Chapter 2, such archival silences can be filled through a more collaborative approach to the way in which journey evidence is gathered. The activities of missionaries, wives of officers, merchants or diplomats would have required them to ply between England and northern Europe far more frequently than records reveal. Mary Ward is known to have made 4 documented trips, although her biographer estimates this number was as high as 10.[202] We know through incidental references that Anne Ferneley, wife of the merchant Thomas Gresham would regularly accompany her husband on overseas trips and that they shared a home in Antwerp. However, only one documented trip to Antwerp is known, due to the fact she sat for her portrait there in 1563.[203] Across the entire database only 4% of women are known to have made made more than one journey overseas. In reality, and with further research, this figure is of course likely to be far higher.

Data on the duration of journeys is similarly hard to establish. Once professed, nuns normally remained overseas for the rest of their lives and were not at liberty to travel, with the exception of those associated with Mary Ward's Institutes such as the Rookwoods. Out of the 259 nuns in the database for whom we have accurate records of when they arrived abroad and when they deceased, the average time spent living abroad was an impressive 31 years, with the longest time set by Marie Gawen (1605-1696), who joined a Franciscan convent in Brussels in 1623 and lived there until her death at the age of 73. For other secular travellers, time restrictions were often imposed, the maximum being three years. Typical of many was the licence issued in 1611 to Sir Robert Drury and his wife Ann Bacon who were granted permission 'to travayle for three yeares'.[204] Few had the means to spend extended periods of time travelling abroad for personal pleasure, aside from women such as the Countess of Pembroke, who spent 2 years travelling abroad between 1614 and 1616, or the Countess of Arundel, who made two extended journeys in 1613-14 and 1620-3. Entries in the *Remembrancer Records* suggest that the majority of women travelled with specific,

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[201] TNA, E 157/27 f.43.

[202] Littlehales, Margaret, *Mary, Mary Ward: Pilgrim and Mystic* (Tunbridge Wells, 1998), p.15.

[203] Alford, *London's Triumph*, pp.59-60; Guy, *Gresham's Law*, p.24.

[204] *CSPD* (1611-18), p.52; *Chamberlain*, I, p.322.

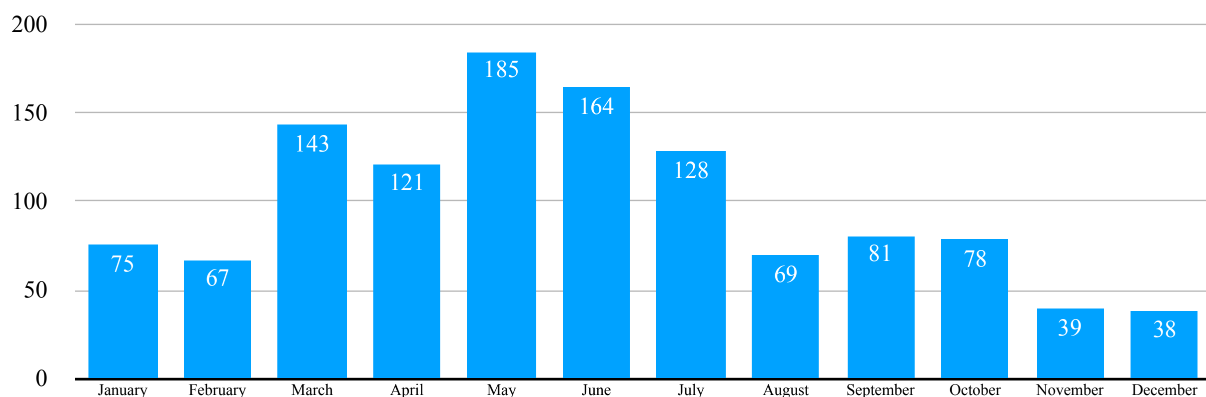

Fig. 3.4. Monthly issuance of licences.

time-limited aims, to return to homes or to join family members living overseas or to accompany husbands serving in the military.

Aside from frequency, the database also reveals the seasonal nature of women's travel (Fig. 3.4). Most journeys were made during the summer months when cross-Channel travel was safest. Stoye and others have alluded to the popularity of destinations like Spa in the summer months, but an extensive trawl of licences in the *Acts of the Privy Council* or the *Remembrancer Records* confirms for the first time that 2/3 were issued between April and July.[205] This tallies with contemporary warnings of the dangers of winter crossings for women such as when the Earl of Northumberland 'persuaded [the Countess of Arundel] to desist from her intended voyage, as most unfitting for her to take before spring, and likely to do more hurt to herself than good'.[206]

Licences issued outside the normal season for travel were often necessitated by extraordinary or unpredicted circumstances, such as Mrs Cooke, who in January 1616, was granted a licence to the Low Countries for 'the recovery of moneys' or Lady Harington's journey to Heidelberg in November that same year 'to attend upon the Lady Elizabeth' who was then expecting a baby.[207] The timing of the licences suggests that the process of applying was swift, with women and their parties being granted the right to travel whilst conditions were still favourable. Journeys may also have been timed to coincide with seasonal markets in the main commercial centres. John Guy has argued that the resident community of Antwerp of around 100 merchants could increase six-fold during the time of Brabant fairs, such as the Pentecost fair between late

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205 Stoye, *English Travellers*, p.208.

206 *CSPD* (1611-18), p.150.

207 *APC* (1615/16), p.382; *APC* (1616/17), p.70.

April and mid-June and St Bartholomew’s fair in late August. Busiest times for traders were between Easter and Whitsun when new consignments of English cloth arrived.[208]

2.2 Ages

There was considerable variation in the ages of women travelling abroad. The average age of the 1,352 women whose dates of birth and year of departure are known, was nearly 27. Once again aggregate numbers hide great diversity. Ages ranged from newborns, such as Kath Blunden, the daughter of a soldier fighting in Lille aged just 9 weeks old, to Jane Newdigate, grandmother of the Duchess of Feria, who first ventured abroad aged 72.[209] Amongst the oldest groups of travellers were those travelling for reasons of health. Ages ranged from 14 to 64, but nearly half were over the age of 40.[210] Women associated with overseas diplomatic or commercial households were also typically older at roughly 30 years of age. Beatrice Walcot, wife of the English ambassador to Spain, was 48 when she accompanied her husband to Madrid in 1622 and Anne Ferneley was 43 when she last travelled to the family home in Antwerp in 1563.[211] Seniority also characterised the women working as household attendants. The average was 35 and notable examples of older women travelling abroad in this capacity include Anne Kelway, Baroness Harington (1549-1620), who attended on Elizabeth Stuart throughout her adult life, returning to England just a year before she died.[212]

Among the youngest were those who made the journey abroad to join convents. Women travelling abroad for educational purposes were even younger on average at around 14 or 15, but these journeys were often made by those anticipating entry into convents as they grew older. Their average age was 22, with ages ranging from 11 to 62.[213] Amongst the 204 girls under the age of 18 recorded in the database, 104 went abroad to profess as nuns. The exodus of girls in this category

[208] Guy, *Gresham’s Law*, p.21.

[209] TNA, E 157/27 f.43; *CSPF*, II, (1559-60), pp.438-439, 441 and 487.

[210] Frances Parker (b. c.1606-1653), daughter of Lord Monteagle was 14 when she visited Spa in 1620; Ann Kelway, Countess of Bedford (1549-1620) was 64 when she visited in 1613.

[211] *Chamberlain*, II, p.429; Guy, *Gresham’s Law*, p.140.

[212] She was fondly remembered by Elizabeth as ‘My good mother, Madam Harington’, Akkerman, *Correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia*, I, p.188.

[213] Jane Howard, Jane (b.c.1614) entered the Abbey of Our Lady of Consolation, Cambrai in 1625 (*Miscellanea*, VIII, p.41); Margaret Offspring (c.1549-1629) became a lay sister at St Monica’s, Louvain in 161, aged 62 and lived on until she was 80, Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.119.

tallies with contemporary suspicions that girls and young women were particularly likely to slip undetected abroad, leading to a tightening of government measures. In 1606, James issued a proclamation stating 'that no woman nor any child under the age of one and twenty yeeres …should bee permitted to passe over the Seas' without a licence, followed up with another 9 years later against 'sending of children, or reliefe to Seminaries abrode.[214]

A small but significant number of children, venturing overseas for secular purposes, appear to have travelled alone. The youngest among them was Oliff Kydd, whose father resided in the parish of St Andrew's, Holborn, and who travelled alone to Amsterdam in 1624 aged only 8, 'to remane there' on her own.[215] Similarly, Margaret Chambers, travelled unaccompanied in 1621 aged 10 to Gorinchem 'to remane there with her unkle'.[216] In most cases, it seems that the loss of a parent necessitated a move abroad for these children, where they were brought up by extended family members living overseas. In total, 11 children listed in the database are described as having travelled abroad to 'remane with her unkle'. Sadly, very little equivalent work on the sociological profile of male travellers has been undertaken for this period. Stoye observed that many male travellers often spent their formative years travelling for educational purposes before returning as mercenaries or religious refugees, whilst Warneke concluded that travel for men was most common between completing their formal education and settling down to start a family.[217] Gerrit Verhoeven's recent study of Flemish and Dutch Groote Tour travellers provides some useful points of comparison, suggesting that the average age of travel was younger than the women in this study (between 20 and 25 years of age) whilst a far smaller percentage of children appear in the records (around 5%).[218]

2.3 Confessional identity

[214] Larkin, J. and Hughes, P. (eds.), *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, I (Oxford, 1973), pp.329 and 334.

[215] TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

[216] TNA, E 157/27 f.43.

[217] Stoye, *English Travellers*, p.191-2; Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller*, p.79.

[218] Verhoeven, Gerrit, 'Young cosmopolitans: Flemish and Dutch youths and their travel behaviour' in Sweet, Rosemary, *Beyond the Grand Tour* (Abingdon, 2019), p.187.

A note of caution must be sounded when attempting to identify travellers on the basis on their beliefs, and the pitfalls of making windows onto souls, be they male or female. For the purposes of this study it has been be assumed that due to restrictions on travel, especially in the wake of Elizabeth's excommunication in 1570, the vast majority of licenced travellers were at least ostensibly Protestant in faith. This categorisation includes mainstream Protestants, Non-Conformists or followers of one of the many breakaway reformists groups such as Separatists, Brownists or and Anabaptists. From 1609, under the terms of the Oath of Allegiance Act, travellers were required to swear allegiance not only to James, as head of Church and State, but also to deny papal authority to depose him. Whilst the oath did not challenge the doctrines of the Catholic Church or stipulate that those who took it should conform to the practices of the Church of England, the highly personal way in which it was administered was frequently sufficient, as Marcy North has argued, to ensure travellers' consciences were closely examined.[219] References to the administration of this oath sometimes appear in the *Remembrancer Records*. For instance, the enumerator notes that a battalion departing for Venice in 1620 'all tooke the oath of allegiance'.[220] In theory, women would also have been required to take the oath, but this is rarely documented in licences. A rare exception concerns Joan Williams travelling to the Low Countries on 10 September 1629 with her husband Ludowicke. The clerk records that the oath was administered, but this is possibly due to the foreign status of her husband.[221] Women who refused the oath were immediately suspect and could expect to be summoned before a board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners to explain their failure to comply.[222]

Travel to destinations with incontestable Protestant credentials, such as the commercial towns and cities of the United Provinces, have also been used as a factor in determining faith. In some instances, baptism and marriage registers, such as those of the English Church at Hague, the Hamburg Church Register and the notarial records of English pilgrims at Leiden, help to confirm the religious identities of women living overseas and that of their families.[223]

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[219] North, Marcy, 'Anonymity's Subject: James I and the Debate over the Oath of Allegiance' in *New Literary History*, Vol 33, No. 2 (Spring 2002), p.219.

[220] TNA, E 157/4 f.44.

[221] TNA, E 157/14 f.88.

[222] *APC* (1590), pp.409-10; PC2/17 f.881.

[223] TNA, RG 33/83*;* https://www.dutchgenealogy.nl/pilgrim-leiden-pilgrim-records/ (last accessed Aug 2023).

Confessional records for Catholic travellers are inevitably much harder to find. Conventual chronicles along with government censuses of exiles and recusants living overseas have been crucial in identifying these travellers. Recusants and religious exiles were far more likely to circumvent the licensing system, leaving few footprints of their journeys among official sources. Once again circumstantial evidence must be used to identify such individuals. For instance, it is highly unlikely that Catholics, professed or crypto, would have been assigned roles in ambassadorial households or as attendants for Elizabeth Stuart. As with Protestant travellers, destination of travel can sometimes be used as a marker of faith along with kinship and sociability networks. Families such as the Digbys were immersed in Catholic tradition and practice and regularly appear in the database either as nuns, travellers to Spa or relatives of Catholic plotters and rebels. Elizabeth Digby, sister of one of the Gunpowder Plotters, travelled to Brussels by 1608 where she joined a Benedictine convent whilst a relative, Mary Digby, whose father had been imprisoned for his involvement in the Babington Plot (1586), first travelled to Spa in 1624 before entering a convent in Ghent.[224] The activities of the Digbys can be replicated among dozens of other Catholic families, and provide a reliable indicator of confessional identity where documentary evidence is scant.

Using this approach, the database reveals that 644 of the women who travelled in this period were in all probability Catholic. Women who were Protestant, due to the nature of their licences, destination, motive for travelling or family background account for 898 individuals. The remaining travellers have been categorised currently as ‘unknown faith’, due to insufficient details at this stage regarding their personal contexts or the purpose of their journeys.

2.4 Itineraries and principal destinations

Most itineraries and destinations were shaped by practical necessity, following safe and popular routes where infrastructure and support mechanisms were firmly established. Countries which were geographically close and religiously compatible were by and large the most popular (Fig. 3.5 & 3.6). As a consequence, the Netherlands, Belgium and northern France account for 90% of all journeys by women across the period. Travel to southern Europe, was virtually unknown, partly because of accessibility, but also because of fears of Catholic conversion. The licence issued to

[224] *Miscellanea*, XIV, p.180; *APC* (1623/25), p.214.

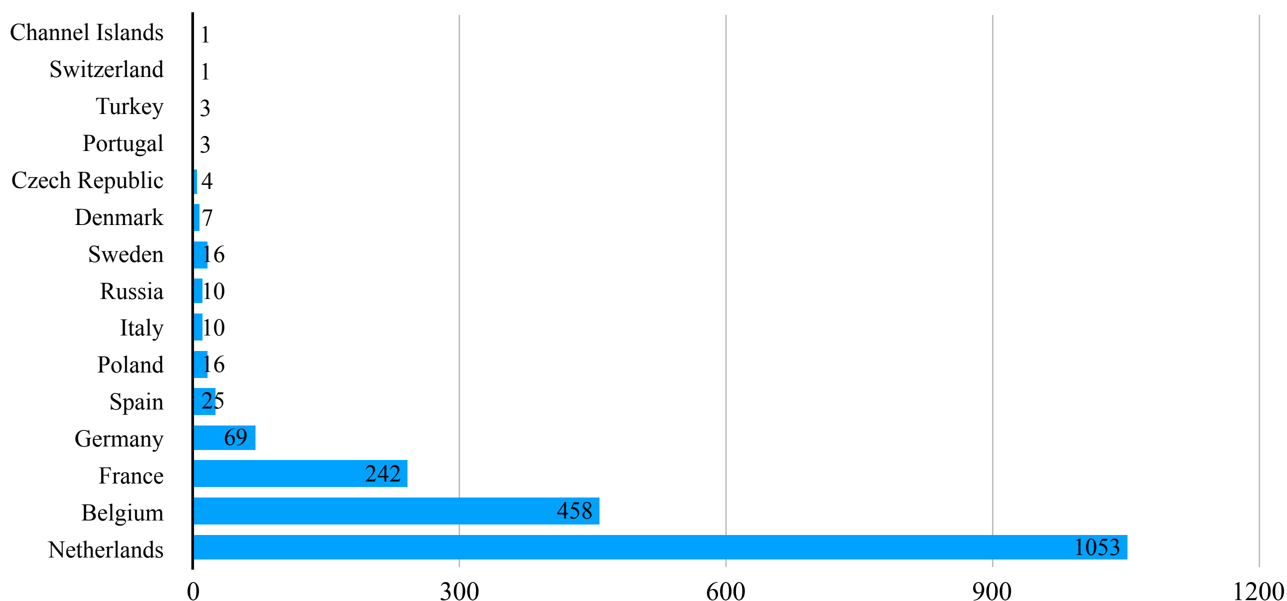

Fig. 3.5. Countries visited.

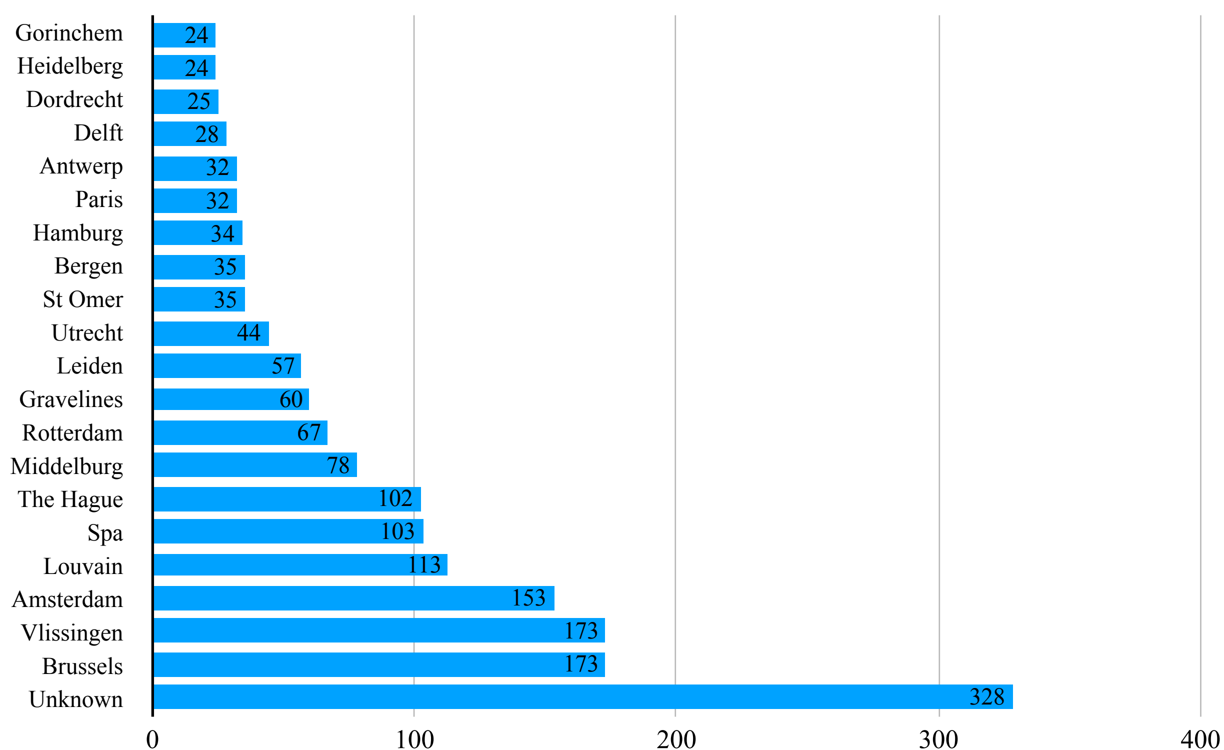

Fig. 3.6. Primary destinations.

Frances Napper and her husband is typical of many. The Council generously allowed them to take on their 3-year tour a Europe ‘a man and a maid servant, trunkes of apparell and other necessary provisions’ and was even prepared to increase the time allowance when the couple applied for an

extension to the original terms.[225] However, on the issue of the itinerary, they were adamant that though they may 'pass beyond the seas and live abroad' they did so 'with proviso that they, nor any of them, goe to the cittie of Rome'. As a result of such strict licensing conditions, only 10 women are known to have visited Italy across the entire 72-year-period compared with the 100s if not 1000s of men who are thought to have made the same journey.[226] Paradoxically, women were more likely to travel to eastern Europe where 26 visits are recorded. Various factors may explain this disparity. Although on paper the same licensing restrictions applied to men, women as we shall see in Chapter 5 were subjected to far more stringent checks on their motives for travelling. In addition, the types of activities that drew travellers to southern Europe such as self-improvement or diplomacy were still predominantly undertaken by men. Added to this, the threat of imprisonment by the Inquisition and the dangers posed by marauding militias or criminal opportunists, provided a significant barrier to women's travel into the remoter corners of Counter-Reformational Europe. Writing primarily about the eighteenth century, Sarah Goldsmith argues in *Masculinity and Danger on the Grand Tour* (2020), that the unique challenges of travel to Italy were part of its allure to male travellers who saw such experiences as formative.[227] Similarly, Rosemary Sweet in *Cities and the Grand Tour* (2012) argues that the challenges of trans-Alpine travel combined with social mores made travel to Italy a remote possibility for all but the hardiest independent women travellers until the onset of the eighteenth century.[228]

Accessibility and infrastructure go far to explain the popularity of certain towns closer to the English frontier. Following the loss of Calais (1557), Vlissingen grew rapidly as the main entry point for English travellers to the Continent. Not only was it less than a day's sailing away, but it was also one of only two garrisoned or 'Cautionary Towns' (1585-16) under English rule within the United Provinces.[229] One historian has calculated the town tripled in size during this period as a consequence of the steady stream of English travellers.[230] The importance of the town to English residents can also be gauged from the reactions of contemporaries when the time came to return it to the Dutch. Sir John Throckmorton, deputy governor noted that women and their families would

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[225] *APC* (1613/14), p.660; *APC* (1617/18), p.15.

[226] See Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller*, p.163ff.

[227] Goldsmith, Sarah, *Masculinity and Danger on the Eighteenth-Century Grand Tour* (London, 2020).

[228] Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, p.55 ff.

[229] The other was Brill.

[230] Goldgar, Anne, *Tulipmania: Money, Honor, and Knowledge in the Dutch Golden Age* (Chicago, 2007), p.24.

be hardest hit: 'here are many pore Souldiers Widdowes, and fatherles and motherles Children' and that in the absence of the support of the garrison and the English church, it would be impossible 'to keepe them from Beggerye'. [231]

The adjacent town of Middelburg also became a thriving hub for the English, and its population more than doubled in the latter part of the sixteenth century, going from 7,000 (1550) to 20,000 (1600).[232] Situated on the island of Walcheren within a day or two from Antwerp, Amsterdam and Brussels, it was a safe and convenient stopping off point for women travellers in particular, and the town is frequently mentioned in connection with their journeys. Anne Stanley and her four daughters stayed in the town in 1615, awaiting the return of the Countess of Pembroke from her sojourn at Spa whereupon 'with her shee will returne back into England'.[233] Middelburg had been chosen 3 years earlier as the disembarkation point for Elizabeth Stuart on her 1613 nuptial tour of mainland Europe. The numerous hostelries and inns, among them *The Golden Chair* and *The Angel,* clearly catered for an English clientele, and between them accommodated the 163 servants in her entourage.[234]

Cities such as Brussels and Antwerp were equally popular destinations for both practical and confessional reasons. The reopening of the English embassy at Brussels early in the 1600s, supported by a large professional workforce, made the city a particular favourite with English travellers.[235] Additionally, it was well-positioned at the crossroads of several major European highways. From Brussels travellers could easily journey on to Spa or Louvain, where significant overseas English communities existed. Brussels and Louvain were also home to numerous convents which specifically catered to the flow of postulants and exiles coming from England. The most famous of these were the Convent of the Assumption of Our Blessed Lady in Brussels and St Monica's in Louvain. Catholic families gathered around these institutions, quickly gained the soubriquet the Louvainists and formed close networks providing additional support for travellers.[236]

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[231] Collins, *Letters and Memorials of State*, II (London, 1746), p.341-342.

[232] Zuidervaart, Huib J, 'The Middelburg Theatrum Anatomicum: A Location of Knowledge and Culture' in Dijksterhuis, Weber and Zuidervaartan (eds.), *Early Urban Context in Locations of Knowledge in Dutch Contexts*, (Leiden, 2019), pp.64-104.

[233] *HMC De L'Isle & Dudley*, V, p.275.

[234] Akkerman, *Correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia*, I, p.119.

[235] Anderson,'The Elder William Trumbull', p.119; Das, Nandini, Melo, João Vicente, Smith, Haig and Working, Lauren, *Keywords of Identity, Race, and Human Mobility in Early Modern England* (Amsterdam, 2021), p.31.

[236] Loomie, A. J., *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* (New York, 1963), p.96.

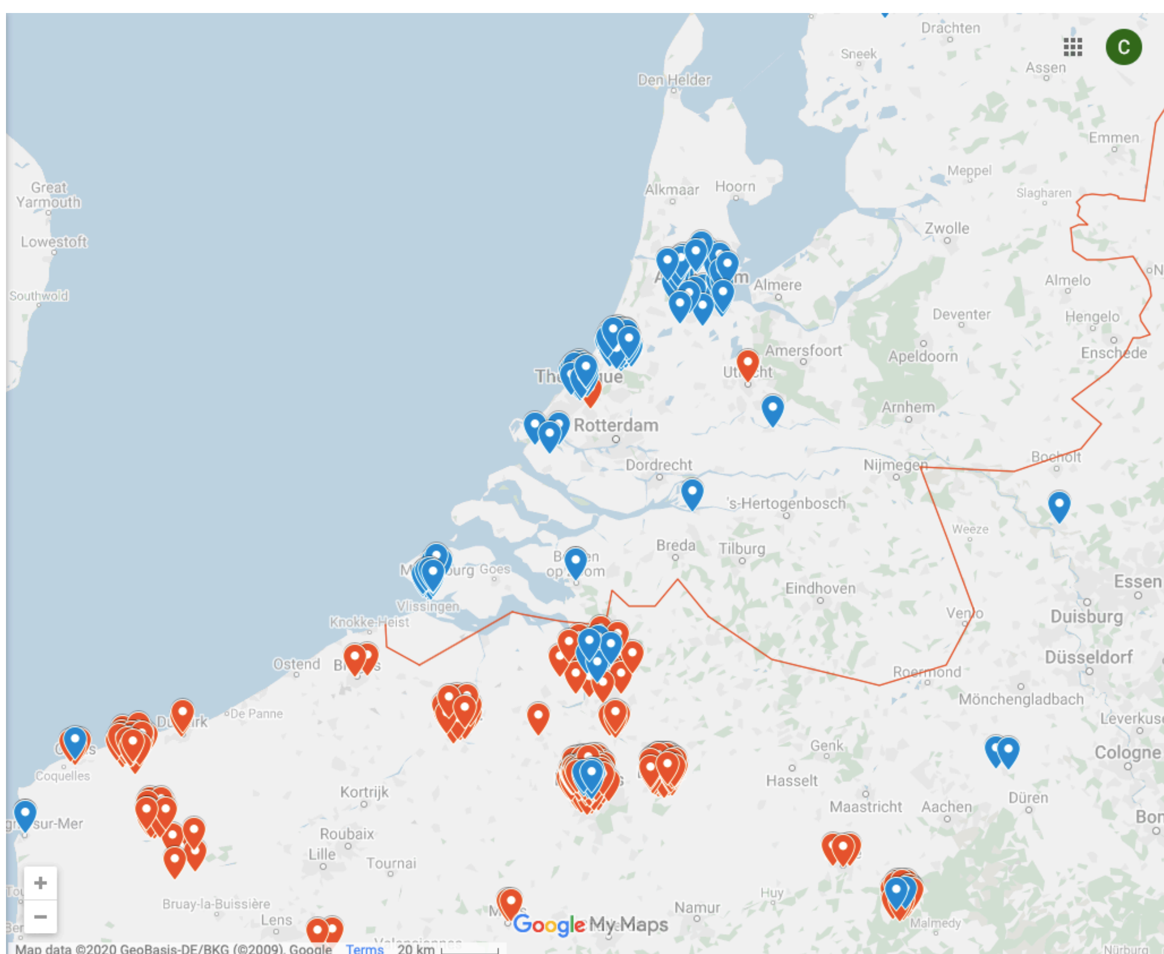

Fig. 3.7a. Distribution of Catholic (red) and Protestant (blue) travellers. Red line indicates borders of United Province at time of Twelve Years' Truce (1609).

Prior to becoming a nun, Barbara Babthorpe (1563-1635) lived for 5 years in Louvain with her husband until his death in 1618.[237] Similarly, Anne Dormer, Lady Hungerford (1525-1603), resided in Louvain for over 30 years.[238]

For women associated with Protestant families, the commercial towns of the United Provinces and northern Germany had obvious appeal. Cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Hamburg amounted to nearly a fifth of known journeys by women (252), offering the prospect of established trading communities alongside a religious environment where godly consciences could easily be assuaged. The Fall of Antwerp (1585) helped to seal Amsterdam's fate as a safe and prosperous hub for English mercantile families. Records of female visitors to the town rise from just 4 in Elizabeth's reign, to 94 under James and 55 in the first 5 years of Charles' reign alone. Typical of many were Sara Staresmore and her husband and children who were granted permission in 1629,

[237] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.417.

[238] TNA, SP 15/18 f.147 (1570); *CSPD*, Elizabeth (1601-03), p.212 (1602).

'to goe over to Amsterdam having lived there for divers yeares last past'.[239] A thriving and interconnected Anglo-Dutch community, made the town and many others in Holland a safe and appealing option for overseas travel and residence.

Although northern France was popular largely with Catholic visitors, towns and cities with large Huguenot communities such as Sedan drew English Protestants, too. Christian Barclay (1582-1640) travelled to Sedan with her Scottish minster husband, John Forbes in 1606, whilst Elizabeth Carleton, daughter of the English ambassador to The Hague was educated by a French governess there in 1618.[240] When principal destinations are brought together and plotted on a map according to travellers' confessional identities, the dichotomy between Protestants and Catholics is stark (Fig. 3.7a). This distinction is also played out when one looks at the religious make-up of visitors to specific towns (Fig. 3.7b), with Protestants women prevalent in the northern European towns and Catholics in the Low Countries and France. The inter-confessional nature of Brussels and especially Spa, partly explains the interest these destinations provoked both among travellers and authorities, and will be examined more closely in Chapter 5. All told, religious identity was an incontrovertible factor in shaping the itineraries of women at this time. For roughly a quarter of the women in the database, it has been difficult to ascribe a clear confessional identity. Informed guesses can be made, as the majority of these women travelled to cities with established 'reformed' credentials among them most popular being Vlissingen, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Middelburg and The Hague. Travel to destinations within Catholic dominions is less common among women with no clear faith, and may be explained either by the fact that they were using these places as transit hubs such as Calais, Brussels or Antwerp or they were places renowned for their confessional ambiguity such as Spa, as will be seen in Chapter 5.

The extent to which routes and destinations were gendered is perhaps harder to assert. It is clear that Spa had a particular appeal for women travellers, but across the timeframe of this thesis it is harder to detect routes or locations to which women were distinctly drawn. Women travelled for a range of motives, usually in the company of men and routes were very often at the mercy of extraneous events beyond their control. There is some evidence that women revisited locations frequented by female relatives and friends. Lady Catherine Whetenhall, a relative of the Countess of Arundel, who travelled across Europe between 1648 and 1650, and whose itinerary was recorded by her chaperone, Richard Lassels, appears to have revisited many of the sites which her aunt had

[239] *APC* (1628/9), p.298.

[240] Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, p.22-3; BL, Add MS 72425 f.14.

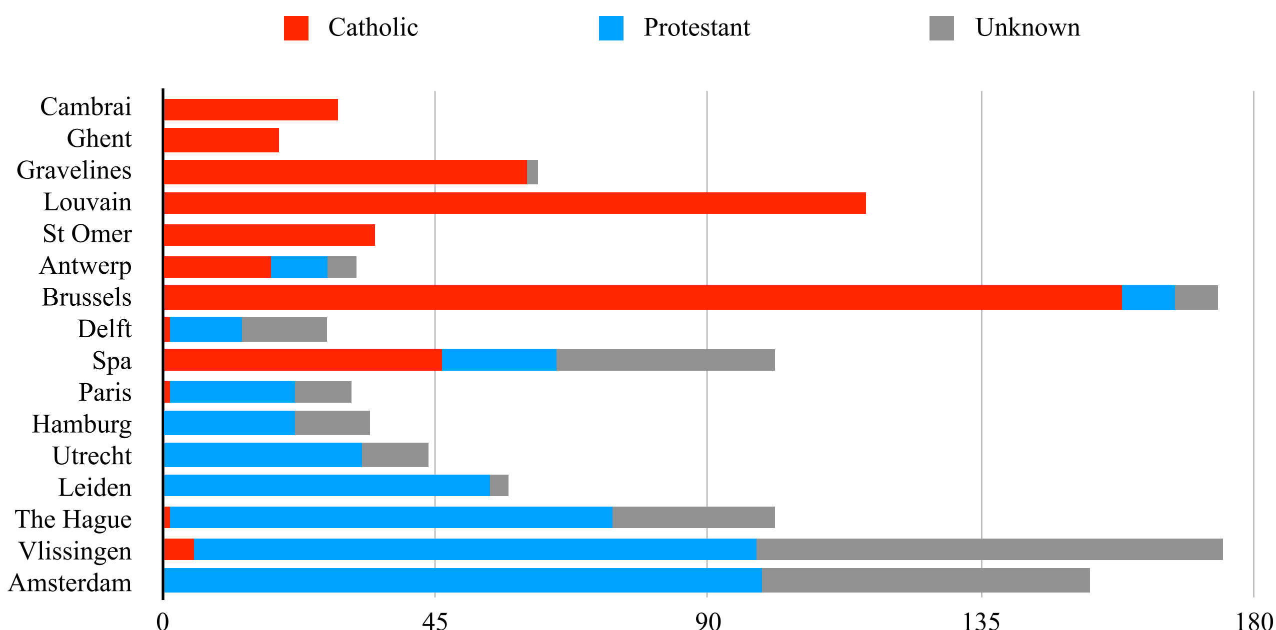

Fig. 3.7b. Travellers to towns, according to confessional identity.

particularly appreciated during her earlier tours of the Continent.[241] For most women however, responsibility for planning itineraries remained outside their agency. Travelling parties were led by men or undertaken for specific motives, such as joining family abroad or accompanying husbands on military duty, curtailing the possibility for recreational journeys with gendered aims. Very few women enjoyed the luxury or independence of the Countesses of Arundel or Pembroke, who were clearly able to design their own tours of Europe and make alterations to their itineraries based on personal preferences.

Arguably the woman who had the most decisive impact on the itineraries and destinations of women travellers at this time was Elizabeth Stuart. Her nuptial progress to Heidelberg in 1613

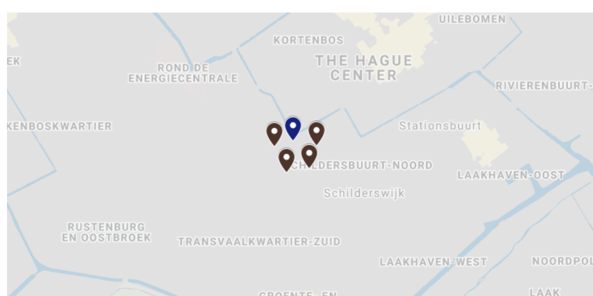

Fig. 3.8a. Visits to The Hague up to 1620

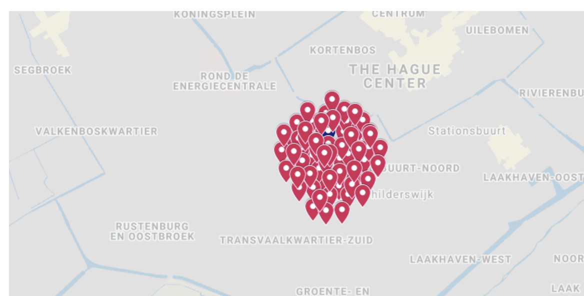

Fig. 3.8b. Visits to The Hague up to 1630.

helped raise the profile of the towns and cities she visited en route among with women within her

[241] BL, Add MS 4217 (*Whetenall Journal*). Among the sites both expressed interest in were the Church of S.Carlo Borromeo, Antwerp, and Siena, a city both acknowledged as well-suited to learning Italian.

sociability circle. More significantly, Elizabeth's decision to reestablish her court at The Hague, following her exile from Bohemia in 1621, transformed the town into a nexus for women travellers seeking work, patronage or offering their friendship. Visits by women to the town grew from just 5 before 1620 to 77 by 1630, as dramatically shown when mapped (Fig. 3.8a & 3.8b).

In summary, what the data reveals, as speculated in the introduction, is that considerations of safety, accessibility and confessional identity combined to shape the nature of female itineraries. Certain sites and cities were popularised by female elites creating the closest to any notion of gendered itineraries identified by historians of earlier forms of women's mobility, such as pilgrimage.

2.5 Status

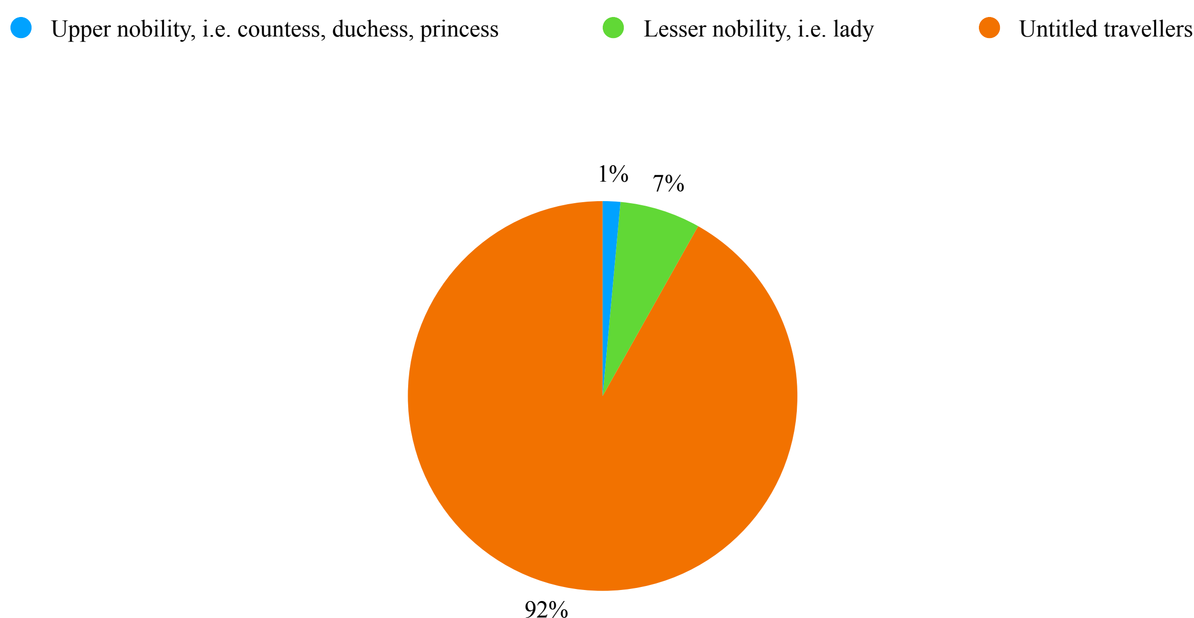

Fig. 3.9. Status of travellers.

As with establishing the religion of travellers, identifying their status presents a number of methodological challenges.[242] For the purposes of this study travellers have been grouped into three status categories: upper nobility, in other words senior members of the aristocracy such as the Countess of Arundel; lesser nobility, women of the 'middling' ranks and members of the gentry and

[242] For further analysis of the problem of class see: Calvert, Peter, *The Concept of Class: An Historical Introduction* (London, 1982).

governing classes, such as, Anna Gerard, Lady Carleton; and finally, untitled travellers. Although the status of women might also change over time, such as Beatrice Walcot (1575-1658), wife of the English ambassador to Spain Sir John Digby (1580-1653), who eventually achieved the title Countess of Bristol, the title used at the time of their journeys has been recorded.

With these caveats in mind, the database reveals that travel was not an exclusively privileged activity (Fig. 9). Roughly 1% of women were drawn from the upper tiers of society, whilst another 8% were drawn from the lesser nobility. The remaining 92% (1,913 journeys) were undertaken by women of untitled status, largely drawn from the ranks of soldiers' wives, household attendants or those associated with commercial traffic. Far from being an elite venture, travel in the early modern age was a far more 'democratic' enterprise. Only one member of the royal family, Elizabeth of Bohemia, journeyed abroad in 1613, the first female royal to do so since Katherine of Aragon travelled to France for the Field of the Cloth of Gold in 1520.

Motives for travelling were often markers of status. For example, 51% of all journeys connected with diplomatic activity were made by women of titled status. By contrast only one titled woman is known to have travelled overseas due to connections with trade and commerce - Anne Ferneley, Lady Gresham.[243] Destinations also correlated to status (Fig. 3.10). Women of higher status were far more likely to undertake more costly and elaborate journeys than their poorer counterparts. Italian towns and cities, apart from Mary Ward and her sisters, were almost exclusively the domain of titled travellers, with 5 out of the 6 visitors fitting this category. The exception being, Alice Carleton, who nevertheless was the sister of the English ambassador Sir Dudley. Travel associated with recreation and health was more common among women of this

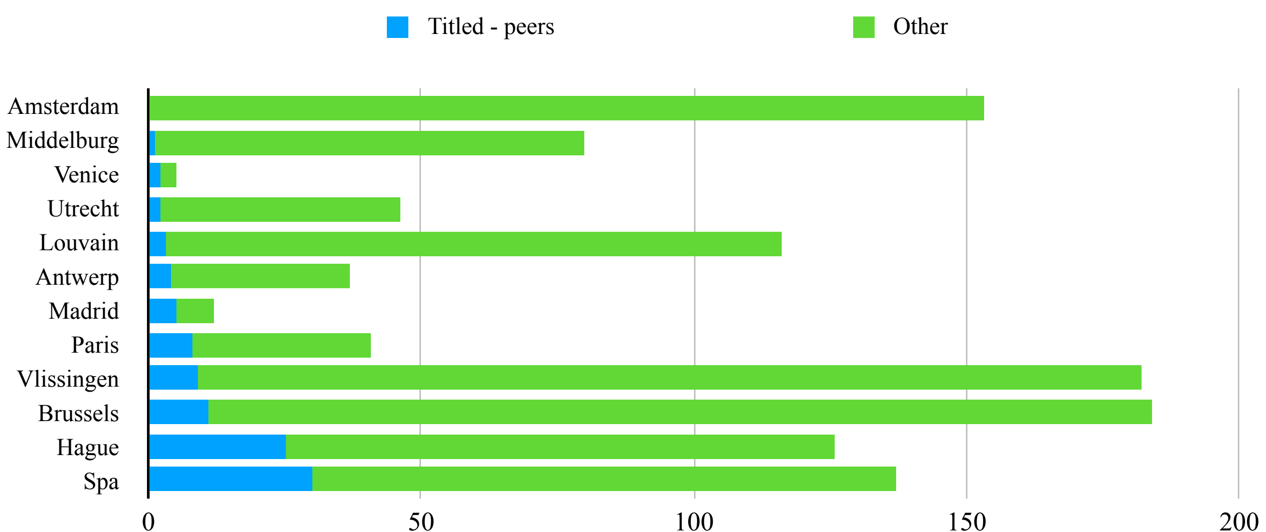

Fig. 3.10. Popular destinations arranged by status of travellers.

243 Alford, *London's Triumph*, pp.59-60.

status. Spa enjoyed a significantly higher percentage of titled visitors, at 28%. Likewise, towns and cities associated with political and diplomatic activity such as The Hague, where nearly a quarter of the visits were by women of high status. By contrast, towns with military or commercial significance were far less popular. Out of 173 visitors to Vlissingen, around 5% are of higher status, whilst out of 153 visitors to Amsterdam, no high status female visitors made it their principal destination.

2.5 Size of parties

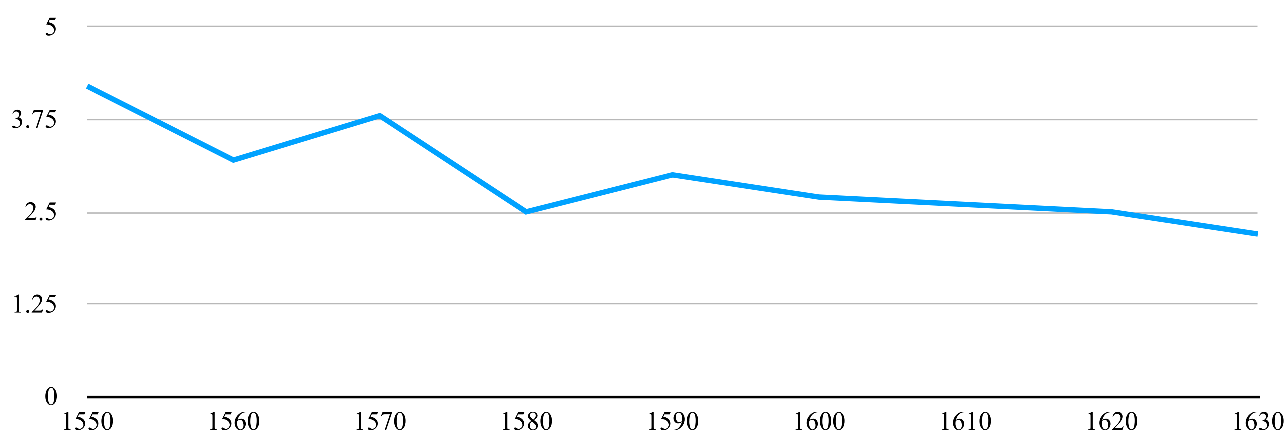

Fig. 3.11. Average size of parties.

The size of parties also serves as a valuable additional indicator of the status of women travellers. As one would expect, those travelling in larger groups, accompanied by household servants were principally drawn from the titled classes discussed above. The size and make-up of these groups can easily be established from the *Remembrancer Records* and the dates of departure used to determine if families or couples were travelling together or separately. Caution needs to be taken when establishing whether wives of soldiers serving overseas travelled alone or in the company of their husbands. Elizabeth Singer, wife of a soldier serving in the Netherlands, travelled to Woerden, 'to pass over thither with her husband'. However, her date of departure is given as 26 March 1621, whilst her husband is listed in a separate muster roll dated 24 March 1620, travelling with a company of 20 men led by Lieutenant Harding, to serve under Sir Edward Vere in Woerden on 24

March 1620.[244] Like many of the women listed in the records, she appears to have travelled separately to join her husband.

The numbers and identities of individuals permitted to travel were recorded with notable precision, and frequently provide the names of the principal licence holders, their family members and the number and even gender of the servants they could bring with them. The licence issued to Elizabeth Kynte in 1630, ‘to see her friends’ in Delft was typical of many, specifying who could also travel under the pass, in this case only ‘her sonne, twoe doughters and a maid servant’.[245] The numbers of women travelling with servants, approximates the numbers of women of titled status. The database reveals 148 references to the presence of servants among parties, which is closely in line with the 179 titled women identified earlier who one would expect to travel with either a male servant, maid or both. We sometimes see wives of military officers bringing servants with them as an indicator of their status and the size of the households they enjoyed whilst overseas. Typical of many was Frances Groves, who received a pass in 1629 to ‘goe unto her husband Sir John Conyers, knight, captaine of a troope of horse in the service of the States of the United Provinces’ accompanied by ‘a kinsman of hers’ in addition to ‘a waighting woman’, a male servant and a maid.[246]

The size of groups travelling abroad is generally quite small. The largest groups were in the region of 3 to 4 individuals and the average size across all women travellers was 2.5. Parties like that of Elizabeth Markham (c.1560-1630) sister of the spy, Sir Griffin Markham, were the exception and represent one of the largest parties in the database. In 1625, she travelled abroad with her husband, her son Ralph and ‘eighteene servantes and tronkes of apparrell and necessaries’.[247] What is interesting is that the size of parties gradually declines over time, suggesting that women were relying more on support from communities of servants already living abroad or that the challenges which required larger numbers of servants earlier in the period were perceived to have been mitigated (Fig. 3.11).

The frequency with which women travelled alone is one of the most notable findings. Of the 2,227 journeys in the database, 379 were made by unaccompanied women. A significant number, approximately 5%, of those travelling alone were widows. Some like Elizabeth Leigh were deterred

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[244] TNA, E 157/27 f.43; TNA, E 157/6 f.4.

[245] *APC* (1630/31), p.17.

[246] *APC* (1628/9), p.376.

[247] *APC* (1625/26), p.110.

neither by age nor the length of their journeys from setting off for abroad. Aged 72, Leigh travelled to Helsingor in Denmark in 1624 'to reside with her daughter'.[248] By contrast, some of the widows were tragically young. Judith Baker aged only 19 when she returned to her home in Vlissingen in 1623.[249]

3. Motives for women's travel

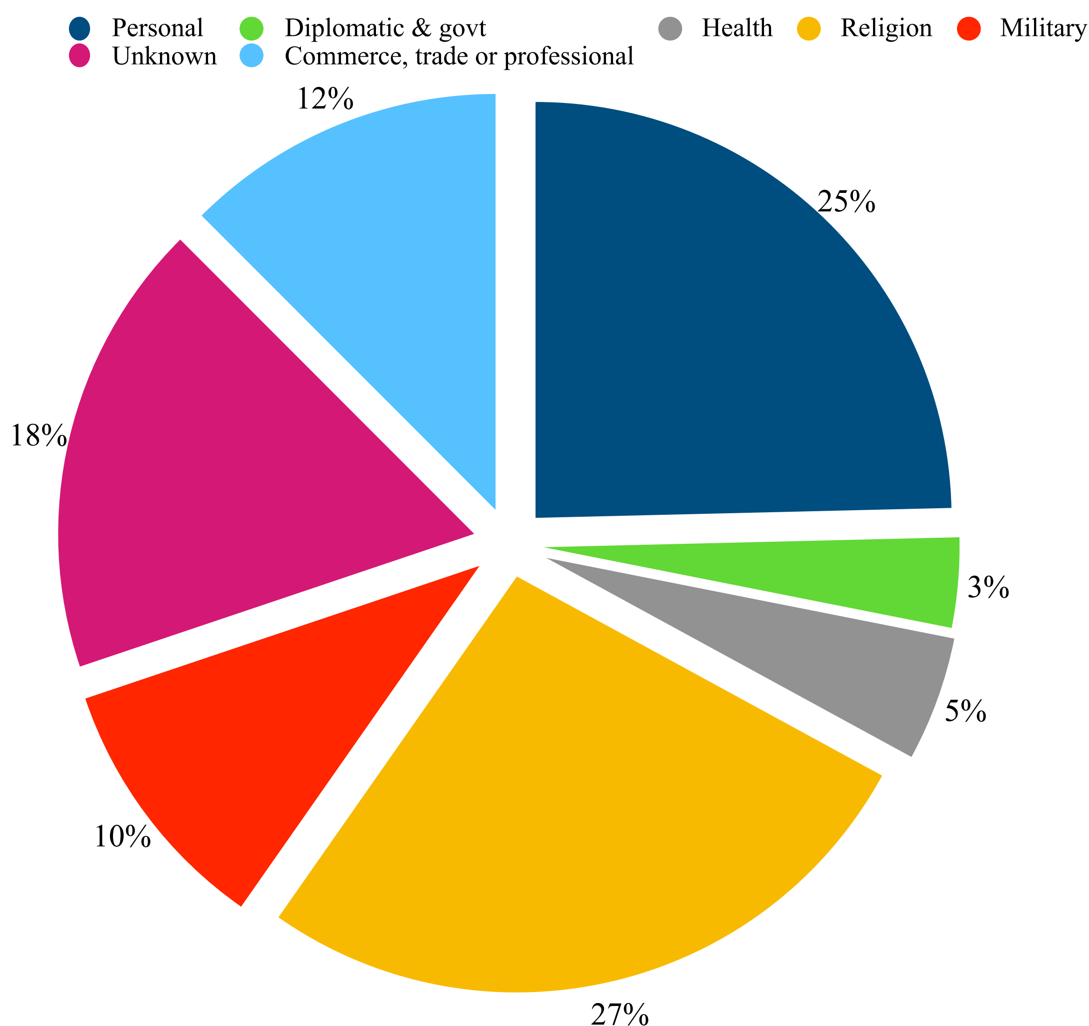

Fig. 3.12. Motives of travellers expressed as percentages of journeys.

Although it is important to distinguish between different motives for women's travel, such differences should not be over simplified. The process of categorisation presents many hurdles, not

248 TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

249 TNA, E 157/28 f.11.

least as the declared objective of a visit may vary from the actual one. The well-documented but little-known case of Joan Hone encapsulates this problem. In June 1623, Joan, widow of the Procter of the Arches, William Milbury, received a licence to travel to Spa with her servants, ostensibly to take the waters.[250] Among those travelling with her was her niece, Elizabeth Hone, who would later enter a convent in Gravelines in 1629.[251] As it later emerged, Joan Hone was part of an extensive underground network, involved in educating children of recusant families and chaperoning them abroad. Her duplicitous activities first came to light, on her return to England in August 1623, when customs officers at Dover seized 'Popish pictures' from amongst her personal possessions.[252] Lord Wallingford, whose own Catholic-leaning wife had travelled to Spa that same summer, interceded and the items were returned, possibly implying that Joan was smuggling goods on behalf of influential peers.[253] She escaped prosecution, but the authorities maintained a close eye on her activities over the next four years, as the copious references to her in the *State Papers* suggest. With the assistance of her brother William, an accomplished lawyer, Joan initially managed to evade prosecution for recusancy.[254] Eventually, her luck ran out when it was discovered she had taken into her care the son of Sir William Foster 'to be brought up in the Roman Catholic religion'.[255] A mysterious trunk was discovered at a house in Long Acre, containing '£200 in gold and £120 in plate' as well as documents linking its contents to Joan. During the investigation the owner of the house, Christopher Neighbour, claimed the trunk had been deposited for security at this house by one, 'Monsieur Garniere,' the late attorney general to Queen Henrietta Maria, 'as a pawn for a child called Nall Foster'.[256] Joan, or her accomplices, were clearly keen to recover the trunk and its contents and offered one hundred pounds to Sir John Coke, Master of Requests, as an inducement to release the trunk.[257] Unfortunately, Joan Hone died before the trunk was returned and references to the affair disappear after 1627. What the case succinctly reveals, however, is that travel abroad may have masked a complex web of activities involving senior members of the Anglo-Catholic

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[250] *APC* (1623/5), p.4.

[251] Goodrich, Jaime, 'A Poor Clare's Legacy: Catherine Magdalen Evelyn and New Directions in Early Modern Women's History' in *English Literary Renaissance*,Vol.46, No.1 (Jan 2016), p.10, n.26.

[252] *CSPD* (1623-5), p.61.

[253] *CSPD* (1621-23), p.586.

[254] *CSPD* (1625-6), p.452.

[255] Ibid, p.437.

[256] Ibid, p.449.

[257]*CSPD* (1627-8), p.230.

establishment. Joan's journey to Belgium to enjoy the waters at Spa, concealed a hidden cross-Channel network of accomplices and activities aimed at conveying the children of Catholic families overseas and smuggling outlawed texts and artefacts back into the country.

As well as the difficulties of unpicking the actual as opposed to declared reason for travel, a second major problem is that motives might be multifaceted and evolve as journeys progressed. The first continental journey undertaken by Aletheia Talbot, Countess of Arundel in 1613-14 perfectly illustrates this point. The official purpose was to escort Elizabeth Stuart on her nuptial progress to Heidelberg. In private, many suspected the Countess and her husband intended to use the trip to visits sites of cultural interest and add to their renowned collection of art, a fact confirmed by the presence of Inigo Jones in their party.[258] Following the completion of their official duties, the Arundels travelled to Spa in June 1613, to benefit from a course of the waters.[259] Afterwards, they toured Italy together before the Countess retreated to a Sienese monastery in the winter of 1613 to 'better learn the [Italian] language'.[260] Her travels resumed the following spring, when she visited Rome during Holy Week. After this she rejoined her husband and made her way back to England, attending a royal reception hosted by the French queen. By the autumn of 1614, she was back in the Arundel home in Highgate once again.[261] In summary, what began as a state progress, evolved into a health trip, a site-seeing tour of Italy, an opportunity for educational improvement, religious pilgrimage and a diplomatic reception. How does one catalogue such a multifaceted journey?

Fortunately, not all journeys were as complex as those undertaken by the Countess of Arundel, and in the vast majority of cases one prevailing motive is clearly identifiable, allowing us to categorise different types of journeys and evaluate them quantitatively. This process is also supported by the fact that certain datasets ally themselves more firmly to particular objectives, for instance the licences to travel in the *Acts of the Privy Council* and *State Papers* often relate to diplomatic or health travel whilst those of the *Remembrancer Records* to commercial or military motives. For the purposes of this survey, six principal motives have been identified: diplomatic, health, military, personal, commercial and religious (Fig. 3.12). These may be further subdivided, for instance personal motives can be explored in terms of social and recreational, financial and even educational, whilst health includes both those whose sought treatments and those who provided

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[258] Birch, Thomas, *The court and times of James the First*, I (London, 1848), p.255.

[259] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.154.

[260] *HMC Cowper*, I, p.80.

[261] Ibid, p.83

medical assistance such as nurses and midwives. Where no clear motive is identifiable, the purpose of journeys has simply been listed as unknown.

3.1 Diplomacy

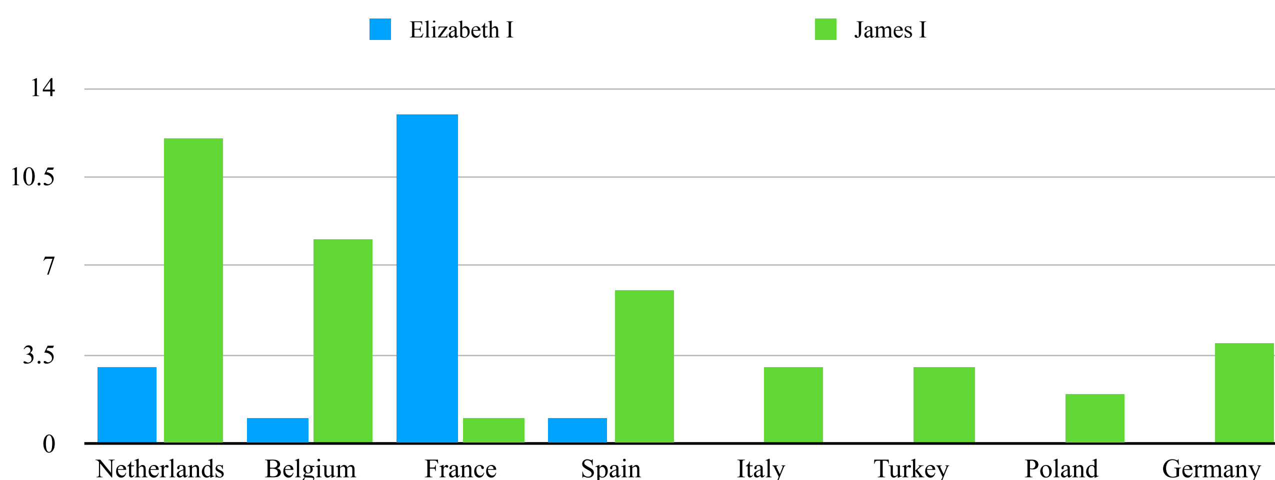

Fig. 3.13. Journeys made by female diplomatic staff during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I.

Women who fall into this category were largely those associated with a burgeoning network of permanent overseas residences. The scale and geographical remove of these embassies grew significantly during James I's reign, necessitating the increased presence of wives and other family members as well as female household servants (Fig. 3.13).

Although the figures are relatively small, the patterns of mobility associated with women in this category notably mirror developments in English foreign policy. Intense periods of diplomatic activity, such as those surrounding Elizabeth's betrothal to the Duke of Alençon or the Spanish Match during James' reign, go far to explain the increase in numbers of women travelling as part of diplomatic households to those countries. Flashpoints in foreign policy, such as the expulsion of Elizabeth Stuart and her court from Bohemia to The Hague in 1621 are also reflected in patterns of women's travel (Figs. 3.8a and 3.8b). Long-term trends, such as the ever-closer political ties with the Netherlands, are also identifiable from the numbers of women within family groups moving to the region in the course of James' reign. The geographical range of embassies grows too, with new ambassadorial outposts in Poland and Turkey staffed by women as well as men.

Much of the information regarding women travelling within diplomatic households relates to ambassadors' wives, or 'ambassadresses', the subject of Chapter 5. Out of 57 journeys by women associated with diplomatic households, 49 fall into this category. However, evidence relating to personal attendants and female domestic staff is also discernible from the database, and is explored in greater detail in the aforementioned chapter. Among the best documented are Elizabeth Devick and Phyllis ('Phippe') Wolley, who served as ladies-in-waiting to Magdalen Wood (d.1614), wife of Sir Thomas Edmondes, the English ambassador first to Brussels (1605-9) and then Paris (1609-17). Devick's movements can be traced largely due to the fact that she was married to Trumbull's chief secretary, Jean Beaulieu. Family members also made up embassy staff and sometimes performed important ancillary functions. Magdalen Wood's sister, Anne came to Paris in the summer of 1610, and remained there for several years. When the Countess of Arundel visited Paris in 1613, Anne was given responsibility for entertaining her and organising her reception at the French court due to the indisposition of her sister at the time.[262] Similarly, Alice Carleton, sister of the English ambassador to Venice, Sir Dudley, lived in the city for at least two years from 1615-16, continuing to facilitate the purchase of luxury goods for her brother's English clients long after he had left his post.[263] Sadly, many of the names remain fleeting references, such as 'Mrs Louise' a member of the domestic staff in the Edmondes' household, whose presence is known only from a brief reference in the *Trumbull Papers* in August 1613, noting she was 'sickly'.[264]

3.2 Health

In common with diplomacy, travel for reasons of health is among the best documented in the database and likewise is the subject of an individual chapter in this thesis. It is also one of the more complex motives for travel, incorporating those who superficially travelled for therapeutic reasons but concealed a confessional agenda. In spite of these complexities, women whose formally declared purpose on licences was to travel to Spa have been counted in this category. As seen in Fig. 3.14, the growth in the popularity of travel to Spa among women was considerable, especially in the

[262] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.35.

[263] Chamberlain refers to a consignment of 'glasses' [mirrors] sent from Alice in Venice in Feb 1615. *Chamberlain*, I, p.574.

[264] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.181.

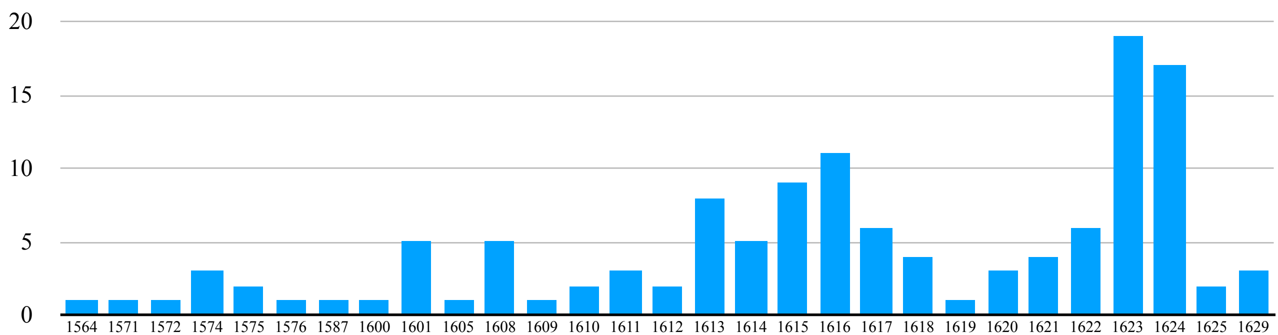

Fig. 3.14. Travellers to Spa (1564-1629).

latter half of James' reign. The decline in numbers between 1617 and 1622 may relate to gaps in the records of the *Acts of the Privy Council*. If, as will be explained in Chapter 5, we look more holistically at references to women's travel to Spa in other sources, the impression is of steady and continued growth in travel to the town across the first quarter of the seventeenth century.

An intriguing and perhaps overlooked dimension of women's travel associated with health relates to the practice of medical care. Sometimes this involved women who were part of household groups that included doctors travelling abroad to offer their services to wealthy overseas clients. Among this group was Jane Richards (d.after 1586), wife of the celebrated doctor Bomelius, who travelled to Russia with her husband in 1572, where he was serving as physician to Ivan IV.[265] Tragically, Bomelius was accused of treason and died in custody, leaving Jane stranded in Moscow for another four years until she was rescued by the English ambassador, Sir Jerome Bowes. Cross-referencing *Remembrancer Records* with the *Acts of the Privy Council* can provide valuable new evidence of women's travel in this category. In June 1624, Elizabeth Damson and Martha Smith, both maid servants listed in the *Records*, received licences to travel to Russia.[266] In their party were Arthur and Jane Dee, children of the famous Dr John Dee. With them travelled Randolph Wardley and his wife, Alice. Wardley was another well-known apothecary at the Russian court and an associate of Dee's son. Their eight-year-old daughter Mary appears three years later in the *Acts of the Privy Council*, where she was issued with a pass 'to goe into Russia, where her father and mother liveth in the company of Doctor Dee'.[267] Sadly we know nothing more of Mary's journey or indeed who accompanied her to this remote corner of Eastern Europe. However, taken together the licences hint at an established flow of overseas traffic among English families associated with medical practice.

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265 Levin et al, *Exemplary Lives*, p.60.

266 TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

267 *APC* (1627), p.351.

Aside from being part of medical households, women travelled overseas to provide maternity care as midwives and wet nurses. Among these was Elizabeth Watson, who may have been employed as a wet nurse within Sir Edward de Vere's (1581-1629) household at The Hague. She was granted permission to travel to the city in 1624 'with her sucking child'.[268] Midwives were valued figures among female circles, and for those that could afford them, their presence was sought after whatever the costs. When the ambassadress Beatrice Walcot lost her child in Spain in 1611, Chamberlain ruefully attributed the tragedy to the absence of suitable medical care and that she 'went thither unprovided of midwife or nurse'.[269] When Debora Downe successfully gave birth to a baby girl in 1616 without the presence of her usual midwife, her ambassadorial colleagues were clearly relieved at the outcome: 'Both my wife and I salute with much affection Mrs Trumbulls happie deliverie, in despite of those who debaushed [rejected] her midwife'.[270]

Women with midwifery skills were highly sought after by English expatriates. Elizabeth Cockin's skills as a nurse led to her travelling as far away as Russia in March 1630.[271] Lady Burgh, lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth Stuart, was given strict instructions to bring 'a midwife with her' to assist with the birth of her first child in Heidelberg in 1613.[272] Eventually 'a skillful Englishe Midwife' was found by the name of Mrs Mercer, a woman with 'an excellent good report both for skill, carriage and religion'.[273] Mercer's departure was noted by John Chamberlain, who described her not only as 'a famous midwife of this towne' but one who 'hath large allowance'.[274] The Exchequer accounts confirm the value placed on her services, noting she was paid £84 4s, to cover the costs of her journey, along with six other persons accompanying her from London to Heidelberg and back again.[275]

Although the figures for midwives and nurses are very small, only 6 in the entire database, plus incidental references to individuals adopting nursing roles, the level of detail we have on their

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[268] TNA E 157/13 f.22.

[269] *Chamberlain*, I ,p.326-7.

[270] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.12.

[271] TNA, E 157/15 f.79.

[272] *Chamberlain*, I, 489; SP14/75 f.52.

[273] TNA, SP 14/75 f.64.

[274] *Chamberlain*, I, p.494.

[275] Devon, Frederick, *Issues of the Exchequer; being payments made out of his Majesty's Revenue during the reign of King James I* (London, 1836), p.185.

identities and experiences underscores the importance attached to this particular role for women travelling overseas far from their familiar female support networks.

3.3 Military

This category accounts for 10% percent of all those in the database, and a similar proportion amongst entries in the *Remembrancer Records*, where travel for military purposes is more likely to be found. These women were largely wives or daughters of English mercenaries serving in the Dutch army. In many cases, the enumerator clearly identifies the military connections of these women by stating their relationship to the men who they were travelling with or to. For instance Jane Beacon is recorded as the twenty-one-year-old wife of John Beacon, ‘ a souldier in Utrecht’ who she joined there in January 1623.[276] It is not uncommon to find entries for military wives in the *Acts of the Privy Council*, but their husbands were generally of officer status. Typical of many is the licence granted to Lieutenant Edmonde Lewis and his unnamed wife who in 1629 to travelled to the

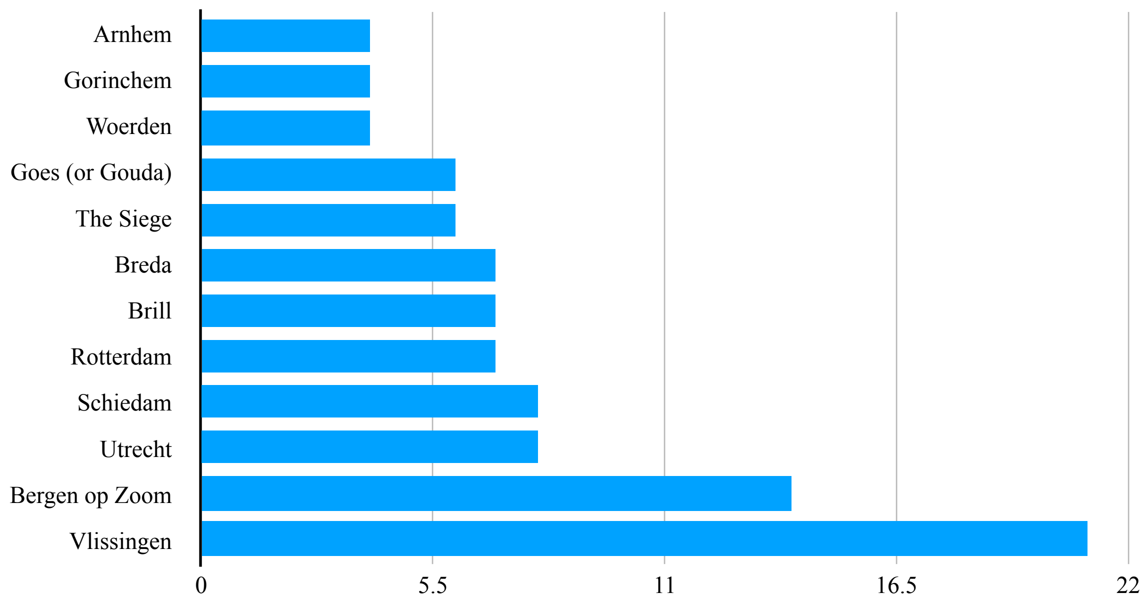

Fig. 3.15. Destinations mentioned on licences.

[276] TNA, E 157/28 f.11.

United Provinces along with 4 servants and 6 other soldiers, to serve under Captain Edward Gouldwell.[277]

Certain towns clearly had a strong correlation with women connected to military households (Fig. 3.15). Among the most popular are Vlissingen, Bergen op Zoom, Utrecht and Brill where military garrisons existed. Vlissingen and Brill, the so-called Cautionary Towns, had the largest military presence, and so their popularity with English travellers providing services for the garrisons or seeking their security, should come as no surprise. However, following their return to the Dutch in 1616, one might have expected, as many contemporaries did, that English involvement in the towns would decline. There was certainly a detectable decrease in visits by English women immediately after this date (Fig 3.16). However, the ending of the Twelve Years' Truce between Holland and Spain in 1621, paradoxically led to a renewed upsurge in travel to the town, as numbers of mercenary troops and supplies increased in preparation for expected hostilities, shown by 3 peaks in visits of 18 and 45 in 1621 and 1624 and a continuing upward trend thereafter into the reign of Charles. In all, over 80% of the women travelling to Vlissingen do so following the renewal of hostilities, suggesting that international peace treaties were no barrier to women's travel

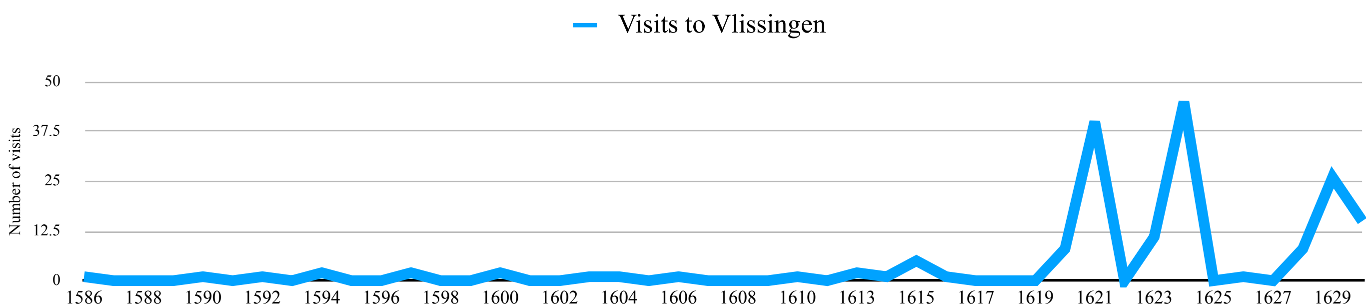

Fig. 3.16. Journeys to Vlissingen.

at this time.

A remarkable number of women in this category travelled alone, 63 out of 194. Many travelled with their families and a few were even pregnant when they made the perilous journey abroad. Lady Baskerville (d.1632), wife of the governor of Rammekens Castle near Vlissingen, was 'great with child' when she journeyed out to St Valéry, France to be with her husband in 1596, where she gave birth to a son, christened appropriately enough, Hannibal.[278] Sadly, Lady Baskerville also returned alone, as her husband died the following year.[279] The demise of serving

[277] *APC* (1628/9), p.397.

[278] Collins, *Letters and Memorials*, II, p.16; BL, Harley MS 4762, fols. 69–74.

[279] *HMC Salisbury*, VII, p.242.

husbands sometimes necessitated journeys abroad by their next of kin to recover belongings and settle finances. In 1611, following the death of her husband, a captain in garrison at Vlissingen, the widow Johnson was unremitting in her insistence that moneys and goods belonging to her late husband be made over to her. The exasperation felt by the military establishment at her persistence is palpable. In October 1612, Throckmorton, one of the deputy governors at Vlissingen, wrote to his superior Sir Robert Sidney, 'Good my lord, I could wish you would give an end to the business of Captain Johnson's widow'.[280]

Some women included in this category appear to have travelled out of a curiosity, engaging in the sort of battlefield tourism that characterised later conflicts. In 1624, having been entertained at a specially-organised dinner by Sir Edward Cecil, the Countess of Oxford was treated to a visit to the frontline where she 'went to the trenches, and then to look on the enemy', taking evident delight in witnessing the antics of Sir William Brounker and Dr Turnor who both rode as close as they dared to the frontline, dodging bullets in an effort to impress their female visitor with their bravery.[281]

One of the most curious examples of women travelling overseas associated with military activity concerns Elizabeth Leech. She had been arrested for felony and was awaiting sentencing in a London gaol, when in 1629 she was press-ganged along with fellow male prisoners into the service of the Swedish King. Warrants were issued to the sheriffs of London and Middlesex to convey 47 prisoners, among them Leech, to the Swedish ambassador 'to the end that they might be employed in the service of the King of Sweden'.[282] What role Leech was assigned is not stated, though it is likely she performed domestic duties to support the soldiers forced into the service of the Swedish army.

To minimise the risks of exposing families to the dangers of frontline conflict, English communities emerged within the Dutch heartlands. Utrecht had particular appeal to military governors, officers and their families. Among those who congregated in the town were Sir John Ogle and his Dutch wife, Elizabeth de Vries, and that of wife the military commander, Sir Edward Cecil and his wife Theodosia Noel. Families such as these kept highly cultivated and popular households and were regularly visited by members of the English establishment. Among the visitors was Lady Cecil's sister-in-law, Lady Frances, who stayed with the family whilst her husband

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[280] *HMC De L'Isle*, V, p.64.

[281] *HMC Portland*, II, p.114.

[282] *CSPD* (1628-9), p.568.

sojourned in Spa. Inklings of the sophisticated entertainments offered can be gleaned from *HMC Downshire*. In 1613, Cecil requested Trumbull send him 'lute strings that come from Rome', adding that 'when you come to Utricke you shall enjoy our music'.[283] The households were closely embedded into local culture. The close ties which English families made with their Dutch counterparts are demonstrated by the fact that both Elizabeth de Vries and Theodosia Noel named children in honor of their host municipality - Utricia and Utriche respectively. Ogle's biographer even goes so far as to describe him as a 'nexus between England and the Netherlands'.[284] Clearly the presence of cultured and politically important families like the Cecils and Ogles helped to popularise the town with other English travellers. Before their arrival, no women travellers are known in the town, but by 1630, that tally had risen to 30. Unsurprisingly, Utrecht was one of the towns the Countess of Pembroke considered as a possible wintering hole during her European tour.

3.4 Personal - Recreational & Social

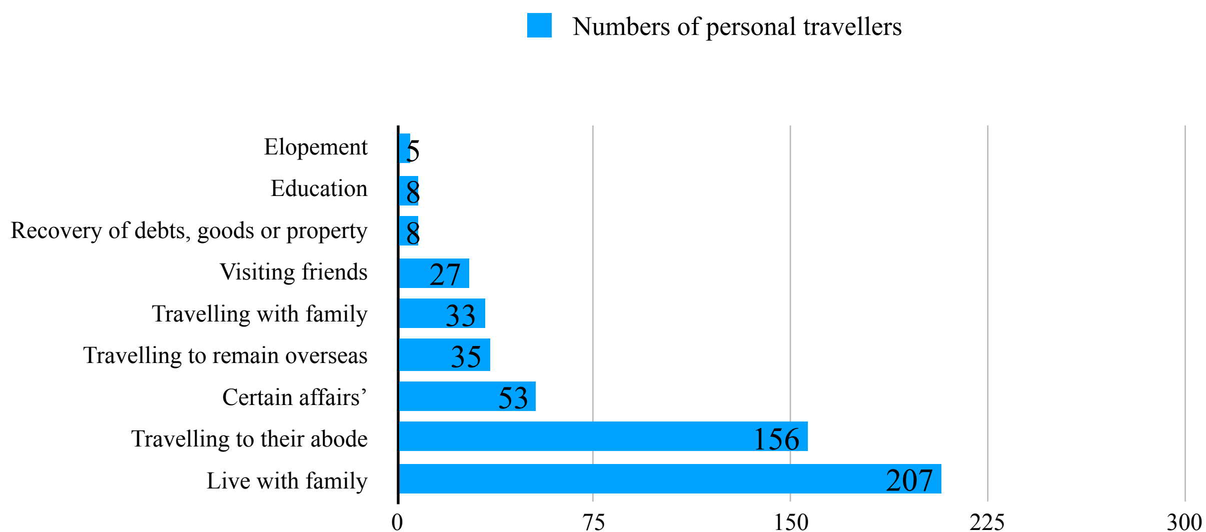

Fig 3.17. Personal motives.

Travel for personal reasons is arguably the most complex motive of all and covers approximately 25% of those in the database. Personal relates to those who travelled for non-occupational reasons or due to highly specific, one-off objectives. Many of those in this category were travelling to join

[283] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.250.

[284] Trim, D.J., 'Sir John Ogle' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-20611 (last accessed Mar 2024).

friends or family already living and working abroad but for whom no obvious professional or commercial activity can be identified. It is highly likely, as shall be seen, that many women within this category were part of households connected with international commerce and that the purpose of their journey overseas was to join husbands and other family members already engaged in those activities.

The interdependence of families either side of the Channel and the transnational support networks that connected them is one of the most striking features to emerge from the findings of the database. The phrase 'to remane with' along with a specified family member is commonly listed among the purposes of travel, suggesting that overseas residence was no barrier to the family networks upon which early modern society depended. Most frequently, women who were travelling abroad to join family members did so to be reunited with husbands. Among them Anne Jones, thirty-year-old wife of Henrie Jones, living in Rotterdam, who she joined in the spring of 1629.[285] More than 140 women in this category express as a motive the fact they were returning to husbands, presumably working overseas, often with children and family members. Joan Custis, typified many such women who travelled in the autumn of 1627 with her 5 children to Delft to join her husband Henry Custis, 'who liveth there'.[286]

Many of the women crossing overseas appear through age or circumstance to be highly vulnerable, among them widows and young girls. Overseas family networks provided a vital form of support and social welfare that might otherwise have been absent had they stayed in England. In 1624, the 19-year-old, Richard Haseldale, returned to England to bring his widowed mother back to Bergen with him where he was establishing a business as a feltmaker.[287] Similarly, in 1626, Katherin Harvisse, 'a poor distressed widowe' was permitted 'to passe over the seas to the citty of Prague with her three children to finde relief there from her later husband's friends'.[288] At a time of growing concern over poor relief, we see in these records an interesting international solution to the problem. The transnational character of kinship networks, allowed orphans, widows and other vulnerable members of society, to see family contacts abroad as a viable source of support when the need arose.

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[285] TNA, E 157/14 f.88.

[286] *APC* (1627), p.65.

[287] TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

[288] *APC* (1625/6), p.337.

Recreational and social activities relating to Spa will be looked at in closer detail in Chapter 4, but what is perhaps striking is the proportion of women who declare the chief purpose of travel was to visit friends and family abroad. One suspects that some of this socialising was related to religious mobility. Such as that of Mrs Southcote who in 1610 visited the convent of St Monica's, Louvain, in the company of Mrs Brokesby, niece of the prioress of St Monica's, 'both being come here to Louvain to see their friends'.[289] Other women, with less suspect intentions often cite this as a reason to travel. For instance, in 1630, Elizabeth Kynte received a pass to travel to Delft 'to see her friends there' whilst the following year, Anne Dee, Anne Holloway and Katherin Bush were granted permission to travel as far afield as Russia 'to remayne with their friends there'.[290] Children were not excluded from the chance of social visits overseas. Eve Barnards and her sibling Peter, were chaperoned to Middelburg by their Dutch maid 'to visit their frende' in October 1621 before returning.[291] The insistence that these visits were for reasons of sociability may sometimes have disguised other intentions, but the fact that such visits were officially declared in this way suggests a widespread acceptance of this motive for travelling.

Wealthy elites remained the most likely to travel for solely recreational purposes. The presence of Elizabeth Stuart at The Hague, provided a unique opportunity to strengthen or expand sociability networks. Philadelphia Carey, Lady Wharton (d. 1654) appears to have been the first to pay her respects, having been a member of Elizabeth's original retinue in 1613.[292] She visited twice, once shortly after her arrival and again in 1624.[293] Similarly, Elizabeth Cecil (1578-1646), wife of the jurist Sir Edward Coke, travelled to The Hague in 1623 and again in 1627.[294] For some women, an audience with the exiled Queen of Bohemia seems to have become a staple requirement of their European tours. In 1624, Margaret Wharton (1581-1659), the half-sister of Sir Henry Wotton, paid her respects to Elizabeth Stuart, en route to Spa along with Ladies Hatton, Purbeck, Wallingford and Harington.[295]

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[289] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, pp.116 and 123.

[290] *APC* (1630/31), pp.17 and 374.

[291] TNA, E 157/ 27 f.43.

[292] Green, Mary Anne Everett, *Elizabeth, Electress Palatine and Queen of Bohemia* (London, 1909), Appendix A, p.415.

[293] Oman, *Elizabeth of Bohemia*, p.253.

[294] TNA, SP 84/115 f.172; Aughterson, K., 'Lady Elizabeth Hatton' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-68059 (last accessed Mar 2024).

[295] Green, *Queen of Bohemia*, p.218.

Even if not declared in the original licences, travel for leisure purposes was clearly a feature of many of the journeys undertaken by women at this time. The two continental journeys undertaken by the Countess of Arundel have already been alluded to, but less well known is the Countess of Pembroke's tour of France and the Low Countries between 1614 and 1616. Her itinerary appears to have been shaped by sociability networks, practical necessity and the lure of popular tourist destinations. Trumbull's secretary reported that the Countess intended to move to Pougues-les-Eaux, Nevers, 330 miles away in central France, 'being in some distast of the ruggedness of the countrie of Spa,' suggesting her itinerary was dictated by matters of personal choice as much as practical necessity.[296]

Ambassadors' wives were especially well placed to indulge in travel for their own gratification. On his return journey to England in 1628, the English ambassador to Istanbul, Thomas Roe was keen to offer his wife Eleanor Cave (d.1675) the prospect of some sightseeing, promising to 'return by land, and see somewhat of pleasure for her past patience'.[297] Having disembarked at the Tuscan city of Livorno, the couple proceeded to Florence, where they were entertained by the Grand Duchess herself before following an extensive itinerary that took in Venice, Padua, Vicenza, Verona, Brescia, Bergamo and Turin. They eventually arrived in England early in January 1629, having also passed through Switzerland and Germany.[298] The Roes were not the only ambassadorial couples to take advantage of the opportunities for tourism afforded by their diplomatic roles. In 1616, the Carletons, took time out from their duties to explore the countryside around The Hague, describing these journeys as 'petty progresses'.[299] Among the towns they visited were Harlem, Amsterdam, Utrecht and Leyden, where they soaked up the local sights and cultural offerings.

A curious subsection within this category relates to elopement. Although numbers were again small, only 5 in total, the involvement of such high profile figures as Arbella Stuart, a close relative of King James, captured the public's imagination and arguably helped shape perceptions of women travelling as something unorthodox and even rebellious. Among those who feature in this category was a woman named variously as Mrs Packington or Mistress Pagnum. In reality, she was Ursula Chichely, wife of Robert Packenham.[300] In April 1577, she eloped to Calais with the

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[296] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.253.

[297] Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p.185.

[298] Ibid, p.188.

[299] Maurice, *Jacobean letters*, p.218.

[300] Starza Smith, Daniel, *John Donne and the Conway Papers* (Oxford, 2014), p.40, n.38.

Anthony Bourne, son of a former Privy Councillor to Mary Tudor, Sir John Bourne. It seems the couple's departure was supported by the French government, who saw Bourne as a valuable source of intelligence. The French ambassador in London, Mauvissiere, provided him with his passport, and informed Catherine de' Medici 'he is in displeasure with certain of the Council in England, for which such of his friends are like him well disposed to the King of France'.[301]

Of equal interest was the case of Francelliana Townsend who fled abroad in order to marry the Catholic exile Edmund Neville, son of one of the chief perpetrators of the Northern Rebellion (1569). Having first married Jane Smythe (d.c.1646) Edmund then bigamously married Francelliana. The two appear to be living abroad by 1607 and are included in a government list of 'Persons of note'.[302] As with Southwell and Dudley, it was feared the couple might be a focus for Catholic opposition and their movements were closely monitored by Trumbull and his informants. James Wadsworth's *The English Spanish pilgrime* (1630), which lists many fugitives living in the Spanish Netherlands singles out 'his second wife', Franceline, who he accused of 'playing the shee Physitian in the Archdutches Court'.[303]

Not all cases were such high profile ones. Continental elopement was probably far more common than is recorded, and is only betrayed by incidental comments in documents such as the *Remembrancer Records*. Typical of these is the tragic story of John Bamford, who in 1575 was granted permission to travel overseas to recover his wife along with 'one Stapleton' with whom she was living, 'to the end he may persuade them to return'.[304] Though limited in number, these cases of elopement spoke to a popular narrative that women's travel was subversive and destabilising, something which will be explored further in Chapter 4.

3.5 Personal - Financial, Recovery of Debts and Belongings

A significant number of women travelled abroad to resolve personal financial matters. The phrase 'about certen her affaires', along with 'and so to returne againe' is a common indicator of this type

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[301] *CSPF*, XI (1575-7), p.558.

[302] TNA, SP 77/8 f.418.

[303] Wadsworth, James, *The English Spanish pilgrime. Or, A new discoverie of Spanish popery, and Jesuiticall stratagems ...* (London, 1629), p.69.

[304] TNA, E 157/1 f.4.

of traveller, which occurs at least 53 times in the database. Typical of many who fall into this category is Ann Rand, a twenty-two-year-old woman from Whitechapel who travelled overseas in the winter of 1629. We know little about her background other than she lodged at a house belonging to one Mr Fletcher 'at the signe of the half moone' before making her way 'versus ye Hague about certen her affares, & so to retune agane'.[305] The exact nature of these affairs is rarely clear. The fact that licences are registered in the *Remembrancer Records*, a subdivision of the Exchequer, may suggest they relate to personal financial issues, connected with an overseas family enterprise or a change in circumstances such as a bereavement of a relative living abroad. Very often the destinations tally with trading hubs such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam or Delft, suggesting their journeys were connected with family members engaged in certain commercial activities.

Many of the women in this category were acting a runners or chaperones for family enterprises. Among those in this category is Hester de Pre (b.1585), wife of Jacob de Pre and resident of Fenchurch Street, London. Hester is recorded as travelling alone to Rotterdam on 16 May 1629 'to visit her family and so to returne'.[306] Cross-referencing Ester's surname with entries in the *Returns of Aliens* for 1617, the de Pre family can be traced to the same London street, where a vibrant Dutch community of tradesmen and professionals appears to have lived.[307] There were 8 'aliens' living in the street including the de Pre family. Ester's English identify is confirmed by the fact she is listed as 'borne here' although the nationality of her 3 children is not stipulated. Jacob is described as a schoolmaster, one of two living on the same street, and that he had lived in the country for 5 years. Unfortunately we do not know the circumstances of Hester's visit to Rotterdam. It may have been prompted by a death in the family or it could have been connected to the school run by her husband, as often children attending such schools were boarders whose parents worked overseas.[308] It was perhaps for this reason that Sara Kettell, escorted the sons of a Dutchman, van Arwick to Amsterdam in 1621, 'and so to return'.[309]

It is not unusual to find women deputising for husbands in the recovery of goods or even individuals. The *Acts of the Privy Council* reveal the fascinating story of Ann, wife of the royal physician, Thomas Cademan, who was granted a licence in 1629 to 'goe over to Bruxells to bring

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[305] TNA, E157/28 f.11.

[306] TNA, E 157/14 f.88.

[307] *Returns of Aliens*, p.174.

[308] See Grell, Peter Ole, *Dutch Calvinists in Early Stuart London: The Dutch Church in Austin Friars (1603-42)* (Leiden, 1989), pp.106-119.

[309] TNA, E 157/27 f.43.

over a doughter of theires from thence, and also some Books and moneyes due to her husband … which the said Anne Cademan hopeth by her journey to get'.[310] Thomas Cademan, was by this time physician to Henrietta Maria and a known recusant. The books and money Anne had been tasked to retrieve may well have been connected to Cademan's medical practice, but given his Catholic leanings it was deemed safer for his wife to make this journey and collect the undisclosed items along with their daughter.

The unexpected death of a family member might also occasion a journey overseas to settle family debts and collect remaining items. Mary Holcombe was granted permission to travel to Spa in 1617 'for the recovery of some money and certeyne goods of her syster's' following her sibling's death, presumably whilst receiving treatments at the town's popular springs.[311] Due to the high numbers of men being contracted to fight in overseas armies, many of the women who ventured abroad were probably widows seeking payment of salaries or war pensions. Their desperate plight is evident in the wording of some of the licences. Elizabeth Bicknell received a pass 'to goe over the seas and to remaine there 3 monethes to recover a debt due unto her from the States and to take with her, her 3 children and one servant'.[312] The fact that she was travelling in February, one of the most dangerous times to make the crossing hints at her urgency, as does a note on her pass which states 'without it appeare that the children are living, she can not recover the debt'.[313] Wives might also petition for the release of captive husbands. For example, in 1624 Elizabeth Tynn was a granted passage to Dunkirk, 'to her husband being a prisoner to gett his release, and so to returne'.[314]

3.6 Personal - Educational

The pursuit of travel for purely educational purposes by women was clearly more common among men. Though very few comparable statistical studies exist, Lawrence Stone calculated that around 320 men were either privately tutored or travelled abroad to complete their education across the

[310] *APC* (1628/9), p.410.

[311] *APC*, (1616/17), p.336.

[312] *APC* (1621/3), p.143.

[313] Ibid, p.143.

[314] TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

same timeframe as this study.[315] Categorising the number of women and girls travelling for educational reasons is problematic. Although the numbers are small, 8 in total, some who begin as scholars, go on to profess as nuns. The records of English convents suggest it was common for young girls to be taken across to the Continent for a broad educational grounding as preparation for the noviciate. Among those, Francis Kempe (c.1599 - after 1635), daughter of an Essex gentleman, who first entered St Monica's Louvain as a scholar, before returning to England to claim her inheritance.[316] Having been imprisoned for several weeks for recusancy she eventually managed to escape to the Continent once more and became a fully-clothed member of the community at St Monica's. Girls and young women travelling to the new religious foundations like Mary Ward's English Institutes were likely to find educational as well religious fulfilment. Helen Brittan travelled to St Omer early in the reign of James I to live with a cousin in the town, Mrs Fortescue. Initially 'she had no intention to religion, but only to see these countries and learn French'.[317] She lived for a while as a scholar with the Poor Clares in Gravelines before eventually professing as a nun at St Monica's in Louvain in 1616. Helen Brittan's story is typical of many girls her age, drawn by the prospect of education, only to enter one of the burgeoning religious communities that specially catered for English émigrés.

Examples of girls travelling abroad for the purposes of secular education are much harder to find and amount to little more than 4 clearcut examples across the database. In 1604, Lucy St John (c.1589-1659), later to be Lady Apsley, wife of Sir Allen, Lieutenant of the Tower of London, travelled to Jersey in the company of her aunt, where 'she boarded in a French minister's house, to learn the language'.[318] In the 1580s, Lady Pounde, the teenage daughter of Honora, Countess of Sussex (c.1532-93) was sent to France to be educated in the household of the Seigneur de Marchaumont. Her host, Pierre Clausse wrote letters to the Countess with samples of her daughter's work, reassuring her he would 'endeavour to his utmost to render her such as the Countess would have her to be'.[319] The most detailed account of girls travelling for educational purposes concerns

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[315] Stone, Lawrence, 'The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640' in *Past & Present*, no. 28 (1964), p.54, table III.

[316] Bowden, Caroline and Kelly, James, *The English Convents in Exile, 1600-1800. Communities, Culture and Identity* (Farnham, 2013), p.94.

[317] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.152.

[318] Hutchinson, Lucy *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson* (London, 1863), p.11.

[319] *HMC Salisbury*, II, p.381; Merton, Charlotte, *Women who served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth : Ladies, Gentlewomen and Maids of the Privy Chamber, 1553-1603,* Unpublished PhD (University of Cambridge, 1992), p.166.

Elizabeth Trumbull, daughter of the English ambassador to Brussels. She attended a finishing school in Sedan in Northern France perfecting her language skills under the guidance of a French governess, Mistress Fornelet. The experience was not an entirely happy one, and in one especially heartbreaking letter to her parents, she confessed how lonely she had become, and wished ‘that my yiere were out that I might come home’.[320]

Education could be achieved informally or as a by-product of travel. Already mentioned was the fact that the Countess of Arundel used the occasion of her 1613 trip to spend time studying Italian in a convent just outside Siena. Jane Weston (1581-1612) the English poet and step-daughter to the alchemist Sir Edward Kelley used the opportunities afforded by travel to develop her skills as a writer and a linguist.[321] When Kelley travelled abroad with John Dee in 1583, she and her brother joined them a few years later and profited greatly from the experience. She mentions learning Latin from John Hammonius, possibly in Trebon, near Prague in the Czech Republic, as Dee employed Hammond as a tutor at that time. Whilst Kelley served as alchemist to Emperor Rudolph II in Prague, she expanded her knowledge of languages to include Italian in addition to Latin.

3.7 Commercial or Occupational

Women who travelled abroad as wives of merchants, traders or craftsmen or those connected with specific occupations such as servants or household attendants amount to 12% of those recorded in the database (Fig. 3.18). Among the scores of women in this category was Joan Barrow, an English spinster who travelled to Leiden to marry the widowed wool-carder Zachariah Barrow in 1616.[322] It is impossible to know whether women like Joan assisted their husbands with their businesses, but they are clearly associated with a particular type of commercial activity and so this has been taken as the primary reason for their travelling abroad. The numbers of women travelling overseas for commercial or artisanal purposes is likely to be higher and include many of the women who travelled abroad for unknown or personal reasons, for instance to join husbands living abroad where no specific commercial activity is indicated.

[320] BL, Add MS 72425 f.15.

[321] Cheney, D., ‘Elizabeth Weston’ in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29120 (last accessed Mar 2024).

[322] Leiden Archives, Record Group 1004, call no. 198B, p.52v.

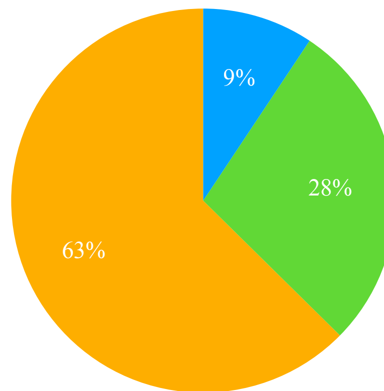

Fig. 3.18. Women connected with commerce, trades or services.

Instances of women travelling overseas for commercial motives can be found more readily in the *Remembrancer Records* than all other sources and from seemingly minimal entries we are able to extrapolate significant details concerning their journeys as well as broader prosopographical trends. They frequently furnish us with quite precise details on the type of trade carried out by the women's partners. These range from the mundane to the highly skilled. In 1629, Jane Shergell travelled to Vlissingen where her husband was 'to remane and work on his occupacion a bricklaier', whilst in 1621, Ann Lynsey travelled to Rotterdam where her husband was working as a glass-maker. [323] Cross-referencing entries with other archives allows us to contextualise these journeys. In 1629, Joan Partridge, and her husband, whose first name is unfortunately illegible due to damage but who is described as a gold-beater, travelled to Amsterdam, 'purposing to remane there and work on his occupacion'.[324] The Partridge family were well-known goldsmiths. Affabel Partidge was goldsmith to Elizabeth I and the name Partridge is also associated with goldsmiths recorded in the Livery Company Records for this period.[325]

Details on the district, parish or even street in which women resided provide valuable clues to their motives for travelling and status. Among the addresses frequently listed are Petticoat Lane, Rosemary Lane and Long Lane, all associated with the cloth trade at the lower end of the market. According to John Stow's *Survay of London* (1598), the area was closely associated with clothiers and drapers.[326] Between 1621 and 1634, the *Remembrancer Records* reveal that Alice (b.1573-),

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[323] TNA, E 157/14 f.88; TNA, E 157/27 f.43.

[324] TNA, E 157/14 f.88.

[325] https://www.londonroll.org/home (last accessed Aug 2023).

[326] Stow, John, *A Survay of London* (London, 1598), p.309.

wife of James Murray, a Scottish cloth merchant resident in Long Lane, made at least 10 separate journeys to Vlissingen and neighbouring Middelburg, either alone, or in the company of household members including a Dutch servant boy.[327] It is quite possible that Alice acted as some sort of runner for the family, gathering bales of cloth or cheap garments from the Dutch markets to trade from their premises in Long Lane. Alice is one of many women, appearing among the *Remembrancer Records*, casting new light on the involvement of wives and other family members in early modern commerce and trade.

The movement of women overseas for professional or commercial reasons often mirrored wider trends, such as the rise and fall of specific Cautionary towns or shifts in the location of English staples. Staple towns enjoyed special trading rights and privileges and so were a natural focal point for English merchants living overseas. Movements of these staples often match fluctuations in the movements of women and their families. The foremost English trading company in the region, the Merchant Adventurers switched staple centres for the sale of undyed cloth on numerous occasions, from Middelburg (1582-1621) to Delft (from 1621) and on to Rotterdam (1635-).[328] The company also established trading centres at Emden and Hamburg (1611-) in Germany. Families appear to move in tandem with the relocation of these staples as more secure business opportunities opened up (Fig. 3.19). For instance, following the move of the staple to

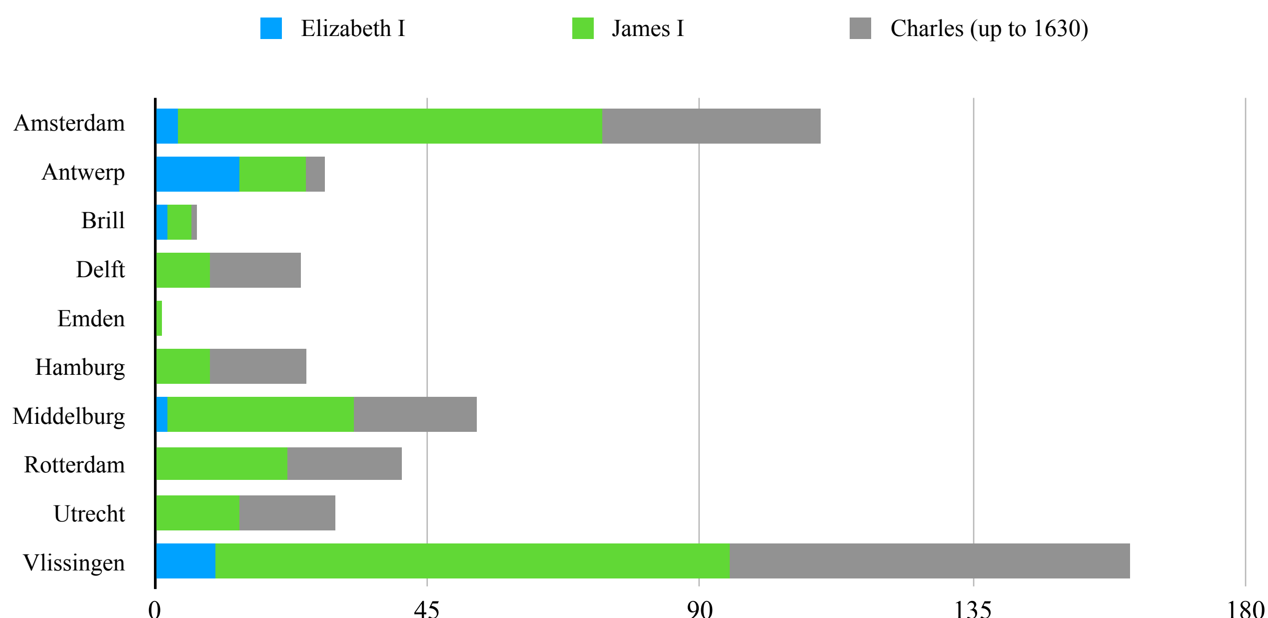

Fig. 3.19. Popularity of trading towns over time.

[327] See above.

[328] See for example, Steven, Rev. W, *The History of the Scottish Church, Rotterdam* (London, 1833).

Delft, recorded journeys by women to the city increase from none in Elizabeth's reign to 9 in James' and 15 during the first five years of the reign of Charles. In addition, the fall of Antwerp and the migration of Protestant traders to Amsterdam is clearly shown by the increased volume of women travellers at this time, rising from 4 in Elizabeth's reign, to 70 in James' and 36 in the first 5 years of Charles' reign alone.

The experiences of the merchant's wife, Grace Sadler (b.1597-) typifies how an individual's fortunes were inextricably linked to those of staple towns. Sadler lived in Sherbourne Lane, near Lombard Street, another area closely associated at this time with the cloth trade.[329] Her husband, who is described as a 'resident' of Delft presumably moved to the town around the time it became a staple market for undyed English cloth in 1621.[330] According to the *Remembrancer Records*, she first travels to her husband on her own in 1624.[331] She may have travelled regularly between London and Delft but she next turns up in the *Acts of the Privy Council* confirming the name of her husband, a London merchant called Peter, as well as those of her children Grace and Anthony, and that she is returning to the Netherlands.[332] The entry hints at the growing wealth of the family due to booming trade with Delft, as Grace is now able to take a servant with her and can afford the expense of transporting 'truncks of apparrell and other necessaries'. Cross-referencing licences to travel across different archives and searchable databases such as the records of livery companies enables us to shine new light on the changing fortunes of individuals who form part of a wider prosopographical narrative.

Aside from commerce or trade, many women travelled abroad to take up posts as servants or household attendants. The database records the names of 120 women described either as 'servant' or 'maid', whose ages range from nine-year-old Elizabeth Coston who travelled alone to Vlissingen in 1621 to Ellin Shillcock who received a licence to travel to Amsterdam in 1624 at the age of forty-one.[333] Women in this category were amongst the youngest in the database. Their average age being 22, whilst nearly a fifth were eighteen or under. Many of these women probably worked for English families based overseas, lacking the language skills or connections to branch out further. Occasionally, we can find out the identity of their employers, again by collating different sources

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[329] Wheatley, *London, Past and Present*, II, pp.415-418.

[330] TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

[331] Ibid.

[332] *APC* (1629/30), p.403.

[333] TNA, E 157/27 f.43 and TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

within the database. For instance, Joan Hames, was licensed to travel to Middelburg on 10 January 1620, where she was to work as 'Servant to Mr Bennet of the English House in Mittl:'[334]. Edward Bennett, was Deputy of the Merchant Adventurers in Middelburg and the English House served both as the administrative office of the company and a place where English visitors could find board and lodging.[335] Some of these servants were supporting military communities overseas as well. The wife of Captain Applegate (b.1591), an English officer serving in the Dutch army appears to have gathered around her a substantial body of English domestic staff to support her overseas. In April 1621, she travelled out to Bergen with her maid servant Elizabeth Wood and three other male servants.[336] In July that year another female servant Ellinn Wharton was summoned to the same town, 'to be a servt to Mris Applegate'.[337] Three years later, the centre of Mrs Applegate's household appears to have shifted to Amsterdam, where yet another servant, Marie Bullard, along with two other male staff, are sent to attend on her.[338]

Higher status women have been categorised as household attendants and equate to 40 names in the database. Their names are more likely to be found in the records of the *State Papers* or *Acts of the Privy Council*. For example, Elizabeth Deane (1589-), wife of Captain Henry Deane, served as 'Keeper of the linen' at Heidelberg for Elizabeth of Bohemia. She received a pass to go to The Hague in February 1622 'to attend upon the Lady Elizabeth' taking with her 2 further servants.[339] Deane became a vociferous defender of her mistress' clothing requirements, complaining that in spite of the £2000 worth of linens brought over from England and the further £1000 spent in Germany, her mistress was 'ill provided for'.[340] She travelled regularly between Heidelberg and England, presumably restocking the royal linen cupboards each time.[341] Many of the household attendants followed Elizabeth Stuart and her court first to Heidelberg, for which we have 20 names and then to The Hague where we have another 13.

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[334] TNA, E 157/27 f.43.

[335] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.341; Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, p.187.

[336] TNA, E 157/27 f.43.

[337] TNA, E 157/27 f.43.

[338] TNA, E 157/13 f.22.

[339] *APC* (1621/3), p.142.

[340] Strickland, *Lives of the Queens*, p.81.

[341] In 1624, Elizabeth Deane received a licence to travel to Vlissingen (TNA, E 157/13) and another in 1628 (TNA, E 157/14). On the second occasion, a Henry Deane, her husband is listed as travelling to the same destination.

The households of religious exiles account for the presence of a significant number of servants and attendants. Among them, Mrs Twyne, a gentlewoman in the household of the Countess of Northumberland, who had gone into exile to Brussels, following the failed Northern Rebellion (1569) and is included among other female names in 'A list of English exiles, about the year 1575'.[342] Some women travelling overseas as servants, went on to join convent communities. For instance, Ursula Whitsall accompanied Lady Babthorpe to Louvain, working in the town as a servant in the household of Sir Thomas Liege before professing as a nun at St Monica's, Louvain in 1622.[343] The Duchess of Feria maintained a large household of English overseas expatriates, who played a valuable if overlooked part in upholding pan-European Catholic networks. The Catholic courtier, Sir Francis Englefield and the Duchess' mother, Lady Hungerford regularly communicated with Dorothy Essex, a member of the Feria household. In one instance from 1570, Englefield relays to Dorothy Essex news about the Duchess of Feria's financial affairs, forwards letters from Lady Hungerford and provides valuable intelligence on the movement of fellow Catholics: 'within these four or five months, 25 or 30 persons have come out of England on pretence of the Spa waters, and we daily look for more'.[344]

The growth in commerce and trade which characterised the period of relative peace and prosperity in the aftermath of the Anglo-Spanish wars and the onset of the Thirty Years' War fuelled an expansion in cross-Channel mobility which women and their families as much as men were a part of. Their destinations were shaped by fortunes of particular towns known for their favourable trading conditions and by travelling overseas in ever greater numbers, women were clearly supporting the work of their husbands as well as exploiting opportunities for employment themselves as maids and household staff.

3.8 Religion

Religiously motivated migration was the most popular reason why women travelled abroad in the early modern era, accounting for 27% of all entries. The majority of travellers as noted in Section 2.3 of this chapter were likely to be Protestant, but roughly a third were clearly Catholic. Their

[342] TNA, SP 12/105 f.10.

[343] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.244.

[344] TNA, SP 15/18 f.150.

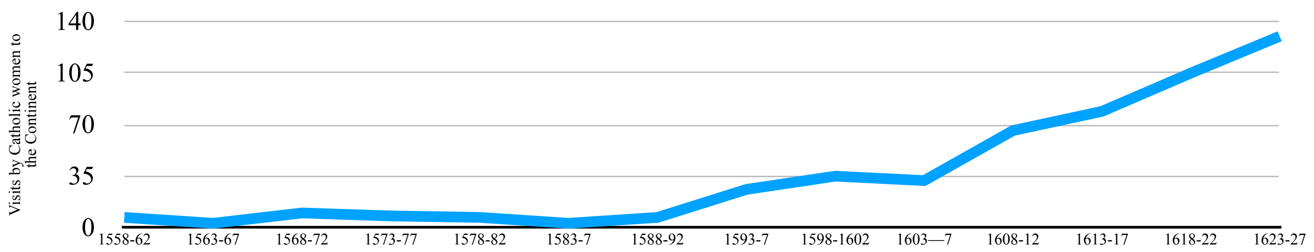

Fig. 3.20. Catholic women travelling to the Continent.

motives for travelling fall into several categories. By the far the largest number, and arguably the best documented were women travelling overseas to profess as nuns, accounting for 451 entries in the database. Others include those travelling to well-known Catholic destinations, confessional exiles and women who formed part of Catholic networks supplying books and artefacts, chaperoning children or gathering and relaying information. Fig. 3.20 records the movements of all these women and shows that for much of Elizabeth's reign the numbers travelling abroad remained constant, increasing only in the latter part of her reign, when laws against recusancy ratcheted up. Numbers began to rise again in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot when many Catholic families, including those like the daughters of Antony Maria Browne, 2nd Viscount Montague, were forced to flee abroad fearing they would be suspected of complicity.[345] The start of the Twelve Year's Truce in 1609 may also have facilitated travel to the Spanish Netherlands for this group.

As noted in earlier, certain towns especially those in the Low Countries and northern France were particularly popular with Catholic travellers and emigrés, either because they enjoyed an established network of support or they were home to one of the newly-founded English convents. Katy Gibbons believes religious foundations such as these played a crucial part in evolution of overseas travel, contributing towards 'a seemingly discrete development - the expansion of the Grand Tour'.[346] The university town of Louvain emerged early on as a key hub for Catholic women and their families following the foundation of the English convent of St Monica's in 1609. Of the 99 women who visited the town in the period, all were Catholic, although not all were nuns. Some, like Elizabeth Clifford were so-called 'white nuns', connected but not wholly attached to the convent, others such as Lady Cross, were listed with 4 other English women living in Louvain in 1616.[347] Similarly, Grace Birnand, Lady Babthorpe, lived in Louvain with her family for for 5 years between 1613 and 1618, when her husband died. Three years later, she returned to profess as a

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[345] One of the daughters, Lucy Browne (- 1653) professed as a nun, another, Mary Browne, Baroness Petre (c.1604-1685), was brought back to England (*Who were the nuns?*; *APC* (1616/17), p.254).

[346] Gibbons, *English Catholic Exiles* , p.166.

[347] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.125; TNA, SP 14 / 88 f.107.

nun.[348] Other towns, where English convents had been recently founded reveal a similar attraction for Catholic travellers. St Omer, where a convent of English nuns was founded in 1608, attracted visits from 33 Catholic women in the period, compared with no known Protestant visitors. Similarly, 53 Catholic women made their way to Gravelines whilst again it appears to have been completely eschewed by Protestants. By the end of the seventeenth century there would be 21 such convents.[349]

Not all Catholic women who went abroad did so with the aim of joining a religious community. Some travelled abroad to escape persecution in England and pursue their faith unimpeded. Among such women was Anne Somerset, (1536-1591) wife of the disgraced 7th Earl of Northumberland, executed for his part in the Northern Rebellion (1569). Anne fled with her daughter first to Mechelen and then Brussels, supported by a generous Spanish pension.[350] Her household became an important hub for English exiles, among them the Duchess of Feria, and she used her contacts to help publish and disseminate Catholic tests.[351] Anne Somerset was typical of many Catholic women whose primary motive for travelling abroad was flight from arrest, who then decided to remain in Europe and help to maintain sociability networks for fellow fugitives.

Female chaperones, who supplied convents with a constant stream of well-heeled postulants, form an important subsection of those women travelling abroad for religious motives. Young women were either surreptitiously escorted across the Channel individually or concealed within large licenced parties. In 1615, Lady Anne Stanley received a pass from the Privy Council to travel to the Low Countries along with four of her daughters.[352] Ostensibly Anne was travelling on legitimate family business, to recover ‘certeyne writings and evedences’ relating to her son's overseas commission. However, the presence of so many girls with such strong Catholic connections alerted the authorities to her true intentions, leading the deputy governor of Vlissingen to observe ‘shee will not carrye them all back with her’.[353]

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[348] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.210; *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.417.

[349] Patton, Elizabeth, ‘From Community to Convent: The Collective Spiritual Life of Post Reformation Englishwomen …’ in Bowden and Kelly, *English Convents in Exile*, pp.27 and 29.

[350] TNA, SP 12/105 f.10 records that ‘The Countesse of Northumberlande hath by the monneth of the K. of Spaine 30 cr.’ She appears to have gone to Brussels.

[351] See Katy Gibbons, ‘The Exile of Catholic Noblewomen and Gentlewomen under Elizabeth I’ in Fiona Reid and Katherine Holden, *Women on the Move: Refugees, Migration and Exile* (Cambridge, 2010).

[352] *APC* (1615/16), p.27.

[353] *HMC De L'Isle and Dudley*, V, p.275.

Orphaned girls feature prominently among those who were taken abroad, often on the promise of a better upbringing and education. In 1620, Bridget Goulding, daughter of a Nottinghamshire gentleman, was sent away on the death of her mother to be brought up by a local Catholic family, where she was encouraged through 'reading in books that religion was the happiest state of all others'.[354] Her father forged a letter from her sister, championing the merits of a religious calling and arranged for her to be chaperoned over to the Continent by family acquaintances, Mr and Mrs Landen. The party was met on the other side of the Channel by the ubiquitous Lady Lovel who convinced Bridget, to change her name to Teresa before conveying her to the convent of St Monica's in Louvain where she was to remain for the rest of her life.[355]

The presence of chaperones and women running 'safe houses' on the Continent, suggests a complex international network evolved, with women at its heart, to faciliate the conveyancing of Catholic women and girls abroad. Among such networks was one 'M[rs]Langley' who lived in Antwerp around 1618 and offered board and lodging to her English 'nieces'. Elizabeth Wickham was typical of hundreds of girls, who made the journey to the Low Countries, where they could be brought up as Catholics and live safely amongst those who shared the same faith. She was roughly twelve years old when she was brought to Antwerp by an elder sister, to serve an aged aunt living in the city. After three of four years the aunt died, bequeathing Elizabeth a dowry of £40 on condition she entered a convent. Either fear of returning penniless to England or a genuine religious calling prevailed and in 1619 she professed and entered St Monica's.[356]

In addition to unimpeded access to Catholic services and education, another motive for recusant women travelling abroad was to acquire proscribed texts and religious artefacts. John Rhodes in *An Answere to a Romish Rime Lately Printed* (1602) suggested that women were leading agents in the purveying of illicit texts and 'Romish wares' obtained abroad. He warned his readers against these 'women Brokers and Pedlers' who 'with baskets on their armes shall come and offer you other wares under a colour, and so sell you these'.[357] The database records numerous examples of women involved in similar activities, such as Mabella Griffith and her female colleagues who were apprehended at Dover for carrying prohibited texts and artefacts.[358] Women of unquestionable

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[354] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.198.

[355] Ibid, p.198.

[356] Ibid, p.196.

[357] Smith, Helen, *Grossly Material Things: Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2012), p.166-167.

[358] *CSPD (*1611-18), pp.61, 479 and 495.

Protestant credentials were sometimes used to divert the attention of customs officers. When the Countess of Pembroke returned from her continental sojourn in November 1616, the pinnace, which Edward Zouche, Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports had sent for her, was found to contain a suspicious package of books that was subsequently impounded by the Dover customs officers.[359]

The vast majority of women travelling overseas were Protestant or Non-Conformist. For many of these women, faith was an incidental feature in their lives not a motivating one for travelling abroad. For others, the opportunity to practise the reformed faith amongst liked-minded Protestants in northern European towns and cities was obviously appealing. Just as English convents drew Catholic exiles, so the presence of English churches was a magnet to families of Protestant and Non-Conformist backgrounds. Frederik Dentz calculated that 21 such churches existed across Holland & Belgium.[360] Towns with English churches like Amsterdam and The Hague provided extensive support networks for newly arrived families. The Merchant Adventurers had a chapel in the Gasthuis Church in Middelburg which was popular with English traders, whilst The English House on the Lange Delft, provided accommodation and recreation for travellers, even after the Adventurers moved their staple to Delft.[361] Utrecht, was another town popular with women travellers, and was for many years ministered by Thomas Scot. His congregation was said to number 120 English families.[362] Although we cannot be sure of the religious affiliation of women visiting the town, in all likelihood they were Protestant or Non-Conformist. Among them was Frances Cecil, daughter of the Thomas Cecil,1st Earl of Exeter, who stayed with her brother Edward in the city, whilst her Catholic-leaning husband, Nicholas Tufton was 'left at the Spa' in 1616.

At Leiden, where an especially rich source of notarial and marriage records survives, we can build up an unusually complex picture of the identities and connections between women travellers to the city. Many of the 52 women who arrived there were fabric workers. The influx of women is also partly attributable to the Scrooby Separatist Congregation, who left their Nottinghamshire parish from 1607-8 to form a Non-Conformist community in Leiden under the guidance of pastor John Robinson. Forty-three of the women we know about in the city arrived or are documented during Robinson's period of exile. Some of these women would even go on to join the Mayflower on its famous voyage to North America in 1620. The experiences of Robinson's wife Bridget White

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359 *CSPD* (1611-18), pp.402-403.

360 Dentz, Frederik, *History of the English Church at The Hague, 1586-1929* (Delft, 1929), p.16.

361 Sprunger, *Dutch Puritanism*, p.187.

362 Stoye, *English Travellers*, p.195.

(c.1577-1643) are typical of many of the English women in Leiden.[363] She probably travelled to Europe with her husband in 1608 with other members of the congregation, travelling first to Amsterdam and then to Leiden. Bridget had six children, with suitably god-fearing names among them Mercy and Fear. She, remained in Holland following the death of her husband in 1625, and lived at least until 1643, when she wrote her will. Several Robinson children married and remained in Leiden, while one son, John, became a physician in England and another, Isaac, moved to New England. Her life suggests she lived within a well-appointed and closely-knit network of women and their families, and that her household continued to thrive even in the absence of its patriarchal head.

Religious identity, though complex and not always easy to pinpoint, clearly was a decisive factor for many women in deciding to travel overseas. For Catholic women it was closely associated with refuge, but once abroad they were able to remain part of closely connected and highly influential networks. For women from Protestant backgrounds, especially those associated with commerce, religion was an incidental motive for travelling. Faith was a common denominator among these women rather than a prerequisite.

4. Conclusion

The database which underpins this survey of English women travelling to Europe in the years 1558-1630, comprises 2,227 journeys made by 2075 different individuals identifiable from a range of sources including licences to travel in the *Acts of the Privy Council* and *Remembrancer Records*, alongside references to journeys in the *State Papers*, convent records and personal correspondence. It confirms pre-existing suppositions and reveals significant new findings. Most importantly, that travel by women in the early modern period was far more extensive than commonly supposed. Overseas journeys were being made regularly by women across the social spectrum, and that a trip to the Continent was not the preserve of the ruling elites. Furthermore, although the principal categories of travel are limited in number, amounting to no more than about five or six, within each category were far more complex and nuanced reasons for journeying abroad. Women travelling for personal reasons, for example (Fig. 3.17), were doing so for an even wider range of more specific motives ranging from family reunion, to the recovery of personal

[363] See Sprunger, K. 'John Robinson' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-23847 (last accessed Mar 2024); Prögler, Daniela, *English Students at Leiden University, 1575-1670* (Farnham, 2013), p.66.

property and assets, to the pursuit of travel for the purposes of better health, entertainment or education.

The scale of the database allows us to draw prosopographical conclusions that hitherto would not have been so accurate or revealing. Among them, the sociological characteristics of women travellers, such as their average age, the duration of their journeys and the status of women involved. The typical size of parties travelling overseas can be determined for the first time, along with the surprising frequency of independent travel by women to parts of Europe that were ravaged by the effects of the Dutch Revolt and the onset of the Thirty Years' War.

The nature of the licensing system, the requirements for health certification and the swearing of oaths of allegiance, the customs checks on papers and personal belongings imposed significant technical barriers to foreign travel by women. Nevertheless, early modern women proved to be extremely resourceful in sidestepping these hurdles, either by hiding the true purposes of their journeys, travelling on forged documents or in the case of all the nuns recorded here, ignoring the official processes altogether.

Mapping the frequency and location of journeys, shines valuable new light on the interconnectedness of Anglo-Dutch communities in the period. Family and commercial life were closely intertwined, and the regular movement of women to and from the Continent played a vital part in sustaining these networks. In addition, patterns of movement can be determined more accurately, most notably the very stark divide between those travelling to the United Provinces and those travelling to Flanders and France on the basis of confessional identity. The popularity of northern Europe and eastern Europe outshone the prospect of travel to the southern states of Europe. Women were more likely to be found in Moscow than venturing forth to Rome or Madrid at this time. Political instability at home, such as the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot or the ending of the Twelve Year Truce between Holland and Spain appeared to present no insurmountable barrier to women travelling, and the numbers of women journeying abroad actually increased.

Chapter Four: 'Gadding abroade': contemporary perceptions of English women travellers

1. Introduction

The historiographical review in Chapter 1 prompted many important questions regarding contemporary perceptions of international travel by women. At a practical level, beyond the conventional *ars apodemica* or travel guides, what sources can usefully be deployed to gain a more complex understanding of the prevalence and characteristics of women's travel in the period under consideration? Secondly, given the monopoly of male-authored accounts, is it possible to hear the authentic voices of women and how they responded to the expanding opportunities for travel suggested by the findings of the database? The earliest published travelogues by women, such as those of Margaret Cavendish (1623-73), Cecilia Fiennes (1662-1741) or Catherine Whetenall (d.1650), whose work was circulated in manuscript form, lie outside the chronological parameters of this thesis.[364] Does this mean that women left no accounts of their own or other women's overseas journeys at this time or do we need a more innovative approach to the available textual and material evidence to formulate an answer?

Historians have traditionally been dismissive of the prospects of unpicking popular perceptions of women travellers. We saw how Sara Warneke argued that quantitative evidence was too minimal to merit meaningful discussion, whilst Mary Fuller conceded in 'Looking for the Women in Early Modern Travel Writing' (2019) we are unlikely to progress from 'not many' names to 'some'.[365] Nevertheless, research into eighteenth century women's mobility provides some useful new methodologies that could be applied to earlier ages. Agreeing that too much travel history has reinforced 'the normative values of elite masculinity', Rosemary Sweet in *Cities and the Grand Tour* (2014) makes greater use of unpublished materials such as diaries, journals and personal correspondence to explore the experiences of women who travelled alongside men or in some cases travelled alone.[366] She detects a distinctly gendered response to travel from these sources, as women

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[364] See Cavendish, Margaret, *The life of the thrice noble, high, and puissant prince William Cavendishe, Duke, Marquess, and Earl of Newcastle ... written by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle, his wife* (1675); Morris, C (ed.) *The journeys of Celia Fiennes* (1947) BL, Add MS 4217, *Voyage of the Lady Catherine Whetenall from Brussels into Italy in the Holy Yeare, 1650.*

[365] Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller*, p.5; Fuller, *Travel and Travail*, p.332.

[366] Sweet, *Cities and the Grand Tour*, p.7.

were 'freer to have a less prescriptive and more personal experience' of the places they visited.[367] Although the focus of her work is the eighteenth century, Sweet's approach encourages us to speculate on gendered perceptions of travel among earlier generations of travellers. Patricia Akhimie and Bernadette Andrea's *Travel and Travail* (2019) equally demonstrates the methodological benefits of turning away from traditional sources of evidence like *ars apodemica* to examine how women's travel was portrayed in other literary sources such as drama and contemporary prose. They argue that travel by women was not universally condemned and that sometimes classical or biblical paradigms were deployed like the figure of Ruth, to lend greater respectability to women travellers with early modern audiences.[368] Alternative ways of exploring travel and cosmopolitanism have also been put forward by John Gallagher in *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* (2019).[369] He suggests that language-learning textbooks reveal as much about contemporary attitudes towards notions of travel as they provide practical guidance on grammar and vocabulary. Dedications point to patrons and readers who expressed an interest in travel as well as language-learning. Dialogues which frequently feature in these books, aimed at equipping learners with useful foreign phrases and words, throw new light on notions of travel among early modern readers. Together this work offers up promising new avenues for exploring women's mobility via less mainstream texts and sources of evidence.

In summary, this chapter aims to resolve two key issues. How did contemporaries view the increase in international travel by women in this period? Were attitudes universally critical or do we find instances where women's travel was endorsed, encouraged or even idealised? Secondly, how did women themselves feel about the prospects of greater mobility, and when occasion arose, how did they respond to the experience of overseas travel itself? To answer these questions an innovative methodology is proposed, framed by the historiographical context outlined above. In addition to reading conventional sources such as travelogues and advice books against the grain, alternative or overlooked sources of evidence will be examined, such as sermons and correspondence, as well as the tantalisingly-few but richly-revealing personal accounts of travel by women that remain. Where possible, these will be used in correlation with evidence from the database, to see if changes in attitudes can be linked to fluctuations in the nature and extent of women travelling overseas. In

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[367] Ibid, p.280.

[368] See Tartamella, S., 'Travelling Companions: Shakespeare's As You Like it and the Book of Ruth' in Akhimie, Patricia and Andrea, Bernadette, *Travel and Travail* (Lincoln and London, 2019), pp.121-38.

[369] See for example, ''A Conversable Knowledge': Language-Learning and Educational Travel' in Gallagher, John, *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2019), pp.157-207.

short, this chapter aims to demonstrate that attitudes towards women's travel moved from a position of abject denial or rejection, to one where it was increasingly recognised and even in some cases celebrated.

2. Perceptions of English women travellers

2.1 Travelogues and advice books

Male-authored travelogues and guidebooks have long been the prism through which public attitudes towards foreign travel in the early modern age have been viewed. Unsurprisingly they have led many historians to conclude that society was universally hostile to the notion of the woman traveller. The earliest authors are undeniably cautious, frequently arguing that women were physically and emotionally ill-suited to the demands of overseas travel. Jerome Turler argued in *The Traveiler* (1575), that along with ‘Infants, Aged persons, & such as have weake bodies’ women were not ‘meet to traveill’.[370] In *Travailes, into forraine Countries* (1606), Sir Thomas Palmer grouped women along with children, ‘Fooles, Madmen and Lunaticke[s]’ as those least suited to the rigours of travel.[371] Like many contemporary authors, Turler and Palmer exploited the assonance of the words ‘travel’ and ‘travail’ - meaning work or pregnancy - to make derogatory puns that implied women were biologically ill-adapted to travel and that attempting to do so subverted the natural order.

Conduct books which spoke to popular male concerns about unchaperoned travel by women and women journeying ‘abroad’ in the broadest possible sense grow in tandem with the increases in journeys made by women recorded in the database. Thomas Bentley’s *Monument of Matrones* (1582) cautioned against the implicit dangers of women roaming far from the home in any sense, something he described as ‘gadding abroade’ and equated with ‘shamelesse behaviour’.[372] ‘As a bird that wandreth from hir nest,’ Bentley warned, ‘so is a woman that gaddeth from hir owne

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[370] Turler, *The traveiler*, p.13 ff.

[371] Palmer, Thomas, *An essay of the meanes how to make our travailes, into forraine countries, the more profitable and honourable* (London, 1606), sig.Ib.

[372] Bentley, Thomas, *The monument of matrones* (London, 1582), p.39.

house, & is oft flitting from place to place, nothing carefull of hir familie'.[373] He reserved his harshest criticism for women 'that gad abrode idlie from house to house, evermore learning and never learned' who in his estimation were little more than 'pratlers and busie bodies, speaking thinges that are not comelie nor womanlie'.[374] His words echo those of other social commentators such as the anonymous author of *The court of good counsell* (1607), who rails against the growing tendency for women to wander freely from the home. 'Suffer a Mayde to go abroad but once or twise in a yeare,' he warns, 'is the way to make her become foolish, fearefull, and out of countenance in companie'.[375]

Travel posed dangers for men too. They might be tempted to adopt the manners and customs of the places they had visited and return home with effeminate new habits. John Melton in *A Six-folde politician* (1609) denounced such charlatans as 'base mimicke anticke affectators and meere fashion-mongers'.[376] Melton, equates such showy behaviour to 'proud women' who are more concerned that 'their outward habit be geerishlye and wantonly set out' whilst their homes are 'poorely and beggerly' furnished.[377] Thomas Coryate in his famous travelogue, *Crudities* (1611), was ever-vigilant of the dangers of adopting the social mores of his continental counterparts who he dismissed as 'effeminate, wanton, given to sleepe'.[378] By contrast, the more formal *ars apodemica* are quick to endorse travel which upholds stereotypically male values. In his essay, 'Of Travel' (1625), Sir Francis Bacon commends pursuits that clearly were of appeal solely to male travellers at the time, among them inspecting 'Wals and Fortifications', visiting 'Armories' and observing the 'Trayning of Souldiers'.[379] By suggesting these were the true objectives of travel, Britain's foremost essayist, in common with many of his contemporaries, underscored that travel was an undeniably masculine exercise which held no purpose or merit for women.

When Englishmen encountered foreign women travellers for whom long-distance, independent travel was customary, they had to find new ways to explain away such behaviour. In *An*

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[373] Ibid, p.50.

[374] Ibid, p.106.

[375] Anon, *The court of good counsell. Wherein is set downe the true rules, how a man should choose a good wife* (London c.1630), Ch. XXII, H3.

[376] Melton, John, *A sixe-folde politician Together with a sixe-folde precept of policy* (London, 1609), p.54.

[377] Ibid, pp.148-149.

[378] *Coryate, Thomas, Coryats crudities hastily gobled vp in five moneths travells …newly digested in the hungry aire of Odcombe in the county of Somerset, & now dispersed to the nourishment of the travelling members of this kingdome (London,1611)*, sig.B6v.

[379] *Bacon, Francis, The essays, or councils, civil and moral, of Sir Francis Bacon … (London, 1625)*, p.47.

Itinerary (1617), Fynes Moryson, who had undertaken two major European tours in the latter part of the sixteenth century (1591-5 and 1595-7), returned to the debate over the moral and physical suitability of women travelling.[380] For Moryson, 'women for suspition of chastity are most unfit for this course' and yet he noted, women of the Low Countries frequently 'make voyages for trafficke, not only to their owne Cities, but even to Hamburg in Germany, and more remote places'.[381] The only way he could reconcile these conflicting ideas was that they were 'masculine women' and subsequently unlikely to attract unwanted male attention.[382] Furthermore, he suggests any benefits women might accrue from travelling were neglected, due to their inability to rationalise such experiences. He relates an encounter with a group of women travelling to Dresden as part of the household of the Electress of Saxony. Their trivial conversation, flitting from one topic to another, seemingly ignorant of the countryside they were passing through, led him to liken them to a flock of geese. For Moryson, travel was wasted on women, claiming that sights and experiences were frequently ignored due to their preference for banter. 'Is anything lighter,' he concluded, 'than a woman?'[383]

Whilst Moryson questioned the freedoms enjoyed by northern European women, other travel writers applauded the restrictions on women's mobility which prevailed in more remote communities. Their experiences were used to draw moralising comparisons with the lack of restraint enjoyed by their female counterparts in England. William Biddulph, English chaplain to the merchant community at Aleppo and author of *The Travels of Certaine Englishmen* (1609) welcomed the custom of Turkish women who 'never goe abroad without leave of their husbands', which he argues was in stark contrast to the 'libertie and freedom' enjoyed by women at home.[384] Much could be learned in his view, from the Middle Eastern women who 'keepe their tents' and are busily engaged in 'houshold huswifery' unlike English women who he accuses of 'gossipping and gadding abroade.'[385] Although 'abroad' in this sense related to domestic travel, Biddulph's

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[380] Moryson, Fynes, *An itinerary written by Fynes Moryson gent., first in the Latine tongue, and then translated by him into English* (London, 1617).

[381] Moryson, *Itinerary*, p.1.

[382] Ibid, p.1.

[383] Ibid, p.13.

[384] *Biddulph, William, The travels of certaine Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bythinia, Thracia … and to sundry other places… (London,1609)*, p.55.

[385] Ibid, p.36.

comments reveal how unconscionable the prospect of more far-reaching travel remained for most men.

For contemporary commentators, one of the most worrying new trends relating to women's mobility concerned the growing fashion for women to travel on horseback or worse still by coach. Andrew Gordon notes in his essay 'Eastward Ho and the Traffic of the Stage' (2018), how the ascendancy of coach travel was frequently commented on in popular literature of the time, and became an important signifier of social change.[386] The impact of coach travel specifically on women was particularly transformative affording them new levels of comfort, security and above all independence that instantly expanded their travelling potential. The anonymous author of *Pleasant quips for upstart newfangled gentlewomen* (1595) bemoaned both the physical and moral dangers of this new form of transport:

> 'Wantons now in coaches dash,
> From house to house, from street to street,
> Were they of state, or were they lame,
> To ride in coach they need not shame'.[387]

Frequent references to coach-travel by women in the database suggests they embraced this fashionable new form of transport wholeheartedly. In 1610, Lady Edmondes, made a grand arrival in Paris conveyed in a 'caroche with 6 horses', whilst in 1620 Lady Carleton, was granted special permission by the Privy Council to travel to The Hague with 'her coach [and] coach horses'.[388] She describes how a 'coche' owned by her friend Lady Hatton 'hath bin as much mine as hers sence I came hether' and asks her husband to ensure that on a forthcoming trip they return the favour to Lady Hatton, by procuring her a coach and horses during her sojourn.[389] As fearful as men were of its invention, modern coach travel had become an indispensable perquisite of the wealthy early modern woman traveller.

Despite their evident wariness, authors of travelogues and guides were not universal in their criticism of women who travelled abroad. Over time, many came to realise that the presence of women, particularly on diplomatic missions as shall be seen in Chapter 5, or on commercial

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[386] Gordon, Andrew, 'Eastward Ho and the Traffic of the Stage' in Jowitt, Claire and McInnes, David, *Travel and Drama in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2018), pp.92-110.

[387] Anonymous, *Pleasant quippes for upstart newfangled gentlewomen* (London, 1596), sig.B3v.

[388] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.343; *APC* (1619/21), p.314; PC 2/30 f.637.

[389] TNA, SP 14/148 f.146.

ventures, as noted in Chapter 2, could play a valuable part in supporting the work of their partners. In a chapter of *The Traveiler* (1575) entitled, 'What persons are meet or unmeet to Traveil …', even Turler, the inveterate opponent of women 'gadding abroade', acknowledged that in some countries, though not all, women's travel was widely accepted and valued. He gave the example of 'Dutch Wéemen' who were often seen assisting their husband's commercial activities: 'they traveil also unto ye furthermost partes of the world to trafacque and occupy Merchaindize'.[390] In chapter eight, 'Of such matter as is commonly objected against Traveilers…', Turler goes on to pose the salient question whether couples should be separated by travel, noting that whilst the regulations of trading companies forbade women 'to take long or often jouneys in hand' he felt the 'lawe of matrimonie' dictated that couples should 'bee coupled' and 'dwell evermore together'.[391] The implication was that travel by husbands and wives, upheld the natural order of things and even strengthened the bonds of marriage. Similarly, Sir Thomas Palmer in his aforementioned *Essay* (1606) conceded that although 'Regular' travel was 'an honorable or honest action of men' it may also be acceptable 'in speciall cases of women'.[392] Without seeking to subvert the patriarchal norms that dictate women 'are rather for the house than the fielde' he argued that 'travaille into other Nations' may be appropriate in certain unspecified instances.[393]

As the numbers of women travelling abroad as part of commercial or diplomatic households grew, so too did the realisation that the presence of women had quantifiable practical benefits. Male authors of travelogues frequently commented on the facility for languages among the women they encountered on their journeys, raising the question that if this were desirable in foreign women, then why not among their English wives as well? Typical of many was the travel-writer, James Howell's description of the Dutch women he encountered on a tour of northern Europe (1616-22), 'who were so well vers'd in all sorts of languages, so that in Exchange time one may heare 7 or 8 sorts of toungs spoken'. Even outside the bourses, 'the women and maids also in common hostries' were proficient in foreign languages.[394] Similarly, Giovanni Botero, in *The Travellers Breviat* (1601) reported that 'in Antwerpe you shall heare the women speake Dutch, French, Italian, Spanish

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[390] Turler, *The traveiler*, p.9.

[391] Ibid, p.96.

[392] Palmer, *Travailes, into forraine countries,* pp.1 and 9.

[393] Ibid, p.17.

[394] Howell, James, *, Epistolae-HoElianae or the Familiar Letters of James Howell* (Boston,1907), p.26.

and English.[395] Although confined to continental European women, their observations helped to forge a new belief that female companionship on foreign travels could be a valuable practical asset. Such views chimed with those of the government, which sought to regulate the flow of travellers to the Continent, whilst at the same time acknowledging the necessity of exceptions. The *Acte … against Jesuits Seminarie Priests, Recusants* (1603), whilst keen to prevent women and girls attempting 'to passe over the Seas' without a 'lycense of the Kinge' on the grounds of religious conscience, also acknowledged that they 'have from time to time just and necessary causes and occasions to goe and passe over the seas'. [396] In a pivotal case in 1614, involving a merchant named Captain Keeling, who wished to take his wife on board his ship bound for Asia, supporters reminded directors of the East India Company of the moral duty of male travellers to uphold their commitment to their marriage vows and of the practical benefits of having women on board, arguing what 'God hath joined together, let not man put asunder'.[397] Within the governing classes opinions were clearly beginning to shift, regarding the advantageousness, both moral and commercial, of women travelling overseas.

Whilst travelogues and guides are inescapably pejorative in their attitudes towards women's desire for greater opportunities for travel, closer inspection reveals some significant caveats. Conservative authors were dismissive of women's travel from the perspective of the physical and moral risks it entailed. However, as the seventeenth century progressed and travel by women became more widespread, there was a discernible change in the tone. Women's travel was clearly becoming more common, as was the sight of women travelling by coach or on horseback. Even if the authors of *ars apodemica* remained critical, they appeared to acknowledge the spiritual and commercial benefits of women travelling overseas with their husbands and families.

2.2 Language-learning and educational texts

[395] *Botero, Giovanni, The travellers breviat, or, An historicall description of the most famous kingdomes in the world relating their situations, manners, customes, civill government, and other memorable matters* (London, 1601), p.20.

[396] Cited in Loomie, Albert J. 'Toleration and Diplomacy: The Religious Issue in Anglo-Spanish Relations, 1603–1605' in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 53, No. 6 (1963), p.31

[397] See Schleck, Julia. 'The Marital Problems of the East India Company' in *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, vol. 17, no. 3 (Pennsylvania, 2017), pp. 83–104.

It is clear from recent scholarship, such as Jason Lawrence's *Who the devil taught thee so much Italian?* (2006) and John Gallagher's *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* (2019) the period under question witnessed and upsurge in interest in foreign language-learning.[398] Much of the historiography has focused on the impact of this trend on male learners, writers or translators, overlooking the fact that women too were keen participants. It should come as no surprise that the first language-learning manual directed specifically at women comes from this period when the numbers of women travelling overseas travellers was increasingly so dramatically. There was a deepening recognition of the practical benefits for women in learning foreign languages. It was no longer viewed as a hollow, academic exercise for the amusement of fashionable female elites, but had much wider practical applications for women associated with international trade, commerce and diplomacy. Consequently, instructional manuals provide an overlooked source of evidence not just on language-learning but wider changing attitudes to the prospect of women using such skills to travel.

Prior to the late sixteenth century, educationalists shared the same reserve regarding female self-improvement. At best, language-learning by women was accepted as a domestic pastime. It was certainly never anticipated it should be a facilitator for overseas travel. Richard Percivale's *Spanish Grammar* (1599) encouraged women to learn languages at home, but baulked at the idea they should attempt to perfect their skills with first-hand experience abroad.[399] His dedicatory introduction to the 'Gentlemen Students of Grayes Inn' cites countless sayings and proverbs attesting to the benefits of travel for men, among them 'Meglio esser mendicante che ignorante' but he was adamant that language-learning for female edification was not his aim: 'deckings pertaine to women, and travels belong to men'.[400] Even the celebrated linguist John Florio saw no need for women to study foreign languages overseas. He dedicated his popular Italian-English dictionary *A Worlde of Wordes* (1598) to Lucy Harington, Countess of Bedford (bap.1581-1627), 'who being at home so instructed for Italian, as teaching or learning could supplie, that there seemed no neede to

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[398] Lawrence, Jason, *'Who the Devil taught thee so much Italian?' Italian language learning and literary imitation in early modern England* (Manchester, 2011); Gallagher, John, *Learning Languages in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2019).

[399] Percivale, Richard, *A Spanish grammar, first collected and published by Richard Percivale Gent. Now augmented and increased with the declining of all the irregular and hard verbes in that toong, with diuers other especiall rules and necessarie notes for all such as shall be desirous to attaine the perfection of the Spanish tongue. Done by Iohn Minsheu professor of languages in London…* (London, 1599).

[400] Percivale, *Spanish Grammar*, sig.i2v.

trauell'.[401] Paradoxically, the Countess would travel to the Continent on two occasions (1613 and 1621), where her aptitude for foreign languages proved invaluable. G.N. de la Mothe author of *The French Alphabet* (1592) encouraged his readers to mingle with native French-speakers living in England, including those who gather, 'where the Frenchmen have a Church for themselves, as they have in London'. To his mind, English ladies, who had never been out of England spoke the language 'much better than some others I know which have been in France three of four years'.[402]

Even men raised in a tradition of Renaissance humanism and with established, cosmopolitan credentials, poured scorn on the new fashion for language-learning among women. John Harington, translator of *Orlando Furioso* (1591), joined many in making crude punning references to 'tongue' as both a word for a language and a human organ, to quip about the absurdities of the fad in his epigram *Of Women learned in the tongues* (1600):

> You wisht me to a wife, faire, rich and young,
> That had the Latine, French and Spanish tongue.
> I thank't, and told you I desir'd none such,
> And said one Language may be tongue too much'.[403]

The 'foreignness' of foreign languages was especially troubling for many men, who feared that women who studied European languages, especially from foreign tutors living in England or by studying abroad, exposed themselves to the even more serious risk of Catholic conversion. Sir John Tasburgh banished his daughter Agnes when he suspected a 'French gentleman' employed as her tutor was polluting her mind with popish ideas.[404] His suspicions were proved correct when his daughter later professed as a nun during a journey to Louvain in 1623. In his collection of anti-Catholic writings *Foot out of the snare* (1624), John Gee saw a close connection between women's travel and language-learning and the threat of Catholic conversion.[405] He relates the story of a 'Catholicke collapsed Ladie' who had fled abroad to be a nun.[406] Whilst abroad, she lived in a

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[401] Florio, John, *A worlde of wordes, or Most copious, and exact dictionarie in Italian and English* (London, 1598), sig.A3v.

[402] Cited in Foster, Watson, *Religious Refugees and English Education* (London, 1911), p.56.

[403] Harington, John, *Letters and epigrams of Sir John Harington, together with The prayse of private life* (Philadelphia, 1930), p.261.

[404] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.253-254.

[405] Gee, John, *The foot out of the snare with a detection of sundry late practices and impostures of the priests and Jesuits in England ...* (London, 1624).

[406] Ibid, p.62.

manner 'incompatible to Nunship' before returning to England due to an undisclosed illness. Gee described how a wise woman, who was in fact a Jesuit in disguise, was employed to cure her, by entering a trance-like state and uttering 'her mind both in Italian, Latin and Greeke'.[407] Through his crude characterisation of the 'wandering' nun and the superstitious antics of the multilingual wise woman, Gee sought to conflate in his readers' minds the coexistent perils of travelling women and foreign language-learning.

The most celebrated educationalist to comment on the propriety of women learning languages was Richard Mulcaster. Like John Harington, Mulcaster was internationalist in his outlook, counting among his associates the travel writer Richard Hakluyt and the author of the famous language-learning text *Campo di fior* (1583), Claudius de Sanlienes, for whom he wrote a dedication.[408] In *Positions Concerning the Training up of Children* (1581), Mulcaster acknowledges women were adept at learning languages, suggesting they may be 'preferred as beyond comparison, even to the best Romaine or Greekish paragones'.[409] However, like many of his peers, he rejected the idea of women travelling abroad to study, arguing 'our ladies at home can do all this'.[410] In support of this view, Mulcaster pointed to Queen Elizabeth, the living embodiment that travelling was not a requisite of polyglotism.[411]

The increasing opportunities for English women to journey abroad cannot be unrelated to the simultaneous growth in publications directed at female language-learners or dedications to women associated with overseas travel. It is surely no coincidence that the very first language-learning book expressly written for female readers, Pierre Erondelle's *The French garden: for English ladyes and gentlewomen* (1605), was published precisely at this time.[412] It was dedicated to the highly cultivated Elizabeth Carey (1576-1635), whose husband Sir Thomas Berkeley made at

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[407] Ibid, p.62.

[408] Hollyband, Claudius, *Campo di fior or else The flourie field of foure languages of M. Claudius Desainliens, aliâs Holiband: for the furtherance of the learners of the Latine, French, English, but chieflie of the Italian tongue* (London, 1583), p.4.

[409] Mulcaster, Richard, *Positions wherin those primitive circumstances be examined, which are necessarie for the training up of children, either for skill in their booke, or health in their bodie…* (London, 1581), p.168.

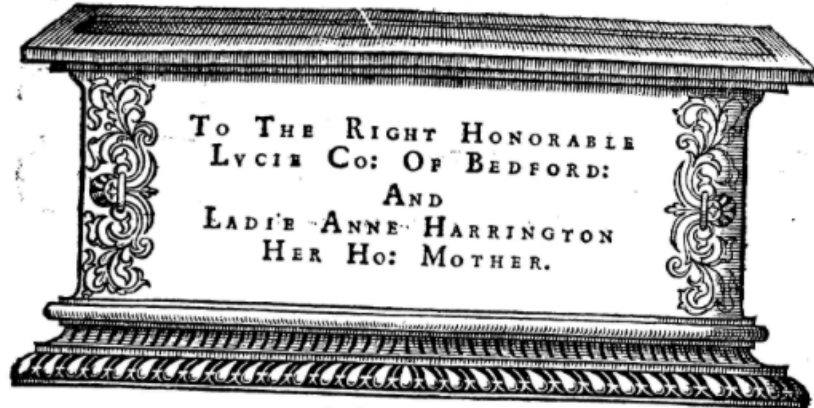
[410] Ibid, p.214.

[411] Ibid, p.224.

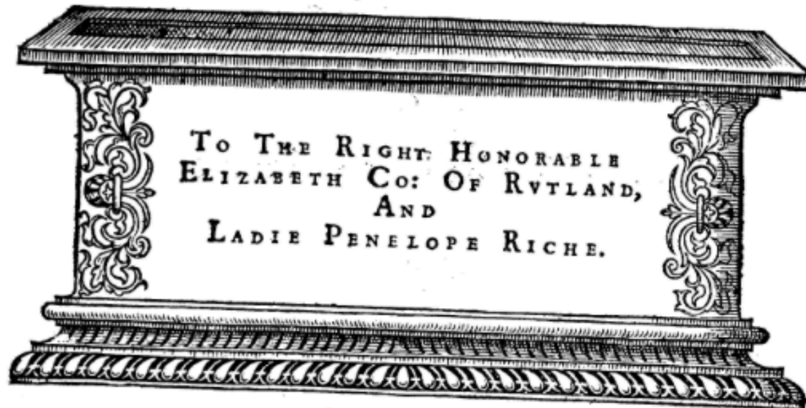
[412] Erondelle, Pierre, *The French garden: for English ladyes and gentlewomen. Being an instruction for attayning the French tongue* (London, 1605).

By him that hath inviolably vowed his labors to the Æternitie of their Honors, whoſe names he hath ſeverally inſcribed on theſe his conſecrated Altares.

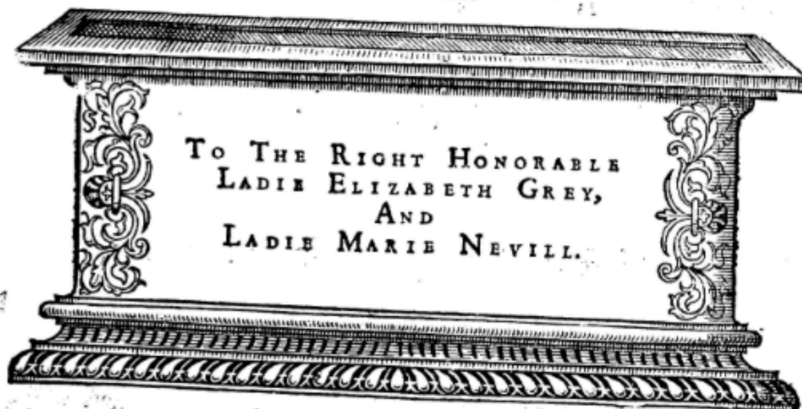
The firſt Booke.



The ſecond Booke.



The third Booke.



Iohn Florio.

¶ Printed at London by Val. Sims for Edward Blount dwelling in Paules churchyard. 1603.

Fig. 4.1. Frontispiece to Florio’s translation of Montaigne’s *Essayes* (1603).

least three European tours in his lifetime, and she may even have accompanied him abroad.[413] Instructional manuals were keen to tap into this new female readership and increasingly invoked women in their dedications who either travelled directly or were cosmopolitan in their outlook. In *Women and Dictionary-making* (2018), Lindsay Rose Russell identifies 24 dictionaries published between 1530 and 1699 that name women either as patrons or dedicatees.[414] Once again, women within the database were prominent among dedications. Lady Margery Norris, wife of the English ambassador to France, was the recipient of a dedication in Stefano Guazzo's *Civile Conversation* (1579).[415] The most celebrated dedicatees with international credentials were the Talbot sisters. Giovanni Torriano, son of an Italian preacher at the Mercers' Chapel in London struck a close and profitable partnership with the Italian-speaking Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Kent.[416] He dedicated a number of works on Italian language-learning to her including *New and Easie Directions for Attaining the Tuschan Italian Tongue* (1639) and *The Italian Tutor* (1640).[417] The interest these women showed in language-learning also arguably helped to fuel a wider growth in reading European texts in translation.

The wording of dedications helped forge ever stronger associations in the public's mind that foreign travel and women were not mutually exclusive concepts. This is most apparent in the work of Giovanni Florio, the foremost linguist of his age. Among other achievements, Florio was the author of a hugely popular and influential translation of Michel Montaigne's, *Essayes* (1603).[418] Each section of his great oeuvre, began with a dedicatory epistle to female patrons, nearly all of whom were closely connected to foreign travel (Fig. 4.1).[419] Even less well-known dedicatees had

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[413] Davidson, Alan, 'Sir Thomas Berkeley' in *HOPO*, http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1604-1629/member/berkeley-sir-thomas-1575-1611 (last accessed Mar 2024).

[414] Russell, Lindsay Rose, *Women and Dictionary-Making: Gender, Genre, and English Language Lexicography* (Cambridge, 2018), p.41.

[415] Pettie, George, *The civile conversation of M. Steeven Guazzo written first in Italian, and nowe translated out of French by George Pettie ...* (London, 1581), sig.A1v.

[416] See Villani, Stefano, 'The Italian Protestant Church of London in the Seventeenth Century' in Schaff, Barbara (ed.), *Exiles, Emigrés and Intermediaries Anglo-Italian Cultural Transactions* (Amsterdam and New York, 2010), pp.217-236.

[417] Torriano, Stefano, *New and easie directions for attaining the Thuscan Italian tongue Comprehended in necessary rules of pronunciation, rules of accenting, by way of alphabet ...* (London, 1639), sig.A3-A4; Torriano, Stefano, *The Italian tutor, or, A new and most compleat Italian grammer. Containing above others a most compendious way to learne the verbs, and rules of syntax …* (London, 1640), sig.A2.

[418] Montaigne, Michel, The essayes or morall, politike and millitarie discourses of Lo: Michaell de Montaigne…The first booke. First written by him in French. And now done into English by him that hath inviolably vowed his labors to the æternitie of their honors, whose names he hath severally inscribed on these his consecrated altares ... Iohn Florio (London, 1603),

[419] Montaigne, *The essayes*, sig.A1v & ff.

widely recognised internationalist credentials. Anne Harington (née Keilway, d.1620), a member of Elizabeth Stuart's personal household, accompanied her abroad on her wedding procession in 1613 and lived in Heidelberg for 3 years between 1616-19. Florio reserved particular praise for Elizabeth Sidney (née Manners), Countess of Rutland (1585-1612) and Penelope Devereux, Lady Rich (1563-1607) whose European connections he especially esteemed. He compares the Countess of Rutland to 'a worthy Dutchesse of Florence' and along with Lady Rich, describes them both as 'perfect scholars' and 'peerless ladies' of languages.[420] Not only was Lady Rich a champion of language-learning, but she also counted among her personal household, Renée de St Martin, wife of Jean Hotman, author of *The Ambassador* (1603). Even Florio's dedication to 'Ladie Elizabeth Grey', the Countess of Kent and Mary Neville (d.1612) can be explained by their international connections. Elizabeth was a well-known Italophile and sister of the widely-travelled, Aletheia, Countess of Arundel, whilst Mary, was the daughter of Thomas Sackville, 1st Earl of Dorset who himself travelled to Rome in the early 1560s.[421] The inclusion of these women among the dedicatees of such a celebrated book, helped to crystallise in readers' minds the association between female foreign language-learning and the cultural benefits of overseas travel.

The flourishing interest in language-learning among female elites went beyond book dedications. Women appear to have been increasingly keen to develop their spoken proficiency, particularly those associated with foreign travel or with interests in European culture. In the early 1570s, the daughters of the Sir Henry Sidney, Mary and her sister Ambrosia, learned Italian from a tutor named 'Mistress Maria' employed by their polyglot mother, Mary Dudley.[422] It is thought that the Countess of Bedford, Lucy Harington and her mother Anne Kelway were directly tutored by the aforementioned Giovanni Florio.[423] A select few were fortunate enough to study overseas. Lady Sussex, the daughter of Honora Pounde, the Countess of Sussex was entrusted to the care of Pierre Clausse, Seigneur du Marchmont an agent of the Duke of Anjou to perfect her fluency in French. In 1581, he forwarded letters to the Countess of Sussex from her daughter with examples of her work reassuring her that she was , 'was in the hands of one who has the highest respect for her,' and that he would 'endeavour to his utmost to render her such as the Countess would have her to be'.[424]

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[420] Florio, *Essayes*, 'The Second Booke', sig.R2r ff.

[421] Zim, R., 'Thomas Sackville, Earl of Dorset' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-24450 (last accessed Mar 2024).

[422] Hannay, Margaret P., *Philip's Phoenix: Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke* (Oxford, 1990), p.27.

[423] Akkerman, *Correspondence of Elizabeth Stuart*, I, p.94, n.3.

[424] *HMC Salisbury*, II, p.381.

Women within the ambit of diplomacy had more opportunities than most to study modern foreign languages. The development of permanent residencies in the seventeenth century, and the opportunities for women to spend longer periods of time abroad, often alone, meant that foreign language acquisition became a vital necessity. The diplomat Thomas Chaloner, who served as a special ambassador to Europe in the 1540s and 1550s, was particularly keen on his return to ensure female members of his household were skilled in languages. He acquired dictionaries and grammars for his stepdaughter, Katherine Leigh.[425] His accounts also reveal that in 1553, he purchased 'a vocabulary in Latin which I gave to my to my daughter'.[426] In the same year, 10 shillings were, 'given to a Flemming maister who teacheth my daughter for ii books Italian in a pair'. [427] Women connected with these households were being given wider opportunities to learn languages, and increasingly encouraged to do so. In Venice, Giacomo Castelvetro 'frequented the English embassy to teach Italian specifically to the 'household' of Sir Dudley Carleton in 1611. His wife, Anna Gerard, who Sir Dudley relied on to liaise with local Italian contacts, almost certainly would have participated in Castelvetro's lessons.[428] Sir John Digby, English ambassador to Spain was so keen his wife Beatrice Walcot was able to speak and understand Spanish whilst living abroad, employed the grammarian, John Sanford to tutor 'to my Lady for her language'.[429] Sanford, composed a Spanish grammar for Beatrice that would eventually be published as *Propylaion, or, Entrance to the Spanish Tongue* (1611).[430] A copy survives in the Bodleian Library, containing a handwritten dedication to Lady Digby, stating it was produced not just for her but 'her other sisters' in addition to other grammars he had written 'for the French and Italian Tongues', suggesting that language-learning may also have occurred among Lady Digby's wider female circle at home or in the embassy.[431]

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[425] Chaloner married the widow Joan Cotton (d.1557), wife of Thomas Leigh in 1550. See Miller, C., 'Sir Thomas Chaloner' in *ODBN*, from https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5040 (last accessed Mar 2024).

[426] Dan O'Sullivan, *The Reluctant Ambassador: The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Chaloner, Tudor Diplomat* (Stroud, 2016), p.89.

[427] Ibid, p.89.

[428] https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol12/pp221-230 & https://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol12/pp201-220; Rosenberg, Eleanor, 'Giacopo Castelvetro: Italian Publisher in Elizabethan London and His Patrons' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 6, no. 2 (1943), pp. 119–148.

[429] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.390.

[430] Sanford, John, *Propylaion, or, Entrance to the Spanish Tongue* (London,1611).

[431] Ibid, p.62.

Attitudes towards the prospect of women as language-learners evolve over the timeframe of this thesis. Ranging from being cautious to overtly hostile, they evolve to acknowledge the idea that women could be proficient practitioners of languages. The correlation between the growth in female overseas travel and the production of books specifically tailored to the female market must be more than coincidental. Dedications to women who either travelled themselves or were associated with internationalist households, notably those by foremost authors such as Pierre Erondelle and John Florio, helped to cement the association between women and travel in the public conscience. In some sectors of society, families were taking practical steps to equip their wives and daughters with the skills needed to journey and live abroad, notably those connected with the fields of diplomacy and families associated with military households. In summary, changing approaches to language learning, revealed in language texts and accounts by learners themselves, reveal a growing acceptance of the reality of foreign travel by women by the early seventeenth century.

2.3 Literary references to travel

Contemporary literature provides a rich, and until recently, relatively untapped source of evidence on shifting attitudes towards women's travel. In common with travelogues and language-learning texts, views evolve across the period in line with the growing numbers of women, venturing overseas. By the early seventeenth century, authors who previously had characterised overseas women's travel as exceptional and even inappropriate, were gradually acknowledging its ubiquity.

Portrayals of the absurdity of women learning languages are well-known, ranging from Princess Katherine in Shakespeare's Henry V (1599) mispronouncing body-parts for comic effect, to Mistress Openworke in the Jacobean comedy, *Roaring Girls* (1611) claiming with barely disguised double entendres she had the 'Latine tongue and a spice of the French'.[432] Representations of travelling women were not unknown to playgoers of the era, but their actions were often peripheral to the main storyline or used to underscore the dangers of this novelty. Very often they are obliged to transform their appearance or subvert their female identities to make the notion more palatable to audiences. In *The Merchant of Venice* (1596), Portia travels from her house in Belmont to Venice 'in such a habit that they shall think we are accomplished with what we

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[432] Shakespeare, *Henry V*, Act III, Sc iv; Dekker and Middleton, *The Roaring Girle*, Act II, scene i. The French disease was a phrase commonly used at the time as a euphemism for a venereal disease.

lack'.[433] The comedy derived from cross-dressing women also softened the impact of their transgressive behaviour. In *Twelfth Night* (1601), Viola cross-dresses both for comic effect, but also to protect her reputation: 'What danger will it be to us, maids as we are, to travel forth so far'.[434]

What is notable however is that as the seventeenth century progresses, the character of the independent woman traveller, unimpeded by male disguise, emerges as a central and credible feature in numerous plays. Middleton's little known comedy *No {Wit No Help} Like a Woman's* (1611) is particularly illustrative of this development.[435] The plot revolves around a journey to the Continent made by Lady Twilight and her daughter, Mistress Jane. Their subsequent abduction by pirates, and their return to England ten years later is central to the play's storyline. Desperate to locate his missing mother and sister, Philip Twilight sets off overseas, only to eventually return having squandered his inheritance with a new bride on his arm. The central premise of the play, which audiences would have needed to accept in order for the comedy to work, is that two genteel women might have undertaken such a journey and in crossing the Channel have encountered similar risks. Certainly the references to the dangers of kidnapping by pirates, known as Dunkirkers due to the area they operated from, would have had some currency. When Sir Robert Sidney's wife, Barbara Gamage visited her husband at Vlissingen in 1597, she travelled by royal naval vessels to minimise the risk of being intercepted by pirates.[436] In some instances encounters with pirates and brigands were all too real. Eleanor Cave and her husband, Sir Thomas Roe the English ambassador to Istanbul were returning to England in 1628, when they were attacked by galleys sent by the Knights of St John. The couple narrowly escaped with their lives, although sadly Eleanor's pet parrot died in the crossfire.[437]

The most celebrated representation of the woman traveller on the Jacobean stage was Lady Would-be in Ben Jonson's popular comedy *Volpone* (1607).[438] Lady Would-be must have been an

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[433] Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Sc iii.

[434] Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, Act I, Sc. iii.

[435] Middleton, Thomas, *No wit, [no] help like a womans a comedy / by Tho. Middleton, Gent.* (London, 1657). For details on the date of performance see Jowett, J., 'No Wit/Help like a Woman's; or Thae Almanac' in Taylor, G & Lavagnino, J (eds.) *Thomas Middleton, the Collected Works* (Oxford, 2010), p.779 ff.

[436] Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix,* p.146.

[437] Richardson, S. (ed.) *The negotiations of Sir Thomas Roe, in his embassy to the Ottoman Porte, from ... 1621 to 1628* (London, 1740), pp.826-827.

[438] Jonson, Ben, *Ben: Jonson his Volpone or The foxe.* (London, 1607).The subplot of Volpone is explored in Barish, Jonas A. "The Double Plot in 'Volpone'" *Modern Philology*, vol. 51, no. 2 (Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 83–92. See n.2 which provides bibliographical notes on the suggestion that Sir Politic is a parody of Sir Henry Wotton.

acknowledged 'type' by the time of the play's production for the humour to work so well. Her indomitable spirit, determined to accompany her husband across Europe, would have been instantly recognisable to contemporary audiences. By characterising Lady Would-be as a brash upstart, Jonson played once more to that popular perception that women were out of their depth both physically and psychologically when it came to foreign travel. Her presence on the journey is a constant source of irritation for her mischievous and scheming husband, Sir Politic. To underline this point, Jonson juxtaposes the couple with Peregrine, an avowedly single and sophisticated English traveller, who is unencumbered by female company. Lady Would-be's character echoes many of the tropes of earlier travel guides and language-learning texts, among which that women were too garrulous to make agreeable travelling companions and that foreign-living exposed them to unnecessary risk. Responding to news of Lady Would-be's arrival in Venice, Volpone poses a question that surely would have resonated with male Jacobean audiences : 'I wonder at the desperate valour of the bold English, that they dare let loose their wives to all encounters!'[439]

In common with the authors of earlier instructional manuals, Jonson questions the benefits of women travelling to educate themselves. Like all of the new breed of woman travellers, Lady Would-be is portrayed as a female dilettante, whose appreciation of literature and the arts is as superficial as her predilection for fine clothes and 'fucus' make-up, which symbolically melts in the heat of the Venetian sun. Whilst Sir Politic compares himself to a latter-day Ulysses who seeks to know 'men's minds and manners', his wife has a 'peculiar' desire to 'to quote, to learn the language, and so forth', again lampooning the popularity of foreign language-learning among seventeenth century women.[440] Works of European literature are used as showy accoutrements by Lady Would-be, a point underlined by her mispronunciation of the most famous essayist of the age as 'Montaignié'. Having been translated as we have seen by Florio just three years prior to the first performance of the play, and dedicated to some of the foremost women travellers of the age, few would have failed to spot the joke. Some may even have privately recognised many of Lady Would-be's affectations in themselves. Eleanor Touchet, who was brought up on the Continent as the daughter of the governor of Utrecht and who later returned to Europe on a licence to travel to Spa, was one of those women to be compared unfavourably to Jonson's comic character. In 1622, the poet Christopher Brooke directly described Eleanor as a 'Lady Would-be', and savaged her

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[439] Jonson, *Volpone*, I, ii, l.100-2.

[440] Ibid, II, i, l.11-13.

appearance as an 'abominable stinking greate Symnell'.[441] The character of Lady Would-be clearly remained widely recognisable in early modern society and highlights the evolving way in which foreign travel by women was being perceived. The humour of the satire rests in the fact that travellers like Lady Would-be had become recognisable 'types', and even those not able to journey overseas were increasingly guilty of succumbing to similar foreign affectations.

Changing attitudes towards women accompanying husbands overseas can be gleaned from the pages of other literary sources, notably poetry and prose. Allegorical tales upholding the virtues of wandering women as a way of preserving the bonds of marriage spring ever more readily from the pens of contemporary authors. Essayists and writers of moralising stories speak increasingly candidly about the moral duty of men to uphold their vows of marriage by not abandoning their wives to temptation and vice when they were forced by work or circumstances to journey from home. This debate is well illustrated in an Italianate romance written by the author and traveller, George Whetstone, entitled *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* (1582).[442] In it, he recounts the story of the gentleman, Marco Malpiero who intends to wed the beautiful but untrustworthy Felice. Many attempt to warn Malpiero of the dangers of this relationship, not least because his prospective bride had a roaming spirit and might 'goe like a Pecock' and 'take the lyberty to walk' when his back was turned.[443] Ignoring all advice, Malpiero proceeds with the marriage, but when he departs on business, Felice predictably falls to temptation and wanders away from home. We sense some sympathy in the narrator's voice when he raises the question facing all men who left their wives at home to embark on long overseas journeys: 'What shoulde faire Felice doe in this extremitie? Live upon her husbandes travel, and be idle her selfe? That were no good Huswiferie'.[444]

Felice ventures off to the 'Piatso Richio' a veiled allusion to the Royal Exchange in London 'where the bravest Gentlemen assembled, & where the fynest devices were sould'.[445] The narrator then comes to the central focus of his tale concerning the dangers of women travelling independently: 'if their wyves love gadding, lyke faire Felice …., twentie to one, they wil pawn

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[441] TNA, SP 14/130 f.135.

[442] Whetstone, George, *An heptameron of civill discourses Containing: the Christmasse exercise of sundrie well courted gentlemen and gentlewomen…* (London, 1582) sig.K1-3. Whetstone travelled to Italy in 1580. See Smith, E. 'George Whetstone' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29198 (last accessed Mar 2024).

[443] Whetstone, *Heptameron*, sig.K2.

[444] Ibid, sig.K3.

[445] Ibid, sig.K3.

their honours, to please their fancies'.[446] Inevitably, Felice captures the eye of a suitor, Marino Giorgio, who proceeds to woo her whilst Malpiero is away from home. When Malpiero eventually returns, he surprises Felice in the arms of her new lover and despatches him with his sword. Whetstone's fable is a salient reminder for both men and women that independent travel can place unnecessary strains on marriage. Men have a duty to remain with their spouses and provide companionship whilst women need to be protected from the risk of materialism and even adultery. Whetstone raises the highly salient question as to whether this tragic conclusion could have been avoided and Felice's roaming spirit been satiated had she been able to remain by the side of her husband when he first set out abroad.

The classical canon provided a rich seam of literary parallels for women who travelled abroad. In contrast to the stage satirists, figures from the ancient past provided laudable examples of travelling women, who could safely be emulated by their modern-day contemporaries. George Pettie's aforementioned translation of Guazzo's *Civile Conversation* (1581) compares its chief dedicatee Margery Williams, wife of the English ambassador to Paris to matriarchal figures of Greek history and mythology who either accompanied their partners on voyages or supported them from home whilst they journeyed overseas: 'You may compare with Olimpias for her Alexander, with Hecuba for her Hector, with Thetis for her Achilles'.[447] The most extensive tributes to women associated with travel and adventure can be found in the pages of Thomas Heywood's *Gynaikeion* (1624).[448] Described by the author as 'a discourse of women', the work is dedicated to the widow of the highly cultivated and well-travelled Elizabeth Hastings, Countess of Worcester (1556-1621).[449] The Countess had travelled to Spa in 1612, where she met among others the poet John Donne.[450] Although she died in 1621, her children maintained a strong interest in continental travel and the international Catholic community.[451] Her daughter Blanche may well have travelled to Spa in her mother's party in 1612, whilst a second daughter, Catherine married the inveterate traveller, Thomas

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[446] Ibid, sig.K3.

[447] Pettie, *The civile conversation*, 'Dedication', sig.A1.

[448] Heywood, Thomas, *Gynaikeion: or, Nine bookes of various history. Concerninge women inscribed by ye names of ye nine Muses* (London, 1624).

[449] Heywood, *Gynaikeion,* 'Dedication', sig.A4v.

[450] *CSPD* (1611-18), p.138.

[451] The family were suspected Catholics and both Blanche and Catherine were listed amongst those charged with recusancy in the Middlesex Sessions' Rolls during reign of Charles: *Middlesex County Records*, III, pp.151-152.

Windsor who also travelled to Spa in 1617.[452] Heywood celebrates the 'unparalleled accomplishments' of the Earl's wife and daughters and commends his good taste in supporting 'the patronage of good women'.[453]

Although Heywood recounts the deeds of countless estimable women across the centuries, what is noticeable is how often he returns to those who were shaped by the experience of travel either directly or indirectly. Among the women whose virtues he celebrates are those whose husband's have been constrained to leave them in order to journey overseas. When Thesca's husband Polixenus is forced to flee abroad, she claims to 'have knowne the least purpose of his retyrement,' in order to hide his whereabouts from his pursuers, adding that given the chance she too, would have 'made her selfe a companion in all his Navigations, and Travaile'.[454] For those that did travel, the threats to their physical well-being were commonly cited, but Heywood explores such risks to spotlight female heroism. In one passage he relays the story of Hippo an ancient Greek woman whose ship was attacked by pirates and who was forced to throw herself into the sea to preserve her virtue.[455] Military wives who travelled overseas in the face of real danger were also given full credit. He illustrates this with the story of Bona of Lombardy, the sixteenth century wife of a soldier called Brunorius Parmensis, who accompanied her husband devotedly on his military expeditions, 'not as a partner of his pleasures but a companion in his dangers'.[456] Similarly, he relays the story of Horestilla, the wife of the Roman military commander Marcus Plautius, who insisted on accompanying her husband abroad in spite of the threats she faced. When Plautius is ordered to set sail for Asia, Horestilla 'devoted to his love' as she was, hid herself onboard one of the ships 'exposing her selfe to the dangers of the sea' and abjuring all personal comforts 'on so harsh a journey'.[457] Women travelling as part of military households make up one of the largest sections of the database, and the heroic deeds of earlier military wives would have been passed down orally or through books such as this. High profile military wives, such as Barbara Gamage, wife of the governor of Vlissingen or Diana Cecil, Countess of Oxford (c.1603-1654) could be seen as modern day counterparts of the heroines of ancient legend. Diana Cecil, travelled to the Netherlands, in the company of her officer husband Henry de Vere in the same year as Heywood's

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[452] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.201.

[453] Heywood, *Gynaikeion*, 'Dedication', sig.A3v.

[454] Ibid, p.363.

[455] Ibid, p.135.

[456] Ibid, p.227.

[457] Ibid, p.137.

book was published and specifically requested to be taken to the frontline, where she 'went to the trenches, and then to look on the enemy'. [458] We can never know if she read Heywood's book, but it is highly likely that she and her peers were familiar with many of its stories and heroines.

Figures from more recent times were also celebrated in plays and ballads as worthy of emulation. The life of the Protestant exile Katherine Willoughby, the Duchess of Suffolk (1519-80) captured the attention of the historian John Foxe in his famous 1570 edition of his *Book of Martyrs* in which he catalogued the numerous challenges she faced when she fled abroad in 1555.[459] Her reputation was revived again in the Stuart era, when she was projected as a prototype for the exiled Elizabeth Stuart. Both were seen as Protestant heroines fleeing abroad from their enemies, enduring challenges and dangers along the way before eventually finding religious toleration and safety. Thomas Drue's play *Life of the dutches of Suffolke* was first performed around 1624.[460] Aside from the celebration of Katherine's triumph over Catholic persecution, Drue's play also highlighted many of the practical challenges facing women travellers of the age, not least how closely monitored women travellers were when crossing the Channel: 'all Ports are laid, all passages are stop't, search, and inquirie posts through every towne'.[461] The Duchess of Suffolk's ordeal abroad, during which time she was constrained to give birth to her son in a doorway and forced to disguise her identity to avoid detection by local bandits, was further mythologised in Thomas Deloney's ballad, *The most rare and excellent history of the Duchesse of Suffolkes calamity* (1635).[462] The ballad further gilds the myth of the Duchess who triumphed over physical and spiritual adversity, aided by divine assistance:

> 'Unto the Sea-coast they come downe,
> to passe the Seas was their intent,
> and God provided so that day,
> that they tooke ship and sail'd away'.[463]

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[458] *HMC Portland*, II, p.114. Frances Walsingham also visited her husband, Sir Philip Sidney, then serving abroad in the Low Countries in 1586.

[459] Foxe, John, *The first volume of the ecclesiasticall history contaynyng the actes and monumentes of thynges passed in euery kynges tyme in this realme, especially in the Church of England principally to be noted…* (London, 1570). See also Garrett, *The Marian Exiles*, pp.87-89.

[460] Drue, Thomas, *The life of the dutches of Suffolke As it hath beene divers and sundry times acted, with good applause* (London, 1631).

[461] Ibid, sig.E4v.

[462] Deloney, Thomas, *The most rare and excellent history of the Duchesse of Suffolkes calamity To the tune of Queene Dido* (London, 1635).

[463] Ibid, p.94.

Plays and ballads celebrating the life of Katherine Willoughby spoke to an ongoing narrative that women's travel, however difficult, could provide instructive lessons to contemporary audiences. The trials and challenges such women faced were projected as modern-day pilgrimages in which strength of character and moral fibre were tested and honed.

Literary accounts of foreign travel by women for more pleasurable purposes though less common can still be found. The nuptial progress undertaken by Elizabeth Stuart in 1613 was celebrated with masques and poetry, although much of this centres on the political importance of their union rather than the cultural value of her journey to the Palatinate.[464] A little known work by the poet William Basse in *Eclogue V (Of Temperance)* (1613) perfectly demonstrates the intensity of feeling that independent travel by women could evoke.[465] Framed in a Spenserian pastoral style, Basse describes the embarkation of Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke for Spa in the summer of 1614. The poem was written as a conversation piece between two shepherds, Clorus and Orpin, grieving the departure of their mistress, Poemenarcha, the poetic personification of the Countess. Poemenarcha forsakes the 'chalky cheekes' of the English coast for 'farre discover'd places'.[466] Once across the choppy waters of the Channel, she is greeted by a flotilla of 'Belgique boats' and conveyed to 'famous Spaw'.[467] Basse was a contemporary of leading poets of the Jacobean era, among them Francis Beaumont and George Wither. Wither had earlier written an *Epithalamia* (1613) to celebrate the nuptials of Princess Elizabeth, and there is more than an echo of this earlier royal tour in his description of Poemenarcha's journey.[468] Basse's *Eclogue* celebrates in literary form the importance of female journeys. Its use of classical references and Spenserian verse is a far cry from the ribald humour of earlier playwrights and balladeers. Travel by women, be it an elite few, had clearly become an event of cultural merit and was recognised as such by poets of the Jacobean court.

In short, the literary response to women's travel found in poetry, plays and prose of the era follows many of the same evolutionary patterns as travel literature and language-learning texts.

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[464] For closer analysis see Smart, S & Wade, Mara R., T*he Palatine Wedding of 1613: Protestant Alliance and Court Festival* (2013).

[465] Warwick Bond, R. (ed.),*The poetical works of William Basse* (London, 1893), p.209-212.

[466] Ibid, p.211.

[467] Ibid, p.212.

[468] George Wither, *Epithalamia: or Nuptiall poems upon the most blessed and happie mariage betweene the high and mightie Prince Frederick … and the most vertuous, gracious and thrice excellent Princesse, Elizabeth* (London, 1613).

Initial cynicism and reluctance gives way to a gradual recognition of how widespread overseas women's travel had become. Comedy was gleaned from female language-learning and overseas travel not so much because it was so new and unusual but because it was becoming increasingly common and recognisable. More serious works of literature even begin to champion the benefits of women's travel. Figures drawn from history and legend as well as more recent high profile travellers such as the Countess of Pembroke and Elizabeth Stuart were increasingly used to celebrate the virtues of travel and played a key part in gaining wider social acceptance.

2.4 Religious texts

Religious texts and moralising literature, such as conduct books, present a more complex perspective on societal attitudes towards women's travel. Authors' views depended not only on their religious persuasion but the type of travel under discussion. The prospect of women fleeing English shores to join overseas convents, was unconscionable to Protestant commentators, and they were quick to question the moral integrity of these 'wandering weemen' and 'galloping girls'.[469] The Anglican priest, Joseph Hall vented his spleen at the Catholic exiles he had encountered first-hand on a trip to Brussels in 1605 in *Epistles* (1608), mockingly characterising them as latter-day Vestal Virgins, participating in 'a thousand rites, I know not whether more ridiculous, or magicall.'[470] The theologian, William Perkins, pilloried such women as superstitious crackpots. In *Discourse of the Damned Art of Witchcraft* (1608) he argued that such travelling to 'farre countries, to meete with Herodias, Diana, and the Devill, and such like' amounted to satanical delusions.[471] For some, madness was the only explanation for such aberrant behaviour. The diplomat, George Chaworth, thought the English nuns he encountered at St Omer in 1621 were unsound of mind and could only explain their wanderlust as the product of a temporary form of madness he calls 'lucida intervalla'.[472] For Chaworth, not only had these women rejected the certainty of the Anglican faith but worse still were living free from the constraints of conventional family life.

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[469] TNA, SP 77/8 f.417; Turler, *The traveiler*, p.9.

[470] *Hall, Joseph, Epistles, the first volume: conteining two decads.* (London, 1608), p.39.

[471] *Perkins, William, A discourse of the damned art of witchcraft so farre forth as it is revealed in the Scriptures…* (London, 1608), p.194.

[472] Kempe, *The Loseley Manuscripts*, pp.461-462.

Catholic authors took a different stance on female confessional mobility. The lives of wandring holy women, whose journeys helped to forge their saintly reputation, were held up as encouraging examples to modern-day exiles facing similar challenges. Among the most popular were Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Teresa of Ávila. A new *Life of the blessed virgin, saint Catharine of Siena* (1609) by the English Catholic priest John Fenn underlined how the saint's 'travaile into farre and strange countreis' played a formative role in shaping her holy character.[473] Fenn himself was no stranger to the hardships of travel, having fled to Flanders at the start of Elizabeth's reign, before serving as resident chaplain at St Monica's, one of the primary destinations for English women taking holy orders. The parallels between the perils and challenges Catherine faced and their own, whereby 'she cast no doubt neither of the travaile and tediousnes of the long journey' would have been self-evident to the English canonesses.[474] Similar contemporary parallels would have been drawn with the publication two years later of Michael Walpole's English translation of the life Saint Teresa of Ávila, *The lyf of the mother Teresa of Jesus* (1611).[475] It was written at the behest of the foremost mendicant nun of the age, Luisa da Carvajal, who like the eponymous heroine of the book, wandered her homeland founding reformed convents. Walpole's work was further connected with the theme of women's travel, as his sister Margaret was a close confidant of Luisa's, accompanying the nun on her journey from Spain to London in 1606.[476] In the title of the book, Michael Walpole describes *The Lyf* as 'very profitable for all vertuous and devout people, and for all those that are desyrous to be such' making a clear link to Luisa's lifestyle and women like his sister.[477] The life of Teresa clearly resonated with readers and authors associated with the world of travelling women. Tobie Matthew, who produced his own translation of the *Lyf* in 1642 entitled *The flaming hart*, was within the kinship circles of at least 13 women travellers in the database, acting as their overseas chaperones, confidantes and correspondents.[478] Among those Matthew struck up a close attachment was Lady Elizabeth Knatchbull (1584-1629), abbess of the Convent of the Immaculate Conception, Ghent (1624), about whom he wrote a biography. Victor

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[473] Fenn, John (trans.), *The life of the blessed virgin, Saint Catharine of Siena* (Douai, 1609), p.380.

[474] Ibid, p.340.

[475] Walpole, Michael, *The lyf of the mother Teresa of Jesus* (Antwerp, 1611).

[476] Redworth, Glyn and Henstock, C.J. (ed.) *Letters of Luisa de Carvajal, y Mendoza*, I (London, 2012), pp.54-5 and p.130.

[477] Walpole, M*other Teresa of Jesus*, frontispiece.

[478] Matthew, Tobie (trans.), *The flaming hart, or, The life of the gloriovs S. Teresa foundresse of the reformation, of the order of the all-immaculate Virgin-Mother, our B. Lady, of Mount Carmel …* (Antwerp, 1642).

Houliston argues that Matthew draws upon St Teresa's *Lyf* to relate the achievements of the latter-day traveller and foundress in the same hagiographical style, further strengthening the conceptual bonds between spirituality and female peripateticism.[479] As Caroline Bowden and others have noted, copies of *The Lyf* as well as hagiographies of other inspirational itinerant female saints regularly appear in the collections of English overseas convents.[480] The women who fled abroad in search of freedom of conscience did not lack for champions. Dedicating his life of the Virgin Mary, *The mirrour of created perfection* (1632) to Sister Agnes Rosendale, an English Carmelite at Antwerp, the author John Falconer called upon other 'English gentelwomen' to heed her example.[481] For him, Rosendale was the perfect embodiment of how, in the right circumstances, women could 'enjoy abroad, such sweet retyrements, & strait imbracings of their Heavenly Spowse, as their owne Homes cannot now affoard them'.[482]

Aside from the call to venture forth, *Mirrour* is punctuated with references to character-shaping journeys undertaken by the Virgin, which travelling Catholic women of the period were encouraged to mimic. Apart from Mary's obvious journey to Jerusalem, *Mirrour* includes a description of how Mary undertook 'a paynfull iourney of 3 dayes travell, over the craggy mountaynes of Jewry, to visit her aged Cosen S. Elizabeth in Hebron'.[483] A description that echoed tortuous journeys undertaken by tourists to Spa described in Chapter 5 or ambassadresses travelling to and from their ambassadorial residences outlined in Chapter 6. The lives of both saints and the Virgin Mary served as inspirational role models for contemporaries and paved the way for wider social acceptance of women's travel.

On occasion, Catholic and Protestant authors were able to find some common ground on the subject of women's travel. Often this concerned their choice of figures from the Old Testament and early Christian history who they regarded as virtuous exemplars of the benefits of travel. One of the foremost paragons championed by Catholics and Protestants alike, was the Queen of Sheba. The Flemish philosopher, Justus Lipsius, who was within the sociability ambit of the Arundels, described the Queen in his *Direction for Travailers* (1592) as among the most 'worthy travellers in

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[479] Houliston, Victor, 'Recusant Literary Culture', in Scully, Robert E. (ed.), *A Companion to Catholicism in and Recusancy in Britain and Ireland* (Leiden, 2022), p.520.

[480] Bowden, Caroline, 'Building libraries in exile: The English convents and their book collections in the seventeenth century' in *British Catholic History*, Vol.32, Issue 3 (2015), pp. 343-382.

[481] Falconer, John, *The mirrour of created perfection* (Saint Omer, 1632), p.5

[482] Ibid p.5.

[483] Ibid, p.25.

holy writ'.[484] The English Protestant author, John Stell, writing a dedicatory epistle for an English translation of Nicholas de Nicholay's *Navigations, Peregrinations and Voyages* (1585), explored the educational value of travel through the person of Sheba.[485] He noted it was only by seeing Solomon 'wyth her eyes' that she was fully able to appreciate the king's 'incomparable renowme' [486] The theme is taken up by Thomas Heywood in his aforementioned *Gynaikeion* (1624) who underscored the power of travel to enlighten women as well as men and that by having visited the famously wise king she 'returned into her countrey richer by her gifts, more benefited by her knowledge'.[487] The social commentator, Richard Brathwaite also found instructional value in Sheba's story. In *The English Gentlewoman* (1631) she was celebrated as the archetypal woman traveller, who left 'her owne Region to heare the Wisdome of King Salomon'.[488] Brathwaite was arguably more conservative than his peers, and was keen to remind his female readers not to shun the values of the hearth. He extolled the virtues of the humble snail who though a traveller remains metaphorically and literally attached to its home and 'still carries her house about her, as is the property of a good House-keeper'.[489] Curiously, Brathwaite proposes that this view may not be universally endorsed, adding 'I ingenuously submit to others [sic] censure'.[490] His self-consciousness suggests that his views on the proper place for a woman, were even by 1630s beginning to sound old-fashioned.

The Old Testament figure of Ruth was cited as another praiseworthy example of a valiant woman traveller popular with religious commentators of all hues. According to the Bible, Ruth had married the son of a woman from Judah, but refused to abandon her new family, even after she became a widow. When her grieving mother-in-law, Naomi decides to return to her homeland alone, Ruth insists on accompanying her with the now famous words 'Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you lodge, I will lodge'.[491] The English cleric, Edward Topsell, in *The Reward of Religion*

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[484] Stradling, John (trans.), *A Direction for Travailers. Taken out of Justus Lipsius…* (London, 1592), sig.A2v.

[485] Nicholay, Nicholas de, *The navigations, peregrinations and voyages, made into Turkie by Nicholas Nicholay Daulphinois, Lord of Arfevile, chamberlaine and geographer ordinarie to the King of Fraunce …* (London, 1581).

[486] Nicholay, *Navigations*, sig.Q3v.

[487] Heywood, *Gynaikeion,* p.378

[488] Brathwaite, Richard, *The English gentlewoman, drawne out to the full body expressing, what habilliments doe best attire her, what ornaments doe best adorne her, what complements doe best accomplish her.* (London, 1631), p.52.

[489] Ibid, p.52.

[490] Ibid, p.52.

[491] *Ruth* I, v.16-17.

(1596) dedicated his 'sundrie lectures upon the booke of Ruthe' to the wealthy female heiress, Margaret Fiennes, Baronnness Dacres.[492] The work includes a eulogy to Ruth, in which he champions her fortitude in choosing to 'renounce her native towne' but equally remains cautious about the merits of independent travel by women, declaring it 'a daungerous or indecent thing, for women to travaile or worke alone without any company'.[493] For Topsell, Ruth was a complex figure. Her decision to venture forth was a difficult one, but he concedes that without the challenges and hardships that travel posed, Ruth would have been unable to demonstrate the qualities of devotion and commitment for which she was widely celebrated.

Ruth's example clearly resonated with contemporary audiences. The Swiss cleric Ludwig Lavater, dedicated his collected *Sermons* (1582) to a group of widows he described as the 'Matrons and Mirrors of vertue' among whom he lists Ann, Duchess of Somerset, Lady Brigit, Countess of Bedford, Mistress Philip Prydeaux, Mistress Luce Cotten and Mistress Mary Watts.[494] He hoped the women, who all share widowhood with the main protagonists of his sermon, Naomi and her dutiful daughter-in-law, Ruth, 'excellent paterns of vertues and godlyness' and draws attention to the similarity of their situation with a series of pointed, rhetorical questions: 'Was Naomi a sojourner in a straunge countrie, and lost there her husband? So, have some of you. Did Ruth leave her countrie for religion? So have some of you. Were they disdayned, skoft and scorned at? So are you of the world for your zeale in religion'[495]

The use of Ruth as an exemplar for women travellers continued into the early Stuart era. The Anglican pastor, Richard Bernard dedicated his commentary on the Book of Ruth, *Ruth Recompense* (1628) to Frances Wray, Dowager Countess of Warwick, whose stepdaughter Isabella Rich, had travelled to Spa in 1621 in the company of Lucy Hay, Countess of Carlisle. Direct parallels were sometimes drawn between Ruth and actual woman travellers.[496] Dedicating his book *Tryall or Travell* (1630) to Elizabeth Stuart, Baptist Goodall singles her out as a 'great honor of

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[492] Topsell, Edward, *The reward of religion Deliuered in sundrie lectures upon the booke of Ruth…* (London, 1596), sig.A4.

[493] Ibid, p.150.

[494] Lavater, Ludwig, *The book of Ruth expounded in twenty eight sermons, by Levves Lavaterus of Tygurine* … (London, 1586).

[495] Ibid, sig.2v.

[496] Bernard, Richard, *Ruths recompence: or a commentarie upon the booke of Ruth wherein is shewed her happy calling out of her owne country and people, into the fellowship and society of the Lords inheritance* … (London, 1628), sig.A2.

travell' in addition to being a 'patterne of piety and patience'.[497] Comparisons between Elizabeth and the biblical figure of Ruth are made throughout to underscore the virtue of women's travel amongst women of her class and status. For Goodall, Ruth was a paragon of self-denial and devotion for whom travel provided the occasion to reveal these qualities. Similarly, women travelling overseas as part of royal or diplomatic households, obliged to abandon the hearth and journey abroad in the service of the state, could become modern-day exemplars of Ruth, who likewise endured hardship and deprivation and wandered far from the comforts of family and home.

Taken together, religious texts, or those that discuss religious subjects are more nuanced in their stance on women's travel than other literary sources. Many are willing to champion figures or 'types' which helped to personify the benefits of travel, among them Ruth and the Queen of Sheba. However, unregulated and unchaperoned travel remained problematic. Conservatives like the English ambassador, William Trumbull feared the young women travelling overseas to newly founded convents exposed themselves to the risk of indoctrination, dismissing their desire to travel as the product of 'brain-sick English gentlewomen'.[498] Even the Archpriest of the overseas English community, William Harrison deplored the peripateticism of the Wardian Sisters, comparing their propensity to 'wander hither and thither' with a form of moral laxity.[499] The response of religious commentators varied greatly, but over time there is a growing acknowledgement, if not acceptance, of the new reality that both the need and desire of women to travel was growing ever greater.

3. The female perception of travel

Whilst gauging the views of men towards the proliferation of female overseas travel is a complex but not impossible task, 'hearing' the authentic voices of women themselves requires a far more imaginative re-reading of the available source material. Correspondence and personal papers, written directly by women travellers or by those closely acquainted with them, have received surprisingly little attention from historians. Much of this material is either unpublished or exists within archives that have been meticulously combed for evidence of the male experience of travel, assuming that female encounters were too few in number to merit comment. Used in combination

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[497] Goodall, Baptist, The tryall of trauell …The way to trauell in three bookes epitemizd / by Baptist Goodall, merchant (London, 1630), sig.A1v.

[498] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.260.

[499] Cited in Chambers, Mary, *Life of Mary Ward*, Vols II, (London,1882), pp. 183-187.

with the database to identify women journeying overseas, we are able to gain a deeper and more interconnected understanding of the impression early modern mobility left on the minds of actual or armchair women travellers.

As noted above, the expansion of language-learning texts and opportunities for women to study modern languages ran parallel to the widening opportunities they encountered for travelling. Contemporary correspondence suggests women were cognisant of these trends and the value of language-learning. The children of Sir Robert Sidney, governor of Vlissingen acquired at least some of their knowledge of foreign languages by travelling overseas, and women played a crucial part in fostering this culture. Sir Robert's wife Barbara Gamage regularly escorted their children to the Netherlands to live as a family abroad, an opportunity clearly endorsed by her relative, Katherine Dudley, Countess of Huntingdon (c.1546-1620). She went so far as to propose places where they might best study languages: 'The best course will be for my nephew to send them to the Haghe … where they shall learn the French tongue'.[500] Learning languages was not just a utilitarian exercise. There is clear evidence from their writings that women developed an abiding emotional attachment to the languages and places where they were acquired. Growing up in cautionary town of Brille after which she was named, Lady Brilliana Harley (1598-1643), daughter of its English governor, Sir Edward Conway, acquired a love of foreign languages that endured throughout her life. On her return to England, she frequently expressed a preference in her letters to her son for foreign reading material: 'I desire it in French, for I would rather reade any thinge in that tounge then in Inglisch'.[501] Like the Sidneys, she championed the benefits of language studies and regularly admonished her son whilst studying at Oxford to persist with his French, 'I hope you doo not forget to spend some time to Learne French. I pray you send me word whether you doo'.[502] Lucy St John (c.1589-1659) was taken by her aunt in 1604 to live in Jersey where 'she boarded in a French minister's house, to learn the language'.[503] Her daughter, the translator Lucy Hutchinson (1620-81), affectionately describes in her own memoirs, how she inherited her mother's love of languages, 'as soon as I was weaned a French woman was taken to be my dry-nurse, and I was taught French and English together'.[504]

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[500] *HMC De L'Isle*, II, p.268.

[501] Cited in Adcock, Rachel et al (eds.), *Flesh and Spirit: An Anthology of Seventeenth Century Women's Writing* (Manchester, 1988), pp.13-14.

[502] Ibid, p.157.

[503] Hutchinson, *Memoirs*, p.11.

[504] Ibid p.16.

One of the best documented examples of young women and girls describing the experience of living and studying abroad relates to Elizabeth Trumbull (c.1611- d.1624), daughter of the English ambassador, William Trumbull. Aside from being born and brought up at the embassy in Brussels, she spent a year studying French in Sedan in northern France in 1621. The town, which was predominantly Huguenot in religious character, was popular with English travellers drawn to its widely respected academy and the confessional freedom it offered.[505] William, Elizabeth's brother was one of many English visitors to the town.[506] Among the *Trumbull Papers* at the British Library are several letters from Elizabeth describing her time abroad. One especially evocative letter, from 1621, describes her experience of studying alone overseas.[507] Beautifully penned - a testament to the quality of her education and the value her family placed upon it - the letter is tinged with recognisable homesickness and a sense of isolation. She first apologises to her father for the lack of regular correspondence, explaining that there was no one to carry her post as 'Master Blancks' had said, 'nobody would part from hence'.[508] There is a tone of modest, self-deprecation about the letter, an unwillingness to be seen as burdensome on the family's resources. Her governess, she informs her father, Mistress Fornelet, had made her a 'gowne which I think will coste a good dele of mony'.[509] The letter concludes with a heartfelt plea for a speedy return to England, 'I would that my yiere were out that I might come home'.[510] Elizabeth was forced to return to England in July 1622, due to an infection she had acquired in one of her legs, possibly an unhealed wound.[511] Her subsequent letters from England to her parents back in Brussels chart her declining health but also her strong emotional attachment to the place and people she had left overseas. She regularly asks to be remembered to members of the household staff in Brussels, including her 'Uncle Beaulieu and My Aunt [Elizabeth Devick]'.[512] She even receives visits from some: 'M. Wolee [Woolley] is not in town but Jermaine [Jermyne] wee expecte from Brussels shortly'. In addition to letter-writing, gifting is used to maintain bonds with those she sorely misses. In one letter she refers to patterns she

[505] See Stoye, *English Travellers*, p.63.

[506] See Anderson, 'The Elder William Trumbull', p.126.

[507] BL, Add MS 72425 f.15.

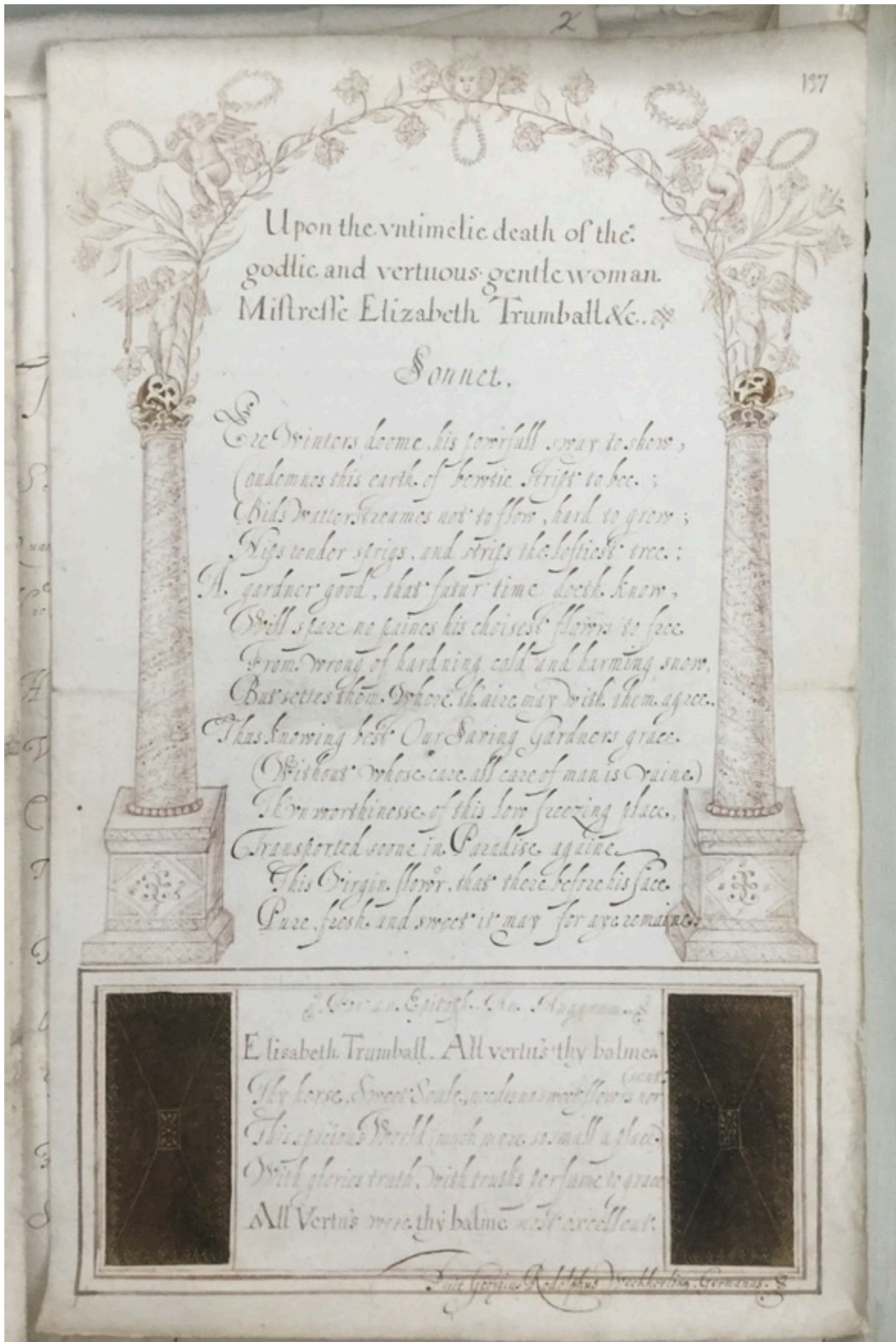
[508] Ibid.

[509] Ibid.

[510] Ibid.

[511] An earlier letter from Wake to Trumbull refers to accident which occurred in the family which led to 'the breaking of little Debora hir arme'. See *Downshire*, VI, p.313.

[512] BL, Add MS 72443 f.65.



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Upon the vntimelie death of the:
godlie and vertuous gentlewoman.
Mistresse Elizabeth Trumball &c..

Sonnet.

Ere Winters doome, his powrfull sway to show,
Condemnes this earth of bewtie stript to bee;
Bids watter streames not to flow, hard to grow;
Nips tender sprigs, and strips the loftiest tree;
A gardner good, that futur time doeth know,
Will spare no paines his choisest flowrs to free
From wrong of hardning cold and harming snow,
But setts them where th'aire may with them agree.
Thus knowing best Our Saving Gardners grace.
(Without whose care all care of man is vaine)
Th'unworthinesse of this low freezing place,
Transported soone in Paradise againe
This Virgin flowr, that there before his face
Pure, fresh and sweet it may for aye remaine.

Or an Epitaph. An Anagram.

Elizabeth Trumball. All vertu's thy balme.
Thy corse, Sweet Soule, [illegible] flowrs [illegible] (scent)
This spacious World (much more so small a place)
With glories truth, with truths perfume to grace
All Vertu's were thy balme most excellent.

Fecit Georgius Rodolphus Weckherlin, Germanus.

Fig. 4.2. Weckherlin, Georg Rudolf , Eulogy to Elizabeth Trumbull (1624), BL, Add MS 72439 f.137.

is sending 'to make stoles for the french woman', and in another, a purse and a cushion she has made.[513] Her mother Debora Downe returned to England in 1623, and appears to have accompanied her back to Brussels for one last journey the following summer where she died aged only 13.[514] Eight eulogies written in her honour survive in the *Trumbull Papers* penned by among others Henry Herman, Robert Haworth and the diplomat Georg Rudolf Weckherlin (1584-1653).[515] Written in several languages and beautifully illustrated (Fig.4.2) they are a testament both to high regard in which Trumbull's daughter was held as well as the strong emotional attachment Elizabeth had forged with her friends and the wider diplomatic community. Richard Raworth particularly acknowledged the connections she had made on both sides of the Channel and her desire to remain acquainted with her friends overseas:

> For Bruxelles Flanders campe
> Was her desire to lie where she was borne she left her breath
> From Dover port of late before Shee past
> To see her parents deere and friends at last
> Flanders hath her breath, England her grave'.[516]

For women unable to travel due to various constraints, the possibility of vicarious overseas journeying remained. Many of the women in the database were within the same sociability networks, and regularly shared correspondence and even artefacts associated with travel whether they were in a position to venture abroad or not. This notion of vicarious or 'armchair travel' is one which has been under explored but has recently gained some traction among historians of mobility. Eva Johanna Holmberg in her essay, 'Practice and Experience, 1500–1700' (2019) discusses the way in which gifting and the presentation of souvenirs of journeys aside from big ticket items such as 'painting and Turkish carpets lugged from abroad' allowed those remaining behind the opportunity to savour 'traces of travel', something which we will explore in Chapter 5 on Spa.[517] In addition, Marie-Louise Ehrenschwendtner has shown in her article 'Virtual Pilgrimages?' (2009) there was an established tradition in Renaissance Europe of women experiencing pilgrimage indirectly through the provision of paintings and shrines that mimicked places on the pilgrim trail to

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[513] Ibid.

[514] Ibid.

[515] BL, Add MS 72439 ff.137-141

[516] BL, Add MS 72439 f.139.

[517] Holmberg, Eva Johanna, 'Introduction: Renaissance and Early Modern Travel: Practice and Experience, 1500–1700', in *Renaissance Studies*, Vol.33 (2019), pp.515–523.

Rome and provided a deeply spiritual but vicarious sense of journeying without ever stepping outside the convent walls.[518]

This notion of armchair travel is perfectly illustrated by correspondence associated with Anne Dacre, Dowager Countess of Arundel (1557-1630) as well as her relative, Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Kent. Both women never travelled abroad, but correspondence connected to Aletheia Talbot, Countess of Arundel, suggests they followed the progress of their itinerant kinswoman very closely and were deeply invested in the experiences she enjoyed. Letters which survive in the *Cowper Papers*, suggest Anne maintained a constant correspondence with Aletheia during her 1613-14 European tour and she was closely involved, if from a distance, in her itinerary.[519] The level of contact between the two is confirmed by a letter in December 1613 sent from Anne to Aletheia then staying in Siena in which she gives 'many thanks for the sundry letters'.[520] Such was the expectation that Aletheia would keep her mother-in-law regularly informed of her progress, any lapse in communication was quickly noted. Following an interruption in the usual stream of letters, Anne remarks that though 'I write weekly … I find in almost a whole month you received none'.[521] As well as maintaining regular correspondence, the *Cowper Papers* suggest Anne took advantage of her daughter-in-law's time overseas to acquire material objects on her behalf. In an earlier lost letter, Aletheia had asked Anne if she desired any souvenirs from her trip, to which Anne enthusiastically replied with an extensive list of carefully selected items, ranging from everyday material for household furnishings to expensive fabrics for personal attire. Among the textiles she requested were 'tafitiss and tafita sarsnetts … for curtains for beds and windows and making of quilts' as well as 'gentle slight silk' and 'so good as I have seen' for dressmaking.[522] Anne is in no doubt about the colours she requires, too and specifically asks Aletheia to purchase 'yellow, green, blue'.[523] This is a woman who knows both her mind and the trends in European fashions. Her understanding of the topography of Italy is equally certain. She expresses a particular desire for 'twisted silks' and for 'fringe and embroidery' and that she knows to 'be good in Sienna'.[524] Her

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[518] Ehrenschwendtner , M-L, 'Virtual Pilgrimages? Enclosure and the Practice of Piety at St Katherine's Convent, Augsburg' in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 60 (2009), pp.45-73.

[519] *HMC Cowper*, I, pp.79-84.

[520] Ibid, p.79.

[521] Ibid p.82.

[522] Ibid, p.79.

[523] Ibid, p.79.

[524] Ibid, p.79.

eagerness to acquire these objects is underlined in a subsequent letter a few weeks later, in which Anne pointedly reminds Aletheia 'the 200 pounds I would send to buy those things for me is here ready to pay or send'.[525] The correspondence confirms we need to rethink female encounter with early modern travel as something which was not necessarily remote nor solely enjoyed by those travelling abroad. It was a far more inclusive experience, savoured by others in their socialisation networks, many of them women, who were both figuratively and literally invested in the journey.

Unfortunately, no correspondence on the subject of travel between the Talbot sisters themselves survives, but it is clear from letters in the *Cowper Papers* that the Countess of Kent expressed an equally close interest in her sibling's 1613-14 tour. Elizabeth engaged in correspondence with the family's secretary, Thomas Coke, who accompanied Aletheia. Coke spoke fluent Italian, as did Elizabeth, and in a letter dating from around December 1613, whilst Aletheia was staying in a Sienese monastery studying Italian, he describes to Elizabeth in evocative language the beauty of the Italian countryside. 'Siamo qui,' he writes, 'in un paese vago e piacevole ed abondante di tutte sorti di rarita'.[526] Coke confirms that Aletheia was staying in Siena and provides details of her sister's social engagements including visits from local dignitaries: 'Signora contessa sua sorella sta bene qui in Siena è ogni di accarezzata e visitata di queste signori per dozzene a volta'.[527] Coke's correspondence suggests he recognised in Elizabeth, someone not only with a strong affinity both with the language and landscapes of Italy, but a profound interest in travel, even if ultimately she never ventured abroad herself. We have already seen that Elizabeth was a prominent dedicatee of language-learning texts. Her interest in collecting was something that was also commented on by outside observers. In 1638, the arrival of a sarcophagus containing mummified remains from an Egyptian pyramid created a stir among London's cognoscenti. The English envoy to the Vatican, George Conn described the episode in a letter to his superior, Cardinal Barberini, and referred to the presence not just of Aletheia and her husband when the finds were opened and examined, but also the 'Contessa di Kent' who had arrived 'di viderlo'.[528] Although these accounts were written by men, reading them against the grain allows us to speculate on the impact of travel on women within their ambit. Judging from the depth and richness of Thomas Coke's letters to Elizabeth, he clearly recognised in her a highly-cultivated and receptive individual,

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[525] Ibid, p.82. According to the National Archives currency converter, roughly equivalent to £27,000 today.

[526] Ibid, p.80.

[527] Ibid, p.80.

[528] Howarth, *Lord Arundel and his Circle*, p. 225, n.11, citing *Vatican Library Barberini Latina* MS 8645 f.276.

one who was able to completely immerse herself in his descriptions of the people and scenery of the places he visited. His descriptions of the Tuscan landscapes resonated so strongly with Elizabeth, that she was transported on imaginative journeys arguably as vivid as any undergone by actual travellers of the time.

Not all the evidence we have relating to the female experience of travel concerns the Talbot circle, or indeed was relayed by male authors. In a few but extremely valuable instances, we are able to hear the voices of women travellers themselves. Following her own European tour Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, remained in contact with her erstwhile chaperone, Tobie Matthew. Matthew had been forced to flee abroad in 1619 for refusing to swear the Oath of Allegiance, but Mary maintained a correspondence with Matthew throughout her life. Some of this correspondence was published later in *A collection of letters* (1659).[529] Some have questioned whether the letters were genuinely penned by Mary, due to the fact they are undated and do not exist in holograph form.[530] But the very specific references to shared experiences as well as the topography of the Spa suggest they are highly credible sources for her two years abroad.

The correspondence underscores the powerful and enduring feelings that foreign travel evoked in early modern women. The first letter, written in the immediate aftermath of Matthew's exile, recalls Mary's trip to the town.[531] She was clearly still thrilled by the experience of visiting one of Europe's most fashionable resorts and chides Matthew for underselling its qualities, 'I owe too much, both to it and you, to let you goe away with that errour'.[532] She contests that the treatments she received left her so completely revived that they had 'created a new creature' out of her, jokingly suggesting that the changes had left her unrecognisable.'Therefore,' she adds, 'let all Pictures now hide themselves, for, believe me, I am not now, as I was then'.[533]

In the next letter in the sequence, Mary's tone changes from one of excitement to a sense of sadness at the prospect of never seeing the town again.[534] She refers once more to the therapeutic benefits of the town's waters, but this time the language is tinged with nostalgia, and reflects the views of an older woman, who yearns to return abroad, but lacks the vitality which Matthew

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[529] Matthew, Tobie, *A Collection of Letters* (London, 1659), pp.89-91.

[530] See Hannay, Margaret, *Philip's Phoenix*, pp.198-201, who argues on the basis of style and content they are likely to be authentic.

[531] Tobie, *Letters*, pp.85-87.

[532] Ibid, p.86.

[533] Ibid, p.86.

[534] Ibid, pp.89-91.

flatteringly still assigns to her: ‘I am likely enough to see the Spaw again, though not with that grace which you give me to bestow upon it’.[535] The third and final letter in the series makes no reference to travel but helps us to date the correspondence.[536] Mary expresses her eagerness to receive a visit from Matthew at her ‘little Lodge’, her Flemish-inspired manor house Houghton Hall, in Bedfordshire, completed in 1621, the very same year that she died.[537] Taken together the letters reveal, however fleetingly, the highly emotional responses early modern women could feel and express regarding travel for pleasurable rather than solely practical purposes. Mary’s enthusiasm for the almost magical curative powers of the waters runs in parallel to her wider excitement for travel itself. The threat of never revisiting Spa’s famous baths, triggers a Proustian moment of sad reflection and confirms the sentimental appeal of travel was felt just as strongly by seventeenth century women as men.

Matthew’s work enjoys another incidental connection with women travellers, and perhaps another reason not to doubt the authenticity of the Pembroke correspondence. The book is dedicated to Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle (1599-1660), who Tobie Matthew escorted to Spa in 1621. Like Mary, Lucy forged a lifetime friendship with Matthew, a relationship which was sustained by regular gifts and luxuries furnished from abroad.[538]

Arguably the richest account we have of a female journey written by a woman herself comes from the pen of Margery Croft (d.1637). Margery was the daughter of Sir Herbert Croft, a soldier and Catholic convert, who had previously served in the Netherlands under Sir Robert Dudley. The Crofts were well-connected both at home and overseas. Margery’s brother became Bishop of Hereford and her sister, Lucy married a nephew of the English ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton. In September 1623, Margery and her cousin Mary, daughter of Sir John Crofts, travelled to The Hague with two other women, Lady Wharton and Lady Gorges. Margery remained on the Continent where she took up a position as a lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth Stuart at The Hague, whilst her cousin returned home.[539] In the summer of 1625, Elizabeth went on a royal progress of the Netherlands accompanied by Margery, and other ladies-in-waiting. Margery recorded the events of the journey

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[535] Ibid, p.90.

[536] Ibid, pp.91-92.

[537] Ibid, p.91.

[538] See Feil, *Sir Tobie Matthew*, p.234 in which he describes how Matthew introduced Lady Percy to drinking chocolate for the first time.

[539] *APC* (1623/25), p.211.

in a four-page letter to her cousin Mary written as a journal.[540] Her descriptions of their trip provide a rare and surprisingly colourful testimony of a tour made by Elizabeth and her female companions around the towns and cities neighbouring The Hague.

The account of their journey is a curious, even problematic one. Given the fact it is a record of a royal progress, involving cultured and well-educated individuals, its content is surprisingly coarse, even to modern eyes. Throughout the author uses double entendres and barely concealed innuendos to describe the adventures the party experience on their tour. These range from furtive kissing and fondling by local burgomasters, comical episodes of flatulence among the ladies-in-waiting, and thinly-disguised flirtation with male acquaintances. Littered throughout are punning references to place names and individuals that only make sense in French, the language in which Croft wrote her journal. Typical of many entries is a description of visit to Enkhuisen to see a cabinet of curiosities owned by the famed physician and collector, Doctor Bernard Paludanus. Croft describes how the widowed Countess of Löwenstein, the Queen's chief lady-in-waiting, was drawn to ask about 'a certain large, thick and stiff instrument' in the Doctor's collection. The two struggle to understand each other as Paludanus adopts Italian, Latin and finally the vernacular to identify the object for her:

> 'Questo è' (replied the Doctor, who was entertaining us in Italian), 'il valente cazzo d'un Elephante' … I do not understand Italian, replied the Countess. 'Hoc est membrum genitale Elephantis' … said the Doctor. Why, say in good French what it is, replied the Countess. The Doctor, finding himself thus hard-pressed, said, 'This is an Elephant's prick to do you good service'.[541]

The misunderstanding caused by language barriers, and the dangers of embarrassment women exposed themselves to, is reminiscent of the plays mocking language-learning women discussed earlier in this chapter. Because of its lurid content, historians have underplayed the journal's value. Mary Everett Green, a genteel Edwardian antiquarian selectively ignored passages when she transcribed it for her authoritative biography of Elizabeth Stuart.[542] Lisa Jardine, in her work on the journal suggested Green may well have deliberately miscatalogued the document among the State Papers German at the National Archives to conceal its scurrilous contents. In the most recent biography of Elizabeth Stuart, Nadine Akkerman suggests that the letter is a forgery, penned by one

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[540] TNA, SP 81/33 ff. 147–50.

[541] Translations from Jardine, Lisa, *Temptation in the Archives. Essays in Golden Age Dutch Culture* (London, 2015), p.12.

[542] Green, Mary Anne Everett, *Elizabeth, Electress Palatine and Queen of Bohemia* (London, 1909).

of Elizabeth's critics in order to satirise the indulgence and moral laxity of her court.[543] However, Margery Croft’s journal is referred to in other correspondence. The special envoy to the Stuart court, George Goring, refers to an account by ‘the Queen of Bohemia's damoyslle that wrote the voyadge of North Holland’ in a letter to Sir Dudley Carleton at The Hague dated 8 September 1625.[544] Goring makes no suggestion the document is a forgery aimed to undermine the Queen, something which he would surely be quick to point out. Indeed, he makes excuses for not having read its entire contents and asks Dudley to give his apologies to Croft: ‘I pray, my lord, commande my goshippe [gossip] and fellow Mage Crofts to forgive me but till next weeke’.[545]

So what should we make of this female-authored account of a journey made for pleasure by women travelling overseas? Clearly some of the content has been exaggerated for the purposes of entertaining its readers. Some of the places described may not even have been on the women’s itinerary, but are referred to as well-known sites of interest among regular seventeenth century tourists.[546] The true value of the journal lies in its remarkable existence rather than the accuracy of its content. This was a manuscript that was primarily for Margery’s female acquaintances and those within her sociability networks. By adopting the style of a standard male-authored travelogue of the period, with its day-by-day account of topography and local customs, interspersed with bawdy incidents and misunderstandings, it satirises not so much the court of Elizabeth Stuart but the male conventions of travel-writing at the time. Margery Croft’s journal fulfilled a practical purpose, too. Just as the Countess of Arundel penned letters to women in her family network to enable them to vicariously enjoy the experience of travel, so too was Margery writing her journal for those outside her coterie of royal courtiers and attendants, including her cousin Mary who by this time had returned home. Travel writing by women of this period, suggests that it was far more of a shared experience than previously imagined. The strictures placed on women's travel, meant that those who had the opportunity to travel did all they could to involve those left behind, through the promise of souvenirs and luxury items or through tantalising, sometimes titillating descriptions of the foreign lands and people they encountered.

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[543] Akkerman, *Elizabeth Stuart*, pp.229-30.

[544] Green, *Queen of Bohemia*, p.245, n.2.

[545] Ibid, p.245, n.2.

[546] Akkerman points out that their names do not appear in Paludanus’ visitor book.

4. Conclusion

Until recently, scholarship on public perceptions of women's travel broadly agreed that contemporaries were largely hostile or at least silent on the subject. Many have argued the lack of evidence of women travelling made this conclusion inevitable. Even recent champions of innovative, interdisciplinary approaches such as Akhimie and Andrea were similarly forced to concede that 'gendered lacunae' in the available source material still pose considerable challenges.[547] However, more ambitious, systematic re-reading of the available evidence provides some significant new insights. Used in conjunction with the database that underpins this thesis, it is possible to see that attitudes to women's travel were far more complex than presupposed and evolve across the period.

The broad message of travel guides and literature known collectively as the *ars apodemica* is undeniably critical towards the notion of independent overseas travel by women. Until the late sixteenth century, authors were either silent on the issue or dismissive, categorising women along with children and those of unstable minds as not 'meet to traveill'.[548] Particular venom was reserved for women who travelled for reasons of conscience or exile, especially those associated with the Wardian Sisters. Such travellers were a persistent target for both Catholic and Protestant commentators.

However, across this extensive and wide-ranging literary corpus subtle changes are discernible over time as authors realised the practical benefits of women accompanying family members overseas. Even arch critics of women travelling such as Jerome Turler acknowledged the stabilising effect of female family members on men living abroad for extended periods of time, and accepted the idea of what he called 'traveil for vertue sake'.[549] Fashionable and well-connected educationalists like Florio and Erondelle did much to cultivate interest in language-learning among England's elite women. In turn, this helped to popularise the notion of women studying languages first-hand abroad. Multi-lingual women within commercial, military and diplomatic households grew in prominence at this time, as shown in the correspondence of the Trumbull and Sidney families. Much can be gleaned from the authors of popular drama as well. Travelling women playing a central role in plots and narratives, such as Jonson's Lady Would-be or Middleton's Lady Twilight and Mistress Jane, underscore the normalisation of women's travel. Some authors went so

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[547] Akhimie and Andrea, *Travel and Traveil*, p.2.

[548] Turler, *The traveiler*, p.13 ff.

[549] Ibid, p.98.

far as to celebrate rather than satirise travelling women through poems, sermons and eulogies. Works as varied as William Basse's *Eclogue,* eulogising the Countess of Pembroke's voyage to Spa, or Thomas Heywood's *Gynaikeion*, memorialising women travellers both literary and actual must have helped to challenge long-held preconceptions that women's travel was uncommon, unnecessary and unconscionable.

Women were clearly not silent on the subject of travel themselves. Although we must wait until the late seventeenth century for the first published accounts, correspondence and newsletters provide invaluable and surprisingly overlooked insights on their attitudes. Letters by those travelling or living abroad were important not just for the information they contained, but the bonds they maintained with those left behind. They strengthened the notion that travel was an experience appreciated by a wider number of women than first imagined. Letters between the Countess of Arundel and her mother-in-law, Anne Dacre show that even women living at some remove from their enterprising relatives, were closely involved in the experience of travel and reaped many of its rewards. Even correspondence written by men to female audiences, such as that between John Coke and the Countess of Kent, read against the grain, reveal an understanding of culture and topography as acute as any male Grand Tourist's. Some of the responses of women to travel may surprise us, such as the intense nostalgia for Spa that the Countess of Pembroke confessed to in letters to her travelling companion Tobie Matthew. Some may even shock modern readers, such as the crude and suggestive humour deployed by Margery Croft in her description of a tour undertaken by Elizabeth Stuart and her attendants in 1625. This particular account was intended as private record of a female adventure to be shared with those in the author's sociability circle, whilst taking a satirical swipe at the male-authored travelogues of the day. Together, these writings provide fresh new perspectives on the female encounter with travel, that until recently was thought either not to have existed or to have been permanently lost.

Rather than being fixed and immutable, attitudes in this period were in a state flux. They switch from one of universal condemnation to a situation in which women's travel was seen as a recognisable and even commendable aspect of early modern society. Fears about the social and moral consequences of the 'wide wandering of Weemen' begin to give way to a growing recognition that there were many benefits both personal and professional which could be gained by endorsing this new pattern of behaviour.[550]

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[550] Turler, *The traveiler*, p.9.

Chapter Five: 'Quaffing of the puddle of popish superstition': the nature of women's travel to Spa

1. Historiographical context

Spa played a highly significant, if underestimated part, in the evolution of European women's travel in the early modern era. Set within the semi-autonomous Prince-Bishopric of Liège, and easily accessible via the Cautionary Town of Vlissingen and neighbouring cities such as Brussels and Antwerp, where there were established English diplomatic and mercantile communities, Spa offered a safe and accessible destination for international travel under the aegis of health treatments at its widely-renowned springs. Over the course of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, Spa emerged as the foremost destination for female continental travel. Out of 2075 women travellers in the database, 117 or roughly 5.5% of the total are known to have journeyed to the town either as their principal destination or as part of an extended tour of the Continent.[551]

In spite of its notable appeal to women travellers, Spa has received surprisingly limited interest by scholars. Stoye (1989) acknowledged the importance of Spa as a destination for English travellers but undervalued its importance for women in particular.[552] John Ghazvinian in his unpublished PhD (2003) on English travellers produced some of the first empirical evidence of their presence, noting that of the 178 individuals he found among the licences in the *Acts of the Privy Council* in the years 1574-77 and 1601-40, at least 35% were issued to women.[553] Phyllis Hembry (1990) working primarily on English spa towns, drew parallels with Spa as a place of entertainment as well as therapy, whilst Amanda Herbert has drawn attention to the functions of spas as places of homosocial engagement, in her article 'Gender and the Spa: Space, Sociability and Self' (2009).[554] Most recently, Sophie Chiaro and Samuel Cuisinier-Delorme (eds.) in *Spa Culture and Literature in England* (2021) have provided an exciting new assessment of the cultural impact of spa travel in poetry, prose and other texts, underscoring the value of adopting interdisciplinary approaches.[555]

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[551] See Appendix, Table A for a full list of names and details.

[552] Stoye, *English Travellers*, pp.206-208.

[553] Ghazvinian, 'A certain tickling humour', pp.252-253.

[554] Hembry, *The English Spa*, p.41; Herbert, Amanda, 'Gender and the Spa: Space, Sociability and Self at British Health Spas, 1640-1714' in *The Journal of Social History*, Vol 43 (Winter 2009), pp.361-383.

[555] Chiari, Sophie and Cuisinier-Delorme, Samuel (eds.), *Spa culture and literature in England, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2021).

The most significant new work to emerge specifically on Spa is Liesbeth Coren's article 'Temporality, Health Care and Confessional Relations in Spa' (2022).[556] Corens argues that the appeal of Spa lay in its reputation as a haven for multi-confessionalism, where 'ordinary concerns and strict hierarchies were suspended', noting that the Archduchess Isabella specifically mandated her forces to grant free passage to those travelling to the town, 'of whatever nations or quality'.[557]

This chapter hopes to build on previous research, in several ways. Firstly, by exploring the response of writers and contemporary observers to the evolution of Spa as a significant convergence point for European travel, particularly among women, in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, a period largely overlooked by historians. Do attitudes in these accounts develop over this timeframe and if so for what discernible reasons? Secondly, by collating all known journeys by women to Spa contained in the database, it aims to unravel the full complexity of the reasons they gathered there. Clearly health combined with confessional mobility were key motivating factors, but were women also drawn to the town by the prospect of greater opportunities for socialisation? More significantly, did Spa also masquerade as an important centre for intelligence gathering or as an arena where women could exert political agency prohibited in more formal surroundings?

Although there were other towns and cities more frequently visited by women at this time, Spa was still the fifth most popular destination, with 103 documented trips between 1558 and 1630 (Fig. 3.6). The preeminence of higher-ranking towns such as Vlissingen and Brussels can be explained away by their strategic and political significance, whilst Louvain, which was almost on a par with Spa in terms of its popularity, clearly owed its preeminence to the English foundations there, such as the Convent of St Monica's and its reputation as a focal point for Catholic exiles. However, what marks Spa out for special attention is not simply the high levels of footfall but also how well documented journeys to the town are. Fearful of it becoming a hotspot for Catholic subterfuge, government agents produced regular censuses of English visitors to the town.[558] English ambassadors maintained a watchful eye over travellers in the area both native and foreign, whilst those fortunate enough to visit Spa were keen to record their experiences in personal correspondence or 'round robins' to be shared with those in their kinship circle.[559] The activities of these travellers can be pieced together from a rich seam of both documentary and material evidence.

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[556] Corens, Liesbeth, 'Seasonable Coexistence: Temporality, Health Care and Confessional Relations in Spa, C.1648–1740' in *Past & Present* (2022), pp.129-164.

[557] Ibid, pp.130 and 136-7.

[558] See for example, TNA, SP 14/81 f.53.

[559] See for example, *HMC Downshire*, II, pp.73-75.

Visitors to Spa were sometimes recorded by travelling artists (Fig. 5.3), and Spaw staves, rings and even water bottles were a regular feature of gifting culture.[560] The popular appeal of Spa allows us to analyse women's experiences of travel across the entire social spectrum, be they wealthy, educated ambassadorial wives like Lady Edmondes or household attendants and ladies-in-waiting such as Elizabeth Devick and Phyllis Woolley. The wealth and variety of evidence we have for Spa, provides the perfect prism through which to view travel by early modern women and serves as a valuable case study for many of the themes identified in earlier chapters. In short, more than any other destination of the time, Spa affords us complex and detailed insights both into the mechanisms of travel and the individual responses of the women concerned.

2. Popular perceptions of Spa

The latter part of Elizabeth I's reign witnessed an outpouring of literature which not only helped to fuel interest among women in visiting Spa but also broadened awareness of the medicinal properties of its spring waters. The Welsh physician, John Jones was a leading expert on the curative properties of spa waters, and his association with the Pembrokes, one of the foremost visitors to Spa across the period may not be coincidental. His most popular work on the subject, *The bathes of Bathes ayde* (1572) was dedicated to the Henry Herbert, Earl of Pembroke (1538-1601), alongside his wife 'the right honorable Lady Kateryne' who visited Spa in 1575.[561] A second book by Jones, *The benefit of the auncient bathes of Buckstones* (1572) is dedicated to George Talbot, the Earl of Shrewsbury (1528-1590), grandfather of Aletheia Talbot.[562] In this work, Jones is far more direct about the gynaecological benefits of spring waters in the treatment of symptoms ranging from the 'overflowing of womens monthes' to 'contrary distemperature' among those who 'bee unapt to conceave'.[563] The appeal of travelling overseas to Spa was either incidentally or overtly championed by authors of travel guides as well as works of literature. The translator and diplomat, Thomas Danett (1543-1601?), who had travelled abroad as a Protestant exile with his own family

[560] See for example, Hembry, *The English Spa*, pp.9-10 and *Chamberlain*, II, p.27.

[561] *Jones, John, The bathes of Bathes ayde wonderfull and most excellent, agaynst very many sicknesse*, sig.A2v.

[562] Jones, John, *The benefit of the auncient bathes of Buckstones which cureth most greevous sicknesses, never before published…* (London, 1572), sig.iiv.

[563] Jones, *auncient bathes*, sig.4v.

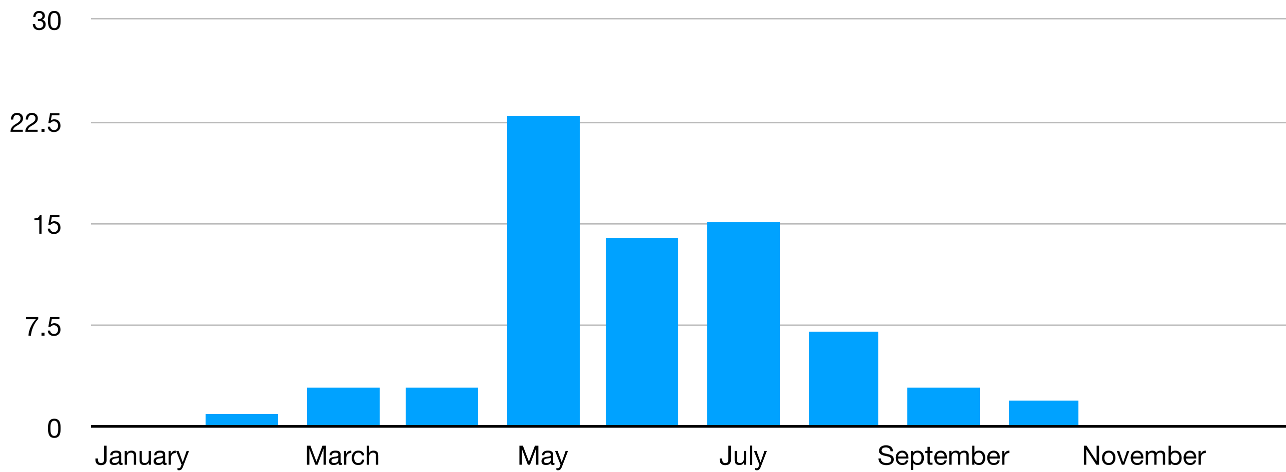

Fig. 5.1. Visits to Spa according to licence dates.

during the reign of Queen Mary, wrote the first mainstream guide to the region, *The Description of the Low Countries* (1593).[564] The book was a translation of an earlier work by Guicciardini and was dedicated to Lord Burghley, whose wife Mildred was a relative and had previously petitioned on Danett's behalf for a diplomatic appointment.[565] In the chapter on Spa, the author celebrates the waters' healing powers 'so famous through the world'.[566] Among the 'diseases of the stomach and liver' the waters were thought to cure, the author mentions their efficacy against 'dropsie' - swelling under the skin, caused by the accumulation of water and common in pregnant women.[567] He goes on to recommend sampling the ferrous waters in July when they are 'of most vertue, because that is the hottest time of the year, and in the greatest heat the water is of most efficacye'.[568] Danett's recommendation possibly betrays a first-hand knowledge of the town. July tallies closely with the timings of trips to the baths shown in the database and is the second most popular month for travelling. Many women set out in May and June in order to visit cities like Antwerp and Brussels en route and find accommodation before arriving in Spa (Fig 5.1).

Danett's work was one among a number of pamphlets and books to focus more specifically on the medicinal benefits of Spa's springs. Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essayes* (1603) included an essay entitled 'The Resemblance of Children to their Fathers' extolling the medical as

564 Danett, Thomas (trans.), *Guicciardini, L, The description of the Low countreys and of the provinces thereof, gathered into an epitome out of the historie of Lodovico Guicchardini* (London 1593).

565 See Allen, Gemma, *The Cooke Sisters. Education, piety and politics in early modern England* (Manchester, 2013), p.138.

566 Danett, *Low countreys*, p.128.

567 Ibid, p. 128.

568 Ibid, pp.128-129.

well as social benefits of so-called balneology.[569] The work was dedicated, as we saw in Chapter 2, to women who were amongst the most receptive to European culture. Three of them would put Montaigne's advice directly into practice and travel to Spa themselves: Lucy Harington, Anne Kelway and Isabella Rich. Gilbert Fuchs' *Briefe Discourse of the Hypostasis, or substance of the water of Spaw* (1612) underlines once more the benefits of a course of the waters for those suffering from dropsy.[570] In addition, he specifically highlights the medicinal value of Spa waters for women, and suggests taking the waters mixed with red wine as a treatment for the 'abundance of Women's Courses'.[571] The merits of Spa for women were trumpeted by other authors at this time. In *Spadacrene Anglica*, or *The English Spa Fountain* (1626), the physician Edmund Deane drew parallels between the waters of Harrogate and those of Spa for their enduring popularity 'with the company of Ladyes, and Gentlewomen'.[572] In his view, water treatments were especially beneficial for women as 'there are very few infirmities properly incident to women, which this water may not seeme to respect'.[573] In particular, he praised the ability of spa waters to cure infertility, noting that women who had been barren for upwards of twelve years, 'have shortly conceived after their returne home to their husbands, beyond their hopes and expectations'.[574]

Visits to the town by female elites further increased the appeal of the town with women visitors. Katherine Talbot, Countess of Pembroke (d.1576) visited the baths in 1575 with the Queen's blessing. Elizabeth even sent Edward St Loe 'to repaire to the Spawe' to provide updates on her progress.[575] Her successor, Mary Sidney, further popularised the town by making two visits during her 1614-16 continental tour. Members of the royal family spoke equally highly of the medicinal and social benefits of a trip to Spa. Elizabeth Stuart wrote to her father, James I about the efficacy of baths following her long journey to Heidelberg: 'I am going with His Highness the Elector to the aciduous waters similar to those at Spa, for no other reason than to refresh myself and

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[569] Florio, *Essayes*, Bk. II, Ch. 37.

[570] Fuchs, Gilbert, *A briefe discourse of the hypostasis, or substance of the water of Spaw; containing in small quantity many pots of that minerall water Verie profitable for such patients, as cannot repaire in person to those fountaines, as by perusing this discourse, it will plainly appeare…* (London, 1612), p.19.

[571] Fuchs, *Hypostasis*, p.7.

[572] Deane, Edmund, *Spadacrene Anglica Or, the English spaw-fountaine. Being a briefe treatise of the acide, or tart fountaine in the forest of Knaresborow, in the west-riding of Yorkshire. As also a relation of other medicinall waters in the said forest* (London, 1626), p.18-19.

[573] Ibid, p.18.

[574] Ibid, p.19.

[575] *APC* (1571-5), p.11.

Fig. 5.2. Watercolour of a vizarded woman traveller and her partner by an unknown artist, *Habits de France* (1581), Bibliothèque Nationale, France.

briefly to take the air'.[576] The town was popular with foreign nobility, too. Among the many female visitors were the Queen of Navarre in 1577 and Queen Louise de Lorraine and Catherine de Medici in 1583.[577] The Comtesse de Sanzay recorded a visit to Spa in her journal for July 1584, noting its popularity with European visitors, among them the English who were often accompanied by 'wives and family members'.[578] Ferdinando Persia, secretary to Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua

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576 Akkerman, *Correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia*, I, no.76, pp.120-121.

577 *CSPF*, XI (1575-77), p.590; *CSPD*, XVII, p.297; *CSPD*, XVII, p.394.

578 Ferrière-Percy, Hector de Masso, *Le Journal de la Comtesse de Sanzay* (Paris, 1859), p.45.

(1562-1612) was struck by the 'great many women in the area taking the cure' during his master's visit to Spa in 1608.[579] Persia also remarked on the women's apparel, and their penchant for wearing vizards or face-masks around the town (Fig. 5.2). The device would have been of practical benefit protecting the wearer's skin from the harmful effects of too much exposure to the elements, but also an accessory that may have fuelled the myth that Spa was an exciting place of mystery and subterfuge. The presence of visitors such as Duke of Mantua heightened the cosmopolitan appeal of the town. During Lady Edmondes' visit that same year, her secretary Jean Beaulieu described Spa as 'more a Court than a village'.[580] The multitude of visitors the ambassador's wife received prompted him to apologise for the absence of news from his mistress, as she had enjoyed 'so much company this afternoon she could not finish her letter'.[581]

The allure of Spa was further enhanced by its celebration by contemporary writers and artists. Edmund Spenser referred to the revivifying powers of 'the German spau' in his epic poem, *Faerie Queene* (1590). The Flemish and Italian artists, Jan Brueghel (Fig. 5.3) and Remigio

Fig. 5.3. Brueghel, Jan 'the Elder', *Spa* (1612), Royal Library of Belgium, Print Room, Brussels.

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[579] Cited in Finucci, Valeria, *The Prince's Body: Vincenzo Gonzaga and Renaissance Medicine* (Cam., Massachusetts, 2015), p.112.

[580] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.68.

[581] Ibid, p.68.

Cantagallina sketched visitors to the springs at Spa in 1612 which were widely circulated as prints.[582] And as noted earlier, William Basse recorded the journey made by Mary Sidney to 'famous Spaw' in 1614 in his poem *Eclogue* (c.1616) in which he celebrated not just her triumphal journey but also praised Spa's precious 'streames' and their rejuvenating properties.[583] The particular attraction of Spa to women is evident in contemporary correspondence as well. Sir Dudley Carleton was forced to admit, 'my wife will not let me go without her' when he visited Spa in 1616.[584] And Elizabeth Devick, wife of the Brussels secretary, Jean Beaulieu ensured that she accompanied her husband when he successfully obtained leave to visit after two failed attempts in 1608.[585] A trip to Spa was also a marker of favour in the eyes of the court. Carleton notes in a letter to Trumbull in March 1616, 'Those that were at the bottom of fortunes wheele I heare are halfway up againe, and the Lady Suffolke shall have leave to come this spring to the Spa'.[586]

As the popularity of Spa grew, especially among women, travel to the town provoked mounting criticism from male observers unsure that the motives of its visitors were entirely honorable or justified. Occasional swipes in plays of the time, allude to particular suspicions over the true intentions of its female visitors. John Webster in *The Duchess of Malfi, first performed* c.1613, implies that the town was used as a front for women seeking confessional exile rather than medical cure.[587] 'In my opinion,' observes the Duchess' maid describing her mistress' intentions, 'she were better progresse to the baths at Leuca [Lucca], or go to visit the Spaw in Germany, for (if you beleeve me) I do not like this jesting with religion'.[588] The animosity felt by men towards female visitors to Spa reached fever pitch in the works of the cleric Joseph Hall, who ironically had enjoyed a trip to the baths himself in 1605. In a truculent essay entitled *Quo Vadis, A Just Censure of Travell* (1617) he derided Spa as little more than a place of 'forraine entertainment' where visitors 'pretend the medicinall use of that spring' whilst in reality they 'freely quaffe of the puddle

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[582] Spenser, *Faerie Queen*, i, II, 30; see Rinaldi, Stefano. "Il Viaggio Nelle Fiandre Di Remigio Cantagallina." *Annali Della Scuola Normale Superiore Di Pisa*, III, 2, (2011), pp. 465–627 and Prosperetti, Leopoldine, *Landscape and Philosophy in the Art of Jan Breughel the Elder*, (Abingdon, 2009).

[583]Warwick Bond, *William Basse*, pp.209-212.

[584] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.536.

[585] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.73 ff.

[586] *HMC Downshire*, Vol V, p.459.

[587] Webster, John, *The tragedy of the Dutchesse of Malfy As it was presented privatly, at the Black-Friers; and publiquely at the Globe, by the Kings Maiesties Servants. The perfect and exact coppy, with diverse things printed, that the length of the play would not beare in the presentment* (London, 1623).

[588] Webster, *Duchess*, Act III, Sc II.

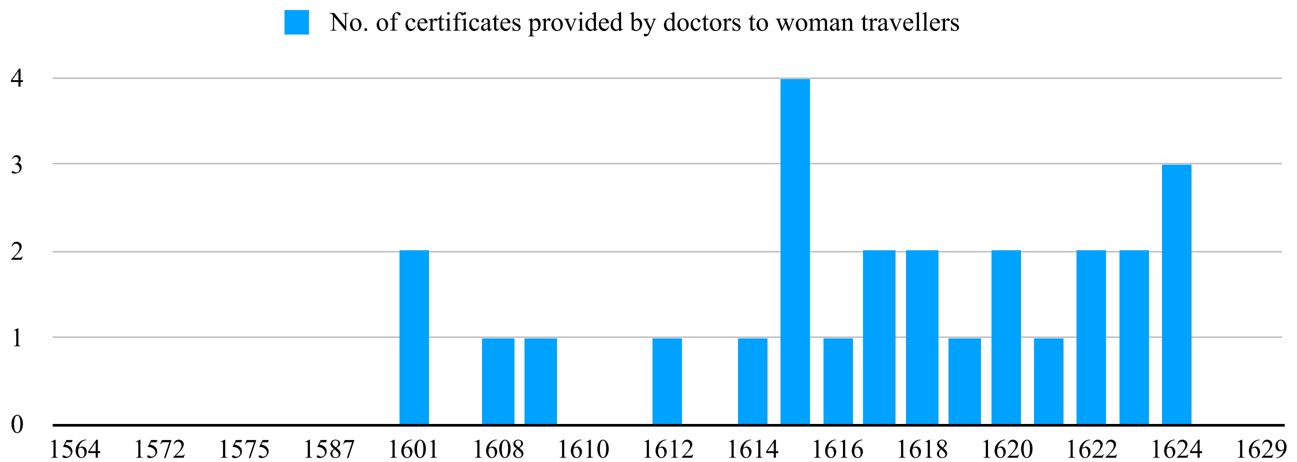

Fig. 5.4. Certification of travel by doctors.

of popish superstition'.[589] Whilst falling short of exclusively blaming women for such indulgence, his disdain for them is clear in his choice of illustrative parallels, comparing tourists as 'like some woman with childe, that longs for that peece which she sees upon anothers trencher, and swounds if she miss it'.[590] Others were more explicit in their attacks. In his book, *The running register* (1626) Lewis Owen censured the fashion for women to travel overseas under the cloak of ill health, only to be lured into convent life where they were in his words, 'Nunnified'.[591] 'They secure a Passe,' he explains in one passage, 'for some sick Gentlewoman, to goe to the Spaw for health-sake; and so under colour thereof, they convey their young Nunnes and Jesuittes, together with their portions, unto their Cloysters'.[592]

The outpouring of words and images relating to Spa from the late sixteenth century attests to its growing popularity. Focus on the therapeutic benefits of the spring waters for women's health was both a response to and a cause of the growing appeal of the town among women travellers. As the seventeenth century progresses and the numbers of women travelling to the town dramatically increases, resistance among conservatives is discernible. Commentators and government authorities began to suspect that the medical benefits of the springs were being used as a smokescreen to disguise alternative motives for travelling abroad.

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[589] *Hall, Joseph, Quo Vadis, A Just Censure of Travell as it is commonly undertaken by the Gentlemen of our Nation* (London, 1617), sig.A4r.

[590] Ibid, sig.C1r.

[591] *Owen, Lewis, The Running Register: Recording a true relation of the state of the English Colledges, Seminaries and Cloysters in all forraine parts…* (London, 1626), p.117.

[592] Ibid, pp.110-111.

3. The mechanisms of travel to Spa for early modern women

3.1 Licences to travel

The popularity of Spa with women presented the authorities with new challenges. Firstly, how to guarantee that those who wished to travel did so for legitimate reasons and secondly how to ensure that their souls as much as their persons remained shielded from any dangers that might materialise en route. Crucial in all these protective mechanisms was the licensing system. In theory, a licence or 'pass' to travel was required by anyone, male of female, wishing to journey overseas in this period. The reality was that nearly half of the female visitors to the town appear to have travelled without one. Out of the 117 women known to have visited Spa between 1558 and 1630, 54 were apparently unlicensed.[593] This is not simply a question of licences having been lost over time, as contemporaries were clearly aware of the anomaly. In 1575, the recusant Henry Parker, Baron Morley wrote a long and disingenuous letter to Lord Burghley explaining how he had travelled to Spa and found 'contrary to [his] expectations' his wife and children. Morley defended his wife's errant behaviour by explaining like many 'she was forced to come to me by incurable illness and want of means'.[594] Census returns of English exiles living in or around the town show the authorities were equally concerned by the presence of wives and daughters of recusants as their male equivalents. Typical of many is an entry for the wife of Francis Stoner, who appears in a list of 'those at Spa in 1615'.[595] Whilst Francis had earlier received a licence to travel to the springs for the recovery of his health 'upon certificat under Mr Dr Atkins and Dr Gifford', taking him with him 'one man', no mention of his wife was made.[596]

The language of the licences also betrays the growing suspicion held by the authorities that many travellers, particularly women were using the excuse of travel to Spa for religious motives. The licence issued to Lady Harris that year is typical of many. She received permission to travel to the baths, 'provided that shee goe directly to the Spawe without making further use of this lycense,

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[593] See Appendix, Table A.

[594] *CSPD*, *Elizabeth*, *Addenda* (1566-79), p.491.

[595] TNA, SP 14/81 f.53.

[596] *APC* (1615-16), p.166.

as shee will answere the contrary', and that she stayed abroad for no more than 6 months.[597] Government suspicions are also discernible from the growing number of medical certificates issued by physicians to validate requests to travel on the grounds of ill health (Fig. 5.4). A total of 24 doctors' names appear on licences to travel furnishing 'certificates of attestacion' for their clients.[598] Of these, 17 can be traced to the register of Fellows of the Royal Colleges of Physicians, among them Sir Matthew Lister, Royal Physician to Anne of Denmark, who would accompany the Countess of Pembroke on her journey to Spa.[599] A significant number of these doctors were clearly Catholic on the basis of recusancy indictments or their listing in John Gee's infamous *Catalogue of Popish Physicians*.[600] Among these names were Dr John Moore, Dr Frier, Dr Lodge and Dr Robert Gifford, all of whom were involved in certificating applications for licences for women travellers.[601] In total, a quarter of these doctors were either certifiably or implicitly Catholic. Men were not exempt from this requirement, but the certification process was clearly far more common for women than men. A survey of surviving licences shows that women were nearly 3 times more likely to provide a certificate of health than men. Thomas Dowse, a Wiltshire gent requesting permissions to travel to Spa 'for the recovery of his health' needed only specify that he had 'been advised thereunto by his phisicions' without requiring a certificate of health.[602] Even when requested for men, certificates tended to be more succinct. When John Chamberlain received a licence to travel to Spa in 1624, his doctor provided him with a cursory description of his afflictions amounting to little more than a handful of lines, summed up by the fact he was 'subject to fitts and paynes of the stone'.[603] By comparison, a certificate written just 3 months earlier by Dr John Moore supporting Margaret Lewkenor's application was three times the length, detailing a range of symptoms. Moore mentions that Lewkenor had for 'divers years been afflicted both wth the stone, the spleene and other infirmities'.[604] He mentions too, that an earlier visit to the Spa had improved her health and she 'hath remayned a whole yeare free from anie symptome of her former

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[597] *APC* (1615/16), p.164-5.

[598] See Appendix, Table A.

[599] See *HMC Downshire*, V, p.14.

[600] Gee, *The foot out of the snare*, X-X2v; Pelling, Margaret and White, Frances, *Physicians and Irregular Medical Practitioners in London 1550-1640* (London, 2004).

[601] See Appendix, Table A.

[602] *APC* (1600-01), p.452.

[603] TNA, SP 14/168 f.70.

[604] TNA, SP 14/ 161 f.13.

affectes'.[605] Moore explains that 'they now beginninge againe to afflict her in their former manner though not wth such violence' that he 'agayne wished her to returne to the Spa and to drinkinge of their waters longer tyme'.[606] Moore was one of those Doctors for whom question marks remained over his religious persuasions. He is the very first doctor to be listed in John Gee's widely read 'Catalogue of Popish Physicians', described as 'a man much imployed and insinuating with persons of great State'.[607] Similarly, the confessional identity of Lady Lewkenor, wife of Sir Leonard Lewkenor had previously been questioned by the authorities and may explain why she had to elaborate on the reasons for applying to travel to Spa. Her name appears among those listed in the recusancy rolls for 1615-16, having been fined £20.[608]

The administration of the Oath of Allegiance was used as another way of vetting travellers. Women were just as likely as men to have their consciences tested in this way on their return, and the authorities were often relentless in their insistence on compliance with the law. Lady Lovel adamantly refused to take the oath prior to her departure, and 'resolved to undergo any misery that may be imposed upon me rather than do that thing which a religious and catholic conscience cannot justify'.[609] Dorothy Forman, wife of a Surrey gent who had spent several years living in France, initially took the oath but then refused when asked a second time to take it.[610] Ellen White was apprehended for contravening the terms of a licence issued 3 years previously. She had been granted a licence to travel to Spa in 1587 and was summoned before a board of Ecclesiastical Commissioners, to explain why since her return she had refused to swear the Oath of Allegiance, 'by a licence granted three yeares agoe'.[611]

By 1630, the authorities were clearly losing their patience with disingenuous travellers and there was a temporary suspension of licences to travel Spa. On 14 July 1630, Charles I announced that, 'being informed of notable abuses at this time in licences for travel, some under pretense (sic) of going to the Spa, and others upon other occasions'.[612] The proclamation empowered the authorities 'to make stay of all such persons, of whoever qualitie soever that doe or desire to passe

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[605] Ibid.

[606] Ibid.

[607] Gee, *The foot out of the snare*, sig.T2.

[608] *CRS*, LXXVI, p.89.

[609] *HMC Salisbury*, XVIII, p.419.

[610] *CSPD* (1611-18), p.480.

[611] *APC* (1590), p.409-410.

[612] Cited in Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, p.129; TNA, SP 16/171 f.48.

by retain of their licences' regardless if they were issued by port authorities, the signet office or even 'our privie counsell'.[613] The impact was swift and there was a dramatic reduction in the numbers of licences issued after 1629, a phenomenon which continued until the onset of civil war in 1642 (Fig. 5.7).

3.2 Itineraries

The routes which women took to Spa were also of concern for the authorities. Independent travellers or those who ventured from conventional routes quickly alerted the attention of suspicious customs officers, harbour masters and English overseas agents. The most common and trouble-free route to Spa, was via Vlissingen and Middelburg. As noted earlier, the towns were heavily garrisoned and boasted well-established English communities, making them the safest and most convenient arrival point for travellers.[614] From there, women often travelled on to Brussels or Antwerp and then to Liège. This was the route taken by the widow of Captain Johnson in 1611, when she was escorted by Sir Rowland Lytton first to Antwerp and then 'towards the Spaw'.[615] According to the deputy governor of Vlissingen, Sir John Throckmorton, it was also the route taken by 'the old Countess of Pembroke' when in 1614 he accompanied her 'on her way to the Spaw'.[616] Carleton describes this as by far the most secure route, 'the way through those places is safe and the other not passable without convoy'.[617]As Corens explains, The Prince-Bishopric of Liège, although in theory a Catholic state within the Holy Roman Empire, had a long tradition of neutrality and was considered to be more tolerant of the passage of foreign visitors, either Protestant or Catholic.[618] Even so, the terrain was rough and for the Low Countries surprisingly mountainous. In July 1608, Lady Edmondes took 12 hours to get to Spa 'on the rugged crooked way from Liège'.[619] Her journey was further prolonged when her coach broke its axel and 'none of the English gentlemen

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[613] Ibid.

[614] Stoye, *English Travellers,* p.172.

[615] *HMC De L'Isle*, IV, p.280.

[616] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.434.

[617] Lee, *Jacobean Letters*, p.210.

[618] Corens, 'Seasonal Coexistence', p.136.

[619] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.67. Roughly 25 miles.

would step out of the town' to assist. Returning to Brussels was no less eventful, as she was forced to make a detour via Namur, due to reports of militias in the area.[620]

Women who chose alternative routes instantly provoked the interest of the authorities, particularly if their journey took them to northern France or Flanders, where many of the exiled English Catholic communities were located. An especially well-documented example of this type of subterfuge involving a party of travellers to Spa occurred in the summer of 1601. Many in the group were women, among them Ursula Ingram, Elizabeth Morgan and Mary Williams. They were stopped by the Lieutenant of Dover Castle, Thomas Fane and asked to swear the Oath of Allegiance to determine whether 'the pretence of their travel was for their health by help of the Spawe'.[621] Fane's suspicions were confirmed when the women refused to comply and were immediately taken into custody at the Gatehouse prison in London. In his report, Fane provides details of their itinerary, which included many of the destinations used by religious exiles and those who conveyed recruits to English convents on the Continent. From Calais, he reports they travelled on to St Omer, then Lille and Liège before finally arriving at Spa.[622] Fane also uncovered a sophisticated conveyancing network back in England, centred around a London-based physician, Doctor Lodge. It appears that some of the women in this party, including Ursula Ingram, had stayed at Lodge's home in Lambert Hill 'troubled with a disease' described as 'the green sickness'.[623] Green sickness, also known as chlorosis, was a disease well-known to contemporaries and thought to be particularly prevalent among young, unmarried women.[624] Whilst there, Ursula had met other Catholic women, among them Elizabeth Morgan and Mary Williams, who 'lay' at the house as well.[625] Having recommended a course of treatment at Spa as the only solution to their ailments, the women then proceeded overseas to be placed under the care of Dr Lodge, a former Oxford physician based in Spa.[626] They stayed in the town and at his house in Liège for 'two or three months' before returning home.[627] Lodge had practised medicine overseas prior to this event, and his local knowledge of Spa

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[620] Ibid, p.72.

[621] *HMC Salisbury*, XI, pp. 356-357.

[622] Ibid, p.356.

[623] Ibid, pp.356 and 357.

[624] See Schleiner, Winfried, 'Early Modern Green Sickness and Pre-Freudian Hysteria' in *Early Science and Medicine*, Vol. 14, No.5 (2009), pp. 661–76.

[625] *HMC Salisbury*, IX, p.357.

[626] Tenney, Edward Andrews, *Thomas Lodge* (New York, 1935), p.174.

[627] *HMC Salisbury*, IX, p.357.

and the surrounding countryside would have been of enormous assistance to the women. In the event all of those arrested were indicted after refusing to take the Oath of Allegiance and Lodge returned to the Continent, possibly with his wife Joan and their daughter Honor, where he was sited in Spa again by Joseph Hall in 1605.[628] Taken together the incident reveals the complexity and scale of networks used by Catholic women travelling to Spa. Confessional identity clearly played a strong part in determining the route women took. Those seeking to avoid unnecessary attention from the authorities were reliant on a sophisticated network of Catholic fugitives and safe houses extending from London to the Low Countries.

3.3 Chaperones

Given the perceived moral and physical dangers of women travelling to Spa, the period witnesses the emergence of travel mechanisms specifically tailored to meet the new demands. Independent women travellers were especially reliant on the services of local English agents and residents whose names appear frequently in correspondence. Some like 'Mr Thetcher' were widely used in diplomatic circles for their skills in sourcing accommodation and provisions for exacting female clients. [629] Thetcher managed to acquire a house for Lady Edmondes and her household at Spa in 1608 'with 8 beds notwithstanding the coming of the D. of Mantua with about 100 gentlemen'.[630] The most ubiquitous of all these chaperones was the recusant son of the Archbishop of York, Tobie Matthew, who acted as both a confidant and a social secretary for women new to the town. Lady Knatchbull, who entered a Benedictine convent in Brussels in 1609 and eventually became an abbess at Ghent, even described Matthew as her 'spiritual director'.[631] When Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle, travelled to Spa in 1621, Matthew arranged to meet her at Antwerp and accompany her

[628] Tenney, *Thomas Lodge*, p.174.

[629] Mr Thetcher who 'was sent out of England young' is mentioned in a letter from Sir Henry Neville writing from Paris to Cecil,12 Jan 1600 (TNA, SP 12/274 f.17). It mentions that he lived first at Rouen 'with a papist, and then was page to Cardinal Allen' but eventually left the Cardinal's service. 'He has never borne arms with our enemies, nor received a pension, though offered, nor meddled in fugitives' practices, but has done good offices to well affected travellers in these parts'. He may well have been one of Cecil's agents overseas.

[630] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.67.

[631] Feil, *Sir Tobie Matthew*, p.147.

to her destination.[632] Like Lady Knatchbull she maintained a close relationship with Matthew throughout her life. Even when Katherine Manners, wife of the Duke of Buckingham, travelled to Boulogne to escort Henrietta Maria back to England in 1625, it was in the company of Tobie Matthew, that seventeenth century equivalent to Beau Brummell, that she travelled.[633]

As part of the licensing process, women were often accompanied to the Spa by their doctors some of whom appear to either have been residents or regular visitors. Elizabeth Hastings, Countess of Worcester personally thanked Trumbull for recommending a physician popular with the English community during her visit to Spa in 1612.[634] When Lady Gresley received a licence to travel to Spa in 1617, following a recommendation by Dr Richard Andrewes, it was deemed appropriate that he also accompany her to the baths 'for her better direction and assistance'.[635] Dr Andrewes appears to have been a well-known figure in the town. Two years earlier, he was writing to Trumbull from Spa regarding some letters he would like forwarded to England.[636] It appears that Andrewes' time abroad enhanced his reputation among his fellow physicians. Following his death in 1634, one memorialist commented, 'he had improved himself much in his faculty during his travels beyond the seas'.[637]

The presence of doctors in close company with women travellers inevitably occasioned speculation that they were ministering to more than their patients' health needs. It was only a matter of time before the Countess of Pembroke's stay in Spa drew the attention of gossip-mongers, not least that arch-purveyor of Jacobean tittle-tattle, John Chamberlain. 'Here is a suspicion,' he writes to Sir Dudley Carleton in 1617, 'that the old Countesse of Pembroke is married to Doctor Lister that was with her at the Spaa'.[638] Even after her death Chamberlain continued to stoke the rumours that the Countess paid for more than Lister's medical services. 'I heare,' Chamberlain writes to Sir Dudley Carleton in 1621, 'Dr. Lister hath sixe or sevenscore pound a yeare during his life, which is well-worne in her service, for they say he lookes old'.[639] The relationship between the two was the subject of an unpublished pastoral drama by her niece, Mary Wroth entitled *Love's Victory*

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[632] Ibid, p.161.

[633] Ibid, p.190.

[634] *HMC Downshire*, III, p.343.

[635] *APC* (1616-17), p.286.

[636] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.273.

[637] Cited by https://history.rcplondon.ac.uk/inspiring-physicians/richard-andrews (last accessed Apr 2022).

[638] *Chamberlain*, II, p.69.

[639] *Chamberlain*, II, p.400.

(c.1620).[640] The play features a romance between Lissius and Simena, intentionally recognisable anagrams of Lister and Mary Sidney's names.[641] Early modern women travellers were caught between the age-old rock and a hard place: constrained by public opinion to accept the protective company of a male chaperone, but subsequently prey to rumour-mongers intent on proving the rapport between doctor and client was anything but professional.

3.4 Social make-up

The social make-up of women travellers to Spa tells us much about the potential for social interaction and agency they enjoyed whilst abroad. The depictions of tourists gathered around the town's well-heads by Breughel (Fig. 5.3.) would suggest the town appealed to a wide cross-section of European society. Sir Thomas Nevitt, a member of Sir Robert Sidney's household, undertook a fact-finding trip to the town in 1611. In addition to the expected 'nobilitie' and 'gentrie' he comments on the volume of 'other people' present, who were 'many in nomber'.[642] Along with English visitors, he estimates that there were as many as '2 or 300 merchants and their wives from diverse places of Fraunce and the Low Countries'.[643] Sir Dudley Carleton was also impressed by Spa's social diversity. Visiting with Lady Carleton in 1616, he notes that 'here we found the town full of men, women and children of all ages, of all conditions, of all sorts of diseases'.[644] Like Nevitt, he is also taken aback by the numbers of English visitors who 'did equal in number all other strangers'.[645]

As diverse as the clientele may have been, it is unlikely that the English women who visited the town would have mixed with those outside their social rank. Over a third of the 118 women who travelled to Spa in this period were from titled ranks of the aristocracy, the remainder were largely

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[640] Findlay, Alison, Sidney, Philip and Brennan, Michael, G., *Love's Victory by Lady Mary Wroth* (Manchester, 2021).

[641] Roberts, Josephine A. 'The Huntington Manuscript of Lady Mary Wroth's Play, 'Loves Victorie.'' *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 46, no. 2, 1983, pp. 156–74.

[642] *HMC De L'Isle*, IV, p.283.

[643] Ibid, p.283.

[644] Lee, *Jacobean Letters*, p.208.

[645] Ibid, p.208.

drawn from gentry backgrounds.[646] Around a third travelled with either attendants or household servants, too. Although their archival imprint is less evident, references to their activities within correspondence or on occasion through newsletters like those pertaining Elizabeth Devick and Phyllis Wolley, attached as they were to Lady Edmondes' household, provide fascinating insights into encounters with Spa from those outside the upper echelons of English society. Nevertheless, the expense of a trip to Spa, coupled with the time required to make the journey made it prohibitive to all but the most socially advantaged. Even those that considered themselves part of this privileged group, baulked at the expense of a trip during the height of the season. Sir Dudley Carleton wrote of his 'costly journey to Spa' with Lady Carleton in 1616 and how 'the quick expence of this place, lies heavy upon me'.[647] Chamberlain reported in 1613 that the Countess of Bedford 'shold have gon to the Spaa but for lack of monie'.[648] A remarkably detailed account of the expenses of Lord William Howard and his wife, Elizabeth's visit to Spa in 1623 survives, probably due to the inordinate cost of their trip.[649] During their forty-day stay, they spent £29 5s 6d on 'dyet', £6 6s 6d on accommodation and an additional £24 3s 2d on 'Rewards, necessaries and extraordinaries'.[650] Taken together and with transport costs from their home to Spa added in, the Howards spent a grand total of £212 9s 11d on their journey, the equivalent of roughly £28,000 today.[651] Such outlay on recreational pursuits was beyond the reach of all but the very wealthiest. However, even these figures pale into comparison with the outlay by the aforementioned Countess of Carlisle. Her sojourn at Spa was intended to signal her status as the wife of one of the country's foremost international mediators for which she received '5000 li for her ordinarie expenses'.[652]

The prohibitive expense of Spa fuelled its exclusivity and made it an ever more appealing convergence point for the great and the good. For this reason it was perfectly positioned for social and political interactions of the highest order to take place, the Jacobean equivalent of Davos for world leaders and economists today. The disproportionately high number of women at Spa led, as will be seen, to increased opportunities for female agency, reflected in the complex and evolving motives for their travelling there revealed by the database.

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646 See Appendix , Table A.

647 Yorke, P (Ed.), *Letters from and to Sir Dudley Carleton, Knt. during his embassy in Holland* (1757), p.80.

648 *Chamberlain*, I, p.470.

649 Stone, Lawrence *Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1967), p.42.

650 Ibid, p.42.

651 TNA currency converter.

652 *Chamberlain*, II, p.381.

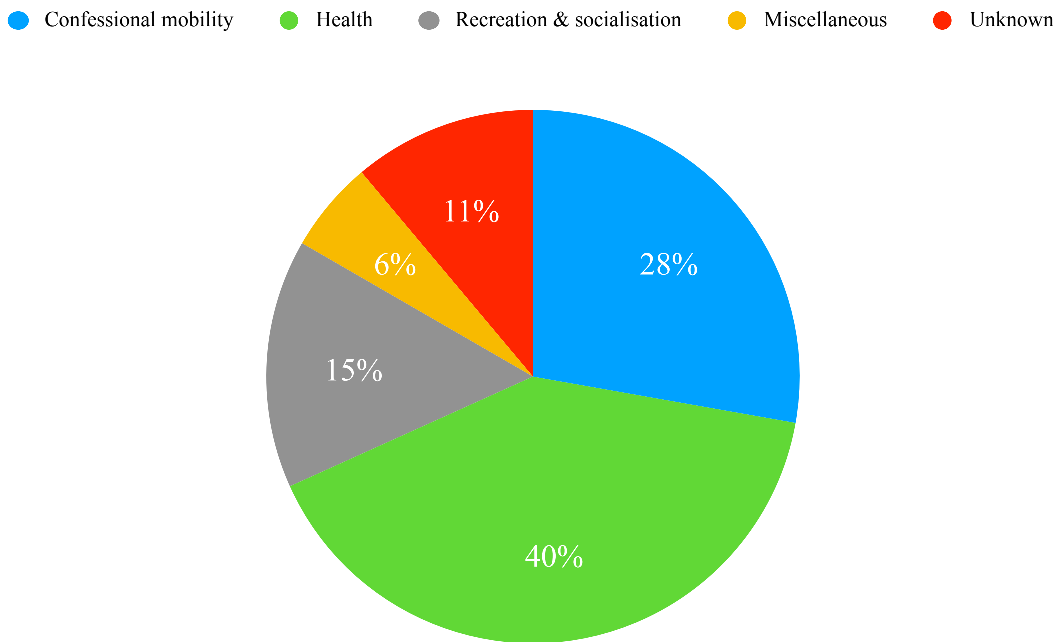

Fig. 5.5. Motives for travelling to Spa expressed as percentages of total entries in database.

4. Motives

Observers have long suspected that the popularity of Spa in the early modern era was due to more than just the medicinal benefits of its waters.[653] During his own visit to the town in 1616, Sir Dudley Carleton attempted to explain Spa's appeal by identifying three common types of travellers, those who came 'for disease of the body, others of the mind, the rest for good fellowship'.[654] When one examines the different motives for travel identifiable from the terms of the licences and the actual activities of those who travelled to Spa, Carleton's suspicions were astonishingly accurate. Drawing together evidence from the database for which we have references to English women travelling to Spa (1564-1629), the largest proportion of journeys were made for reasons of health (40%), followed by religious exile or to borrow Corens' phrase, 'confessional mobility' (28%) and finally recreation and socialisation (15%).[655] A small percentage of travellers travelled for very specific personal reasons, for instance Mary Holcombe who travelled to Spa in 1617 following the tragic death of her sister Anne whilst in the town. She was granted a special licence to recover

653 For sources of data on motives for travel to Spa, see Appendix, Table A.

654 Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix*, p.196.

655 See Corens, *Confessional Mobility*, pp.2-4.

money, 'and certeyne goods of her syster's'.[656] Others may have been motivated to travel as a cover for more political reasons associated with the arrival of Elizabeth Stuart at The Hague, which will be examined in due course. Together these have been grouped into a category labelled 'Miscellaneous'. The final category 'Unknown' (11%) relates to individuals who travelled to Spa, but for whom we have no evidence either from licences or other archive material on their activities in the town. As with earlier analysis of women's mobility across continental Europe, these motives are not set in stone and may have been overlapping or evolutionary. However, they provide a useful starting point for understanding the multi-faceted allure of Spa for early modern women.

4.1 Health

Although, many women used the pretext of ill-health to travel overseas, there is still significant evidence that this was a genuine motive for coming to Spa. The earliest recorded case concerns Elizabeth Brooke, Marchioness of Northampton (1526-1565) who came to Spa in 1564 'by reason of a disease in one of her breasts'.[657] Her journey was personally endorsed by Elizabeth I, who wrote a letter of introduction to Margaret, Duchess of Parma requesting she 'show favour to the Marchioness' believing she 'can only be cured in the Low Countries'.[658] The Marchioness was accompanied overseas by her brother, Lord Cobham and his wife Frances Newton, notwithstanding the fact she was pregnant at the time. Although Elizabeth travelled as far as Antwerp, it is likely from her itinerary and motives that Spa was her final destination. One or two more instances of health travel appear in the records for the Elizabethan period, among them the aforementioned Katherine Talbot, Countess of Pembroke, who died in April 1576 within a few months of her return from Spa.[659] The Jacobean era furnishes us with more detailed descriptions of female health travel. It is quite possible that the journey made by the Drury family in 1610 was associated with the health of their daughter Elizabeth, who also died shortly after her return.[660] For women travelling to Spa on the grounds of illness, the most common descriptor in licences was 'for the recoverie of her

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[656] *APC* (1616-17), p.336.

[657] TNA, SP 70/70 f. 9.

[658] Ibid.

[659] *APC* (1571-5), p.11.

[660] SO 3/4, Aug 1610.

healthe'. This was Margaret Greene's stated reason for travelling in June 1615, and was supported as noted above, by certificates of attestation from her doctors. The usual conditions were attached to her licence including the proviso she took no longer than 6 months to complete her treatment and that she was 'to goe and returne directly to and from the Spawe'.[661]

Although the average age of women travelling to Spa was nearly 40, with the oldest being 64, younger women and even children were on occasion granted permission to journey abroad, strengthening the suggestion they were travelling on serious medical grounds, too.[662] On 31 May 1620, Frances Parker, the daughter of Baron Monteagle was granted a licence aged only 14 to travel to Spa 'for the recoverie of her health'.[663] Her licence application was supported by a letter of endorsement from her doctor that, 'the Spaw waters would notably avvyle [avail] her'.[664] Although Frances eventually professed as a nun, she clearly suffered from ill-health and was admitted to holy orders 'in respect that she was crooked, and therefore not fit for the world'.[665] Lucy Harington, Countess of Bedford took the opportunity to visit Spa whilst her family accompanied Elizabeth Stuart on her progress to Heidelberg in 1613.[666] The Countess had suffered a stroke 3 months before and hoped the trip might alleviate some of her symptoms. Prior to her departure she wrote to Jane Cornwallis explaining that she would 'use the help of the Spaw for the confirmacion of my health and prevention of som infirmities I have of late years been subject to, for which Mayerne counsells me to go thereafter'.[667]

Although licences to travel or letters of attestation are tactfully vague about the health problems women were seeking cures for, reading between the lines many were clearly gendered. For instance, Mrs Mary Baines' application to travel to Spa in 1622 was supported by a letter of attestation signed by her doctors William Clement and John Draper explaining she suffered from 'nephritical passion' (a disease associated with the urinary tract) which could only be treated by a course of the waters.[668] A similar request was made for Mistris Frances Browne, who travelled to

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[661] *APC* (1615), p.236.

[662] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.115.

[663] *APC* (1619-21), p.218.

[664] Ibid, p.218.

[665] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses,* p.252 & II, p.37.

[666] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.115.

[667] Braybrooke, Ld. R.G. (ed.), *The Private Correspondence of Lady Jane Cornwallis*, 1613-1644 (London, 1842), pp.40-41.

[668] TNA, SP 14/132 f.34.

Spa in 1628 along with 2 maids and her own doctor.[669] Though none of the licences specifically refer to fertility issues, the reputation of Spa's water for enhancing the ability of women to conceive outlined in Section 2, must clearly have been on the minds of many younger travellers. Nadine Akkerman believes that Elizabeth Stuart visited the baths at Schwalbach in Germany in 1616 specifically to aid fertility.[670]

The perceived health benefits of Spa, help to explain the popularity of gifting flasks of water from the town, especially among female circles. For those unable to make the journey themselves, a flask of Spa water was an affordable and potentially life-transforming present. Phyllis Hembry estimates that by 1632, 100,000 bottles of Spa water were entering London every year.[671] Ferdinando Persia noted in his aforementioned account of the Duke of Gonzaga's visit to Spa that the water was 'transported all over the world in great quantities' and was thought to preserve its health-giving properties for as many as three years.[672] The exchange of Spa water was used as a way of networking and something women featured in the database clearly were familiar with. A Brussels landlord, Monsieur Maguenet, offered William Trumbull 'a basin or two of Spa water' as a sweetener to a tenancy agreement for a property he was hoping to let in 1618.[673] Jean Beaulieu, husband of Elizabeth Devick herself a visitor to Spa, is known to have forwarded goods purchased in the town to England, on his return there in the autumn of 1618: 'I have already received some of

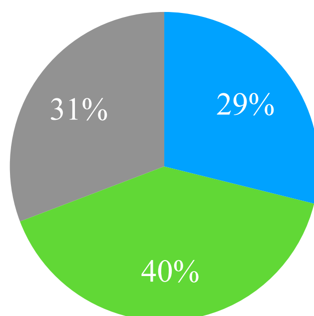

Fig. 5.6a Religion of all women in the database

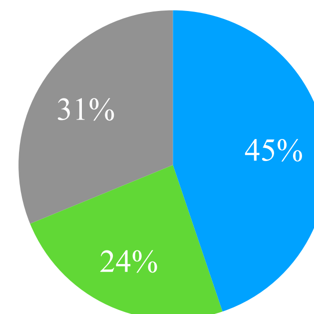

Fig. 5.6b Religion of women at Spa.

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669 *APC* (1628/9), p.23.

670 Akkerman, *Elizabeth Stuart*, p.116.

671 Hembry, *The English Spa*, p.42.

672 Finucci, *The Prince's Body,* p.112.

673 *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.444.

the things that were to be sent to me from the Spa, such as the chains and lace, and the baskets of Spa water which have been deposited in the Lord Treasurer's cellar'.[674]

4.2 Confessional mobility

Comparing the religious identities of women visiting Spa with that of women in the database as a whole reveals how disproportionately Catholic the make-up of visitors was (Figs. 5.6a & 5.6b). Although less than 30% of women in the database were identifiably Catholic, the figure leaps to 45% of all those who travelled to Spa, of whom over half were licensed or officially sanctioned. By comparison, just under a quarter of the women visiting Spa were Protestant. The peculiar appeal of the town for Catholic women is clear both from the data and the written evidence we have. When Lord Morley's wife was discovered there in 1576 without a licence, he pleaded with William Cecil she be allowed to stay both on the grounds of her health and the needs of her faith: 'Let us stay at the Spaw this summer, for my wife's health … and not let the punishment of a mass come to such extremity as to be a talk through Christendom'.[675] As the seventeenth century progressed, it became ever clearer that many were travelling to the town for confessional rather than medical reasons. The acquisition of a licence to travel to Spa was simply a ruse for many recusants to find a legitimate route out of England and live among like-minded Catholics, where they could pursue their faith unhindered. Typical of such women was the Yorkshire recusant, Joyce Langdale, who travelled to Spa in the summer of 1618.[676] She had been granted a licence to travel on the advice of 'learned physitians' in order to cure indeterminate 'greevious langusheing deseases whereof shee can finde no reamydie'.[677] Her application was supported by Dr John Moore, a physician sympathetic to the plight of recusants as noted above, whose name frequently appeared on letters of attestation for Catholic travellers. Predictably, within months of her arrival, Joyce, had abandoned Spa and presented herself at the Convent of Our Lady of the Assumption in Brussels, where she eventually professed as a nun the following year.[678] Similarly, despite being granted a licence in 1622 'to goe

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[674] *HMC Downshire,* VI, p.547

[675] *CSPD*, 1566-79, p. 496.

[676] *APC* (1617-19), p.185.

[677] Ibid, p.185.

[678] *Miscellanea, IX*, p.184.

to the Spaw for the recoverie of her health and to remaine there for 3 moneths', within the year Margaret Paston had entered the same convent.[679]

The best documented example of a woman appealing for a licence on the grounds of health to conceal confessional motives for travelling to Spa is that of Mary Roper, better known as Lady Jane Lovel (also Lovell, 1564-1628). Lady Lovel was a key figure among English recusants. A member of the Roper family - her great-aunt was Mary Roper, daughter of Sir Thomas More - she was known to dozens of lay and religious women within the database, among them fellow travellers Grace Birnand, Lady Babthorpe (1563-1635), and Lady Joanne Berkeley, Abbess of Reims (1555/6-1616).[680] Lovel was well-known for her association with recusants in England, too. She was investigated for harbouring priests shortly after the Gunpowder Plot and the famous Spanish missionary, Luisa de Carvajal is known to have stayed for a time in her London home.[681]

Lovel's decision to apply for a licence to travel to Spa may have been precipitated by a number of contextual events, among them the government clampdown on recusancy in the wake of the Gunpowder Plot and the death of her husband, the English mercenary, Sir Robert Lovel.[682] The arrest and imprisonment of her sister, Elizabeth Vaux on suspicion of her complicity in the Plot may also have intensified her desire to leave England. Correspondence that survives between Sir Robert Cecil and Lady Lovel in the Hatfield archives and *State Papers* reveals much about her state of mind at this time, as well as the antagonism of the government towards licensing women's travel to Spa for all but the most genuine cases.[683]

In the first of her letters to Sir Robert, the principal minister responsible for licences to travel at this time, the urgency of Lady Lovel's request is plainly evident from choice of words she deploys. She displays astonishing candour in the details she provides of her medical condition necessitating her travel to Spa. She writes, 'of a pain in one of my brests [sic], which growing every day more extreme'.[684] She explains that her physician, 'Dr Tuner' thought that 'the Spaue' was her only hope of finding a 'certain cure of this infirmity' and request permission to stay in the town for

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[679] Ibid, p.185; Bowden and Kelly, *English Convents in Exile*, p.179.

[680] TNA, SP 77/7 f.348; TNA, SP 14/ 81 f.53.

[681] *HMC Salisbury,* XVII, pp.613-614; Redworth, Glyn, *The She-Apostle: The Extraordinary Life and Death of Luisa de Carvajal* (Oxford, 2011), p.109.

[682] Some of the plotters had met at one of Lovel's Highgate home although she denied any involvement in the Plot. See Hunt A., 'The Lady is a Catholic: Lady Lovell's Reply to Sir Edward Hoby' in *Recusant* History Vol. 31 No.3 (2013), pp.411-437.

[683] *HMC Salisbury*, XVIII, p.419-420; TNA, SP 14/ 23 f.17.

[684] *HMC Salisbury*, XVIII, p.419.

'some years' due to the fact the 'disease is long in breeding' and consequently 'the cure therefor is lingering'.[685] Her reference to Dr Tuner, or rather Turner, added further professional weight to her bid. Samuel Turner (d.1647) was from a family of Catholic-leaning doctors with particular interest in balneology. He was described as well-travelled and eloquent by Sir Henry Wotton and thought to have authored *Dr Turnor's directions for my Lady at bath*.[686] In addition to seeking out treatment for her condition, Lady Lovel requests that two of her daughters be allowed to accompany her, including Frances Lovel (1597-1639). It is also likely that her niece, Joyce Vaux (d.1667), was a member of the party.[687] The emotional leverage of her ill-health coupled with the needs of a mother not to abandon her children, appears to have worked and in her second letter she expresses her thanks to Cecil at 'how graciously you have stood with me for the grant of my licence'.[688] However, the issue of the Oath of Allegiance, that as noted above all overseas travellers now needed to take, especially those suspected of Catholic sympathies, loomed as a potential sticking point. Lovel's determination to be exempted is evident in the second letter in which she states she is 'resolved to undergo any misery that may be imposed upon me rather than do that thing which a religious and catholic conscience cannot justify'.[689] As a sweetener, she appears to have offered Cecil a gift, possibly a piece of embroidery, rejected out of hand by Cecil as a bribe, which clearly causes Lovel some consternation and in her third letter spells out how she 'been much grieved that you would not accept of that mean present I sent'.[690]

In the end, Lovel appears to have slipped abroad without taking the oath, but not without the cognisance of Cecil. Shortly after her arrival on the continent two censuses were produced listing Catholics of note in the region, both of which include Lady Lovel.[691] The first, entitled *The names of certaine Recusants at St Omer, Malines and Brussels*, probably dates from the autumn of 1606 and includes leading male and female recusant exiles among them her relative Sir William Roper and Lady [Barbara] Babthorpe. The second dated 1607, entitled *The names of such persons of note as live in the Province of the Netherlands under the Kind of Spaines obedience being his Ma^ts^*

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685 Ibid, p.419.

686 See Jansson, Maija, 'Samuel Turner' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-27863?rskey=FjEhfQ&result=4 (last accessed Apr 2024).

687 Anstruther, Godfrey, *The Vaux of Harrowden. A Recusant Family* (Newport, 1953), p.375.

688 *HMC Salisbury*, XVIII, p.419.

689 Ibid, p.419.

690 Ibid, p.419.

691 TNA, SP 77/7 f.348; TNA, SP 77/8 f.418.

subiects, includes leading male and female recusants, many associated with rebellions and plots in England, among them Edward Sheldon and his wife Elizabeth Markham (c.1560-1630, sister of the Catholic informer Sir Griffin Markham) and Mary Mulsho (c.1581-1653), widow of the executed conspirator, Sir Everard Digby. In her first correspondence with Cecil from overseas (20 August 1606), Lady Lovel is at pains to stress her continued fidelity to the English Crown. Her words are littered with expressions of loyalty such as 'remebring my naturall princ [sic] wth Reverent duty & the country that bredd me wth deere affection' and 'the loyalty of min own hart toward my princ & country'.[692] She is equally keen to show how indebted she is to Cecil, offering to help him in any way possible, 'though it er wth hazerd of my life'.[693] Tellingly, she suggests her sex would render her less likely to arouse suspicion whilst travelling abroad, 'being unlikely in respect of my estate as a woman' although she does not disclose what use her skills may be put to.[694]

It seems that the English government knew all along that Lady Lovel's primary purpose was not to visit Spa but live overseas according to the principles of her Catholic faith. Few were surprised when she announced her delay in travelling to Spa that first summer by the 'Continuall Raines fallen in thes partes'.[695] When two years later she eventually did reach the town, the cynicism of commentators is evident. Writing to Trumbull from Spa, Beaulieu was among many who were surprised when she finally arrived: 'my la. Lovell's holy and strange resolution hath amazed us who expected her here [i.e. in Spa]'.[696] Lovel herself appears to have made little effort to uphold the masquerade and was frequently sighted attending mass or consorting with Catholic community leaders in a bid to raise funds or find novices for the new overseas English convents.[697] In her letters to Cecil, she herself admits 'I frequent the church and exercise my conscence [sic] heere in this catholick countrye, that in your wisdom you will pardon me'.[698] In spite of her earlier protestations that breast-cancer threatened to end her life prematurely, Lady Lovel lived to the ripe old age of sixty-four, dying in 1628, twenty-two years after her initial departure for Spa. The entire episode of Lady Lovel's request to visit Spa reveals how aware the authorities were that the licensing system was being abused by recusant women travellers. However, if such individuals were

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[692] TNA, SP 14/23 f.17.

[693] Ibid.

[694] Ibid.

[695] Ibid.

[696] *HMC Downshire*, II, pp.70-71.

[697] Peck, *Consuming Splendor*, p.136; *CSPD*, 1603-10, p.329.

[698] TNA, SP 14/23 f.17.

sufficiently prominent within the Catholic community, and their presence overseas could be of service to James' ministers, especially if as women they could move around and potentially network with informants with greater ease, then such disingenuousness could be overlooked for the greater good of the state.

Lady Lovel was also at the centre of another event associated with Spa, which underscores the town's importance for government authorities as a focal point for confessional exchange and intelligence gathering. An intriguing report was commissioned by the English government in July 1615, entitled simply *Those at Spa* providing details on participants at an assembly in the town with the apparent intention to appoint no less than a new Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury.[699] The prospective candidate was Dr Thomas Worthington. Worthington had long been on the radar of the English authorities.[700] In a savage report to Lord Burghley, he was once described as 'the most dangerous and pernicious' of all the Jesuits gathered against England.[701] Worthington eventually rose to become President of the famous Douai missionary college, and served in this role from 1599 until 1613.[702] By the time of the Spa assembly, he was beginning to fall out of favour with the Catholic authorities, following polemical works in which he challenged critics of the English Jesuit movement within the Catholic Church.[703] Increasingly seen as a liability, he was replaced as President and given a papal pension in anticipation of his return to England. The aforementioned government report notes that late in June 1615 there was 'a gral [general] assembly at the spaw' convened by the Jesuits Thomas Fitzherbert and John Sweet,' who brought wth them a Comission from the Pope to chuse an Archbp of Canterb'.[704] Both Fitzherbert and Sweet were well-known Catholic missionaries, and the authors of the report were categorical that the gathering occurred 'by vertue of the Popes said comission'.[705] Whether the Catholic authorities fully intended to appoint a

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699 TNA, SP 14/ 81 f.53.

700 Loomie, A., 'Dr. Thomas Worthington' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29993?rskey=P6vslw&result=3 (last accessed Mar 2024).

701 Cited in Foley, Henry, *Records of the English province of the Society of Jesus*, II (London, 1875), p.107, n.4.

702 Ibid, pp. 106-107.

703 See for example, Worthington, Thomas, *A Relation of Sixtene Martyrs* (Douai, 1601).

704 TNA, SP 14/81 f.100.

705 See Foley, *Records of the English Province*, VII, pp.258-9 and Foley, *Records of the English Province*, IV pp.646-655; Clancy, Thomas, 'Thomas Fitzherbert' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-9605?rskey=zfCJze&result=1 (last accessed Mar 2024); TNA, SP 14/81 f.53.

new Archbishop of Canterbury or simply to alarm their English counterparts is hard to say. Worthington was well-advanced in years by the time of the conference and it is questionable how much strategic impact his appointment might have had. The Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot was quick to dismiss the threat, describing him in a letter to him Trumbull the following year as 'old Doctor Worthington' and 'a doting fool with a bauble' who had 'dared to returne into England where yet hee lurketh'.[706] What is perhaps more significant is the fact that it was deemed possible that a new Catholic appointee could have been made and that Spa was the possible setting for such a dangerous precedent.

The report names around two dozen people gathered at the assembly. Aside from senior Jesuit missionaries and doctors of theology, were members of the Catholic laity, including key English exiles such as Sir Gervase Markham, Sir Ralph Babthorpe and Sir Edward Parham. Significantly, a number of women are referred to, as well. Among them, the aforementioned Oxfordshire recusant, Mrs Francis Stoner, who like many others had come to Spa allegedly for reasons of health.[707] Also attending, were the ubiquitous Lady Lovel, and Lady Berkeley, Abbess of Reims.[708] Once his appointment had been endorsed by Rome, the report notes Worthington would be empowered 'to ordain Priests and consecrate all things apptayning to the masse'.[709] In the event, Worthington's candidacy did not advance further. He returned to England not as an archbishop but as an archdeacon of the Catholic priests of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. He continued to write works of Catholic polemic, before dying in relative obscurity in 1626.[710] Regardless of whether the hapless Worthington was ever intended to be proclaimed Catholic Archbishop, the presence of key women exiles in the process is highly significant. Lady Lovel and Lady Berkeley as noted were central figures within the network of lay and religious exiled communities, playing a key role in both establishing new convents and furnishing them with wealthy new postulants from England. Aside from allegedly coming to Europe for treatment of her cancer at Spa, Lovel had also been closely involved with the foundation of new religious institutions with particular appeal to English

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[706] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.532.

[707] *APC* (1615-16), p.166.

[708] Guilday, *English Catholic Refugees*, p.257; Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.203.

[709] TNA, SP 14/81 f.53.

[710] Wood, *Athenae Oxonienses*, p.434; see for example Worthington, Thomas, *An Anker of Christian Doctrine* (Douai, 1622).

women, among them Liège, Mechelen and Antwerp.[711] Likewise, the attendance of Lady Berkeley, pioneering foundress of the first overseas convent for English nuns was an important coup for the organisers, all the more significant since she and Lovel had had a very public spat over the role of English Jesuit confessors in conventual settings.The fact that Berkeley and Lovel had laid their differences aside to attend this assembly together would have been read as a powerful sign of unity by the English Catholic community at home and overseas. Together, alongside the other notable figures gathered at Spa, the assembly afforded the proceedings a degree of legitimacy that would otherwise have been lacking and gave a real purpose to Worthington's mission to revive the office of Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury.

The English government lists of exiles living abroad, continued to view Spa as a hotbed of Catholic intrigue. Even after the Worthington assembly, the town remained a primary focus for their surveillance activities. In fact, the most detailed list of religious exiles associated with the town was produced the very next year. Entitled *List of the English who were at the Spa in July and August 1616, with notes of their residences and of such as are Papists* it seeks to itemise all who were present in Spa either Protestant or Catholic.[712] Among them are names of individuals with unquestionable conformist credentials, such as Sir Horace Vere, Sir Robert Sidney and his sister the Countess of Pembroke. However, the list also identifies those who were practising Catholics, ominously placing the abbreviation 'Pa.', or papist, next to their names. They include Lady Cross, Mrs Fortescue, Mrs Camden Mrs Woodhouse and Mary Ward, whose foundations in Northern France and Flanders were especially popular at this time with English postulants. Like Lady Berkeley, Mary Ward was a high profile figure within the overseas Catholic community, and her newly-founded institute for 'English Ladies' in St Omer was at the height of its success at this time. Ward was beginning to expand her mission, with the foundation of what would be the first of many new religious houses across the Continent at Liège the same year as the census.[713]

Clearly, many who travelled to Spa ostensibly for reasons of health were driven by a deep-seated desire to commune with fellow Catholics and subscribe openly to their faith. The town, with its aforementioned reputation for toleration and inclusivity allowed these women to 'enjoy the free

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[711] For further evidence of her activities see, for example, *HMC Downshire*, II, p.70-1 (18 Aug 1608), *HMC Downshire*, II, p.158 (18 Oct 1609) as well as Sequin, Colleen, 'Mary Lovel, Lady Roper' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-69036?rskey=DcyDci&result=1 (last accessed Mar 2024).

[712] TNA, SP 14/88 f.107.

[713] Peters, Henriette, *Mary Ward. A World In Contemplation* (Leominster, 1994), p.205.

exercise of Catholic religion, without continual fear and molestation'.[714] The fact that this motive was widely acknowledged by the authorities suggests a degree of state-complicity in the presence of these women. Arguably, by acknowledging and accepting the presence of these women at Spa, the authorities were in a better position to monitor their activities and where possible utilise their enhanced agency for the greater good of the state.

4.3 Recreation & socialisation

From the second decade of the seventeenth century, evidence in the database suggests that a significant proportion of women were increasingly travelling for reasons of pleasure rather than religious exile or medical need (Fig. 5.7). The first purely social visits to Spa appear early in the seventeenth century driven by greater political stability on the Continent and the wave of printed literature celebrating both the benefits of balneology and the town's social attractions. A careful study of activities of women travellers to Spa reveals that for at least 20 of the women in the database, around 15% of the total, socialisation and recreation was their primary activity during their stay. When Lady Carleton visited with her husband in 1616, the Earl of Arundel hoped that she would 'visitte the Spawe more for a Somer progresse of recreacion, then for any neede, for I hope you shall not wante health'.[715] To underline this expectation, the Carletons travelled in a party of 30 'holiday-makers', among them the highly convivial Sir Arthur Ingram, 'laden with provisions of gammons of bacon, cheeses, red deer pies, English beer and such like stuff.[716] Spa was not alone in enjoying an upsurge in interest among this new breed of health tourists. The baths at Schwalbach in Germany were popular with Elizabeth Stuart, and the English diplomat Lord Cobham wrote to Walsingham about the benefits of the waters at Mézières in addition to those of Spa.[717] Mary Sidney travelled to Pougues-les-Eaux near Nevers in central France during her 1614-16 tour of Europe.[718] However, few could rival Spa, the original bath town, as a popular retreat for therapy and, above all, socialising.

[714] Hamilton, *Augustinian Canonesses*, p.160.

[715] TNA, SP 14/88 f.41.

[716] TNA, SP 84/73, ff.130-1.

[717] Akkerman, *Elizabeth Stuart*, p.116; TNA, SP 78/9 f.71.

[718] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.253

A significant part of the attraction lay in the fact it was a convergence point for travellers from across the Continent. Visitors could confidently expect to rub shoulders with the great and the good, regardless of their national or confessional backgrounds. Jean Beaulieu describes how during Lady Edmondes' visit in 1608, the town was 'more like a Court than a village'.[719] Among the early modern 'a-listers' in attendance that summer were Catherine of Clèves, sister-in-law to, Louis I Gonzaga, Ernest of Bavaria, representative of the Catholic Prince-Bishop of Liège, and Cardinal Bentivoglio, papal nuncio to the court of Albert and Isabella. Lady Edmondes' presence did not go unnoticed either. Among those who paid their respects to her were Monsieur de la Guesle, a relative of the Attorney General of France, and the Count of Brouay and his wife, who Beaulieu noted 'used much courtesy to my la'.[720] The visit by Vincenzo Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua shortly after Lady Edmondes' arrival was the greatest coup of all. The Duke was connected via marriage to the Duchy of Savoy, an important pawn in the geo-politics of early seventeenth century Europe. His visit, coupled with the fact he offered Lady Edmondes the use of his own coach after hers had been damaged en route to Spa, reinforced the bonds of friendship between the Duchy and England as powerfully as any treaty could do.[721]

Socialisation was not the sole preserve of ambassadresses, and was a central feature of the Countess of Pembroke's visit to Spa 8 years later. She struck a particularly warm friendship with a local noblewoman, the Countess of Barlemont, wife of the governor of Luxembourg, along with 'her two fair daughters'.[722] During their stay, the women 'kept merry company', feasting, and gambling and even taking part in shooting competitions.[723] Such friendships could produce longer term practical benefits and help build ties between English and continental families. When Catherine Whetenall travelled around Europe in the mid-seventeenth century she was granted permission to stay in 'an appartement prepared by ye old Countess of Barlamont to her own Monastery at Brussels'.[724] Given that Catherine's aunt was Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Kent, a woman firmly within Mary Sidney's kinship circle, this favour may well be traceable to the friendships forged at Spa in 1616.

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[719] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.68.

[720] Ibid, p.71.

[721] Ibid, p.69.

[722] Lee, J*acobean Letters*, p.209.

[723] Ibid, p.209.

[724] Edward Chaney, *The Grand Tour and the Great Rebellion. Richard Lassels and 'The Voyage of Italy' in the Seventeenth Century* (Geneva, 1985), pp.77-78.

Just as at court, a requisite element of international socialisation was the exchange of gifts. However due to the relaxed atmosphere of Spa, the giving and receiving of such tokens was far less formal or beholden to diplomatic conventions. Lady Edmondes was regaled with a variety of gifts during her 1608 stay, among them a basket of apricots, from the Count Jean Jacques, representative of the Prince-Bishop of Liège.[725] The choice of this fruit was possibly not coincidental. As a widely recognised symbol of transience and earthly pleasure, the choice of apricots would not have gone unheeded. By contrast, a block of ice given to Lady Edmondes by the Count of Brouay caused much mirth among her household, who were unsure of how best to put it to use given that they were already suffering from 'the coldness of the water treatments'.[726] Eventually, it was handed to the cook, who neglectfully deposited it in a corner of the kitchen where eventually the ice 'out of sullenness thawed itself into its mother water and was never inquired after'.[727]

Gifts were also popular with women returning from Spa and were exchanged as high-status souvenirs of their visit. Amongst these were Spa staffs or staves, which tourists were encouraged to adopt and instead of weapons on arriving at the town as a gesture of goodwill.[728] Surviving examples from the seventeenth century in the town's museum, show that these items were often beautifully carved and painted or inlaid with metals and semi-precious materials such as ivory or mother-of-pearl making them perfect presents for gifting. In 1616, Sir Dudley Carleton sent decorated Spa staves to John Chamberlain to distribute among their London acquaintances, among them Elizabeth Ball, wife of Secretary Winwood.[729] Spa or 'Spaw rings' were also popular, collectible items. They may have been worn by recusants as a discrete signifier of their religion or as a token from exiles still living abroad. Following the failure of the Northern Rebellion (1569), one of the son's of the disgraced Earl of Westmorland sent back 'Spaw rings' to England to confirm his wellbeing and maintain fellowship links with the recipients.[730]

Liesbeth Corens has argued convincingly that in addition to being a place of religious convergence, Spa also represented a place of temporality, where social conventions could be suspended.[731] She sees this culture as prevalent from the latter part of the seventeenth century, but

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[725] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.69.

[726] Ibid, p.73.

[727] Ibid, p.73.

[728] See Corens, *Seasonal Coexistence*, pp.150-151.

[729] *Chamberlain*, II, p.27.

[730] *CSPD*, *Elizabeth*, *Addenda*, p.365.

[731] Corens, '*Seasonal Coexistence'*, p.162 ff.

evidence from contemporary accounts would suggest that this climate of relaxed socialisation existed from as early start of the century. Among the *Trumbull Papers* are examples of newsletters or round-robins, which record with surprising candour the hedonistic adventures of female members of diplomatic households. Beaulieu's reports are astonishingly frank in their portrayal of Lady Edmondes' activities during her stay in Spa, describing how her day was poised between 'physic' in the mornings and 'carousing' there afterwards.[732] One newsletter in particular provides remarkable detail on the behaviour of women at Spa in the summer of 1608.[733] Although signed by 'JS', John Searle a member of the Edmondes household, it is also boldly autographed by other staff members, among them women; Phyllis or 'Phippe' Woolley, a lady-in-waiting to Lady Edmondes, and Elizabeth Devick, wife of Jean Beaulieu. The presence of the women's signatures and the heading 'household letter' on the reverse of the document by the same author's hand, confirms that the contents were for a broad and familiar audience.[734] There are stylistic clues that Elizabeth Devick is one of the principal contributors to the piece as well as the fact that she enjoyed a reputation for being something of a gossip among other members of the Trumbull household. Her brother, William Devick had earlier commented on how entertaining and illuminating his sister's letters were: 'three lines of her own writing to any of her friends is better than a leaf of paper of another's. She knows what I mean'.[735] Other documents within the Trumbull Papers, reveal her mischievous hand. On the reverse of a letter from James VI's international postmaster, Matthew de Questor to William Trumbull, the year after the trip to Spa, she has copied out the names of members of the Brussels household, among them Sandford and Beaulieu and her long-time companion, Phyllis Woolley. Among the many jottings, which include what looks like doodles of wedding rings or perhaps spaw rings, is the phrase 'beaulieu is a knave', whilst further down the page she has added as a corrective, 'good man beaulieu'.[736]

The account begins with a teasing comparison between dreary ambassadorial life in Brussels and the excitement of the social whirl of Spa. The authors make poetic allusions to the dramatic local scenery, 'immured about with rocky cliffs and mountains'.[737] A contrast is drawn between the peaceful isolation of their 'little hamlet' and the 'fenced and walled city' of Brussels, where social

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[732] *HMC Downshire, II, p.68.*

[733] Ibid, p.72 and pp.73-75.

[734] BL, Add MS 72338 f.5.

[735] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.55.

[736] Ibid, p.110; Add MS 72338 f.91v.

[737] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.73.

conformity predominates.[738] In spite of this, the company are still entertained by a panoply of high profile guests and visitors among whom were 'a Duke- Prince, Earls, Countesses, Ladies, Cavaliers and gentlemen as well as you'.[739] The newsletter delights in furnishing its reader with coarse descriptions of the treatments the party was undertaking:

> 'according to the differences of our sexes, some are like cullenders, some lembicks [a distilling device with a long protruding tube], some stream it out again, and some distill it'.[740]

In another section, the authors crudely note that having drunk so much spa water the women were able 'with one week's practice to piss point-blank through the eye of a pack-needle' and nicknames them 'the pisseresses of Spa'.[741] The quantity of water the women were passing is frequently returned to. In one passage, a reference to Rabelais is made, by comparing the drinkers to Parisian dogs who produced such copious quantities of urine they had a street named after them.

Like the Croft letter examined in Chapter 4, the account is a curious mixture of literary allusion and salacious humour, laced with in-jokes and references that fellow members of the Edmondes household would clearly relish. In one section, a mischievous expedition into the nearby woods involving Phyllis Wolley and her fellow staff members is recounted:

> 'One day coming from Fount-Geronster through a dangerous thick part of the forest Cavallero Phippe lay in ambush behind a bush of dwarf oak — yet not so covertly but that her plume appeared. I considering the danger wherein I was, having nobody with me but Roger Crack-Bottle carrying my Spa lance whiles I went untrussing my points for fear of some sally out of the rearward of my body, I valiantly set my heels behind my toes and ran by her and would not see her'.[742]

The lance referred to is one of the famous Spa staves, but the sexual double-entendres barely need explaining. The author gently chides the women in the party for their pleasure-making and implies that they were at risk of turning into savages if they stayed too long at the resort:

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738 Ibid, p.73.

739 Ibid, p.73.

740 Ibid, p.74.

741 Ibid, p.74.

742 Ibid, p.74.

> 'The Gentlewomen throve well in spitting and spawing by their Spa sipping, but I am half in doubt that if they stay long here they will grow wild. We can never keep them out of the Wood'.[743]

This fanciful description of life in Spa emerges in other accounts of the period, too. As mentioned above, William Basse depicted Mary Sidney's trip there as a pastoral adventure whilst Lady Hatton, who visited Spa during a continental sojourn in 1623, referred to the region as a country that had 'long lived under the government of the land gods, and now put themselves under the protection of Neptune'.[744] Spa was a mythical place where conventions could be abandoned in the pursuit of pleasure and adventure. As we have noted, Mary Sidney embraced the new lifestyle wholeheartedly, and her friendship with the like-minded Countess of Barlemont caused much consternation among English onlookers. Sir Dudley Carleton was particularly horrified by their irregular behaviour, worse still her enthusiasm for the new fad of smoking tobacco, something which the ambassador feared would tarnish the nation's reputation, 'as if in her conceit all English had drawn no other breath'.[745] Dudley's decision to report the Countess' antics to the newswriter John Chamberlain was probably a deliberate ploy to shame her into abeyance. The presence among her playfellows of two notorious Catholics, Tobie Matthew and George Gage, added to the atmosphere of non conformity, and Carleton cannot resist making punning references both to the baths and their infamy as Catholics exiles when he describes them as being 'deep in the waters'.[746]

In the early decades of the seventeenth century, Spa became fixed in the public conscience as a place of relaxed living and socialisation. Its appeal to visitors from across the Continent made it a primary nexus for international networking. Due to its position within the historically more liberal principality of Liège it was seen as a place where the normal rules and conventions of polite society could be loosened if not entirely abandoned. Women as much as men were beneficiaries of this more relaxed social climate, as demonstrated by the surprisingly well-documented experiences of those such as Lady Edmondes and the Countess of Pembroke as well as many of their female attendants and associates.

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[743] Ibid, p.74.

[744] TNA, SP 84 / 115 f.172.

[745] Lee, *Jacobean Letters*, p.209.

[746] Ibid, p.209.

4.4 Information exchange & political agency

Spa's reputation as a place of religious and social forbearance may also explain why it was also well-placed to serve as a focal point for information exchange and political agency, where women could play a pivotal role. As a place of social and political convergence comparable to Cold War Berlin, the town provided the perfect backdrop for espionage and intelligence-gathering. Women travelling there may well have done so for reasons of health, recreation or confessional exile but running alongside this is a strong suggestion that many acknowledged the political opportunities afforded by Spa's unique geo-political status. As Nadine Akkerman notes in her recent book *Invisible Agents* (2018), women travelling to Spa in the mid-seventeenth century were known to be complicit in this type of activity.[747] Anne St John (1614-1696), future Countess of Rochester, used the pretence of a visit to Spa in 1654 where Charles Stuart was temporarily holed up, to convey and gather information for the royalist cause. Akkerman argues she was like many 'women who hopped back and forth across the narrow seas' in support of the future Charles II.[748] However, the tradition of Spa as a nexus for intelligence-gathering has a much longer tradition. As early as 1565, Sir Edward Warner reported from Spa that there were many who were acting as agents for their respective governments in addition to the 'great repair here for the benefit of the waters'.[749] Among them he mentions, 'A merchant of Antwerp, Ant. Grot, is at the Spa, who receives intelligence from all part of Italy'.[750]

Among the foremost women in the database potentially involved in the process of information gathering and exchange were Lady Mary Leedes and Lady Bridget Parham. Their activities in and around Spa early in the seventeenth century have left a significant archival footprint, although their relationship with the authorities was complex and at times contradictory. Lady Leedes was the wife of the disgraced nobleman, Sir Thomas Leedes, Deputy Lieutenant of Sussex. She was a devout Catholic, as were others in her family circle, and is listed along with other 'names of persons of note' living in the Netherlands as early as 1607.[751] Like Akkerman's Channel hoppers cited above, she appears to have moved frequently between England and the Low

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[747] Akkerman, Nadine, *Invisible Agents: Women and Espionage in Seventeenth-Century Britain* (Oxford, 2018).

[748] Ibid, p.83.

[749] TNA, SP 15/12 f.205.

[750] Ibid.

[751] TNA, SP 77/8 f.418.

Countries. On 15 Oct 1613, she specifically received a licence to 'pass over unto the Spawe to her husband remayning there'.[752] She, along with her husband, quickly gained a name for herself as a useful local contact for those on Spa circuit. The Earl of Southampton writes to Trumbull in 1614, suggesting he and his party stay at the Leedes' family home in Louvain during their visit to Spa.[753] Lady Leedes was also within Trumbull's circle of acquaintances. In one letter to Trumbull, Sir Thomas refers to a gift of 'some brawn' which Lady Leedes has prepared for his wife.[754] Although the exact nature of Lady Leedes' activities remains uncertain, her proximity to such seniors figures within the political establishment raises serious questions. Her close association with the English overseas Catholic community would have been indispensable to men like Trumbull, and the English authorities would have been churlish to ignore any prospect of assistance she might offer.

Like Lady Leedes, Bridget Parham also appears to have acted as an intermediary between the Catholic communities living in exile and the English government. Bridget Parham, was the wife of Sir Edward, a Catholic gentleman from Somerset, listed among other recusants living in Flanders in 1605.[755] Tellingly, Tobie Matthew described her husband as a 'mutual friend'.[756] In spite of this, she and her husband were granted a licence to travel to Spa on 31 May 1613, along with 'three men and one mayd servaunt, with other necessaries not prohibited'.[757] She appears to have remained overseas, whilst her husband served on military duty during the 2nd Cleves-Julich Crisis (1614).[758] Lady Parham later emerges as the companion to the Countess of Pembroke during her visit to Spa in 1614, confirmed by a letter from Dr Lister to Trumbull, stating: 'My Lady Parrom is here with my lady and desyres you, if there be any letters from Sir Edward, to send hether to her'.[759] Like Lady Leedes, Lady Parham was also within the sociability circle of the Earl of Southampton, judging from a letter he sent to Trumbull from England in October 1614 requesting his correspondence be conveyed to Lady Parham.[760] Likewise, the Earl of Westmoreland was within their network of acquaintances. On 15 April 1615, Westmoreland wrote to Trumbull asking him to

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752 *APC* (1613-14), p.234.

753 *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.469.

754 *HMC Downshire*, V, p.68.

755 TNA, SP 77 / 7 f.348.

756 *HMC Downshire*, V, p.68.

757 *APC* (1613-14), p.59.

758 *HMC Downshire*, V, p.13-14.

759 Ibid, p.14.

760 Ibid, p.31.

'commend me to Sir Edward and Lady Parham'.[761] In addition, she and her husband were beneficiaries of the Catholic agent, Sir Griffin Markham who were granted 200 'philips' in the event of his death.[762] In short, both women appear to be high profile recusants and points of contact for English travellers to Spa, enjoying particularly close ties of association with government agents.

In 1615, this situation changes dramatically amid growing suspicions that they may be operating more in the interests of their Catholic hosts than the English government. Early in 1615, Sir Ralph Winwood, Secretary of State, wrote to Trumbull asking him to draw up a list of 'what Englyshe familyes lyve there who ordinaryly hawnt the Masse,' with a view to issuing them summonses to appear before the Privy Council.[763] Revealingly, his letter mentions the Leedes and Parham families by name, identifying them as key figures within Catholic communities centred in and around Spa.[764] As a sign of the close relationship Mary Leedes enjoyed with Trumbull, she made a direct plea for his intercession in the matter, complaining her husband had been 'bitterly and unjustly criticised,' and called upon Trumbull to 'inform the Lords of the Council and His Majesty of this incontrovertible truth'.[765] The Privy Council were undeterred and sent an agent named Christopher Porter to convey a letter under royal seal to Sir Thomas requiring him to return to London to answer the charges against him. Trumbull's intercession in the matter is telling. In a highly defensive response, Trumbull sets out Lady Leedes' woeful situation to Sir Ralph Winwood, that on receiving the letter she 'immediately came to me with the information that her husband, Sir Thomas Leedes, was absent in France, and that she herself did not possess the means to travel to England'.[766] Trumbull goes to considerable lengths to depict Mary as a vulnerable, innocent woman unable to return to England to answer the charges as she was completing a course of treatments at Spa 'and that her doctor also had advised her to go for reasons of health 'which was much empaired by certaine inward diseases against which that fountayne is esteemed to be a souveraigne remedy'.[767] On her behalf, he asks if she might have time to sort out her financial affairs and assemble the necessary funds for the trip to England, where she will appear before the Privy

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[761] Ibid, p.405.

[762] Ibid, p.464.

[763] Ibid, p.144.

[764] Ibid, p.144.

[765] Ibid, p.296.

[766] Ibid, p.211.

[767] Ibid, p.211.

Council to answer any charges against her. On 11 May 1615, Secretary Winwood writes back to Trumbull, insisting more sternly that writs had been issued 'to recall home some Papysts who lyve with their familyes in your cowntryes …' and warning him of placing too much trust in his Catholic associates, singling out Lady Leedes for particular opprobrium:

> 'The less you have to doe with thys kind of men, the better service you shall doe his Majesty, for howsowever he doth temporyse him selfe and pretends the Spaa waters, yet I heare of what carige hys wife ys, who trotts up and downe at all processions and hawnts all pilgrimages, and omitts noe superstition that may stain and dishonour her cowntrye'.[768]

The Parhams were not protected from scrutiny by the English government. When, like Lady Leedes, she and her husband were required to respond to a summons to appear before the Privy Council, Trumbull once again appears to have interceded, 'sending one of his people' to the Parhams' house.[769] The couple refused churlishly to step out and accept the summons, 'standing on the privilege of ther great Altesse'.[770] When eventually they did emerge, they made their way to Spa, arriving there by late June 1615. En route in Liège, the couple happened upon 'the Prince of Portugale and his lady' who was travelling incognito to France.[771] Their revelation of this 'chance' encounter to Trumbull may be an attempt to underline the value of their presence on the Continent as additional eyes and ears on the ground. Manuel, son of Don Antonio of Portugal and his wife, Emilia of Nassau would prove to be useful pawns in constructing an anti-Hapsburg league among Protestant European states.

Lady Parham's later movements slowly disappear from the archives. On 20 August 1615, Throckmorton reports she was travelling to Dunkirk and the last reference to her in the *Trumbull Papers* is in the will of Sir Griffin Markham mentioned above.[772] Nevertheless, taken together, the actions of Lady Leedes and Lady Parham, connected as they were with senior figures of both Protestant and Catholic hues, as well as their proximity to internationally important figures, suggest that they enjoyed a degree of government protection. Trips to Spa were sanctioned because it was known that this was a primary locus for information gathering, and although the government was clearly aware of their recusancy, it was willing to turn a blind eye to for the benefit of the state.

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[768] Ibid, p.214.

[769] Ibid, p.228.

[770] Ibid, p.228.

[771] Ibid, p.255.

[772] Ibid, pp.318 and 464.

Not all the political intrigue associated with Spa related to the Catholic community, however. An overlooked reason why some women requested to travel to the town relates to the politicking of Elizabeth Stuart following her forced exile from Bohemia in 1621. During this period, relations between Elizabeth and her father had soured over the prospect of a Spanish marriage between the Infanta Maria Anna and her brother Charles. Such a marriage ran counter to her own anti-Habsburg sentiments following the onset of the Thirty Years' War and scuppered all prospects of her eventually inheriting the English throne. Elizabeth's enforced exile at The Hague, just a short Channel-crossing away from England, made her the focal point for the anti-Spanish Match faction, especially among her female friends and associates. The early 1620s sees a plethora of women making the journey overseas, often on the pretence of a trip to Spa, to pay their respects at her court in exile (Figs. 3.8a and b). Lucy Harington, Countess of Bedford was among the first, who travelled there in 1621. Chamberlain notes in a letter to Carleton in April 1621, 'The Countesse of Bedford is preparing to go to the Hagh'.[773] Her visit was followed in 1623 and 1624 by a succession of female visitors, among them Lady Hatton and her daughter Frances, wife of John Villiers, as well as Ladies Wharton and Wallingford.[774] Lady Hatton wrote to Sir Dudley Carleton in April 1623 setting out the frustration she and other female companions felt at trying to gain permission to make the crossing: 'having beene a suitor to the Kinge, this five or sixe weekes for leave' and continually 'promised, but yet delayd'.[775] She explains that she had pretended to be 'bound for a Spa voiage' but intended to go on a 'venture' to The Hague instead.[776] Lady Wallingford joined Lady Hatton and her daughter and maintained the same pretence that the principal aim of their journey was a trip to Spa. On 20 May 1623, she was granted 'a licence to for the Ladie Wallingford to goe to the Spaw for 6 moneths' taking with her 'eight coach horses' in addition to the 'sixteen horses' her husband also requested.[777] A sizeable number of horses for a pleasure trip to Spa. Her arrival in The Hague was clearly a surprise to the English ambassador, and Carleton wrote irritably to Edward Cecil that it was unannounced and that no prior arrangements had been made for her lodgings.[778] Nevertheless, their presence was gratefully received. Carleton noted how Elizabeth thrived off these visits, 'it gives new life to this good and gracious princess to see old friends; so as I am when such occasions

[773] *Chamberlain*, II, p.365.

[774] TNA, SP 84/115 f.172; *APC* (1623/25), p.211.

[775] *CSPD*, 1619-23, p.562.

[776] Ibid, p.562.

[777] *CSPD* (1621-23), p.586; TNA, SP 14/151 f.3.

[778] TNA, SP 84/112 f.210.

happen, which do minister some entertainment, of which (God knoweth) she hath need'.[779] Some, like Sir Dudley's nephew, were clearly overwhelmed by the sight of so many women rolling up at Elizabeth's court and acidly described the excessive numbers of female visitors in correspondence with his uncle as a 'shoale of ladies'.[780]

Carleton's wife, Anna Gerard played a crucial role in galvanising support for this cross-Channel, anti-Spanish Match faction. Her correspondence with her husband during her trips back to England in the early 1620s suggests she was constantly on the look out for like-minded attendants for Elizabeth Stuart's household. Where possible she would even escort them back with her to The Hague. Referring to plans for accompanying Lady Hatton back with her, she notes in May 1624 'I much feare my Lady Hatton will deffer her iurny to goe with me for in truth we are extreme deere'.[781] On this occasion, travelling with Lady Hatton was another large party of female well-wishers, who used the excuse of a trip to the Spa as an opportunity to pay their respects. Among them, according to their travel licence was 'Mistris Elizabeth Gorge [Gorges?], daughter to Sir Arthur Gorge, Mistris Marie Crofts, daughter to Sir John Crofts and Mistris Margerie Crofts, sister to Sir William Crofts'.[782] They travelled across in some style, with 'thirteen servantes to attend them and to take with them their tronkes of apparell and other necessarie provisions'.[783]

Taken together, what these two groups of travellers to Spa suggest is that the town was sometimes used as an excuse for other more political motives for travel. The popularity of the town with what Carleton described as those disaffected in religion made it the perfect focal point for information exchange among fellow Catholics. The English authorities recognised this, and were prepared to overlook religious deviation in return for valuable intelligence. Equally, the pretence of a trip to the medicinal waters of the town was used as a ruse for women seeking employment or an audience at Elizabeth Stuart's new court in Holland. Given the largely Protestant profile of these visitors, it may be argued that they also forged the basis of an anti-Spanish Match caucus that had been sidelined back in England under James. The wife of the English ambassador, Lady Carleton appears to have played a central role in the formation of this group, by recruiting suitable supporters during her trips to England and facilitating their journeys to The Hague.

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[779] TNA, SP 84 /115 f.172.

[780] TNA, SP 14/146 f.5, cited by Akkerman, *Elizabeth Stuart*, p.192, n.65.

[781] *CSPD*, 1623-25, p.11; TNA, SP 14/148 f.80.

[782] *APC* (1623/25), p.211.

[783] Ibid, p.211.

5. Conclusion

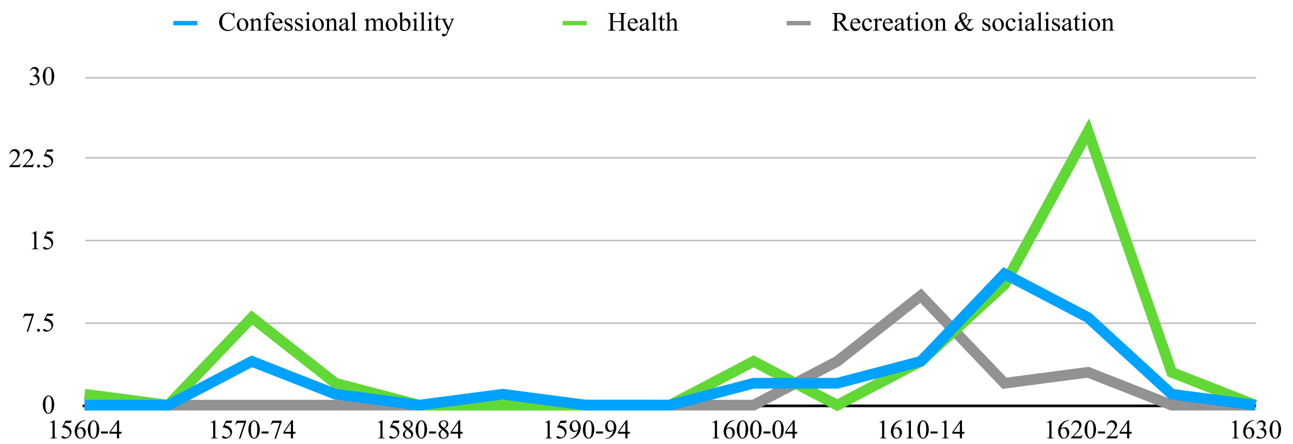

Fig. 5.7. Popularity of Spa according to motives (1560-1630).

Spa acts as an invaluable case study for travel by early modern women due to the unusual quantity and variety of evidence it affords. It allows us to study in microcosm the complexity of women's travel and how motives for mobility evolved over time in response to wider contextual developments. Extraneous events such as plots and rebellions enhanced its appeal as a safe site for religious and political refuge. In addition, the growth in literature celebrating Spa's therapeutic benefits as well as the opportunities for socialisation and networking it offered, prompted a renewed wave of interest in the town in the latter part of James' reign (Fig 5.7). Works as varied as Spenser and Basse projected an image of Spa as an idyllic retreat, where not only social norms were suspended, but visitors had the opportunity to encounter the elites of European society. References to Spa's springs in scientific texts and guide books acknowledged the particular allure of the town for women travellers. The rapid growth in interest in Spa eventually fuelled a conservative backlash and authors such as Joseph Hall savagely characterised visitors to the town as religious reprobates who went solely to 'quaff at the puddle of popish superstition'.[784] The government reacted too, with ever harsher licensing systems, evidenced by James' proclamations on travel, stricter terms to licences and the increased requirement for doctors to attest to the health of women applying for travel licences. The fact that women were able to circumvent these restrictions in ever greater numbers attests both to their ingenuity and resolve to travel abroad.

[784] Hall, *Quo Vadis*, sig.A4v.

The evidence of these licences as well as diplomatic correspondence on women travelling abroad reveals that although Spa may have primarily served as a destination for those taking the waters, it motivated women to travel for a range of reasons. Clearly religious refuge was one, and the fact that nearly half the women in the database who turned up in Spa were Catholics suggests that the town served as a hub for an international community of exiles. This situation was widely-recognised by the English authorities judging by the regular censuses they commissioned, but this was also used to their advantage. It seems that some families, like the Leedes and Parhams, and in particular women within those families, provided a vital source of intelligence. Spa offered a rare and reliable point of interface between the Catholic and reformed worlds. The religious ambiguity of Spa provided the perfect backdrop for those who used a trip to the baths as a smokescreen for conveying child-novices to overseas convents. The routes taken out of the country and the complex network of agents who worked along the lines of communication confirms the interdependence between communities of Catholics in England and on the Continent.

Spa was also used as an excuse for Protestant women to travel abroad. As we have seen, the database shows that the presence of Elizabeth Stuart at The Hague led to an upsurge in visitors to her court in exile, drawn by the prospect of patronage and a shared opposition to closer ties between England and Spain. Like their Catholic counterparts, women of reformed faith often used a trip to Spa as an excuse for other activities, in this case to pay their respects to Elizabeth or even in some cases take up residence in her household.

The database also reveals that an increasingly prominent expectation of women travelling to Spa was for the purposes of socialisation and even recreation. The accounts of the ambassadress Lady Edmondes and the Countess of Pembroke would certainly confirm this. We even have descriptions of the activities of those lower down the social scale, in the shape of newsletters compiled by household attendants, many of them women. These suggest that Spa's isolation from courtly conventions, allowed for more relaxed and progressive social interactions. The town was often depicted in the correspondence and literature as a rural idyll, a place of adventure and pastoral fantasy, where traditional conventions dissolved, and where social as much as religious interchange could freely occur. The accounts of the ambassadorial staff playing out bacchanalian fantasies in the woods and neighbouring countryside is one example of this, so too the more relaxed forms of gifting that took place between the dignitaries gathered there. The infrastructure that emerges particular in the Jacobean era shows how the town's facilities were developing in tune with the needs of female visitors. English doctors, improvements in accommodation and the presence of

well-known and well-connected chaperones, notably Tobie Matthew, helped to strengthen the town's appeal with women.

Due to its unique qualities, its isolation and the fact it was a nexus for international communities of exiles and travellers, Spa gave the women who travelled there uncommon agency. Ambassadresses travelling ostensibly for purposes of recreation, took advantage of the presence of international elites to network and strengthen bonds of association, as was the case with Lady Edmondes and the Duke of Gonzaga. Leading female Catholics like Lady Leedes became a valuable bridge between the English authorities and the burgeoning community of Catholic overseas exiles. Even their Catholic patrons acknowledged their influence by accepting the fact that women like Lady Lovel and Lady Cross might play a role in choosing a new Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury for the country. An undeniable part of the attraction of Spa for women travellers must have been the agency it afforded them. Far from simply quaffing the waters, popish or otherwise, women encountered at Spa a unique space where social and cultural interactions could take place without censure and where their presence was highly valued. Their motives for travelling were complex and evolutionary, and 'quaffing' played just one small part in their rationale for visiting one of Europe's most popular travel destinations.

Chapter Six: 'The Dawnyning Ambassadresse': women within ambassadorial households

1. Introduction

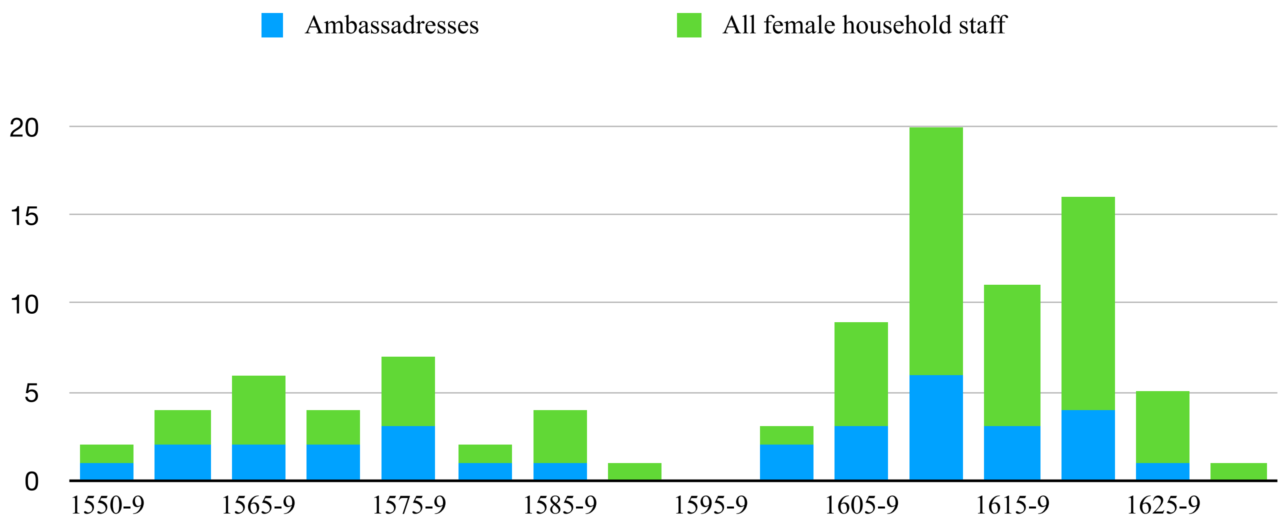

Fig. 6.1. Journeys to Europe by women attached to diplomatic households.

In common with women travelling to Spa, the numbers of women travelling associated with diplomacy, either directly as ambassadors' wives or as female attendants within ambassadorial households is statistically small. Around 4% of the women recorded in the database fall within this category.[785] As with Spa, their numbers fluctuate as a result of wider contextual events. There are steep declines, for instance, with the onset of Anglo-Spanish War (1584-1605) as well as in the aftermath of the outbreak of the the Thirty Years' War (1618-48). What is also noticeable is that in spite of occasional setbacks, the presence of women, be they ambassadresses or other female household staff continues to advance as more and more permanent embassies are established across Europe and the mechanisms of modern international diplomacy begin to crystallise (Fig. 6.1). Gemma Allen has calculated that in the sixteenth-century, a quarter of English ambassadors were accompanied by their wives but by the seventeenth century this figure had more than doubled.[786]

The expansion in the numbers of women travelling overseas connected with ambassadorial households went hand-in-hand with an expansion in their agency, too. Allen argues that the growing

[785] See Appendix, Table B.

[786] Allen, 'Rise of the Ambassadress', p.619.

presence of women within permanent residences led to increased opportunities for female agency, especially where they were able to sidestep formal protocols and conventions, in areas such as gift-giving.[787] As Table B shows, we know of the names of at least 45 between 1558 and 1630 who travelled overseas within ambassadorial households. Though statistically small in number, the richness of the archival evidence that survives, like that of women who travelled to Spa, is unrivalled and largely overlooked.

This chapter aims to build on earlier research in several ways. Firstly, to examine the etymological origins and evolution of the term 'ambassadress' in personal correspondence and popular literature. From this it is hoped to reveal how the role of the ambassador's wife was becoming more identifiable. The term was not merely a flattering reference to the spouse of a senior diplomat, but one which was widely recognised by contemporaries as having status and agency. Secondly, drawing on the evidence brought to light by the new database of women travellers, it will attempt to categorise more precisely the different roles performed by ambassadors' wives in the late Tudor and early Stuart eras. It hopes to show how the performance of some of those roles, such as mediation and even patronage, occur with ever greater frequency and how the ambassadress establishes herself as a vital co-partner in the execution of diplomatic duties. Finally, it aims to draw back the curtain on the activities of women on the peripheries of ambassadorial households, the personal attendants and female household staff. Their archival footprint is clearly fainter than that of the ambassadress, but by trawling the database for references to them, however incidental, and by imaginatively rereading the documentary evidence that does survive, is it possible to construct a clearer picture both of their roles and the relationships between women within ambassadorial settings? In summary, like the preceding discussion on Spa, this chapter aims to spotlight one particular dimension of women's travel, namely women associated with ambassadorial households. By drawing together disparate and seemingly unconnected evidence from the database and revisiting overlooked or undervalued surviving archival evidence, it aims to demonstrate how the roles, experiences and encounters of these women develop not just in frequency but in variety and complexity over the timeframe of this thesis.

2. Evolution of the ambassadress

[787] Ibid, pp. 623ff., 625 ff., and 630 ff.

Any discussion of the role of women in international diplomacy during this period comes with caveats. The very word ambassador was still in a state of flux, and sometimes was used interchangeably with envoy or agent. In addition, many of the activities traditionally associated with diplomats may also have been undertaken by high profile figures within the military and mercantile classes.[788] The 'political' activities of wives of military governors like Barbara Gamage, wife of Sir Robert Sidney, governor of Vlissingen or Anne Fernely, wife of the international financier, Sir Thomas Gresham, in many ways mirrored that of their ambassadorial counterparts. For the purposes of this chapter, we will restrict our discussion to the ambassadors and their wives associated with permanent residencies, principally those of Paris, Brussels, The Hague, Venice, Madrid and Istanbul.

The growth in overseas travel by women in diplomatic households mirrors the first recorded uses of the term 'ambassadress' or variations of it, such as 'embassadress' and 'ambasciatrice'. Initially, the word is used loosely to describe a woman who acted as some form of intermediary: a conveyor of news or information, often of a positive kind. The very earliest printed reference in English appears to be in Richard Carew's translation of Torquato Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered* (1594), describing the arrival of the day: 'Dawnyning, th' Embssadresse was risen from bed, Tydings to beare'.[789] The phrase is used again in his fantasy poem *A herrings tayle* (1598) to describe Dame Aurora the 'faithfull Ambassadresse of the new borne day'.[790] In George Chapman's 'Englishing' of Homer's *Iliad* (1598) the word takes on the meaning of an arbiter in disputes when he refers to the rainbow goddess Iris, who 'came down, ambassadress from heaven' following a storm.[791] Similarly in the anonymous translation of Pedro Mexia's, *The treasurie of auncient and moderne times* (1613), Queen Thalestria sends an 'Ambassadresse' to act as an intermediary between herself and Alexander the Great.[792] The common denominator in all these early iterations of the ambassadress is that she is a conciliator, able to use gendered sociability skills to dispel discord and effect peaceful resolution.

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[788] Das, N., et al, *Keywords*, p.30 ff.

[789] Carew, Richard (trans.), *The recouerie of Hierusalem An heroicall poeme written in Italian by Seig. Torquato Tasso, and translated into English by R. C. Esquire…* (London, 1594), p.98.

[790] Carew, Richard, *A herrings tayle contayning a poeticall fiction of diuers matters worthie the reading…* (1598), sig.A2v.

[791] Cited in Hooper, Richard, *The Iliads of Homer … done according to the Greek by George Chapman* (London, 188), p.66.

[792] Anon. (trans.), *The treasurie of auncient and moderne times* (London, 1613), sig.F2v.

The word first emerges in official correspondence early in the seventeenth century. Initially, it is used with more than a hint of flattery and affectation. In 1615, Sir Edmund Herbert addressed a letter to Anna Gerard, wife of the then English ambassador to Venice, Sir Dudley Carleton, 'For my Lady Embassadress'.[793]. The following month, the embassy's Italian secretary, Gregorio Monti went on to describe her as 'Ambasciatricia della G. Bretagna'.[794] Given that the couple had by now vacated the Venetian embassy and were en route for their new post at The Hague, Monti's choice of words may well have been intended for a wider audience than Lady Carleton herself, underscoring the value placed on the strong political ties between England and the Republic. By the 1620s the term is a firmly established convention among international diplomats. When in 1628, Isaac Wake, the Carleton's successor at Venice, requests a passport from the Duke of Bavaria for 'the ambassadress, his wife and her household' the phrase is used as if it were commonly recognised.[795]

Treatises and conduct books first endorse the presence of women within the ambassadorial household around the turn of the century. In his popular guide *The Ambassador* (1603), the French envoy, Jean Hotman encouraged prospective diplomats to 'bring his wife with him' to act as both a practical and ethical overseer.[796] In an important conceptual gear change, he also asserted the status of the ambassador's wife should be equal to that of the ambassador himself. The 'privileges and immunities of an Ambassador' he states, should also be shown to 'those of his family, & all that appertaineth unto him'.[797] Hotman's text enjoyed wide circulation. The first English edition of the book appeared in the same year as the original French publication and was dedicated to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, a man firmly within the sociability networks of many of the women in the database. Hotman's wife, René de St Martin was also a regular correspondent with Magdalen Wood (d.1614), wife of the English ambassador to Paris, Sir Thomas Edmondes.

Not all responses to the emergence of the ambassadress in English political life were so positive. In common with a broader perception outlined in Chapter 4, that foreign travel resulted in unseemly affectations, ambassadresses were sometimes suspected of 'going native'. Gertrude Sadler (c.1592-1639), wife of the English ambassador to Madrid, Sir William Aston was given the

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[793] TNA, SP 92/2 f.279.

[794] TNA, SP 99/19 ff.113 & 115.

[795] *CSPV*, XXI (1628-29), p.455.

[796] Hotman, *Ambassador*, sig.H2v.

[797] Ibid, sig. H2v.

Italian-sounding soubriquet 'Gartricia' in a satirical swipe at her suspected Catholic leanings.[798] Similarly, Thomazine Godolphin (d.c.1635), wife of the English ambassador to Paris, George Carew was described condescendingly by John Chamberlain as 'the French Lady Carie'.[799] Accusations that ambassadresses put on airs or adopted foreign mannerisms as a consequence of their time spent abroad may not have been entirely unfounded. In spite of her English roots, Anna Bray (c.1593-1642), wife of Isaac Wake, English ambassador to Venice, modified her Christian name as a nod to her Italian connections, as did her predecessor, 'Anna' Gerard.

Changes to court ambassadorial protocols during the early Stuart period were extensively recorded by the Master of Ceremonies at the Stuart court, John Finet. His accounts often satirise spats between nobles and socially mobile diplomats as they jostled for status and recognition at important state occasions. Ambassadors' wives feature with ever greater frequency among these disputes. During the marriage banquet for James I's daughter Elizabeth in 1613, Finet describes how the recently ennobled, Anne St John, Viscountess of Effingham (d.1638), when asked to move down the banqueting table turned to the French ambassadress for assistance; 'possesst already of her proper place (as she called it) would not move lower, so held the hand of the Ambassatrice'.[800] Anne's actions suggest she recognised in the ambassadress a guaranteed place at the high table and so literally anchored her fortunes to this woman. It was only when the French ambassador threatened to leave, that she agreed to be seated at a less prominent table. Although Finet sets out to ridicule the power-play between members of the political establishment, his interest in the issue of precedence involving ambassadresses was clearly a product of contemporary concerns about their changing social status.

Conflict over ambassadorial protocols were not confined to the English court and can be witnessed among the behaviour of ambassadresses abroad, as they asserted their status ever more stridently. An episode in 1629, involving the aforementioned Lady Wake neatly characterises this tension. She squabbled very publicly with the Venetian ambassador to the Netherlands, Giovanni Soranzo over the right to use a ship chartered to sail to the United Provinces. Even though Soranzo claimed the ship had been assigned to him by the States General and offered to share the passage with her, Lady Wake stubbornly refused, claiming she had the backing of the 'Admiralty of

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[798] Samson, Alexander 'The Literary Glocal: Sir Walter Aston between Staffordshire and Madrid', in *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 4 (Winter 2019), p. 599.

[799] *Chamberlain*, II, pp.320 and 599.

[800] Wife of William Howard and daughter-in-law of Charles Howard, 1st Earl of Nottingham who had led the English fleet to victory against the Spanish Armada.

Fig. 6.2. Miereveld, Michiel, portrait of Anna Gerard, Lady Carleton (c.1625), Montacute House, National Trust.

Rotterdam' to requisition the ship for own exclusive purposes.[801] Sensing a diplomatic debacle, Soranzo wisely backed down, acknowledging her higher status as wife of the English ambassador to

[801] *CSPV*, XXII (1629-32), p.110.

Venice.[802] Ambassadresses did not always get their way. In 1621, Lady Carleton tried to use her position as an ambassador's wife to provide a place of honour for the Countess of Bedford at entertainments organised for Elizabeth Stuart at The Hague. Much to her chagrin she was overruled by members of Elizabeth's very conservative household, who still asserted that Dutch and Palatine ruling classes took precedence over ambassadresses or their guests.[803] What all these episodes reveal is that by the first quarter of the seventeenth century the status of the ambassadress and protocols associated with her were being tested and even challenged as never before.

Evidence of the social mobility of ambassadresses comes from material as well as documentary evidence. Ambassadresses were increasingly confident in promoting themselves through patronage and material consumption. It is no small coincidence that the earliest authenticated portrait of an English ambassadress commissioned whilst serving abroad is that of Lady Carleton (Fig. 6.2). Painted around 1625 by Michiel van Miereveld, an artist closely associated with the Palatine court and in high demand amongst northern Europe's fashionable elite. In contrast to the sombre companion portrait of her husband, Lady Carleton is bedecked in expensive cobweb lace and ostrich plumes, and wears a lavishly embroidered bodice, sporting slashed-silk sleeves. The brooch she wears, a coronet above a heart, was a personal gift from Elizabeth Stuart, and its presence serves to remind viewers of her proximity to the Queen.[804] Whether or not she directly commissioned the portrait, the subject matter speaks of a woman who is well-connected, fashionable and self-assured. An even earlier portrait of an ambassador's wife has recently been identified by Philip Mould as that of Gertrude Sadler, wife Sir Walter Aston, English ambassador to Madrid. Mould dates the painting based on style and clothing to the period 1615-20, which would perfectly coincide with the date her husband received his commission and so was probably painted to commemorate their departure for Madrid.[805].

Changes in the consumer habits of ambassadresses again reflect their evolving status and self-perception. Surviving expense accounts for overseas residencies suggest local merchants were regularly pressed into service to acquire items of clothing for the socially aspirational ambassadress. The leading Antwerp merchant Lionel Wake, was frequently tasked with such requests. In 1606, he described to Trumbull how he had scoured the city's best markets, 'for such stuff as might please

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[802] Ibid, p.110.

[803] Oman, *Elizabeth of Bohemia*, p.261.

[804] Akkerman, *Elizabeth Stuart*, p.12.

[805] See http://www.historicalportraits.com/Gallery.asp?Page=Item&ItemID=1348&Desc=Lady-Aston-of-Forfar-%7C--English-School-Early-Seventeenth-Century (last accessed Aug 2021).

my Lady'. No stone was left unturned, and even international contacts were marshalled into service: 'I have asked an Italian to cause search to be made in Milan, and that it might here be delivered 3 weeks before Easter'.[806] Lady Edmondes was equally keen that other female members of her household dressed for the part, requesting expensive 'stripe cobweb lace' with 'silver ends' (aglets) and 'yellow leather to make shoes' for her daughter in addition to herself.[807]

The consumerism displayed by ambassadresses reflects a growing awareness of the importance of material goods, not just in ensuring personal comfort whilst living overseas but also as an indicator of social status. Personal accounts relating to women are rare for the early modern period, not least for wives of ambassadors, but one such document does survive among the *State Papers* for Savoy.[808] Lady Carleton and her husband were guests of the Duke of Savoy at Turin in early summer 1615, following the successful conclusion of the Treaty of Asti, in which Sir Dudley played a major part. The Carletons were lavishly entertained throughout their stay, during which time their secretary, Andrews kept a meticulous record of Anna's personal expenses. They cover five pages and amount to a total expenditure of £41 7s 6d from late June to mid-July, furnishing us with a rare but fascinating glimpse into the spending habits and preoccupations of a Jacobean ambassador's wife.[809]

The most frequent entries relate to day-to-day necessities such as clothing and food. Lady Carleton spends 3 shillings on a pair of gloves, an item popularly used for gifting, along with 3 shillings for what Andrews' testily describes as 'yet an other paire'. There are entries for tailors too, to purchase fabrics or 'upcycle' items such as a silk-lined stomacher. There is a suggestion that some of the clothes were being prepared for ceremonial events associated with signing the treaty. She pays £1 9s for 'the making of some bands for my lord' along with 'coreandels ribband' and sarcanet, an expensive, delicate silk used for lining dresses. She also purchases starches presumably used for ruffs, similar to the one worn in her Miereveld portrait.

The accounts hint at the sophisticated tastes of the ambassador's wife, too. Costly delicacies feature prominently among them 'sparigos' [asparagus], goats' milk and strawberries, along with the not inconsiderable of sum £3 8s 4d 'given to John Cooke for the buying of … suger'. Jewellery

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[806] *HMC Downshire*, II, p. 18.

[807] Ibid, pp.99 and105.

[808] TNA, SP 92/3 ff.239-41, *A note of taken out of Andrews Booke of money laid out for my lady at Turin*, c. July 1615.

[809] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.260; *CSPV*, XIII (1613-15), item 919; according to TNA currency converter the equivalent of around £5,500.

and precious metals are also listed, including £14 spent on 'gould and silver', £4 8s on 'twisted silver' and £3 8s 4d 'for 6 glasses to put som sweete meats in for my lady'. Many of the purchases seem quite exotic to modern readers. She pays 3d for gum of Dragon, an aromatic resin used for a variety of purposes including food preparation, cough remedies and the stiffening and scenting of clothes.[810] In addition, she spends 1s 6d on 'vile and sweet amonds', a common digestive aid. Items relating to personal comforts are included, too. She spends nearly 2s on 'sope' during her stay as well as 'herbes for the washing of my ladys feete' - a welcome relief for a woman so frequently on the road. For more serious complaints, she sent out for local medicines and doctors, including 9s on her husband when he was 'sicke of the stone' - a condition Sir Dudley mentions in his letters to William Trumbull and for which he would travel to Spa with Anna the following year for treatment.[811]

The accounts also provide clues to Lady Carleton's social activities. She regularly gifted to those she met along with family and friends at home, sending 9s to a 'Mrs Webb', 5s to 'the Dwarfs daughter' and 'common doment' or clothes to 'two Nunnes'.[812] She also spent 8s 'for packing up som goods for my lady which was sent to England'.[813] As well as consumables and personal effects, there are indications of how Anna whiled away her free time. Gambling was a popular pastime among women of her class, and she spent £5 spent on 'play' or cards in the course of her stay, including £1 she lost against her own steward, Nathaniel Brent. All together, Anna Gerard's accounts provide an incredibly rare, intimate and revealing picture of the daily concerns of an early modern ambassador's wife. The motives for keeping this ledger are unclear but point to a growing consciousness of the necessary expense of the ambassadress's household in order to uphold the honour and status of the embassy as a whole. Anna's fashionable attire and luxurious creature comforts had become as much a requisite of diplomatic life as the day-to-day political activities of the ambassador himself.

In summary, we see from conduct books and commentaries that the figure of the ambassadress was becoming ever more firmly established. Texts such as Hotman's widely read *Ambassador* and satirical accounts of tensions over protocols and precedence in works like Finet's *Philoxenis* suggest that greater acknowledgement was being made of the political and social

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[810] See Kowalchuk, Kristine, *Preserving on Paper: Seventeenth Century English Women's Receipt Books* (Toronto, 2017).

[811] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.536.

[812] TNA, SP 92/3 ff.239-241.

[813] Ibid.

significance of the ambassadress. The growing usage of term ambassadress and variations of it in diplomatic correspondence as well as in popular literature, further entrenched the notion of the ambassador's wife in the public consciousness. Her status was still in an evolutionary state, and references to tensions over diplomatic precedence or criticisms focused on perceived affectations of ambassadresses, suggest that people were still determining the ambassadress rightful place in the social hierarchy. Nevertheless, by the end of James' reign the presence of the ambassadress along with an extensive corps of female household staff had become normalised among diplomatic circles. What remains to be discussed are the precise roles such women were increasingly required to fulfil.

3. Roles of the ambassadress

3.1 Managing and financing the ambassadorial household

The formation and expansion of permanent overseas residencies particularly in the early seventeenth century when the status of the ambassadress was in such a critical state of flux, meant that the ambassadorial home, whose responsibility it was to manage and upkeep took on particular political significance. We should not underestimate or trivialise the importance of this role simply because it relates to a domestic space. Jean Hotman, author of *The Ambassador*, described the ambassadorial residence in almost sacred terms, 'a sanctuarie and place of retraite to his servants and followers, against all injuries and violence'.[814] Hotman emphasised the central role of the ambassadress in maintaining the inviolability of this space, 'whose eye will stop infinite abuses amongst his people, and disorders in his house'.[815] In her essay 'Marginal diplomatic spaces during the Jacobean era' (2016), Roberta Anderson argues that ambassadorial homes performed a multitude of functions, which were as much cultural and social, as political, arguing that 'they assisted in the projection of diplomatic reputation, eased pressure, facilitated changes of direction and supported

[814] Hotman, Jean, *The Ambassador* (London, 1603), sig.K3.

[815] Ibid, sig.D6.

foreign policy initiatives'.[816] The point is neatly reiterated by Helen Jacobsen who notes, 'the embassy thus operated as a locus of cosmopolitan convergence and international politics, and the ambassador's wife was at the centre of it all'.[817] The careful curation of the ambassador's permanent overseas residence was an essential cog in the evolving diplomatic machinery of the period and one which the ambassadress was increasingly responsible for maintaining.

Managing households, far from home was a hugely demanding undertaking, especially given the growing scale of their operations. The size of the households ambassadresses took out with them were indicators of both their status and the extensive practical demands put upon them. Lady Carleton and her husband travelled to Venice in 1610 with a household of some 19 or 20 persons conveyed by a procession of eight carriages.[818] Likewise, in 1611 Beatrice Walcot, Lady Digby (1575-1658) travelled to the Madrid embassy 'with a large train of servants', returning eleven years later in similarly grand style 'with a traine of 15 and 16 women'.[819] The size of households may also have been taken by onlookers as an indicator of the commitment of the English to foster good relations with their host nation. The earlier comments of Piero Priuli, Venetian Ambassador in Spain, may be as much a product of his concern at the prospect of stronger Anglo-Spanish relations arising from a new marriage alliance between Prince Henry and the Spanish infanta, as his preoccupation with the scale of the English diplomatic retinue.[820] When Lady Edmondes arrived at the Paris embassy in 1610 with her household servants and only one wagon for her personal effects, it was considered as going, 'a la legère', in other words lacking in the necessary grandeur required for such an office.[821] William Devick, a secretary within the Edmondes' household, concerned by the poor impression her diminutive retinue might make, commented: 'She comes so slenderly accompanied that I think we shall be fain to send some of our small train back to attend her'.[822]

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[816] Anderson, Roberta 'Marginal diplomatic spaces during the Jacobean era' in Rivère de Carles, Natalie (ed.), *Early Modern Diplomacy, Theatre and Soft Power: The Making of Peace* (London, 2016), pp.166 and 178.

[817] Jacobsen, Helena, *Luxury and Power, The Material World of the Stuart Diplomat* (Oxford, 2011) p.57.

[818] *CSPV*, XII (1610-13), pp.xxix and 61.

[819] Ibid, p.160, 6 Jun 1611; *Chamberlain*, II, p.429.

[820] See Strong, Roy, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London, 2000), p.58 ff.

[821] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.292.

[822] Ibid, p.312.

As overseer of the ambassadorial household, the ambassadress was responsible for receiving callers and guests from very different social backgrounds. In one instance, she might be paying the accounts of local tradesmen, in another, she might be required to prepare the embassy for the reception of a diplomat, local dignitary or even an impromptu royal guest. In December 1583, Don Antonio, the exiled pretender to the Portuguese throne appeared at the English embassy in Paris. Though the ambassador, Sir Edward Stafford calmly recorded 'Don Antonio very courteously came to see my wife and me' one can only imagine the flurry of preparations his visit evoked.[823] The arrival of Don Antonio, an ally of Catherine de'Medici, and someone who Elizabeth I was keen to solicit as leverage against Spain, required both ambassador and ambassadress to work in close partnership to welcome their guest and ensure he left with a favourable impression.

The unexpected arrival of Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham at the English embassy in Madrid in March 1623 was an even greater headache for the English ambassador, Lord Digby and his wife Beatrice Walcot who had returned to the Spanish capital once again to assist renewed marriage negotiations. The Prince had arrived incognito with a small band of followers, hoping to woo the Spanish Infanta, and the English embassy became his primary residence during the proceedings. A letter which survives from Beatrice to her sister-in-law, Lettice FitzGerald (c.1580-1658) in the Sherbourne family archives, provides a fascinating insight into the feverish preparations necessitated by the Prince's impromptu arrival. Lettice, the widow of Lord Digby's eldest brother, Robert, had recently received the title Baroness Offaly, and was clearly a woman on the rise, whom Beatrice wanted to impress with the nature of the task that had befallen her. Throughout Beatrice is keen to stress that Charles' presence was a great honour, but the energy of her description betrays how stressful the experience was for her as manager of the household:

> 'When the knowledge of their being in the house cam to our eares we could not but feare and admire the strangeness of the enterpris … so slenderly attended and our being altogether ignorant of any intention that the Prince had of coming hither made the sight more wonderfull to us'.[824]

Intriguingly, Lady Digby refers at one point to 'his higness's coming to this courte'. Whether she is referring to the embassy, as the overseas equivalent of the English court or Charles' intention to visit the Spanish court is at first unclear. However, the word 'court' was also used in James Howell's

[823] *CPSF*, Vol 18 (1583-4), p.266.

[824] Sherbourne Castle Archives, Beatrice Walcot, letter to Lettice Ofaly, widow of Robert Digby, 13 March 1623.

account of the Prince's stay with the Digby household.[825] Conceptualising the embassy as a court underscores the importance of its setting, not just the home of the ambassador and his wife but a place afforded special dignity and status and where events of political consequence might take place. As the primary curator of this space, the ambassadress was indispensable.

Aside from their own household staff, ambassadresses might also be called upon to supervise the children of those within their sociability circles. The embassy occasionally functioned as a cross between a high-class orphanage and a finishing school for European elites, and the ambassador's wife was often at the centre of this enterprise. Following the demise of her brother-in-law, Reverend John Dove and his wife, their daughter Bess was brought to Holland in 1618 to be raised within the embassy under the care of Lady Carleton herself.[826] Anna Bray, Lady Wake took great pains to ensure that a young family friend, Peter Moreton received the best possible education whilst abroad, and having accompanied her to the embassy at Venice from England, she supported his studies at Padua with her own money.[827] Anna later wrote to Moreton regretting that she could not have supported him more: 'If I had any beter penes [pennies] to give you I would continue to kepe you at scole [school] longer to rede my hande'.[828] Eleanor Cave, wife of the English ambassador to Istanbul, Sir Thomas Roe, adopted Jane Rupa, the daughter of a lady-in-waiting to Elizabeth Stuart at The Hague. Elizabeth particularly valued the care and protection Eleanor afforded her young attendant. 'I pray,' she wrote in one of many letters acknowledging her debt of gratitude to Eleanor, 'commend me to your wife and thank her for her charitie to Rupa'.[829] Ambassadresses were sometimes petitioned by anxious parents, worried about the welfare of their children whilst travelling abroad. Although Lady Constance Lucy wrote to William Trumbull in 1615 concerning her son's lack of finances, she turned to his wife as the person most likely to provide practical support, requesting 'Mrs Trumbull would find some way of providing sufficient money to defray [her sons] travelling expenses from Sedan to Brussels'.[830] She later wrote to Debora Downe herself, as one mother to another imploring her assistance having 'recently lost a most promising boy in France' and fearful of the consequence of her latest son being 'destitute of

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[825] Howell, *Epistolae-HoElianae*, p.219: 'there is a complete court now at my Lord of Bristol's house'.

[826] Lee, *Jacobean Letters*, p.258.

[827] BL, Add MS 33935 f.75.

[828] Ibid, f.179.

[829] Akkerman, *Correspondence of Elizabeth of Bohemia*, I, p.746; see also p.804, n.11 and 12.

[830] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.369.

money' or facing 'serious difficulties like health'.[831] The care and protection of younger travellers whilst abroad was clearly a recognised dimension to the work of the ambassadress. Whilst the role of the cicerone or chaperone would evolve into a primarily male one, in the early seventeenth century it seems women, and more particularly the ambassadress played a significant and largely unrecognised part in the upbringing and education of younger protégées.

The cost of maintaining permanent overseas residences placed an enormous financial burden on ambassadors and their families. Another way in which we see ambassadors' wives contributing to the work of their husbands was by defraying some of the running costs of the embassy through the use of personal funds and assets. Sonia Anderson has suggested that Lady Trumbull's personal assets, including family estates in Kent were used to fund her husband, William Trumbull's career.[832] Anne Carew's personal fortune, inherited from her father, a wealthy international merchant, would not have escaped the notice of her new husband Sir Thomas Bodley, in helping to pave the way for his subsequent diplomatic career.[833] Their stepdaughter Elizabeth Ball (1585-1659) would herself go on to marry the English ambassador to The Hague, Sir Ralph Winwood and likewise, she may have used her inheritance from the premature death of her stepfather, to defray the costs of her own husband's diplomatic career.[834] As well as being clerk of the signet, Lady Edmonde's father, Sir John Wood had successfully invested in Dutch commercial enterprises, enabling him to bequeath his daughter £3,000 along with her dowry in land and an annual income estimated to be between £250 and £350 pa.[835] Sir John's demise in 1610, just as she and her husband Sir Thomas Edmondes were setting off for Paris, would have provided a timely boost to their household finances.

For long periods of time, responsibility for managing the ambassadorial household might rest firmly on the ambassadress' shoulders. If an ambassador was recalled to London, the task of maintaining the residence frequently fell to his wife. This was the situation Beatrice Walcot confronted twice, in 1616 and 1625, when her husband, Lord Digby was unexpectedly summoned

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[831] Ibid, p.369.

[832] Clennell, W., 'Sir Thomas Bodley in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-2759 (last accessed Mar 2024); Anderson, 'The Elder William Trumbull', pp.116-117.

[833] Bell, G.M., *A handlist of British diplomatic representatives*, 1509-1688 (London, 1990), p.85.

[834] Hasler, P.W., 'Nicholas Ball' in *History of Parliament Online*, http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/ball-nicholas-1586 (last accessed Mar 2024).

[835] *HMC Downshire*, II, pp.378.

back to England.[836] Whether or not ambassadresses remained and the scale of the households left behind was again a subject of speculation by observers. Lunardo Moro, the Venetian ambassador to Madrid clearly attributes meaning to Digby's decision to leave without his wife and children and not to return for 'four or five months'.[837] Abandoning the ambassadress and his family in this way is seen as signifier of the urgency of Lord Digby's business in London, as well as a possible indicator of the direction of Anglo-Spanish relations after the succession of the new king Charles.

During such periods of absence, the ambassadress might also be called upon to protect the embassy and its remaining staff from intruders or even hostile attacks. In 1572, as the events of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre unfurled around them, Ursula St Barbe (d.1602), the pregnant wife of Sir Francis Walsingham, barricaded herself in the English embassy along with her five-year-old daughter, Frances to avoid being caught up in the bloodshed. In spite of the ongoing dangers she and her family faced, it was not until the following year that Walsingham was able to secure their safe return to England.[838] In 1625, the English ambassador's house in Padua, was attacked by armed men whilst the ambassador was away on diplomatic business. Although little more damage was done than a few broken windows, the episode clearly horrified Lady Wake, who was residing in the building at the time. Anna contacted the podestà of Padua to express her concerns over her personal safety and that of her household. As a consequence, the Paduan authorities stepped up security and a night watch was provided, 'particularly as the ambassadress will stay there while her husband is away with the Swiss'.[839]

In short, ensuring the upkeep and administration of the ambassadorial residence was a crucial, sometimes highly political task, which fell increasingly to ambassadors' wives. Correspondence suggests that ambassadors genuinely recognised and valued the work wives performed on their behalf. When Debora Downe arrived in Brussels in the autumn of 1613, following one of her frequent visits to England, an associate noted how her husband, William Trumbull 'rejoices to have the advantage of Mrs Trumbull's return'.[840] In 1617, special envoy Sir John Harington, praised his wife Anne Kelway's virtues, 'I do much rejoice that I am strengthened not only by her wisdom in what I have to do here, but also by her authority'.[841] The authority the

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[836] *CSPV*, XIV (1615-17), p.160; *CSPV*, XVIII, p.590.

[837] *CSPV*, XVIII, p.590.

[838] Stewart, Alan, *Philip Sidney, A Double Life* (London, 2000), p.92.

[839] http://www.british-history.ac.uk/cal-state-papers/venice/vol19/pp111-131(accessed Aug. 2023).

[840] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.230.

[841] *HMC Buccleuch*, I, p.186.

ambassadress enjoyed grew in strength as the seventeenth century progressed. She was viewed as the manager of a space which was not just of practical importance but one of political magnitude as well. Her presence was vitally important, especially during the absence of the ambassador, in maintaining, and even bankrolling, the nation's diplomatic presence overseas.

3.2 Mediating and deputising

As the person of the ambassadress achieved wider currency, so too did the notion that wives of diplomats had a distinct and important role to play as alternative access routes to the ambassador. As Rosemary O'Day argues that elite women often played a crucial role 'as gatekeepers to their husband's patronage' but this was arguably intensified in the setting of the embassy.[842] In her study of Anne Fanshawe (1625-80), wife of the mid-century diplomat Richard Fanshawe, Laura Oliván Santaliestra suggests that although their involvement was not formally recognised, ambassadresses played a vital role in 'the political dynamic of the time'.[843] Their position within the ambassadorial hierarchy allowed them to act as 'collaborators and mediators in diplomatic matters of great import' beginning a process which would 'normalise them as diplomatic figures, as noble partners' in their own right.[844] I would contend that this role was being carved out much earlier, and can be traced back to the ambassadresses of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries when they had already established themselves as intermediaries and alternative, informal routes to the ambassador himself.

Evidence of the ambassadress fulfilling the role of intermediary comes from a number of examples across the database. Many concern individuals coming before the ambassador for a solution to pressing financial or legal difficulties. To maximise their chances of success, petitioners would sometimes approach the ambassador and his wife simultaneously. Having been saddled with debts from her former husband, a merchant named Sir Henry Parvis, Cecilia Gritti along with her new husband, Lorenzo Contarini, approached the English embassy in Venice for help. Whilst

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[842] O'Day, Rosemary 'Mistress of the household: what wives did all day' in *Women's Agency in Early Modern Britain*, (Harlow, 2007), p.231.

[843] Oliván Santaliestra, Laura 'Lady Anne Fanshawe' in Sluga, Glenda & James, Carolyn *Women, Diplomacy and International Politics Since 1500* (Oxford, 2016), p.69.

[844] Ibid, p.69.

Contarini appealed to Isaac Wake for assistance, Cecilia went directly to his wife, Anna Bray. Anna was clearly known to Cecilia and her family, and was described in an account of the proceedings as having a relationship that was 'intimate and friendly'.[845] Sadly the outcome of her agency is unknown, but the fact that she was initially approached by Cecilia Gritti indicates she was considered to have significant leverage in resolving this politically sensitive issue.

In addition to acting as intermediary, the ambassadress was increasingly seen working in concert with her husband. An encounter between Anne Sutton (d.1611/12) wife of the English ambassador, Sir Henry Brooke, Lord Cobham and members of the French royal family in 1580 highlights this trait and underscores the gendered skills that ambassadors' wives could bring to diplomacy. In the autumn of 1579, Lord Cobham took up his post as English ambassador to Paris. He was joined by Lady Cobham at some point before February 1580, when the two were invited to attend receptions hosted by the Queen Mother, Catherine de'Medici around the time of the Shrove Tuesday festivities. Two reports authored by the Cobhams survive in the *State Papers* describing the entertainments.[846] They possibly refer to separate events given their contents and the fact Lady Cobham's report is undated, but what is particularly significant is the way the ambassador and ambassadress frame their accounts in very different ways. Lord Cobham had a reputation being overly obsessed with unnecessary detail in his diplomatic correspondence and was even warned by Walsingham to précis them due to the exorbitant postage costs.[847] He begins in typical fashion with an extensive description of the fabric and architecture of the buildings in which the meetings took place, and proceeds with inordinate details about the choreography of the entertainments and the fabrics worn by the performers. He even includes an account of a discussion with the King about the finer points of security arrangements at court.[848] By contrast, Lady Cobham's account, whilst shorter, focuses far more on the interactions between the principal players. In addition, she takes every opportunity to foreground the role she is performing as the Queen's official female representative and the conveyor of an important portrait of Elizabeth.

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[845] *CSPV*, XVIII (1623-25), p.605.

[846] *CSPF*, XIV (1579-80), pp.161-164 and 174-176.

[847] G. M. Bell, 'Men and their rewards in Elizabethan diplomatic service, 1558–85', (Los Angeles, 1974), p.211 cited in Lock, Julian, 'Brooke, Sir Henry' in *ONDB,* https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-5743?rskey=gPrVrX&result=3 (last accessed Apr 2024).

[848] *CSPF*, XIV (1579-80), p.162.

She starts by name-dropping the 'great scoort of ladies' and members of the royal family who rushed to greet her 'at the stair head' of the Queen Mother's private residence.[849] Alert to the importance of precedence mentioned above, Lady Cobham notes how she was seated at the King's table for the banquet, alongside the Princess of Lorraine, and how both 'saluted me with a kiss'.[850] She even feels confident enough to throw in occasional jokes and punning references to the interest shown in her at the dinner, and likens it to being 'carved unto on all sides'.[851]

Throughout her account, Lady Cobham is at pains to stress her unswerving adherence to Elizabeth's instructions. She refuses to allow even the French King, Henri III to preview the Queen's portrait, having vowed 'the first should see it should be his mother'.[852] When the King comments 'the ambassador's wife was much changed' we are encouraged to believe he is talking not just about ambassadresses in general but how well Anne discharged her role .[853] Other incidents during the reception speak to the same narrative of Anne's commitment to duty. With the intended recipient of Elizabeth's portrait, Catherine de'Medici, indisposed, Anne agrees to present it to the Queen instead. Given the political significance of the gift - a portrait of Elizabeth, who was presently considering marriage with the King's brother, the Duke of Alençon - the decision to entrust the task to the ambassador's wife and not the ambassador himself speaks volumes.

Unlike her husband, Lady Cobham, is far more interested in relaying incidental details of conversations, that would have satisfied Elizabeth's hunger to know more about how she was perceived at the French court. In one such exchange with the French Queen, Lady Cobham specifically notes how eager she was to know 'how the Queen did'.[854] Later, when the portrait is finally revealed, she notes how first the Queen and King examined it closely in their hands and that it was described as 'an excellent picture' and she 'a very fair lady' [855] The affection the French royal couple felt towards the Elizabeth is finally spelled out by the words of the Queen Louise, which again Lady Cobham chooses to record, that 'if wishing would have prevailed, they would have been together many times long ago'.[856]

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[849] Ibid, p.174.

[850] Ibid, p.174.

[851] Ibid, p.175.

[852] Ibid, p.174.

[853] Ibid, p.174.

[854] Ibid, p.175.

[855] Ibid, p.175.

[856] Ibid, p.175.

The survival of the two accounts is not a chance event. Elizabeth clearly recognised in Lady Cobham, a woman who was capable not just of conveying a precious, personal gift but also relaying in subtle detail the feelings of those present towards the English queen. A few weeks later, in recognition of her services, Elizabeth gifted the ambassadress with a precious jewel. Her husband with characteristic condescension writes to the Queen to express his gratitude on her behalf as 'my wife's dutiful thanks are no way sufficient'.[857] Whilst Lord Cobham's accounts of the French court appear aloof even bombastic, in Lady Cobham, and potentially other ambassadors' wives, the Queen had found someone who could provide her with a far more nuanced and personal perspective on international diplomacy.

The notion that the ambassadress might act as an intermediary or deputy for the ambassador continued to evolve into the next century. One of the most successful exponents of this form of agency, and arguably the highest ranking of the ambassadresses in terms of tenure and status was Magdalen Wood, who accompanied her husband Sir Thomas Edmondes during his time as English ambassador to Brussels (1605-9) and then Paris (1609-17). Like Anna Bray, Magdalen perfectly complemented her husband's work and was able to assert her status and exploit her gendered networks to advance his interests. Her upbringing in a household closely associated with the inner workings of government, as the daughter of Sir John Wood, Clerk of the King's Signet, would clearly have helped in this. Magdalen quickly established herself as a widely recognised and respected figure among Europe's courts and diplomatic circles, leading the historian Thomas Birch (1744) in a rare concession to female achievement to describe her as 'exemplary'.[858]

Following the successful conclusion of the Twelve Years' Truce in 1609, Sir Thomas and his wife were called to Court on 8 September. The meetings, which the two attended with James I and Anne of Denmark respectively, again reveal the very different approaches of the the ambassador and his wife, although on this occasion we only have male accounts of proceedings.[859]. Arguably, the tactics adopted by the ambassadress, Magdalen Wood, were far more productive. Jean Beaulieu, secretary to Sir Thomas, provides the most detailed account of the meeting, and notes the King's deep satisfaction with his master's work, and his subsequent ambition to 'furnish all the places which were void with Ambass^rs'.[860] It seems that Sir Thomas misread the King's enthusiasm and

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[857] Ibid, pp.292-293.

[858] Birch, Thomas, *Negotiations between the courts of England, France and Brussels* (London, 1744), p.xiv.

[859] *HMC Downshire*, II, pp.126-129 and p.149.

[860] Ibid, pp.126-127.

attempted to use the audience to petition the King for the payment of outstanding expenses, coyly described as 'ayuda de costa'.[861] His request was greeted with frosty silence and James cut short his stay at Hampton Court leaving the matter unresolved. In contrast, Magdalen's encounter with the Queen, was far more constructive. She was warmly received by Anne the following day, who 'had the honour to kiss her hand' and presented her with a portrait of the Archduke's wife, Isabella Clara Eugenia.[862] Thomas Edmondes also provides us with a description of events in a letter to Trumbull the following week.[863] He clearly feels frustrated by the lack of progress over his personal remuneration, despite having 'done nothing else but run up and down'.[864] As a postscript he refers to Lady Edmondes' meeting with the Queen. No mention of the portrait is given and he merely refers to letters from the Infanta which she delivered on her behalf. He appears to steal some of his wife's glory, too, by mentioning how 'nothing hath been omitted by her or me to publish the Infanta's honour' and stresses how 'the Queen used us both very graciously'.[865]

Despite the absence of Magdalen Wood's account of events, the descriptions of the two encounters speak volumes. Whilst her husband emerges empty handed, she is granted a private audience with the Queen, which led on to personal preferment. In recognition of her service, Anne bestowed on Magdalen the prestigious position of member of the Queen's privy chamber along with her younger sister, Anne Wood.[866]

Lady Edmondes continued to foster a close relationship with Queen Anne prior to returning overseas to join her husband at his new post as ambassador to Paris. Her arrival in late summer 1610 could not have come at a more critical time in Anglo-French relations. On 14 May, the French King, Henri IV had been assassinated and the country was on the brink of returning to religious war. In this tense political climate, Lady Edmondes worked in partnership with her husband, helping to confirm the English government's continued commitment to cooperation with the French and avoid a new Catholic league with Spain. Her principal task was to convey the Queen's personal message of condolence to Henri's widow, the Queen Regent Marie de'Medici. The importance of her mission was underscored by the fact that Anne of Denmark herself had equipped Lady Edmondes with mourning clothes to wear, along with her own 'tirewoman' to ensure they were fitted

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[861] Ibid, p.127.

[862] Ibid, p.127.

[863] Ibid, p.127-129.

[864] Ibid, p.127.

[865] Ibid, p.127.

[866] Ibid, p.302.

correctly.[867] The Edmondes' Paris secretary, William Devick stresses in his descriptions of Lady Edmondes' appearance, how stately she appeared and how finely attuned she was to French fashions and customs. To underline this fact he peppers his commentary with French figures of speech, characterising her outward appearance as all 'grand doeuil' [mourning] in readiness to appear before the French court 'pour fayre la reuerance a la Royne'.[868] Devick returns again to the honours the Queen had bestowed on the ambassadress and her sister prior to arriving in France as a mark of respect, noting not only had she discoursed and even danced before the Queen but was 'sworn of the Privy Chamber in ordinary which none else is but my Lady Hobby [sic] and herself'.[869] The comparison with Elizabeth Cooke, the highly cultivated wife of Sir Thomas Hoby, the former ambassador to France (1566) is significant, and would have been viewed by contemporaries as an impressive paradigm. Echoing the role performed by Anne Sutton under the previous monarch, Magdalen had been tasked to act as the Queen's deputy on the most important of state occasions. Her gendered skills had been singled out by the Queen and used to ensure a message of utmost importance was conveyed with appropriate precision, decorum and solemnity.

3.3 Petitioning and advocacy

Extensive sociability networks, coupled with the mobility they enjoyed, afforded ambassadors' wives unique opportunities to petition on their husbands' behalf. Petitioning focused on two principal areas: the settlement of financial claims and the advocacy of family interests. A well-established convention that diplomats were only remunerated by the Crown on the completion of their missions placed an enormous financial burden on their personal finances. Sir Thomas Edmondes wrote in 1593 that he survived 'as the Camellions doe by the ayre. If they doe not shortlie revoke me, I protest … I will lay the key under the doore and goe without leave'.[870] Using his wife to petition on his behalf, meant that an ambassador could sidestep politically awkward discussions concerning remuneration and carry out his diplomatic duties uninterrupted. The frequency with which wives returned to England shown by the database, increased the opportunities

[867] Ibid, p.343.

[868] Ibid, p.343.

[869] Ibid, p.327.

[870] Nicols, J.B., *The Edmondes Papers* (London, 1913), p.80.

for this dimension of their agency to occur. Anne Carew (1522- c.1590), wife of the English ambassador to Paris, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton spent much of the 4 years her husband was abroad petitioning the government for the payment of his expenses and trying to expedite his return home. Her skills as a plaintiff did not go unnoticed, with one contemporary commenting, 'Lady Throckmorton has shown herself so good a solicitor for her husband's revocation, that yesterday Sir Thomas Smith was ordered to prepare for France to succeed him'.[871] Anne was also very persuasive when it came to ensuring her husband's associates promptly settled their debts. In July 1562, she acquired '800 French crowns' in loan repayments from the Portuguese ambassador alone, and boasted she was 'in suit to get more money from him; if she can have any'.[872] Five weeks later, she wrote to her husband updating him on her efforts to recoup his losses, noting she had received a further '£200 of his debts'.[873]

Lady Throckmorton was not alone in discharging the duties of petitioner or advocate on behalf of absent partners. Debora Downe, made at least 6 trips to England whilst her husband, William Trumbull served as ambassador to Brussels, during which time she occupied herself with personal affairs, such as the management of the family's estates in addition to petitioning on her husband's behalf.[874] One especially well-documented episode concerning her husband's desire to be recalled to London and the settlement of his expenses, perfectly illustrates the efficacy of her approach. Debora arrived in England on 19 October 1617, and travelled directly to the King to plead her husband's case.[875] Unfortunately, her representation was unexpectedly derailed by the demise of James' Secretary of State, Sir Ralph Winwood on 28 October. Winwood, a former ambassador to The Hague, had been a valuable Trumbull ally at court, and his death opened the way for the Duke of Buckingham to gradually assume his former duties. On 1 November, John Castle, a clerk of the Privy Seal, reported back to William Trumbull on the regrettable turn of events: 'I have just met your wife, but Mr Secretary Winwood's sudden death has interrupted what she proposed to undertake on your behalf here'.[876] Castle tried hard to advance the family's cause, but as he

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[871] *CSPF*, IV, (1561-2), p.602.

[872] TNA, SP 70/39 f.21.

[873] *CSPF*, V (1562-3), p.309.

[874] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.107, May 1609; *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.193, Sep 1613; *HMC Downshire*, V, p.334, Sep 1615; *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.214, Jul 1617; *HMC Downshire*, VI, p. 318, Nov 1617; BL, Add MS 72424, Jun 1622.

[875] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.316.

[876] Ibid, p.318.

explained, Buckingham 'refused to present Mistress Trumbul's [sic] petition to the king for your revocation untill your busines now in hand shall com to an exigent'.[877] By November, Sir Thomas Edmondes, whose own fortunes were on the rise at court, had returned to England and joined Castle in helping Debora Downe with her suit.[878] Encouraged by Edmondes' support, she took her petition back to the King. John Moore, Edmondes' secretary, wrote to Trumbull that 'his Majestie' had 'perused the letters which Mistress Trumbull brought' although he desired more information on the advance of enquiries into the notorious *Corona Regia* case before proceeding with Trumbull's own requests.[879] On 21 November, Beaulieu confirmed he too was in London working Trumbull's wife on his behalf: 'I have met Mrs Trumbull and discussed her business at court. We have agreed that our immediate objective should be your recall from Brussels'.[880] Gradually their efforts began to bear fruit. Moore reveals that 'Mrs Trumbull is for the moment retaining the second packet of letters which she is to deliver in person' and refers to a mysterious contact at Court who she intends to approach: 'M is a *privado* there where Mistress Trumbull is to give that letter'.[881] He concludes with a note of optimism that they 'have been promised by the Exchequer that all your money will be paid next week'.[882] This is followed up by further good news from Sir Thomas Lake offering Trumbull 'a 100 li a yeare more than you have' if he chose to stay in Brussels.[883] Shortly before Christmas, Lake wrote once more to Trumbull, confirming that they had 'moved His Majesty to grant you leave to come over to England for a few days'.[884]

Taken together, Debora's activities in London in the autumn of 1617 show a woman able to respond to changes in fortune and direction of plans, to use gendered sociability networks and work in concert with diplomatic colleagues and senior figures at court to advance her husband's suit. She achieved an increase in his pay and if not a permanent recall to England, at least a temporary reprieve from the demanding and costly work of the Brussels embassy.

The database reveals numerous other instances of ambassadresses petitioning on their husband's behalf. Arguably one of the most industrious and skilful was Lady Carleton once more.

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[877] Ibid, p.321 - a seditious publication, whose authorship Trumbull had been ordered to investigate.

[878] Ibid, p.325.

[879] Ibid, p.326-7.

[880] Ibid, p.331.

[881] Ibid, p.332.

[882] Ibid, p.332.

[883] Ibid, p.333.

[884] Ibid, p.351.

Between her husband's departure for The Hague in 1615 and his return in 1625, she made at least 3 trips back to England, petitioning both for the financial remuneration and the promotion of her husband.[885] Her visit to London in 1620 is especially well-documented and concerned the woeful state of Carleton's finances after years of public service. Sir Dudley clearly placed enormous trust in his wife's ability to resolve the issue, shown by a letter to his friend, John Chamberlain, stating his wife was 'thincking to see England this next spring …for owr poore domestique affaires grow to that disorder that the sooner she seeth her frends is the better'.[886] Once again we witness the ambassadresses using her connections amongst the Jacobean elite to advance her interests. Her efforts did not go unnoted. Chamberlain replied to Sir Dudley how 'she is so much visited when I finde her at home that I have little conference with her'.[887] In addition to friends in England, the Carletons also drew on their international contacts. The Venetian ambassador to England, Girolamo Lando reports an undisclosed 'office' he performed that October which 'greatly pleased' Lady Carleton.[888] Although on this occasion, Anna failed to receive any additional financial assistance from the thrifty King, the episode reveals how, as with gifting, an ambassadress was able to sidestep normal protocols and petition vigorously on her husband's behalf with impunity. Letters Sir Dudley subsequently wrote to the Duke of Buckingham and Secretary Naunton imply that Anna acted without his full endorsement, shielding him from any personal suggestion of indecorous behaviour. To Buckingham he offered 'many humble thancks for your honourable favor in ye suite to wch my wife hath been moved by both our extreme necessities' and to Naunton an 'acknowledgement of yr Highness favourable intercession with his Mty on my behalf of wch my wife hath advertised me'.[889] Lady Carleton's frustration at being unable to secure the payment of Carleton's arrears was palpable. On her return to The Hague, Sir Dudley described her as being 'being in no small coler' and that she particularly blamed 'the Chancellor of the Exchequer [Sir Francis Greville] for standing in the way of his Maties bountie'.[890] However, the trip was not a total failure. James gave his permission to allow Carleton to return to England for a period of 2 to 3 weeks to put his financial affairs in order.

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[885] *Chamberlain*, II, p.153, Apr 1618; *Chamberlain*, II, p.303, May 1620; *CSPD*, 1619-23, p.569, Apr 1623.

[886] Lee, *Jacobean Letters*, p.275.

[887] *Chamberlain*, II, p.304.

[888] *CSPV*, XVI (1619-21), p.442-3.

[889] TNA, SP 84/96 f.73; TNA, SP 84/96 f.96.

[890] TNA, SP 84/97 f.163.

Even if Lady Carleton was not immediately successful in recouping her husband's losses, the experience clearly honed her negotiating skills and extended the parameters of her sociability network. In subsequent correspondence, she continued to cultivate contacts at Court, particularly via her female acquaintances. In the summer of 1623, she was back in London to secure the lucrative and highly influential post of Provost of Eton College for her husband, made available by the death of Sir Henry Savile.[891] As the stepdaughter of the previous incumbent, Anna felt she was especially well-positioned to advance her husband's claim and she networked feverishly with key figures in the decision-making process, among them the Lord Treasurer, Lionel Cranfield and the Earl and Countess of Arundel.[892] Anna attended countless social gatherings to raise her husband's profile, a persistent problem for absent diplomats seeking promotion at home. On 23 May 1623, she wrote to her husband describing how she had 'been exceedingly kindly used of the Duke and Duches of Richmond' along with 'my lady Bedford' who 'for 3 a weeke she findes to visit me and makes marvelous much of me and so doeth the Duches of Buckham'. [893] Anna worked particularly hard to foster relations with with the socially mobile, Duchess of Richmond and Lennox, the so-called 'Double Duchess'. Frances Howard had recently been widowed, remarried to Ludovick Stuart, and together received the title of Duke and Duchess of Richmond and Lennox. She proudly reports that she was 'in great favour with the two duchesses' - a punning reference to Frances Howard's nickname.[894] Knowing that the appointment would ultimately be decided by the Duke of Buckingham, Anna did all she could to secure the support of his wife, Katherine Manners, petitioning her directly 'to write to her Lord about Eaton'.[895] Sadly, in spite of all her efforts, the appointment went to Sir Henry Wotton. Arguably the decision to ignore Carleton's suit was not due to Anna's failures in petitioning effectively but ultimately because her husband was too useful to the government, in the context of the political storms then blowing across Europe in the aftermath of the Bohemian Crisis.

Petitioning and advocacy were vitally important for the financial wellbeing and political prospects of any ambitious ambassador. Given the demands of his work, which kept him overseas for long periods of time, and the comparative mobility family members enjoyed, the ambassadress

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[891] Maxwell-Lyte, H.C., *A History of Eton College 1440-1910* (London,1911).

[892] Peck, Linda Levy, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (Boston, 1990), p.65.

[893] TNA, SP 14/145 f.30.

[894] *CSPD*, XI, (1623-5), p.33.

[895] TNA, SP 14/ 147 f.112.

was uniquely well-placed to deputise on his behalf. In addition, the extensive sociability networks ambassadresses were adept at cultivating were exploited to the full. Although in a closed and patriarchal patronage system their efforts were not always successful, ambassadresses clearly were highly adept at making nuisances of themselves, whilst circumventing any suggestion their husbands had acted importunely. As Anna herself observes in a letter to Sir Dudley reflecting on the outcome of her own petitioning: 'I must not forget to tell you that the kinge sent me a bucke on Satterday last to stope my mouth'.[896]

3.4 Forging sociability networks

The maintenance of sociability networks was a consistently important dimension to the work performed by the ambassadress. Such networks included not just those associated with international diplomacy, but local agents and elites that could be called upon to advance both the needs of the state and those of the ambassadress and her husband. Helpful in exercising this role was a capacity to speak foreign languages. As Neale famously wrote in an essay on the Elizabethan envoy, 'an ambassador, unable to understand the language of the country, was half blind'.[897] As we saw in Chapter 4, proficiency in modern foreign languages was becoming just as important for their wives. Anne Morgan, daughter of a Dutch mother, Eliza Marnix and the governor of Bergen op Zoom, Sir Charles Morgan married the diplomat, Walter Strickland. Aside from earlier trips she made to the Continent with her husband, her native language skills played a key part in helping to secure her husband's appointment as Parliamentary ambassador to the United Provinces after 1642.[898] Of the 27 ambassadresses in the database at least a fifth were able to speak at least one other foreign language, most commonly French.[899] As noted above, the language skills of ambassadresses like Anne Sutton, Lady Cobham were especially useful in the service of the state and highly regarded by royal courts on both sides of the Channel. Sir Amias Paulet's wife, Margaret Harvey (c.1536-1602?)

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[896] *CSPD*, XI, (1623-25), p.11; TNA, SP 14/148 f.80.

[897] Neale, J.E., 'The Diplomatic Envoy' in *Essays in Elizabethan History* (London, 1958), p.133.

[898] B.D. / E.L.C.M., 'Walter Strickland' in *History of Parliament Online*, http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/strickland-walter-1516-69 (last accessed Mar 2024); *ACP* (1630/1), p.61.

[899] See Appendix, Table B.

was an equally familiar face at court and correspondence suggests she regularly mixed with members of the French establishment ably assisted by her skills in languages. Writing to Elizabeth I in June 1577, Paulet notes how the Queen Mother had recently summoned Margaret to the court and regaled her with 'good intertaynement' and that 'both shee and the French king's wife did use her with great favor and familiaritie' using the occasion to share with the ambassadress 'many protestacions of theire sincere affection towards your Majestie'.[900] The couple chose to live away from the capital in Tours, a possible measure of their confidence in integrating into French society, and letters frequently hint at close friendships between them both and local dignitaries.[901] Alongside an aptitude for languages, ambassadresses were expected to be accomplished hosts. Margaret Harvey and her husband maintained a highly cultivated household at the English embassy in Paris. Among those in her retinue were the essayist Francis Bacon and the portraitist, Sir Nicholas Hilliard, whose wife Alice Brandon travelled to France in the company of Margaret Harvey in 1573, but had to return early alone when she became pregnant.[902] Society events hosted by Elizabeth Cooke, wife of the English ambassador to Paris, Sir Thomas Hoby were particularly popular and had all the hallmarks of blue-stocking salons of later eras. One such event in June 1566, was attended by among others Madame Bochetel, wife of the French ambassador to England and Marie Bourdin, wife of the French Secretary of State and the celebrated translator, Jacques Amyot.[903]

Women travelling as part of diplomatic households enjoyed the greatest mobility of all women within the database, regularly journeying to and from the Continent as well as around the towns and cities of their host nations. Their freedom to travel was crucial to their ability to cultivate sociability networks. As noted above, Debora Downe made regular trips between England and Brussels during the 16 years that her husband served as ambassador to the city. Other ambassadresses travelled even more frequently. Between 1610 and 1625, Anna Gerard visited dozens of towns and cities across the European continent among them Venice, Turin, Paris and Spa.[904] Whilst serving as ambassadress at The Hague, she toured extensively around the United

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[900] Ogle, Octavius, *Copy-Book of Sir Amias Poulet's Letters, Written During His Embassy to France (A.D.1577)* (London, 1866).p.42.

[901] See Ogle, *Copy-Book*, p.47: letter to diplomat, Sir Jerome Bowes, in which Paulet refers to Mme Caillacq, 'I cannot express unto you how much I and my wyfe are beholding to this gentlewoman'.

[902] Jardine, Lisa and Stewart, Alan, *Hostage to Fortune: the Troubled life of Francis Bacon* (London, 1998), p.53.

[903] Laoutaris, Chris, *Shakespeare and the Countess: the Battle that Gave Birth to the Globe* (London, 2014), p.65.

[904] Venice, Pearsall Smith, Logan, *The Life and Letters of Sir Henry Wotton,* I (Oxford, 1907), p.498; Turin, TNA, SP 92/ 3 f.239-41; Paris, *HMC Downshire*, II, p.368; Spa, *HMC Downshire*, V, p.551.

Provinces either in the company of Elizabeth Stuart or on fact-finding missions for her husband's clients.[905]

As a consequence of their mobility, ambassadresses were able to maximise networking opportunities among themselves, or other English overseas residents. Debora Downe was especially adept at this task. Within days of arriving in the Low Countries, in 1615, she made an unaccompanied visit to Louvain, where she met with the exile and government agent, Sir Thomas Leedes. A letter from Leedes to her husband specifically cites this meeting and the hospitality he extended to her, arranging to 'meet her with [his] wife's coach'.[906] In addition to professional associates, Debora cultivated close connections with leading members of mercantile community, notably the Antwerp merchant Lionel Wake, cousin of the English ambassador to Venice, Sir Issac Wake. It seems from surviving correspondence they regularly socialised together. In one letter from 1618, Wake makes a light-hearted and familiar reference to a planned holiday together: 'I would remind Mrs Trumbull of her promise to spend the coming Christmas Holidays with us'.[907]

Social networking took on some surprising guises. Family events such as births and christenings were consciously exploited by ambassadors and their wives as occasions for advancing the interests of both their families and the government. The birth of a child provided the opportunity to name them in honour of members of the host nation's ruling elites or offer up the title of godparent. Realising the political expediency of the birth of her son, the chaplain to the English ambassador in Madrid, John Sandford cynically remarked in July 1611 that his wife Beatrice Walcot was 'breeding a godson for the K. of Spain'.[908] Lady Edmondes was equally honoured when the King and Queen of France agreed to stand as godparents to her own daughter born that same month. 'The year in this country,' the ambassador's secretary jubilantly proclaimed, 'is called l'année des filles'.[909] Christenings of ambassadorial children became state occasions. The Woods spent 600 crowns on a 'great banquet' to celebrate the christening of their daughter Louisa in Paris in 1611. She was named in honour of her godfather, Louis XIII and the service was attended by'Q. Margaret [of Valois, the widow of Henry IV], and all the princesses … forty great ladies and all the

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905 See for example, TNA, SP 84/121/ f.58.

906 *HMC Downshire*, V, p.192.

907 *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.572.

908 *HMC Downshire*, III, p.111.

909 Ibid, p.131.

four brethren of the House of Guise'.[910] Similar celebrations were repeated the following year when Elizabeth Ball, wife of the English ambassador to the Hague, Sir Ralph Winwood gave birth to twins. The Elector Palatine and James' daughter, Elizabeth agreed to act as godparents and the newborn children were duly christened with their names.[911]

At the other extreme, the death of an ambassador's wife or a member of her family was an occasion for personal grieving as well as gesture politics. The sudden demise of the English ambassador to France, Sir Thomas Hoby in the summer of 1566, prompted a succession of high profile visits to his widow Elizabeth Cooke to pay their respects. Edward Cooke, her diplomat brother noted his sister 'hath received since her husband's death, as much courtesy, at divers men's hands as might be possibly showed to any stranger'.[912] The untimely death of the Trumbull's thirteen-year-old daughter, Elizabeth in 1624 prompted an outpouring of grief from friends, family and associates. As mentioned in Chapter 4, The *Trumbull Papers* contain 8 eulogies commemorating her short life, among them works by the renowned German diplomat Rudolph Weckherlin. His beautifully illustrated poems (Fig. 4.2) written in Latin, English, French and German, were a clear acknowledgement of the pan-European mourning evoked by the death of the Trumbulls' eldest daughter. Among the collection are also epitaphs in English and Latin commissioned by the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Edward Zouche presumably for Elizabeth's tomb at St Mary's Church in Dover where she was ultimately laid to rest. Appropriately enough for an ambassador's daughter, among the many virtues their author Henry Heyman chooses to extol was her proficiency in languages - 'trilinguis hos haec virgo'.[913] Most moving of all are the 'Verses on the Life and Death of the Right Virtuous Gentlewoman Mistress Elizabeth Trumball' by the London printer, Richard Raworth, brother-in-law to Rudolph Weckherlin.[914] Raworth, commemorated the deep attachment Elizabeth felt with those in her sociability circle on either side of the Channel: 'From Dover port of late before Shee past /To see her parents deere and friends at last…. Flanders hath her breath, England her grave'.[915] Collectively the works demonstrate how the

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910 Ibid, pp.139 and 149, according to the National Archives currency converter, the equivalent of over £20,000 today.

911 *HMC Downshire*, III, p.381.

912 Cited in Laoutaris, *Shakespeare and the Countess*, p.70.

913 BL, Add MS 72439 f.140.

914 Ibid, f.139.

915 Ibid, f.139.

death of a member of an ambassador's family, women and girls included, could occasion widespread mourning and be an event of international moment.

The best illustration of how the person of the ambassadress was as valuable in death as in life surrounds the funeral of Anne Lambe (d.1610), wife of Sir Thomas Glover, the English ambassador to Istanbul. Sir Paul Rycaut's updated version of Richard Knolles' *Turkish History* (1687) includes a detailed account of the events surrounding her death, revealing both the personal and political gravity of the event.[916] Her funeral was well-attended by a panoply of local and international dignitaries, among them the Dutch Ambassador, a Hungarian agent, and a French colonel. Knolles describes how she was laid to rest 'with great solemnity' in an imposing tomb 'of fair Marble built four square almost the height of a Man'.[917] William Forde, chaplain to the English community, composed an elegy to Anne, drawing lofty comparisons between her life and that of, Sarah, the wife of the prophet Abraham, who had similarly submitted to duty regardless of danger and 'dyed in a strange Countrey, farre from her kindred and parents'.[918] Forde's characterisation of Anne reads like a checklist for the ideal ambassadress: educated, virtuous and religious, graceful in appearance, humble in behaviour, and unshakeable in the face of danger. In a nod to her surname, he concludes his homily by noting 'she rather resembled a lion than a lambe'.[919]

All told, changes in attitudes towards female education and the benefits of language-learning outlined in Chapter 4, afforded ambassadors' wives new and unprecedented opportunities for agency and social advancement. The ability to converse in foreign languages, earned the respect of their contemporaries and enabled them to foster extensive sociability networks with their counterparts overseas. The person of the ambassadress was as potent in life as in death. Intimate family occasions, from christenings to funerals were exploited to the maximum to strengthen international ties and extol the culture, status and power of the country which she represented.

3.6 News gathering and conveying

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[916] Knolles, Richard, *The Turkish history from the original of that nation, to the growth of the Ottoman empire …* (London, 1687), p.908. The funeral took place in 1612, but Glover interred her body in the cellar of the embassy for nearly two years in the hope she may be buried in England.

[917] Knolles, *Turkish History*, p.908.

[918] Ford, A *sermon preached at Constantinople*, p.81.

[919] Ibid, p.75-76.

With such extensive sociability networks, both on the Continent and at home, another way in which the ambassadress could contribute to the work of the ambassador was as a news gatherer. The line between informant and information gatherer is a blurry one, but it was a poorly kept secret that this was one of the functions of the early modern male ambassador. Although it would be an exaggeration to say women were equally involved in this process, it is clear that ambassadresses were uniquely positioned to assist. Their status as the wife of an ambassador, partially protected them from suspicions of subterfuge. Furthermore, their mobility, travelling to and from the Continent as well as within their host nation, gave them invaluable access to news and information on the ground. Nadine Akkerman argues this freedom of movement was a crucial advantage women not attached to court or country estates enjoyed, stating that 'she intelligencers of different walks of life were mobile, crossed enemy lines, were drawn into or devised furtive schemes'.[920] Akkerman was describing women like the playwright Aphra Behn, who populated the pages of later seventeenth century history. It is my contention that this form of activity, ably helped by their mobility, was equally characteristic of the activities of the ambassadress and was occurring much earlier than has previously been suggested.

Ambassadorial residencies were widely recognised hubs of information exchange, likened by Conrad Russell to 'listening posts', acknowledging the similarities between Counter-Reformational Europe and the Cold War era in which he was writing.[921] It is not surprising that ambassadresses played a crucial part in the process of gathering and disseminating information of value to the state. Frequent references to the security and contents of ambassadors' wives letters, certainly suggest they contained more than just personal information. In 1584, Sir Edward Stafford complained that the customs officers at Rye had been opening his wife's letters, and was especially concerned about one to her daughter, Elizabeth Butler, Lady Ormond.[922] We can only speculate about the contents of these letters, but in other instances correspondence by ambassadors' wives clearly points to activities far more explicitly related to intelligence-gathering. As figures on the peripheries of the diplomatic corps, ambassadresses could involve themselves in politically sensitive operations that freed their husbands from any suggestion of wrong-doing. Sir Francis Walsingham exploited Douglas Sheffield's close relationship with the Queen Mother, Catherine de'Medici to gather valuable information relating to state security. Following the unmasking of the

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[920] Akkerman, *Invisible Agents*, p.26.

[921] Conrad Russell, 'Review: The Manuscripts of the Marques of Downshire. Volume V', *History*, Vol 76 (Feb, 1991), pp.129-30.

[922] *CPSF*, XVIII (1583-4), pp.387-388.

Throckmorton Plot (1583), Walsingham leant on Sir Edward Stafford to use his wife's connections at the French court to unearth more on the movements of Lord Paget and Charles Arundel, a cousin of hers who had been implicated in the plot. Walsingham's expectation of a swift and on honest reply to his requests were made plain in his correspondence with the couple: 'her Majesty is assured that the alliance your lady has with them, shall not make you to be the more remiss to perform your duty towards her with that trust that she doth especially repose in you'.[923]

Similarly, Lady Edmondes, maintained a long correspondence with the Catholic exile, Sir Griffin Markham, presumably at the behest of her husband and his pay-masters in London. Markham had been charged with complicity in the Bye Plot (1603), and after a last minute reprieve fled abroad to the Continent early the following year, where he remained for the rest of his life, constantly fearful that charges might be raked up against him. Lady Edmondes corresponded directly with Sir Griffin, turning his fear of prosecution and his probable need for financial support to the benefit of the state. In 1609, Beaulieu wrote to Trumbull in Brussels, enclosing 'a letter from my La. Edmondes to Sir G. Markham'.[924] The contents are not revealed, but it may have related to a petition that Sir Griffin's wife had made to the King enabling him to discharge his debts and return to England.[925] At precisely the same time as Lady Edmondes' audience with Queen Anne, discussed above, Lady Markham was petitioning the King, and it may well be the two women were acting in concert on behalf of Sir Griffin. She appears to have maintained a long-standing association with Markham. In September1614, just 2 months before her death, Beaulieu was still forwarding letters 'from Lady Edmondes to Sir Griffin Markham'.[926] Just as with petitioning and gift-giving, the 'unofficial' role of the ambassadress enabled her to utilise her position of power and influence to gather information on behalf of the ambassador, without tarnishing his reputation in the process.

Sociability networks were manipulated for both personal and political ends. Again, as the custodian of some of the most extensive kinship circles in the early modern world, with a Europe-wide list of contacts, drawn from the Continent's ruling elites, the ambassadress was an indispensable font of information. Coupled with her skills in languages and regular attendance at court, her contribution could sometimes be decisive in decoding the complexities of foreign political factions and intrigues. Sir Valentine Dale acknowledged his wife, Elizabeth Forth's

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[923] *CPSF*, Vol XVIII (1583-4), p.252.

[924] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.155.

[925] Brown, C, *Lives of Nottinghamshire Worthies* (London, 1882), p.157.

[926] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.17.

(d.1590) far more nuanced grasp of the power play between Catherine de'Medici and members of her court in his correspondence with Lord Burghley, conceding: 'The rest of women's news he shall understand from his wife's letters to her ladyship'.[927] Similarly, Carleton recognised the value of information gathered informally from women within Elizabeth Stuart's household. The high-profile Catholic convert, the Archbishop of Spalato was due to visit England in 1616. En route to London he had stayed at Heidelberg where he had published one of his most searing attacks on the Catholic Church, *Scogli del Christiano naufragio* (1616).[928] A rumour was circulating that the Archbishop had previously been married, an early indicator of his anti-Catholic proclivities, information which Carleton confessed had been gleaned 'amongst some followers of those ladies of yours we had lately at the Hagh'.[929]

Additionally, the ambassadress' mobility allowed her to position herself where information could be gathered from source rather than waiting for it to come to the ambassador in person. During her visits to London, Lady Carleton played a crucial role in news gathering for her husband at The Hague. As Chamberlain noted, she 'dispatcht as much every day as any agent you could have sent'.[930] In another, he jokes that she outshone his own skills as foremost purveyor of news and gossip, 'my Lady herself be so sufficient a secratarie for you, and so well stored and furnished with all that is current at courte, yet I must put in my mite'.[931] He goes on to acknowledge both the quality and quantity of Lady Carleton's news gathering: 'my Lady hath continuall intelligence, when any go hence towards you, and I harken after her dispatches, though I can neither send you so much nor so certain advise of any thing as she, that hath yt, as it were, from the well head'.[932]

Not only did Lady Carleton use her London visits for news gathering but also to convey information relating to her husband's diplomacy. Her 1623 visit to London coincided with a period of intense speculation about the marriage between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta. She was asked to deliver correspondence from Sir Peter Killigrew, diplomatic courier to Spain for Prince Charles, concerning the progress of the marriage negotiations. 'I send you a letter,' she informs Sir

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[927] *CSPF*, XI, (1575-77), p.20; TNA, SP 70/133, f.135v.

[928] De Dominis, Marco Antonio, *Scogli del Christiano naufragio quali va scoprendo la santa chiesa di Christo : alli suoi diletti figliuoli, perche da quelli possano allontanarsi* (London, 1618).

[929] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.76.

[930] *Chamberlain*, II, p.151.

[931] Ibid, p.153.

[932] Ibid, p.157.

Dudley, 'I receved by killigrew out of spaine by which you will know what judgment to make'.[933] Even King James, valued her as a dependable conveyor of information and charged her 'to speke roundly' to his son-in-law, Frederick V, regarding his hostility to the Spanish Match.[934] Lady Carleton was clearly delighted with the confidence James had shown her, and proudly relayed to her husband how 'he tooke me by the hand and walked with me up and downe and was very angry with the King of Bohemia'.[935] James clearly valued Anna Gerard as a trusted and unerring messenger, sharing information with her of the utmost political sensitivity. As she goes on to explain, he 'bid me tell him [Frederick] he would abandon him if he did not subscribe to those conditiones he had proposed to him'.[936]

Lady Carleton was not alone in being charged with relaying highly confidential information between the embassy and the English government. John Moore, Clerk of the Privy Seal mentions that Lady Trumbull delivered transcripts of undisclosed letters from overseas operatives during her visit to London in 1617, whilst the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Abbot writes to Trumbull asking about the whereabouts of 'the papers which she brought with her.'[937] Clearly the ambassadress was seen as valuable bridge between London and diplomatic offices abroad. Her 'unofficial' status within the diplomatic corps made her valuable conduit of news and even intelligence for the benefit of her family and the state.

3.5 Gifting

Sociability networks were forged and maintained through the regular giving and receiving of gifts. Until recently, gifting was considered an incidental, even trivial feature of early modern society, but interest its political and gendered dimensions has grown in recent years. Felicity Heal has attempted to categorise the different ways gifting was used: 'to enhance bonds between individuals and families, to express loyalty and deference, to display charity, and to demonstrate power'.[938] Gemma

[933] TNA, SP 14/148 f.118.

[934] TNA, SP 14/149 f.89.

[935] Ibid.

[936] Ibid.

[937] *HMC Downshire*, VI, pp. 327 and 349.

[938] Heal, *The Power of Gifts*, p.4.

Allen argues ambassadresses were uniquely placed to give and receive gifts as they were not tied to the same diplomatic conventions as their male partners, allowing them to sidestep suggestions of improper conduct.[939] This is clearly borne out by events. When in 1609, representatives of the governors of Zeeland sent Sir Thomas Edmondes, the English ambassador to Brussels a present of wine it was duly refused, but when his wife, Magdalen Wood was sent 'a suite of fine Damas nappery', the gift was gratefully accepted.[940] Using the significant body of evidence related to gifting contained in the database, it should be possible to identify with greater clarity and precision the nature of gifting involving ambassadresses, building on the work of Heal and Allen.

The types of gifts which were offered or exchanged varied greatly depending on the individuals concerned and the significance of the occasion. The provision of lodging to overseas visitors was one of the more prosaic forms of gifting, but one which could still forge vitally important bonds between families and lead to future political advancement. Although she was gravely ill, Magdalen Wood went to great lengths to accommodate the Earl and Countess of Arundel at the Paris embassy on the return leg of their 1613-14 European tour. This courtesy may well have helped to expedite Thomas Edmondes' rapid rise through James' household on his return to England, where following his wife's death just weeks later, he became first controller, then treasurer of the royal household and a member of the Privy Council.[941] It is noticeable how the Trumbulls were similarly at pains to provide the Countess of Pembroke with every possible comfort during her 1614-16 tour of the Continent. Sonia Anderson linked the hospitality the couple provided, with the decision of her son William Herbert to offer Trumbull a seat as MP for Downton, in Wiltshire, and kick start his political career on his return to England.[942]

As noted, protocols regarding the timing and nature of gifts to diplomatic staff were still being formalised. Hotman suggested gifts should not be exchanged until guests were 'ready to take horse and depart'.[943] This convention was clearly upheld at the formal departure of ambassadors and their wives from their posts. Lady Carleton was regaled with a swathe of gifts from Venetian officials on her return to England in 1615. Among the gifts received was 'a carcanet [necklace] of

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[939] Allen, 'The Rise of the Ambassadress', p.638.

[940] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.198.

[941] Greengrass, M., 'Edmondes, Sir Thomas Edmondes' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-8486?rskey=fEZyqM&result=2 (last accessed May 2024).

[942] Anderson, 'The Elder William Trumbull', p.124.

[943] Hotman, *Ambassador*, sig.D7v.

diamons' along with a 'fayre jewel of diamonds, a ring, a box of gold with two ritch bezoar stones in it, twenty payr of Spanish gloves, six purses and many perfumes'.[944] Not only did such prodigious gift-giving help to cement international relations, but as the primary recipient, it helped to further formalise the ambassadress' position within diplomatic circles. Governments often competed to outshine each other with the generosity of their gifts. In May 1627, Lady Wake was presented with a diamond necklace by the Duke of Savoy 'to cultivate that friendship greatly' and to 'preserve the confidence of England'.[945] Keen not to be outdone, on their departure from Venice eighteen months later, the government came up with a gold chain worth 1,000 crowns, 'to be consigned by the Collegio to [Wake's] wife here'.[946]

Gifting was not necessarily costly expensive or archly political. Given the distances women were now travelling it was a way of nurturing and maintaining sociability networks outlined above and as such did not always need to be elaborate. In 1606, following her marriage to the Earl of Arundel, Aletheia Talbot despatched scented gloves to Magdalen Wood and her husband, then living in Brussels, a well-meaning gesture intended to compensate for the fact that she and her husband had not been able to attend the wedding ceremony.[947] Debora Downe would regularly send gifts from abroad to acknowledge or anticipate services from clients and friends back in England whilst accompanying her husband abroad. In 1612 she sent a 'token' to the wife of Christopher Wragge, the local parson in West Malling for 'teaching' the Trumbull's son.[948] Debora Downe appears to have been a particularly generous gift-giver. A letter from around the same time from another relative, Nicholas Bennett thanks Trumbull for her generosity, 'my aunt [Debora Downe] hath been too bountiful towards my wife in her token in respect of her and my little deserving, yet my wife (willing though not able) to requite'.[949] Ensuring the suitability of gifts exchanged could be quite a headache. Too little and the individual party risked looking parsimonious, too excessive and it could offend the recipient or be read as socially inappropriate. One gains a sense of this quandary in a letter exchanged between Lady Carleton and her husband, prior to returning to the Continent in 1627. She was travelling with the highly influential Elizabeth Cecil, Lady Hatton, who she had

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[944] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.287.

[945] *CSPV*, XX (1626-28), p.214.

[946] *CSPV*, XXI (1628-29), p.475.

[947] LPL, MS 3202, f.61.

[948] *HMC Downshire*, III, p.404.

[949] Ibid, p.404.

discovered was bringing over gifts or 'toyes' 'to present all the gentelwemen'.[950] Among the presents was one which clearly had captured Anna's eye, 'a very faire petticott of whit sattine very richly imbrodred with gold and collers it is the faires petticott that I thinke I ever saw'.[951] Fearful of Lady Hatton leaving empty-handed, she admonishes her husband to find a gift of comparable value that will impress the wife of a Cecil: 'there must be some present provided for her I thinke som fine picture'. [952]

With such complex protocols and conventions, the language of gifting could on occasion be misinterpreted or even backfire. Sir Dudley Carleton's sister, Alice sent Anna Gerard a gift of an empty purse on their arrival at The Hague in 1616, something he described as 'an ominous token' and one which he doubted 'by reason of the company and good fellowship of this place we shall bring home with us'.[953] An empty purse was commonly associated with bad luck in love or money, and the childless Anna, who was 30 at the time, may have interpreted it as a portentous sign.[954] When Eleanor Cave, gifted a cat she had acquired on her travels to William Laud, the Archbishop sharply questioned her motives: 'Your Lady hath sent me a cat which she saith came from Smyrna. I thank her heartily for it, whence ere it came, but I hope she doth not mean to scratch her friends with any tokens she sends'.[955]

3.7 Patronage and collecting

Although peripheral to the core political duties of an ambassador, an interest in patronage and collecting provided a useful additional string to their bows. Diplomats were uniquely placed to acquire or commission works of art from European markets, and success in brokering deals for influential clients, was not only highly lucrative but also beneficial to personal advancement. David Howarth (1985) and Robert Hill (2003 et al.) have written extensively about the role of male

[950] TNA, SP 14/148 f.146.

[951] Ibid, f.146.

[952] Ibid.

[953] Lee, *Jacobean Letters*, p.195.

[954] See Michel Sweerts, *Portrait of a Young Man*, c.1636 in the Hermitage collection which features a young man and an empty purse pondering the transitoriness of life.

[955] Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe*, p.221, citing Laud, *Works*, III, p.51.

collectors within diplomatic circles, among them Sir Henry Wotton, Sir Dudley Carleton and Sir Isaac Wake, consecutive English ambassadors to Venice.[956] Interest in male diplomatic connoisseurship has arguably overshadowed the part played by their female contemporaries. Whilst Elizabeth Chew (2003) and Jennifer Fletcher (1996) have done much to redress this balance, looking at the role of high profile women travellers associated with connoisseurship, notably the Countesses of Bedford and Arundel, little serious attention has been devoted to ambassadresses in this pursuit.[957] Given that they were often-as well placed to collect works of art and certainly as well-connected, this oversight is surprising and merits redressing.

In many ways ambassadresses were an obvious point of reference when it came to the acquisition of luxury art and artefacts sourced from abroad. As managers of the diplomatic residence they had a keen eye for furnishings and decorative items, whilst their presence overseas put them in close contact with agents or European art markets. In 1609, the Countess of Shrewsbury prevailed upon Lady Edmondes to assist a 'tapestry man' she had employed to come to Europe to scout for local craftsmen.[958] In 1621, Thomas Locke, a privy council clerk and regular correspondent with the Carletons, asked that on her return to The Hague, 'Lady Carleton lay out £100 for him in table and other linen war[e]'.[959]

Ambassadresses were frequently entrusted with putting clients in touch with art merchants as well as helping to convey items back to England. Lady Carleton worked with some of the foremost art agents of the day, including Daniel Nys, who famously brokered the sale of Gonzaga Collection to King Charles in 1628.[960] In 1621, Anna is mentioned in a bill of lading from Nys concerning the consignment of 14 portraits: 'I have in the house the portraits that your wife ordered from me. I am sending them to London to the Forteries. If Her Excellency orders anything else from

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956 Howarth, David, *Thomas Howard and his Circle* (New Haven and London, 1985); Hill, Robert, 'Ambassadors and art collecting in early Stuart Britain: The parallel careers of William Trumbull and Sir Dudley Carleton, 1609-1625' in *The Journal of the History of Collections*, Vol.15 (2003); Susan Bracken and Robert Hill, 'Sir Isaac Wake, Venice and art collecting in early Stuart England: a new document.' in *Journal of the History of Collections*, Vol.24 (2012), pp.183-198: Hill, Robert, *Works of art as commodities : art and patronage : the career of Sir Dudley Carleton, 1610-1625* (Unpublished PhD, Southampton Solent University, 1999).

957 Chew, Elizabeth, 'The Countess of Arundel and Tart Hall' in Chaney, Edward, ed. *The Evolution of English collecting: The reception of Italian art in the Tudor and Stuart periods* (New Haven and London, 2003), pp.285-314; Fletcher, J, 'The Arundels in the Veneto', *Apollo*, Vol.144, (1996), pp.63–69.

958 *HMC Downshire*, II, p.100.

959 *CSPD* (1619-23), p.284.

960 See, Brotton, Jeremy, *The Sale of the Late King's Goods. Charles I and His Art Collection* (London, 2006).

Fig. 6.3. Rubens, Peter Paul, *Wolf and Fox Hunt* (c.1616), Metropolitan Museum of Art.

me she will be obeyed instantly'.[961] Nys' suggestion was indeed followed up by an order from Lady Carleton in 1622 of sundry fashionable Venetian works including 'a dozen paintings of courtesans and other portraits'.[962] Lady Carleton is also associated in 1624 with the delivery of a portrait of one of the Carleton's clients by the highly-prized artist Michiel van Miereveld: 'given into the hands of My Lady the wife of the ambassador a portrait to the life of the Knight Goring'.[963]

Lady Carleton was not alone in performing this role of intermediary between agent and client. Lady Trumbull assisted Lionel Wake in conveying luxury artefacts back to England for him. In 1617, Wake asked Debora Downe to carry certain items amongst her personal luggage including, '12 pieces of sattins and one piece of stayned velvit'.[964] To avoid awkward questions from customs officials, Wake suggests 'for the better coller you may direct them as if they weare for Mr Secretary

[961] TNA, SP 84/103 f.188.

[962] TNA, SP 99/24 f.159.

[963] TNA, SP 84/121 f.247. Carleton was charged 'fifty carolus guilders'; Sir George Goring was a client of the Duke of Buckingham, and someone who would play a vital role in advancing her husband's bid to be Secretary of State on his return to England, see Memegalos, F., *George Goring, Caroline Courtier and Royalist General*, (Aldershot, 2007), p.15.

[964] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.301.

Winwood and Mr Controlere'.[965] Debora Downe profited personally from the performance of this task, with Wake offering to 'recompense hir better then with a kertell of wrought velvitt' once the goods had been handed over to his agent 'Germayne' at Gravesend.[966]

Just as we saw when it came to setting up and running permanent residences, sometimes the personal assets of the ambassadress were useful in facilitating the acquisition of works prior to their consignment to clients. In 1616, Lady Carleton used her own jewellery to purchase Rubens' *The Wolf and Fox Hunt* (Fig. 6.3) on behalf of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.[967] The use of her own funds enabled her to maintain a closer role in the transaction. When her agent, Tobie Matthew could only raise £50 from her necklace compared with Rubens £80 original asking price, she was kept closely appraised of progress in negotiations. Matthew mentions to Sir Dudley that he had 'written to my Lady about the little wch wilbe given for the Chaine here'. [968]

Lady Carleton's ability to drive a hard bargain when it came to the acquisition of works of art was most clearly demonstrated in an episode involving the auction of the contents of a captured merchant ship at Middelburg in 1624.[969] She attended the sale alone, in search of bargains for influential associates. Among the 'chief persons' on whose behalf she was acting was Buckingham once more. Incredibly, her correspondence from the auction survives, providing rare insights into the working of her mind as she weighs up both the aesthetic and monetary value of the items on sale. 'Be you assured,' she writes to her husband on 6 November 1624, 'heere are very rich and raire thinges sufficient to make my Lord of Buckingham a wonderfull sumtious present'.[970] Her eye was particularly drawn to the luxurious tapestries and wall hangings, delighting over the 'very fine hangings of silke … very good tapestry …[and] a great store of exceeding good household stuff'.[971] In making her selections, she sensibly drew on the advice of local agents and refers in one of her letters to 'Jokeemes brother' whose help she 'desired … in the choice of som pictures for the Duke

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[965] Ibid, p.301.

[966] Ibid, p.301.

[967] Sainsbury, W.N., *Original Unpublished Papers Illustrative Of The Life Of Sir Peter Paul Rubens…* (London, 1859), p.14 - possibly the same 'carcanet of diamonds' she had received from the Duke of Savoy the previous summer, *HMC Downshire*, V, p.287.

[968] TNA, SP 77/12 f.207.

[969] The ship belonged to the Viceroy of Naples, Antonio Álvarez, 5th Duke of Alba (viceroy of Naples from 1622-9) and was seized off the coast of Spain by the Dutch.

[970] *Sainsbury Papers*, p.305.

[971] Ibid, p.305.

of B.' in another to 'Husson [who] hath helped me to by som picturs to day'.[972] Joachim's brother may well be the brother of Joachim von Sandrart who worked in the studio of Gerrit von Honthorst an artist from whom Carleton commissioned a number of pictures.[973] Anna's descriptions of her acquisitions proclaim her confidence in making qualitative judgements regarding works of art. In one section she refers to 'nine [pictures] …good and bad, but in truth none very bad'.[974] Further on she speaks about 'som raire peeces, on[e] of Tisianes' which she purchases for 'all most £30' along with 'another litell peece which cost me £40'.[975] Anna was clearly an exacting customer and complains that she 'never saw pictures sold soe deere in my life, especially trash'.[976] She would not be lured into paying over the odds for her clients, explaining how she decided against a pair of candlesticks for Elizabeth Stuart as, 'they are olde and battered and the least part of them comes to 300li'.[977] Even when her eye was drawn to the jewellery, 'delicate bedes of helitropia as ever I looked on, and very fine ons of lapes lassero and blacke and whit agett,' she declined to purchase them as they were 'but less then those of the Queenes [i.e. Elizabeth Stuart] a good deale'.[978]

Carleton was clearly delighted with his wife's brokerage and in a letter to Buckingham boasted that the pictures 'have bene vewed here by many masters, and well approved for originalls'.[979] Dudley's nephew was just as excited about Lady Carleton's purchases and was clearly impatient to reveal them to Buckingham, 'I could wish here were arrived the fruits of my Ladyes jorney to Flushing'.[980] By 6 January 1625, Anna's paintings had arrived in London, and how 'the Duke of Buckingham is well pleased with his pictures and the most earnest lover of paintings (I thinck) in the world'.[981]

Although few examples of female connoisseurship at work are as well documented as Lady Carleton's, there is evidence among the entries in the database (Fig. 6.4) that many expressed a

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[972] Ibid, pp.306 and 307.

[973] I thank T.Wilks for this suggestion. See also, Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek and Badeloch Noldus (eds.),*Your Humble Servant: Agents in Early Modern Europe*, (Rome, 2006), p. 58.

[974] *Sainsbury Papers*, p.308.

[975] Ibid, p.308.

[976] Ibid, p.308.

[977] Ibid, p.306.

[978] Ibid*,* pp.306-307.

[979] TNA, SP 84/121 f.222.

[980] TNA, SP 14/176 f.67.

[981] TNA, SP 84/122 f.16.

similar interest. Debora Downe is seen exercising her own judgement when commissioning works of art, too. In 1617, John Chandler, an English agent based in Antwerp writes to Trumbull regarding one of her commissions: 'Tell Mrs Trumbull from me that 'if shee remaine still in the resolution to have a painter sent to her, that shee wilbee pleased to send me her pleasure, and whether shee would have the pictures uppon dokoke or borde, that the painter maie come accordingly provided'.[982] Dokoke is probably a corruption of the Dutch word 'doek', a thick linen canvas. Chandler's letter suggests Debora was as closely involved as her fellow ambassadresses both in the nature and quality of works of art, especially those destined to promote her family's status and political ambitions.

It was not unknown for ambassadors, who lacked the required aptitude, to defer to their wives in the acquisition of works of art. Isaac Wake, freely admitted his deficiencies in this area whilst fully recognising those of his wife, Anna Bray. Wake had been tasked with purchasing 'three or fower principall choice pictures' for the Secretary of State, Sir Edward Conway but candidly admitted his inadequacies in sourcing and selecting suitable works, 'because I do professe to know nothing in that way'.[983] By contrast, his wife Anna, Sir Edward's stepdaughter, was astute enough to identify who Conway was purchasing the paintings for, the Duke of Buckingham once more, and helped her husband tailor his choices more appropriately. 'Since the writing herof,' he explains in a letter to Buckingham, 'I have receaved a le[tt]re from my wife at Padua by wch I do understand unto whom yr Lp doth designe these pictures & because I do know a little the genious of that lord I hope I shall fit your Lp well by providing something that shall please him'.[984]

Ambassadresses did not confine their interests in art and patronage to paintings alone and on occasion might also involve themselves in architecture and garden design. Once again, Lady Carleton led the way with her plans for the remodelling of the family home at Imworth in Surrey in the 1620s. Whilst Sir Dudley served out the remainder of his time at The Hague, she threw herself into the task of running the estate as well as project-managing designs for the new property itself. In a letter to her husband on 14 August 1623, she reveals a particular interest in the remodelling of the plan or 'plott' of the family home in preparation for Sir Dudley's retirement.[985] Her vision for the designs are bold and ambitious, including a new 40ft facade 'battlemented and leaded' for visitors

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[982] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.142.

[983] *Sainsbury Papers*, p.352.

[984] Cited by Bracken and Hill, 'Venice and art collecting', p.183.

[985] TNA, SP 14/150 f.164.

to walk along, a 'great chamber' for entertaining guests 'as high as it is brode' and sufficient wall space to 'be brave for picture[s]'.[986] Along one side of the property she plans to erect a 'pergaloe' - a colonnade or loggia, perhaps similar to the one at Houghton House in Bedfordshire, recently built by the Countess of Pembroke. Most significantly of all she asks to 'have Mr Jones draw the plot of it'.[987] Anna's collaboration with Inigo Jones, the foremost neoclassical architect in Britain at the time, is another connection with Houghton, where he is also thought to have worked, and would position Anna Gerard along with her husband amongst the leading architectural patrons of early Stuart England.

Anna was not alone among ambassadresses in expressing a personal involvement in design and even architecture. John Chamberlain describes the interest shown by Elizabeth Ball, wife of Sir Ralph Winwood, in the estates and gardens at their home at Ditton in Surrey. 'She takes great delight,' Chamberlain reported, 'in flowrs and plants' and how she likes to 'busie herself in setting and tending of melons, as any gardner of them all'.[988] He noted how the couple regularly 'trucke and live much by exchange' of plants from English friends and former contacts in the Netherlands.[989] Her biographer notes Elizabeth rebuilt Ditton's fourteenth-century mansion house and gardens 'achieving striking results at very little cost' although sadly little evidence of her involvement survives.[990]

Just as ambassadors were beginning to see the political value of art and material goods as a marker of social status and a means of advancing their personal careers, so too were their wives in supporting this role. Some like Anna Gerard, but also Anna Bray and Debora Downe were particularly adept at this task. Their appreciation of the material and aesthetic value of art was highly regarded. Once again the mobility that ambassadresses enjoyed as well as their sociability networks served them well in this enterprise. The acquisition and commissioning of works of art quickly became yet another valuable, unspoken but recognisable feature of the ambassadress' agency.

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[986] Ibid, f.164.

[987] Ibid.

[988] *Chamberlain*, I, p.544.

[989] Ibid, p.544.

[990] Greengrass, M, 'Winwood, Sir Ralph' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-29783?rskey=zZxUfQ&result=2 (last accessed May 2024).

4. Women within ambassadorial households

Alongside the 27 ambassadresses identified from the database, we have the names of around 18 women and girls directly associated with ambassadorial households, most prominently those centred on Paris and Brussels, but also Venice and elsewhere.[991] Among those in this group are family members, such as the daughters of the English ambassador to Paris, Sir Thomas Hoby, Elizabeth and Anne Hoby; sisters, such as Alice Carleton, sibling of the Venetian ambassador, Sir Dudley Carleton; personal attendants, such as Phyllis Woolley, lady-in-waiting to Lady Edmondes; and wives of diplomatic agents like Elizabeth Devick, wife of Trumbull's Brussels secretary, Jean Beaulieu.[992]

Named references to female domestic staff within ambassadorial households are sadly limited in scope and frequency. For instance, we only know of Mrs Carson, the housekeeper at the English embassy in Venice due to an inventory taken of the contents of her room in 1610.[993] However brief or incidental, such entries provide invaluable insights into the configuration of overseas residences and the manner in which business was conducted within them. At the Venice embassy, staff were clearly afforded a degree of comfort and privacy. Mrs Carson had her own room at Venice, furnished with among other items, 'hangings of Arras', 'a table with a green carpet' and an 'iron bedsteed'.[994] The room of the 'Maydes chamber' was equally well-appointed, remit with 'flock beds', 'mattresses' and a 'bolster'.[995] Correspondence from the time shows that great care was taken over the disposition of rooms for both the ambassador and his household. When the Trumbulls returned from a sojourn in London in 1618, John Woolley, son of there aforementioned Phyllis, went to great lengths to render the household's stay as comfortable as possible. 'Wee have not omitted any diligence', he writes to Trumbull, 'for the dressing up of the said howse and garden'.[996]

Just as travel presented ambassadresses with new opportunities for agency and influence, so too did women lower down the social order quickly discover that their lives abroad often brought them close to centres of power and offered up chances for self-advancement that would be denied

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[991] See Appendix, Table B.

[992] Anne and Elizabeth Cooke, *CSPD*, *Elizabeth*, *Addenda* (1566-79), p.5 ff.; Phyllis Woolley and Elizabeth Devick, *HMC Downshire*, II, p.419-20; Alice Carleton, *Chamberlain*, I, p.206.

[993] SP 99/6 f.215.

[994] Ibid.

[995] Ibid.

[996] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.405.

them back in England. The career trajectory of Elizabeth Devick perfectly illustrates this. The cousin of Thomas Edmondes' secretary, William Devick, through whom she met and married another Edmondes secretary, Jean Beaulieu in 1606.[997] Little is known of her background or childhood. Ester Beauvoir refers to her as 'ma cousine Elisabet de Vick' in the earliest record we have of her in 1605, which may suggest a French or Flemish heritage.[998] She first travelled abroad with Lord Edmondes's wife, Magdalen Wood in May 1606, at the start of his Brussels embassy and quickly found favour with her new mistress, being invited to accompany her on a trip to Spa in the summer of 1608.[999] When Lady Edmondes returned to the Continent again in 1610, Elizabeth Devick was among the small party of attendants accompanying her to Paris to present Anne of Denmark's condolences to the newly-widowed, Marie de'Medici.[1000] The sudden death of Lady Edmondes in 1614 followed by that of her cousin William the following year, did not curtail her career advancement. Initially, she remained in Paris, having received £100 from Lord Edmondes, 'for her long and faithful service to his late wife'.[1001] She returned to London in the spring of 1617 to take up a position within Anne of Denmark's privy chamber until her demise the following year.[1002] Devick, along with some of the country's leading female courtiers including the well-travelled Countess of Arundel and the Dowager Countess of Pembroke, was listed among the attendees at the Queen's funeral.[1003] One last sighting of Devick occurs in the *Acts of the Privy Council*, when she received a a pass 'to goe over into France' on non-disclosed business with her husband James [sic] Beaulieu, along with 2 servants.[1004] Devick could have been anyone of a number of women attached to diplomatic households, who skilfully used the connections and opportunities afforded by travel to promote themselves and those around them.

Reading the numerous addenda to diplomatic correspondence or the round robins to which household staff would often affix their names, what is particularly striking are the close bonds of friendship that emerge from the language and their contents. This familiarity is often apparent in the

[997] See *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.33, where Beaulieu notes in the margins of a letter dated 1613 it was the 'seventh year of our valentinship'.

[998] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.419-20.

[999] *HMC Downshire*, II, pp.14-15; *HMC Downshire*, II, p.73 ff.

[1000] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.296.

[1001] *HMC Downshire*, V, p.212.

[1002] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.132.

[1003] Nichols, III, p.541.

[1004] *ACP* (1623/5), p.222.

requests for items to be sent to the embassy, and we witness how household staff were privy to the same fads for material luxuries as their superiors. Requests for fabric and personal fashion items were particularly common and one sometimes senses almost a personal rivalry among the women. When on 4 June 1609, Beaulieu reminds Trumbull to bring back for Lady Edmondes, 'necklacing, and the 12 pairs each of cherries and strawberries for ear-rings', it was followed only 10 days later with a second order for a 'Wascott of fustian', 'two bodies of whalebones' and 'as much buskin of some pretty mingled colour as will make her a petticoat' for Phyllis Wolley and Elizabeth.[1005] The acquisition and gifting of material items not only satisfied the needs of the recipients but played a more serious role in strengthening the bonds of familiarity between women, especially when travel often separated them for long periods of time. When Trumbull's daughter Elizabeth was forced to return to England due to her declining health, she regularly remembered to send gifts back to female associates in Brussels to underline the depth of friendship she wished to maintain with them. In a letter from October 1622, Elizabeth refers to patterns she had sent 'to make stoles for the french woman.'[1006] Though mere trifles, such gifts not only played an essential part in maintaining bonds of friendship and affection, but reflect how deeply attachments were forged by women across different social strata.

Just like the ambassadress, women within ambassadorial households were keenly attuned to the unwritten conventions concerning gifting. Phyllis Woolley felt no embarrassment in reminding William Trumbull of the importance of appropriate gifting. Addressing him as 'Good father' she pointedly reminds him of his duties with regards to a local dignitary, 'Madame Barbançon' and that 'a pair of embroidered stockings will hardly make the peace between you'.[1007] It is unclear precisely who Madame Barbançon was, but it is likely she was a member of the influential Arenberg-Barbançon family.[1008] Count Charles de Ligne, Prince of Arenberg (1550-1616) had helped to negotiate the Treaty of London (1604), whilst his highly influential wife, Anna de Cröy (1563-1635) had inherited extensive estates from her childless brother, Charles, Duke of Aarschot (1560-1612) and managed to place many of her daughters within the Archduchess' household at

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[1005] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.8-9.

[1006] Add MS 72443.

[1007] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.30.

[1008] The town of Barbençon is in Belgium, the historic heartland of the family estates.

Brussels.[1009] Whichever Barbançon this was, Wolley understood it would require more than a pair of stockings to secure her blessing.

Gifting and material consumerism were just one element of the sociability activities which women within diplomatic households engaged in. As with the ambassadress, female family members, ladies-in-waiting and household staff were astutely aware of the practical and political benefits of forging strong sociability networks. Long after she had returned to England, Anne Trumbull, youngest of the Trumbull children, extended greetings of fellowship to friends and acquaintances still posted overseas. In January 1635, she sent her regards to 'Mr Wolley and to all the rest of my Good friends with you'.[1010] In another that same month, she sent her regards to 'my cosine Carter and his wife Mrs Wolley and to all the rest of my Good friends'.[1011] Correspondence between members of English overseas residences often contained personal notes between women within the different households, suggesting they knew each other very well. Humour and playful language were one way in which these connections were sustained. On 14 February 1613, in the margins of a letter from her husband to the Trumbulls, Elizabeth Devick has scrawled in her own hand 'A greeting for St Valentine's Day for Trumbull and his wife …. not forgetting pretty Betty'.[1012] As we have noted above, a letter from Matthew de Questor to Trumbull in June 1609 is littered with doodles in Elizabeth's hand as she plays with the names of household staff or adds little asides about their characters. In one section of the paper she proclaims that her husband 'is a knave' and then, as if out of a sense of remorse, rescinds her earlier comment and describes him more tenderly as 'good man beaulieu'.[1013]

The intense familiarity between members of diplomatic households, often instigated by women themselves, is demonstrated by an unpublished letter by Elizabeth Devick herself within the *Trumbull Papers.* It underscores the intensity of relationships struck during prolonged periods of time overseas, which to modern readers appear to transgress many of the social conventions of the time.[1014] Dated 26 April 1611, she writes from the Paris embassy, where she is based, to the Trumbulls in Brussels, addressing the English ambassador as her 'dear brother and most loving

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[1009] See Akkerman, Nadine and Houben, Birgit, *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-waiting across Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2013), p.129-130.

[1010]BL, Add MS 72443 f.73.

[1011] BL, Add MS 72443 f.75.

[1012] *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.33.

[1013] BL, Add MS 72338 f.91v.

[1014] BL, Add MS 72340 f.108.

friende' and thanks him for his previous letter to her. Though grateful for his news, she urges him not to trouble himself with writing to her any further as 'I know you have matters of great importance to employ the time'. Elizabeth uses the opportunity to send her best wishes to Trumbull's wife, Debora Downe, who she describes as her 'good sister your bedfellowe'. Sensing her terms of endearment might be misinterpreted she adds, 'I hope she will give me leave to call her soe, since you do honor me with that title'. Elizabeth forgets no one in the letter, and sends her regards to the Trumbull's one-year-old daughter, 'pretty bett' whose progress she had heard of from a mutual acquaintance, 'Monsieur de Bures'. She signs off describing herself as 'Your loving sister and poore freind [sic] to serve you, Elizabeth Devick'. With typical humour, Elizabeth adds a note for Trumbull's secretary, John Woolley, son of her close companion, Phyllis Wolley, requesting he 'tell him that his aunt Devick praies him to have a care how he spends his time for I shall be glad to heare that he aplie his spare time to learning.'

Bonds of sociability could yield practical benefits, too. Women within ambassadorial households also served as valuable conduits of news and information. Just as the mobility which ambassadresses enjoyed permitted them greater access to information on the ground, so too did women staff members benefit from considerable freedom to roam and gather information of value both to the embassy and the ambassador on a more personal level. Even when she had left the embassy in Paris, Elizabeth Devick continued to provide Trumbull with an important source of information on the politics of the royal household in her new role as lady-in-waiting to the Queen. Regular reports from Trumbull's agents in London on Devick's advancement at court suggest he maintained this channel of communication zealously. In September 1617, Beaulieu reports, 'Mrs Devick has taken up her post in Her Majesty's employment and has been shown much favour'.[1015] Similarly, John Wolley informs Trumbull in November 1618 that he had gone 'to Hampton Court yesterday and learned from Mrs Devick that the Queen had recovered her indisposition'.[1016] Following the death of the Queen, Elizabeth Devick continued to furnish Trumbull with information this time of a more personal hue. She returned abroad in 1619 to chaperone his son during his studies at an academy in Sedan, in northern France and ensured his father was given regular updates on his progress. Her signature appears prominently alongside 'Godfather Sanford' [John Sanford?], 'Thomas Loyde' and 'J.Beaulieu' at the bottom of a letter from William Trumbull Jr dated 19 Oct

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[1015] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.290.

[1016] *HMC Downshire*, VI, p.581.

1619 to his father in the *Trumbull Papers*.[1017] Women within households were exceedingly well positioned to gather valuable intelligence, and the connections they forged between themselves were indispensable, if often unseen, components of early modern communication networks. Phyllis Wolley appears to have been closely connected with a woman associated with Walsingham's overseas spy network, Joan Ferneley. Ferneley had lived in Rome with her husband, the double-agent, Solomon Aldred.[1018] She had returned to England and separated from him, initially becoming a member of Anne Dacre, Countess of Arundel's household before marrying the Catholic-leaning Dr Thomas Lodge mentioned in Chapter 5. In a letter to Trumbull, dated 29 June 1609, Lodge refers to the connection between the women in the embassy household, 'As for Mrs Wolley and little Devique [Devick] my Wife would send them a long epistle had she an idle secretary'.[1019] Sadly, we may never no of the nature of this friendship or the subject of their conversations, but the connections between women within these households and their counterparts in the wider political world hint at their value as sources of intelligence not simply as idle gossips.

In short, the actions and agency of household staff mirror to a surprising degree those of the ambassadress. Like their female superiors, travel intensified opportunities for women on the peripheries of diplomatic households to exert influence and promote themselves in both formal and informal settings. In common with the ambassadress, these women attached great value to sociability networks and seized every opportunity to strengthen bonds of association between themselves and those outside their social circles to advance their own interests or in the service of the state.

5. Conclusion

Although statistically small in number compared with those travelling for reasons of trade or religion, the 27 ambassadors' wives who appear in the database provide us with a uniquely detailed picture of women's travel in the early modern period. By the late sixteenth century, the ambassadress had emerged as an enterprising figure on the diplomatic stage, and although her role was never formally recognised, she quickly began to fulfil a complex variety of essential roles. Although the identification of these roles is dependent on the available source material, across the

[1017] BL, Add MS 72424.

[1018] *HMC Downshire*, II, p.112-3

[1019] Alford, *The Watchers*, p.149; Halasz, Alexandra, 'Lodge, Thomas' in *ODNB*, https://www.oxforddnb.com/display/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-16923?rskey=fY2kZW&result=2 (last accessed Apr 2024).

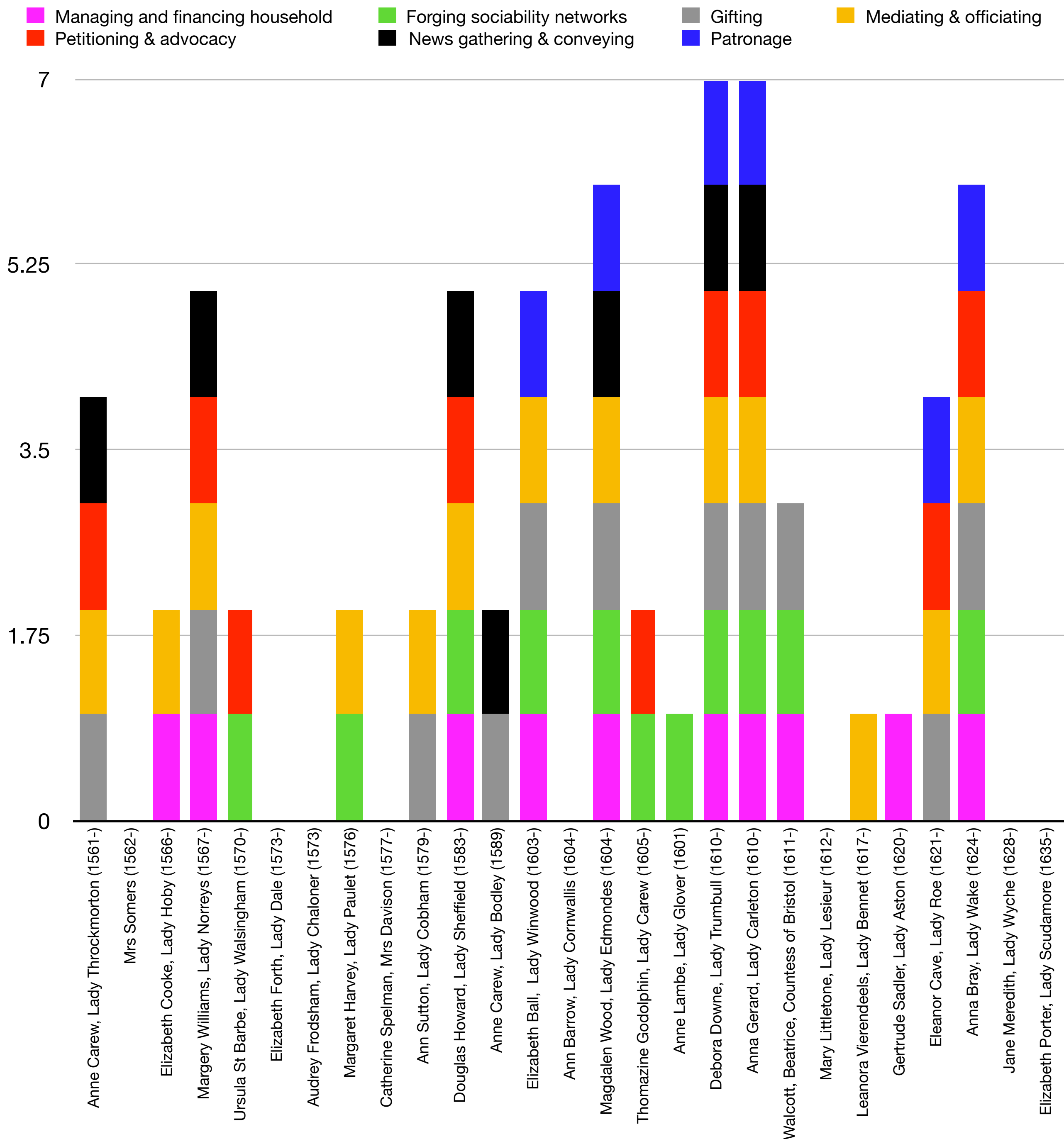

Fig. 6.4. Roles carried out by English ambassadresses.

database at least 7 regularly recur. These range from the practical day-to-day management of the embassy, especially in the absence of the ambassador himself, to more nuanced but equally vital roles such as forging and maintaining sociability networks vital to the success of the diplomatic mission and the advancement of the ambassador's own personal interests. Using the database it is possible to chart the exercise of these roles by different ambassadresses over time (Fig. 6.4).

The most common role across the period, and the one which is most easily identifiable from the records, is that of overseer of the ambassadorial household. Elizabeth Cooke's expense claim for transporting the ambassadorial household back to England following the demise of her husband in

1566 reveals a woman who has an intimate knowledge of the day-to-day costs of running an overseas operation.[1020] Similarly ambassadresses like Beatrice Walcot and Gertrude Sadler were comfortable with the prospect of spending long periods of time maintaining the Spanish ambassadorial residence whilst their husbands were engaged elsewhere.[1021] Forging and maintaining sociability networks became a vital component of 'soft diplomacy', something which the ambassadress executed deftly. Women such as Debora Downe were highly adept at fostering extensive networks both with English overseas exiles, local dignitaries and senior members of the English ruling classes. Similarly, Lady Edmondes counted the Governors of the Spanish Netherlands, the Duke of Mantua and the Earl and Countess of Arundel among her many influential friends and acquaintances. Formal events and family occasions were exploited to the full with the primary objective of further strengthening both personal and political bonds. The christening of the twins born to the English ambassador to Paris and his wife Elizabeth Ball allowed them to acknowledge senior figures on the international stage and strengthen alliances with allies or potential foreign partners. Even in death, the ambassadress and her family were vital assets, as noted with the funeral of Anne Lambe or the eulogies honouring the memory of Elizabeth Trumbull. Gifting played a crucial part, and the ambassadress was at the heart of this process, interpreting the conventions of gifting and ensuring gifts were of appropriate quality. Gifting served to forge the interests of the ambassadress and her family as much as the wider body politic. Trinkets exchanged between Mary Queen of Scots and Lady Throckmorton, wife of the English ambassador to France, provided a material connection between the newly-widowed queen and the English government during the tense aftermath of Francis II's death and Mary's return to Scotland.[1022] Gifting also served to underscore the importance of alliances between England and its allies, but by focusing such gifts on the person of the ambassadress, the risk of such gifts being misinterpreted as some form of obligation was neatly sidestepped.

The database also reveals that some roles perceptibly grow in prominence at certain times. It may be more than a coincidence that ambassadresses were called upon more frequently in the tense religious and political atmosphere of the later Elizabethan and early Stuart era to supplement the news-gathering activities of their male counterparts. Some like Margaret Harvey, Lady Paulet outshone their male counterparts in the performance of this role. New educational opportunities and

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[1020] BL, Add MS 18764.

[1021] *CSPV*, XIV (1615-17), p.160; *Chamberlain*, II, p.610.

[1022] TNA, SP 70/30 f.30.

improvements in language-learning furnished these women with the skills needed to establish their presence among local communities and forge links with powerful elites in their home and host nations. Some like Lady Cobham, were so successful that they became court confidantes and an important conduit for information exchange between the English government and its overseas counterparts.[1023]

Another notable development in the latter stages of this survey is the emergence of a new form of agency for the ambassadress, that of collector and consumer of works of art or luxury goods. The reestablishment of permanent overseas residences during James' reign, placed ambassadors in a unique position to seek out fashionable works of art and commodities for powerful clients available on Europe's flourishing markets. The connoisseurship required for such a role was conventionally a male preserve, but with their sociability networks and language skills, women were willing to enter this field and make their own judgements of taste, too. Lady Carleton, with her well-trained eye clearly excelled at this task, happily travelling independently of her husband to acquire items from markets across the United Provinces for their English clients at home. Others like Lady Edmondes were equally comfortable seeking out costly fabrics and fashionable accessories from as far afield as Milan in projecting a new image of power and status.[1024] The emergence of the ambassadress as a patron of art and consumables is an overlooked characteristic of the ambassadress and one which merits further attention.

All told, the evidence suggests that by the 1620s the role of the ambassadresses was becoming more complex and more valued. Few of the ambassadresses of the early Elizabethan era match the variety of skill sets displayed by those of the Stuart age such as Debora Downe, Anna Gerard or Anna Bray, as graphically demonstrated in Fig. 6.4. Crucial to the agency of the ambassadress was her mobility. Between them, ambassadresses made at least 33 documented trips all though this number was clearly much higher. Journeys involved not just accompanying partners abroad, but regularly moving between the embassy and England on personal or official business. In addition they made countless journeys, often unaccompanied, around their host nations. This mobility gave them unrivalled opportunities to practise the many roles identified in this chapter, be it building sociability networks, deputising and petitioning for their husbands and even participating as equal partners in that bastion of early modern patriarchy, patronage and collecting. In some respects the ambassadress had even greater freedom to move beyond the confines of the

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[1023] See for example *CSPF*, XVII (1583-4), p.264 & *CSPF*, XXII (1588), p.132.

[1024] TNA, SP 16/84 f.70 and *HMC Downshire*, II, p. 18.

ambassadorial residence than her husband, allowing her to carry out the tasks traditionally associated with the ambassador discreetly but arguably more successfully. When it came to representing female monarchs, the ambassadress was clearly seen as a far more suitable representative. Accounts of Anne Sutton's presentation of the portrait of Queen Elizabeth to the French royal family imply that she was entrusted with this highly sensitive and personal task in the knowledge that she would carry out the duty with a level of tact and sensitivity that her husband may arguably have lacked. By deputising for the monarch at events of huge political import, these women were performing roles conventionally pertaining to male ambassadors whilst using their gendered skills to fulfil them with arguably greater exactitude.

The increasing complexity of the ambassadress' work is not merely revealed by statistical analysis of evidence from the database. Acknowledgement of her status in correspondence and contemporary printed literature, along with the first works of art identifying women as ambassadresses, provide material evidence of their increasing stature. In his widely circulated and translated treatise on the art of diplomacy *Il Messagiero* (1582), Torquato Tasso attempted to define the qualities of the 'perfect ambassador', among them dignity, shrewdness, eloquence, grace, affability, even 'belezza d'aspetto', beauty of appearance.[1025] Tasso was concerned with the conventional male figure of the ambassador and made no reference to the qualities required of an ambassador's wife. However, by the Jacobean era things had notably changed. When Hotman's popular guide to the protocols of foreign diplomacy, *The Ambassador* was published in 1603, ambassadors' wives had become recognisable figures on the international stage. Proficient in languages, the manager of overseas households, networker, intelligencer and on top of that gift-giver and patron of the arts, her agency supplemented and sometimes went far beyond the reach of her male counterparts. The ambassadress functioned in a variety of interlocking ways that meant by the 1630s she had become an indispensable part of the diplomatic machinery of the early modern state. Overlooked by contemporaries and later scholars, this was the age not just of Tasso's *Perfect Ambassador*, but also *The Perfect Ambassadress*.

[1025] Torquato Tasso, *Il Messagiero* (composed 1580, published 1582, trans. by Richard Carew as part of Jerusalem Delivered, 1594) cited in Emily C. Francomano, *The Prison of Love: Romance, Translation, and the Book in the Sixteenth Century* (Toronto, 2018), p.64. See also Hampton, *Timothy, Fictions of Embassy: Literature and Diplomacy in Early Modern Europe* (New York, 2009).

Chapter Seven: 'Shoales of ladies': the quest for early modern women travellers - conclusion

The historiography of early modern travel, as noted in Chapter 1, has long upheld the trope that it was principally a male activity, primarily focused on self-improvement, and whose most famous manifestation was the Grand Tour. Popular accounts such as Christopher Hibbert's *The Grand Tour* (1987) along with more scholarly texts such as David Howarth's *Lord Arundel and His Circle* (1985) have helped perpetuate the narrative that travel was an unremittingly masculine venture, enjoyed by a wealthy few with cultural outcomes at its core. Added to this is the persistent belief that the archival footprint of women travellers is so limited as to preclude meaningful research. In *Images of the Educational Traveller* (1995) Sara Warneke was forced to accept that, 'although some women did travel abroad to broaden their minds and increase their knowledge of the world, they were rarities and their numbers formed only a tiny minority of travellers'.[1026] More recently Mary Fuller ruefully concluded in her essay 'Looking for the Women in Early Modern Travel Writing' (2019) we are unlikely to progress from 'not many' names to 'some'.[1027]

However, reviewing the most recent scholarship gives grounds for greater optimism, fuelled in part by a willingness to cast the research net more widely, and adopt a more interconnected approach to the available source material. As Eva Johanna Holmberg noted in her article, 'Renaissance and early modern travel - practice and experience' (2019), the issue of travel has too frequently been 'under-problematized' and called for greater empirical research and contextualisation to challenge the persistent narrative of the 'lone, white and well-educated male traveller'.[1028] In her *Keywords of Identity, Race, and Human Mobility in Early Modern England* (2021), Nandini Das has also proposed new ways of viewing mobility, defining a traveller at this time as anyone who journeyed overseas for 'individual or collective profit or pleasure', whose motives for doing so were considerably more varied in practice than has previously been contemplated.[1029] Expanding the parameters of our understanding of mobility has led to the discovery of both 'new' women travellers and new methodologies for discussing their significance. Most recently, in her book *Confessional Mobility and English Catholics in Counter-Reformation*

[1026] Warneke, *Images of the Educational Traveller*, p.5.

[1027] Fuller, *Travel and Travail*, p.332.

[1028] Holmberg, 'Renaissance and Early Modern Travel', p.516.

[1029] Nandini, *Keywords*, pp.268 & 274. See also Holmberg, 'Renaissance and Early Modern Travel', pp.515–523.

Europe (2018) Liesbeth Corens challenged us to rethink notions of exile.[1030] Far from withdrawing from society, the mobility enjoyed by displaced English Catholics, particularly women, afforded them far greater agency than has previously been contemplated. There has been an increased interest in women's travel for secular purposes, too. In *Web of Empire* (2008), Alison Games has examined the social impact of global exploration and the expansion of international commerce on perceptions of travel, leading to a growing appreciation of the ethical benefits of the presence of women on overseas expeditions.[1031] The renewal of England's overseas diplomatic presence in the wake of the Anglo-Spanish War provided opportunities for women as well as men. Groundbreaking work by Laura Santaliestra (2016) and Gemma Allen (2019) has drawn attention to new diplomatic conventions which served to normalise the notion of the ambassadress and establish their role as 'noble partners in their own right' and 'significant participants' in the activities and culture of the overseas embassy.[1032]

As we saw, new ways of thinking about travel have drawn attention to important lacunae in existing scholarship, most significantly the absence of an extensive database of women travellers comparable with those that exist for men or for other periods and contexts, such as Ingamells (1997), Woolfson (1998) or more recently, the online database *Who were the nuns?*.[1033] Chapter 2 explained how this issue may be addressed, in particular how the challenges of creating an accurate and extensive database can be tackled, given the perceived lack of archive material. Firstly, by looking more widely for instances of travel by women among undervalued sources such as the *Remembrancer Records* or the *Trumbull Papers* (many of which remain unpublished), or by re-reading well-known sources such as the *State Papers* and *HMC De L'Isle and Dudley* against the grain for overlooked instances of women's travel. Armed with such an extensive collection of data, theories could be tested and questions raised about the characteristics of women's travel: the logistics of travel, licensing and itineraries, the sociological profile of travellers, and whether gendered patterns of mobility are genuinely detectable.

As Chapter 3 demonstrated, old assumptions regarding trends in women's travel can now be substantiated, whilst new patterns of mobility have to come to light for the very first time. Systematic analysis of 1,188 passports issued to women between 1558-1630, confirms that most did

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[1030] See for example, Corens, *Confessional mobility*, pp.2-3 and 191-193.

[1031] Op. cit.

[1032] Santaliestra, 'Lady Anne Fanshaw', p.69; Allen, 'Rise of the Ambassadress', p.369

[1033] Op. cit.

indeed travel in the late spring and early summer when Channel-crossings were safest and when trading fairs and popular tourist hubs like Spa were in full swing. Far from 'wide wandring' as contemporaries suspected, 90% of women travellers confined themselves to northern Europe, and only a tiny fraction ventured to countries like Italy or Spain. Women were more likely to visit central and eastern European than the Catholic south. Mapping the itineraries of women travellers spotlights the importance of key centres for women, where infrastructure and support networks facilitated travel. The Cautionary Town of Vlissingen, garrisoned by English troops, was the most popular point of arrival, offering safe and easy access to Europe. Similarly, Louvain, where the first English Augustinian convent was founded in 1609, attracted both postulants and religious fugitives seeking support from fellow English Catholics already established there. Although it is hard to talk about gendered itineraries at this time, certain towns and cities clearly had particular appeal for women. The court in exile established in 1621 by Elizabeth Stuart at The Hague was clearly a focus for women travellers. Before this time, only a handful of women are known to have visited the Dutch city, but after her arrival over 100 are recorded, ranging from household attendants to high-ranking members of her sociability circle. Whilst the divergence of travel according to confessional identity was to be predicted, the database brings into sharp relief the inter-confessional nature of cities and towns like Brussels and Spa, where travellers from either faith converged more extensively. This goes a long way to explaining why Brussels, which recorded 173 visits by women across the period, became such a prominent hub for Jacobean intelligence-gathering as well as an important staging post for onward continental journeys. Likewise Spa, became a hotbed for inter-confessional encounters, receiving at least 100 visits over the same timeframe. Mapping the destinations of travellers on the basis of faith, confirms the popularity of the United Provinces and other 'reformed' regions of northern Europe with women who were broadly Protestant in character against the allure of the Low Countries, France and southern Europe with Catholics. The importance of cities and towns like Brussels and Spa, as inter-confessional hubs is also made starkly apparent.

In addition to sociological trends, the database base reveals common motives for travel. Categorising women's travel comes with two obvious caveats. Firstly, women were not always willing to declare the true purpose of their journeys, often for confessional reasons. Secondly, journeys could be undertaken for a variety of reasons and motives might change as the journey evolved, as the case study of the 1613-14 European tour of the Countess of Arundel perfectly demonstrated. Moreover, if the true purpose of a journey was not always declared on a licence to travel, the destinations and activities undertaken along the way provide the best clues as to their

motives. Surveying the 2,227 instances of travel in the database, at least six recurring motives emerge, namely diplomatic, health, military, personal, commercial and religious (Fig. 3.12).

Paradoxically, the smallest categories of travel, diplomacy and health are conversely the best-documented, accounting for 3% and 5% of the total number of instances. The re-establishment of diplomatic relations with Spain in the aftermath of the Anglo-Spanish Peace Treaty (1604) and the relative lull in hostilities before the onset of the Thirty Years' War facilitated the reestablishment of permanent overseas residences in which women, especially ambassadresses, played an evermore prominent part. The database records the names of 27 ambassadresses between 1558 and 1630, some of whom like Anna Gerard, wife of Sir Dudley Carleton travelled abroad on multiple occasions. We have details of at least 57 journeys during this time to countries as far afield as the Netherlands and southern Europe and Turkey, although not all were undertaken by ambassadresses. Amongst these entries are also the names of socially subordinate female figures, staff and personal assistants like Elizabeth Devick and Phillis Woolley, members of Lady Edmondes' Paris household, whose activities regularly surface among contemporary correspondence. They suggest that women living within diplomatic households, far from constrained by hierarchic conventions, forged close and familial bonds of kinship. The antics of the Edmondes household at Spa reported in their round robins, or the journal kept by Margery Croft of her mini-progress through the Netherlands in the company of Elizabeth Stuart, reveal a camaraderie and interdependency brought about by the shared experience of living abroad.

Similarly, journeys to Spa though proportionately small, were surprisingly well documented. 128 women are known to have travelled to the town in this period, drawn by the therapeutic powers of its springs, but also the promise of what might loosely be described as leisure tourism. In particular, the findings of the database vividly show the exponential growth in travel to the town in the latter part of James' reign (Fig. 3.14). Aside from Spa, the prominence given to journeys associated with nursing care is notable among the entries. Demand for midwives, wet nurses or personal assistants grew as long distance travel became more common and women sought familiar care at critical moments in their lives, notably in childbirth. Women associated with this sector could expect generous remuneration for their services, among them the midwife Frances Vaughan, who received an allowance of £500 from Elizabeth Stuart in 1613.[1034]

Women who followed husbands or other family members abroad attached to English regiments fighting for the United Provinces feature heavily, amounting to roughly a tenth of all

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[1034] *Chamberlain*, I, 489.

entries. They tend to congregate around the garrison towns of Vlissingen and Braille, though others moved closer to frontline positions recorded as The Leaguer in the *Remembrancer Records*. Correlating Privy Council licences with these records has helped to build a richer picture of the activities of officers' wives and household staff. Leading families like the Sidneys, Veres and Ogles gathered substantial households around them, which in turn became focal points for further English visitors. Households were closely connected with local Dutch communities, and the commercial and social ties between them are clearly demonstrated by the fact that as with Brilliana Harley, children were sometimes named in honour of the towns in which families were stationed.

Commercial travel amounts to 12% of the entries in the database. Contextualising these journeys as Holmberg (2019) advocates is particularly fruitful in enhancing our understanding of their nature.[1035] Government records, such as the *Middlesex County Archives* and *Returns of Aliens*, used in conjunction with guild records and topographical surveys like John Stow's *Survey of London* (1598) have helped cast new light on women like Alice Murray, who otherwise would remain as faceless statistics. By identifying her family address at the heart of a community of cloth merchants centred on Long Lane, and combining this with details of her frequent trips overseas recorded in the *Remembrancer Records*, we are able to construct a vivid picture of the part she played and hundreds of other women like her in foreign family operatives. Additionally, women in this group provide a valuable indicator of fluctuations in market forces. The numbers of women travelling to the staple towns of Middelburg, Delft and Rotterdam appear to mirror changes to cloth trading privileges imposed by the Merchant Adventurers.

A quarter of all entries are those women who travelled for one-off or specific reasons, categorised as personal. These range from women travelling abroad for financial motives such as the recovery of property or pensions, to women travelling for reasons of self-improvement, such as Elizabeth Trumbull, daughter of the English ambassador to Brussels, who attended an academy for the children of English elites in Sedan. The database draws back the curtain on many of the tragic personal circumstances that forced women to travel abroad: orphans like Grace Sadler, escorted abroad by elderly relatives or Katherin Harvisse, 'a poor distressed widowe' who travelled to Prague in 1626 'to finde relief there from her late husband's friends' are sadly all too common.[1036] The number of women travelling to visit friends is perhaps surprising, and again underlines the fact

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[1035] Op. cit.

[1036] *APC* (1629/30), p.403; *APC* (1625/6), p.337.

that independent travel by women was not uncommon. Among the more curious personal motives were women eloping to the Continent in the pursuit of love or to escape unhappy marriages.

The largest section of travellers accounting for 27% of all journeys were women travelling abroad the purposes of confessional migration. Plotting the ebb and flow of their movements against key political events like the Gunpowder Plot or the foundation of new English convents, has helped to confirm how significant these moments were in the evolution of female religious exile. All of the women in this latter category travelled, as we have seen, without official sanction, underlining the dangers of being overly reliant on licences to travel when attempting to trace religious refuge. The prosopographical findings captured by the database confirm long-held suspicions such as the average age of postulants (22) along with the average time they subsequently spent in enclosed orders (32 years). Marie Gwen entered the convent of English Franciscan nuns in Brussels in 1623, professed the following year and is thought to have lived there until 1696.[1037] In addition, the database also reveals the scale and complexity of the extensive networks that existed across Europe, to facilitate the transfer of Catholic girls from English recusant families to convents overseas. Not all women who migrated of course were Catholics. It is worth recalling that this category also includes 'reformed' travellers, such as the 50 women listed in the register of the English Church at The Hague or among the notarial records of English pilgrims at Leiden.[1038] For these women, travel was driven by a desire to pursue their Protestant beliefs, alongside the commercial opportunities afforded by living abroad.

Chapter 4 examined how perceptions of travel by women evolved as the numbers doing so grew over time. Conventional wisdom has dictated that authors of travel literature of this period, the so-called *ars apodemica*, were diametrically opposed to the idea of women travelling. A survey of the works of truculent sermonisers like Joseph Hall might confirm this point.[1039] However, as the seventeenth century progressed and travel by women became more widespread, there was a discernible change in tone. Even *ars apodemica* authors were eventually forced to admit the moral and commercial benefits of husbands travelling overseas with wives and families. Some even proposed legendary travelling women such as the Queen of Sheba or the Old Testament figure, Ruth as worthy role models for imitation. In a pivotal case, the East India Company entertained a request

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[1037] Trappes-Lomax, *The English Franciscan nuns, 1619-1821, and the Friars Minor of the same province, 1618-1761* (London, 1922), pp.10 and 128.

[1038] TNA, RG 33/83; https://www.dutchgenealogy.nl/pilgrim-leiden-pilgrim-records/ (last accessed Aug 2023).

[1039] Op. cit.

by Captain Keeling to take his wife on board his merchant ship bound for the South Seas, arguing it was morally unjustifiable for sailors to abandon their wives at home. 'What God hath joined together,' the supporters of Keeling's case argued, 'let not man put asunder'.[1040] Popular literature, too, reflected a growing acceptance of the notion of the woman traveller, and characters like Jonson's Lady Would-Be or Middleton's Lady Twilight, become central and highly credible characters in Jacobean plays and narratives.

Hearing the views of women on travel is a challenging but not impossible task. As Susannah Lipscomb suggested in her recent essay, 'How can we recover the lost lives of women?' (2021) we need to approach existing evidence from a new direction, 'reading between the lines in search of subtexts, listening for silences'.[1041] Her own work on the overlooked history of sixteenth century women, not least *The Voices of Nîmes* (2019) has demonstrated just how ground-breaking this approach can be.[1042] Re-reading evidence 'against the grain' has proven especially constructive when looking for contemporary perceptions of women's travel and foreign experiences. The round-robins and newsletters produced wholly or in part by women associated with diplomatic households or the court of Elizabeth Stuart offer especially rich and overlooked pickings. Margaret Croft's salacious account of a recreational mini-tour of the United Provinces in the company of the Queen and her female attendants, and Mary Sidney's letters to the exiled socialite Tobie Matthew show how travel could at once excite and animate women's minds as well as create a shared experience of adventure whether they themselves could journey alongside them or not. Correspondence directed at so-called armchair travellers, such as the Italian descriptions of Aletheia Talbot's 1613-14 tour sent to her sister the Countess of Kent, show how invested women were in early modern travel, even if this was often a vicarious experience.[1043]

Two particular areas of women's travel are especially well documented and provide detailed case studies regarding the nature and complexity of travel by Elizabethan and Jacobean women. The first concerns Spa, whose popularity with women travellers, as noted in Chapter 5, escalated in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. The reasons for this are manifold. Initially the legendary therapeutic value of its spring waters was thought to be especially beneficial for female health and fertility. Over time, as Corens (2022) has shown, its reputation as a place of refuge and confessional

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[1040] *King James Bible*, 'Mark', Ch.10, v.9.

[1041] Lipscomb, 'How can we recover the lost lives of women?' p.181.

[1042] Lipscomb, Suzannah, *The Voices of Nîmes: Women, Sex and Marriage in Reformation Languedoc* (Oxford, 2019).

[1043] *Cowper*, I, pp.79-82.

coexistence grew.[1044] In addition, it achieved a reputation as a place where formal protocols and conventions of sociability could be suspended and where consequently the agency of women could achieve greater prominence. Ambassadresses like Lady Edmondes were courted by continental dignitaries, whilst exiles like Isabel Huddlestone (aka Mrs Fortescue) were sought out as valuable intermediaries between Catholic families and neighbouring convents.[1045] Women like Jane Lovel were even consulted over the appointment of a new Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury, during an event hosted at Spa in 1615.[1046] Female visitors or nearby settlers may even have served as intelligencers, providing timely information from the operational field in return for political immunity. Among them were Ladies Leedes and Parham, whose inside knowledge on the to-ings and fro-ings of English Catholic exiles was keenly sought by agents of the Jacobean state.[1047] Not only was the town a nexus for information exchange, but some used the excuse of a journey to Spa for other journeys, notably to The Hague, assisted in part by the ministrations of Lady Carleton, wife of its English ambassador and close confidant of Elizabeth Stuart, to foster politically advantageous links with the King's sister.[1048]

Time and again this thesis has shown that travel put women outside the norms of domestic protocols and allowed them to challenge or adapt them to their new circumstances overseas. Confessional exile empowered women, allowing them to be useful intermediaries in the exchange of information, commerce and military migration allowed women greater independence to travel than ever before. The newfound status and influence enjoyed by women within diplomatic households, as explored in Chapter 6, in particular ambassadors' wives, was especially noteworthy. The 'marginal spaces' of the ambassadorial residence as Roberta Anderson (2016) and Gemma Allen (2019) have both demonstrated, offered women opportunities to act as intermediaries to an unprecedented degree.[1049] This thesis has aimed to build on this debate, and demonstrate the evolving complexity of the work that ambassadresses performed. Although the contributions of Elizabethan ambassadresses like Elizabeth Cooke, Lady Hoby and Anne Sutton, Lady Cobham were widely acknowledged, their time spent abroad was of limited duration. During the Jacobean era, when permanent diplomatic residences were emerging, women like Anna Gerard, Lady

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[1044] Corens, 'Seasonable Coexistence', pp.129-164.

[1045] See *HMC Downshire*, II, p.68 ff; TNA, SP 84/73 ff.130-1.

[1046] TNA, SP 14/67 f.217.

[1047] See TNA, SP 77/8 f.418; *HMC Downshire*, V, p.464.

[1048] See for example TNA, SP 14/146 f.5.

[1049] Op. cit.

Carleton and Debora Downe, Lady Trumbull were able to spend much longer periods of time abroad, and expand the remit of their role.[1050] Using the database to gather evidence on the activities of all 27 ambassadresses who served abroad during the Elizabethan and Jacobean eras, we can see how their functions grew in complexity and importance: ranging from the practical day-to-day management of the embassy, to more nuanced but equally vital roles such as forging and maintaining sociability networks through gifting and connoisseurship. These women were especially adept at fostering extensive networks with overseas exiles, local dignitaries and senior members of the English aristocracy and government. Significantly, the 'body' of the ambassadress was as consequential as her personal agency, and family events such as christenings were exploited to maximum effect in strengthening bonds with European rulers by inviting them to participate in proceedings as godparents or as witnesses. The expanding educational opportunities afforded ambassadresses, is partly in recognition of their growing importance. Increasingly, proficiency in foreign languages was cultivated in the service of the state. Few rivalled the linguistic skills of Douglas Howard, wife of the English ambassador to France to the extent she became a close confidant of Catherine de' Medici and an important conduit for information between the English and French courts.[1051] But even daughters of ambassadors, like Elizabeth Trumbull were encouraged to study overseas to improve their communication skills.[1052]

Whilst this thesis hopes to set out more clearly than ever before the true nature and scale of early modern women's travel, it acknowledges that there are many ways in which the work can be developed in the future, not least by the expansion of the database. The construction of a comparable database of male travellers, would enrich our understanding of women's travel immeasurably, as would expanding the geographical and chronological parameters to include travellers from across the British Isles up to the onset of Civil War. The work of Verhoeven (2015) and Leibetseder (2010) has shown that there is tremendous interest among European scholars in prosoprographical research into patterns of mobility among men and women.[1053] Pooling the evidence from this database with other international researchers would undoubtedly deepen our understanding of the interconnectedness of travel networks and permit pan-European comparisons based not just on gender, but also alternative themes such as motives or status.

[1050] See Appendix, Table B.

[1051] See for example *CSPF*, XVII (1583-4), p.264 & *CSPF*, XXII (1588), p.132.

[1052] See for example, BL, Add MS 72425 f.15.

[1053] Op. cit.

Fig. 7.1 Engraving of Elizabeth of Bohemia with Heidelberg in the distance (c.1620), British Museum.

The interdisciplinary nature of this thesis has constantly shown the value of material culture in supplementing the documentary evidence that survives, for instance the commissioning of portraits in identifying and dating the presence of Anne Fernely abroad or the first paintings of ambassadresses in confirming their growing political status.[1054] The exchange of souvenirs or the presentation of costly gifts, all have a part to play in drawing back the veil on women's roles as conduits of international culture, supplementing the sometimes sketchy archival evidence. Equally,

[1054] See for example, Guy, *Thomas Gresham*, p.140.

depictions in art of journeys made by charismatic, historic women travellers, such as Elizabeth Stuart's nuptial progress to Heidelberg (Fig. 6.6.) or Mary Ward's flight to Europe in the *Painted Life* at Augsburg can tell us much.[1055] Even sixteenth and seventeenth century images of legendary or mythical figures such as the pilgrim, St Ursula may usefully supplement the literary record in terms of our understanding of perceptions of women's travel at the time.[1056]

Finally, the role of women in fostering and maintaining gendered socialisation networks overseas has been a constant theme in this thesis and one which would reward closer study in the future. Many of the settings in which women's travel occurred were distinctly gendered, from the newly-founded English overseas convents to the attraction of Spa as a homosocial space for female leisure and interaction. Merry Wiesner-Hanks (2015) and others have conducted ground-breaking research on gendered spaces in the early modern era, and this same methodology could constructively be applied to the context of European travel.[1057] Women played a key role in facilitating travel between England and the Continent through the creation of extensive legitimate and underground networks. English women living within overseas communities were an intrinsic if unrecognised mechanism in the exchange of information among diplomats and other agents of the state. Likewise, the part played by women in sustaining military and commercial overseas communities has historically been undervalued and merits far closer attention than the parameters of this thesis could allow.

The time has come to reevaluate the scale and nature of women's travel across the latter part of the Tudor and early Stuart eras. Old assumptions that women rarely travelled further than their parish boundaries, and that institutional restrictions to their mobility curtailed their freedom to wander, least of all abroad, must surely be revised. Despite the strict licensing system and vigorous societal opposition, women did and were able to travel more extensively and in far greater numbers among different tiers of early modern society than has previously been entertained. Though dismissed by some contemporaries as 'wide wandring weemen' or 'galloping gurles', women's travel in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries helped to normalise such activity for their successors and lay the foundations for international travel for women in the modern era.[1058]

[1055] See Marmion, J. 'Some Notes on the 'Painted Life' of Mary Ward' in *British Catholic History*, Vol. 18, No.3 (1987), pp.318-322.

[1056] See Cartwright, J., *The Cult of St Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins* (Cardiff, 2016).

[1057] See Wiesner-Hanks, Merry E, *Mapping Gendered Routes and Spaces in the Early Modern World* (Farnham, 2015).

[1058] TNA, SP 77/8 f.417, dated 1607; Turler, *The traveiler*, p.9.

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Appendix

A. Table of all known English women travellers to Spa (1558-1630)

	Licensed?	Source	Year of presence	Motive	Religion	Accompanied by	Certificating doctor or reference to medical advisor
Bacon, Ann, Lady Drury	Y	SO 3/4	1610	Health - daughter died shortly after her return.	Protestant	Sir Robert Drury & daughter Elizabeth	
Bacon, Ann, Lady Drury	Y	CSPD, 1611-18, p.52; SO 3/5	1611	Recreation & socialisation - went on a mini tour of Europe with John Donne; her husband may have been hoping to raise his profile as a candidate for an ambassadorial post either at Brussels or Venice	Protestant	Sir Robert Drury & John Donne	
Bacon, Mary	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.79	1623	Religious refuge - granted licence to Spa with Catherine Gascoigne who eventually professed as a nun	Catholic	Catherine Gasgoigne	
Baines, Mary		TNA, SP 14/132 f.34	1622	Health - 'nephritical passion'	Unknown		William Clement & John Draper
Barham, Anne, Lady Butler	Y	CSPD (1603-10), p.424	1608	Recreation & socialisation - visited Brussels for 3 weeks prior to arriving	Protestant	Goddard Oxenbridge; Mr Thetcher offered to act as chaperone	
Bellinghen, Catherine	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.286	1624	Health - no details, but associated with another licence for health	Unknown	'her woemen, twoe servauntes and a boy'	
Bennett, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of Privy Council, 1623-5, pp.222-3	1624	Health - accompanying Sir Arthur who was taking the waters	Protestant	Sir Arthur Ingram, Sara Godericke and two servants	
Berkeley, Joanne, Lady		TNA, SP 14/ 81 f.53	1615	Religious exile - Abbess of Reims	Catholic	Lady Jane Lovel & Lady Cross	
Bet, Mrs		HMC Downshire, II, p.72	1608	Unknown - known to Trumbull's secretary, Jean Beaulieu, who she gave a letter to for her 'dear servant, Cast Bruce'	Unknown		

	Licensed?	Source	Year of presence	Motive	Religion	Accompanied by	Certificating doctor or reference to medical advisor
Birnand, Grace, Lady Babthorpe	Y	Morris, Troubles of Our Catholic Forefathers, I, p.235	1612	Religious refuge - known recusant, refused to take Oath of Allegiance; husband claimed health reasons to travel to Spa	Catholic	Sir Ralph Babthorpe	
Blake, Marie	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1621/3), p.25	1622	Health - 'for the recoverie of her health'	Unknown		
Bramton, Margaret	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), p.195	1624	Health - 'certified of the necessity of her repaire thither' by her doctor	Unknown	Woman and 2 servants	Dr Peire (Pair or Pierre?)
Brereton, Marie	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.286	1624	Health - 'to go unto the Spa for health'	Catholic?	Woman & 2 servants	
Brooke, Elizabeth, Marchioness of Northampton		CSPF, Vol 7-8, 1564-68, p.93	1564	Health	Protestant		
Browne, Anne, Lady Leedes	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1613/14), p.234	1613	Health	Catholic		
Browne, Frances	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1628/9), p.23	1629	Health - 'to drink the waters their at their Fountaines, she being advised thereto by her Phisician.'	Unknown	2 male servants, 2 maids & doctor	
Camden (or Campden), Mrs		TNA, SP 14 / 88 f.107	1616	Religious refuge - associated with Mrs Fortescue in 1616 census of Spa	Catholic		
Chamberlaine, Katherine	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), p.4	1623	Religious refuge - Abbess of Pontoise, Ann Neville, describes the family as living abroad 'with much piety'	Catholic?	Husband, John and daughter Susan	
Chamberlaine, Susan	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), p.4	1623	Religious refuge - see above	Catholic?	Mother, Katherine and father, John	
Clarke, Mary	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.194	1624	Health - with husband, 'for the recoverye of their healthes'	Unknown	Husband, William Clarke and 2 servants	
Coke, Frances, Lady Purbeck		Chamberlain, II, p.319	1620	Health - accompanied husband suffering from possible mental illness	Unknown	Husband, John Villiers	
Cornwallis, Anne, Countess of Argyll		HMC Downshire, VI, p.465	1618	Religious refuge - claimed to be going to Spa for waters but husband announced conversion to Catholicism once overseas	Catholic	Two sons	
Cross, Lady		TNA, SP 14/ 81/ 53	1615	Religious refuge - part of 'general assembly at the Spaw' to choose a Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury	Catholic	Connected with Lady Jane Berkeley & Lady Lovel at Spa	
Cross, Lady		TNA, SP 14/88 f.107	1616	Religious refuge - see above	Catholic	Listed with other papists including Mrs Fortescue, Mrs Camden, Tobie Matthews and George Gage	
Dacre, Elizabeth, Lady Howard		Lord William Howard, Selections from the Household Books of the Lord William Howard of Naworth Castle (Durham, 1878), p.206	1623	Recreation & socialisation - visited with her husband; identified as a potential lady-in-waiting for Elizabeth Stuart earlier & may have hoped to visit her at The Hague	Protestant	Husband, Lord William Howard	
Darcy, Elizabeth, Lady Lumley		SO 3/5; HMC De L'Isle, V, p.112	1613	Recreation & socialisation - takes £200, associated with collecting family, fashionable purchases, e.g. umbrella, uses postmaster Mr Quester for correspondence	Catholic	Her brother (Lord Darcy), members of the Lady Savage & other family members & 24 servants	
Darcy, Elizabeth, Lady Savage		HMC Downshire, IV, p.117	1613	Recreation & socialisation - Lords Chandos & Darcy were interested in collecting items from Aerschot legacy	Catholic	Husband, Sir Thomas Savage, and her father, Earl of Southampton, Lady Lumley, Lord Chandos	
Darcy, Elizabeth, Lady Savage		CSPD (1619-23), p.420	1622	Unknown	Catholic		
Devick, Elizabeth		HMC Downshire, II, p.73 ff	1608	Recreation & socialisation - part of a party including members of the Edmondes staff		Phyllis Wolley and Magdalen Wood	
Digby, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.214	1624	Religious refuge - sister enters a convent	Catholic?	Dame Mary Digby	
Digby, Mary	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.214	1624	Religious refuge - eventually enters a convent	Catholic	Sister & 8 servants	
Digby, Mrs	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), pp.223	1624	Unknown	Unknown	Son, John Digby	
Drury, Elizabeth	Y	SO 3/4	1610	Health - died shortly after the trip	Protestant	Sir Robert Drury & Ann Bacon	
Fayrefax, Margarett (aka Margaret Fairfax)	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.31	1623	Unknown	Unknown	Maid & 2 male servants	
Fortescue, Isabel		TNA, SP 14/88/107	1616	Religious refuge - appears to have helped facilitate the entry of women & girls into local convents	Catholic		

	Licensed?	Source	Year of presence	Motive	Religion	Accompanied by	Certificating doctor or reference to medical advisor
Fowler, Mrs	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.50	1623	Health - accompanying her husband, 'for the recovery of his health'		Husband, Edward Folwer, brother-in-law, William, 3 male servants & 1 maid	Dr John More
Furston, Barbara	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.212	1624	Unknown	Catholic?		
Gascoigne, Catherine	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.79	1623	Religious refuge - granted licence to Spa with Mary and eventually professed as a nun	Catholic		
Gerard, Anna, Lady Carleton		TNA, SP 84/73 f.154	1616	Recreation & socialisation - wife of the English ambassador to The Hague	Protestant		
Gibson, Mrs		Feil, Sir Tobie Matthew, p.86; Tierney, Dodd's Church History, III, p.155	1616	Unknown	Unknown		
Glover, Susan, Lady Philpott	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1617/19), p.442	1619	Health - ' for the cure of infirmities'	Protestant	Husband, Sir John Philpott, maid, 2 male servants & a 'footboye'	Sir William Paddy, knight, Dr Henry Atkins and Dr Theoder Gulston
Godericke, Sarah	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), pp.222-3	1624	Health - accompanying Sir Arthur who was taking the waters	Protestant	Sir Arthur Ingram, Miss Elizabeth Bennett and 2 servants	
Gray, Margaret	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1629/30), p.42	1629	Unknown	Unknown	Husband, Edward Downes	
Greene, Dorothy		Lee, Carleton to Chamberlain, p.209 & 211, n.4	1616	Unknown	Unknown	Mrs Fortescue, Mistress Camden, Mistress Woodrowes	
Greene, Margaret	Y	Acts of Privy Council (1615), p.236	1615	Health - 'for the recoverie of her health'	Unknown	2 servants	Dr Frear & Dr Argent
Greene, Mary		CSPD, 1611-18, p.480	1617	Health - household attendant to Anne Rootes who was going for recovery of health	Catholic?	Anne Rootes	
Gresley, Lady	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1616/17), p.286	1617	Health - 'for the recovery of her health'	Protestant	One gentlewoman, a chambermaid & 4 male servants along with Dr Andrewes	Sir William Paddy (doctor) and Dr Richard Andrewes (who travelled overseas with her).
Greville, Lady	Y	HMC Downshire, VI, p.282	1617	Recreation & socialisation - present during a duel	Protestant		
Hall, Barbara	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.264	1624	Health - 'for the recoverie of her health'	Unknown	Gentlewoman & 2 male servants	
Harington, Lucy, Countess of Bedford		HMC Downshire, IV, p.115	1613	Health - had previously suffered a stroke	Protestant		
Harington, Lucy, Countess of Bedford		TNA, SP 14/122 f.156	1621	Health - mentions recommendations by her doctor	Protestant		Dr Burgess and Dr Purchas
Harris, Lady	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1615/16), p.164-5	1615	Health - 'for the better recovery of her health'	Protestant	Male servant & 2 maids	Dr Argent
Hastings, Elizabeth, Countess of Worcester		CSPD (1611-18), p.138	1612	Recreation & socialisation - Lords Chandos & Darcy were interested in collecting items from Aerschot legacy; met Donne & Drurys	Catholic	Lord Chandos	Mentions a doctor recommended to her by Trumbull, but not named
Henslowe, Mary	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1617/19), p.155	1618	Health - ''the better recovery of her health'	Unknown		
Holcombe, Anne	Y	Acts of the Privy Council, (1616/17), p.336	1617	Health - died 'lately' at Spa	Unknown		
Holcombe, Mary	Y	Acts of the Privy Council, (1616/17), p.336	1617	Personal - recover personal belongings of her sister, Anne	Unknown		
Hone, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), p.4	1623	Religion - connected with Joan (Milbree) Hone apprehended for carrying 'Popish pictures, books &c'	Catholic	Sister, Joan Milbree, James Starchie and servants	
Hone, Joan	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), p.4	1623	Religion - apprehended for bringing back 'Popish pictures, books &c.'	Catholic	Sister, Elizabeth Hoane, James Starchie and servants	
Hougin, Elizabeth	Y	TNA, E 157/1 f. 4	1574	Unknown	Unknown	Husband, Robert Downes, maid, male servant	
Howard, Elizabeth, Viscountess Wallingford, Countess of Banbury	Y	CSPD, (1619-23), p.586; TNA, SP 14/151 f.3	1623	Political - networking at the court of Elizabeth Stuart	Catholic	Lady Hatton, Lady Purbeck, Lady Wharton, Lady Harington & Earl of Essex	
Ingram, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), pp.222-3	1624	Health - accompanying Sir Arthur Ingram who was taking the waters	Protestant	Sir Arthur Ingram, Sarah Godericke & 2 servants	

	Licensed?	Source	Year of presence	Motive	Religion	Accompanied by	Certificating doctor or reference to medical advisor
Ingram, Ursula		HMC Salisbury, XI, p.356	1601	Health - returning from Spa with a group, refused to take the Oath of Loyalty	Catholic	Roger Ingram, Elizabeth Morgan, Mary Williams, Robert Sevell	Dr Lodge, Lambert Hill, London also on arrival, Dr Thomas.
Johnson, Mrs	Y	CSPD (1611-18), p.58	1611	Financial - to petition governor of Vlissingen for her widow's pension; may have travelled to Spa for personal reasons or to petition	Protestant	Sir Rowland Lytton, Philip Lytton, George Smyth, George Nodes & Sam Harvey, Sir Thomas Nevitt	
Kelway, Ann, Lady Harington		HMC Downshire, IV, p.115	1613	Recreation & socialisation - visited during Heidelburg procession & met with daughter, Lucy Harington, Countess of Bedford	Protestant	Husband, Lord Harington	
Knyvet, Catherine, Countess of Suffolk		HMC Downshire, V, p.191	1616	Political - acted as a go-between Salisbury and the Spanish	Catholic		
Langdale, Joyce	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1617/19), p.185	1618	Health - ''being advised by learned physitians to drinke of those waters at the fountaine'	Unknown	Thomas Jackson & female servant, Elizabeth Longdale	Dr Symon Baskervile and Dr Thomas Jackson
Leedes, Mary, Lady Leedes	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1613/14), p.234	1613	Religious refuge - joining her husband Sir Thomas Leedes, with known Catholics	Catholic	2 male servants and 2 maids	
Lewkenor, Margaret		TNA, SP 14/ 161 f.13	1622	Health - reference to previous visit by her doctor	Unknown		Dr John More
Lewkenor, Margaret	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), p.195	1624	Health - 'for the recoverie of her health'	Unknown	2 servants	Dr John More
Longdale, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1617/19), p.185	1618	Health - 'being advised by learned physitians to drinke of those waters at the fountaine'	Unknown	Joyce Langdale & Thomas Jackson	Dr Symon Baskervile and Dr Thomas Jackson
Lovel, Lady Jane (aka Mary Roper)	Y	HMC Salisbury, XVIII, p.419	1609	Religious refuge - travelled abroad in aftermath of Gunpowder Plot; corresponded with Cecil & local Catholic leaders	Catholic	Mrs Vaux' - her sister Elizabeth Vaux, or niece Joyce Vaux?	Dr Turner
Lovel, Lady Jane (aka Mary Roper)	Y	TNA, SP 14/81 f.53	1615	Religious refuge - travelled abroad in aftermath of Gunpowder Plot; corresponded with Cecil & local Catholic leaders	Catholic	Lady Jane Berkeley & Lady Cross	
Maxwell, Lady Anne	Y	Acts of the Privy Council, (1619/21), p.409	1621	Health	Unknown		
Morgan, Elizabeth		HMC Salisbury, XI, p.357	1601	Religious refuge - Abbess of Pontoise, Ann Neville, describes the family as living abroad 'with much piety'; allegedly suffered 'shortness of breath'	Catholic	Roger Ingram, Mary Williams, Robert Sevell	Dr Lodge, Lambert Hill, London.
Newport, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.213	1624	Unknown	Unknown		
Norton, Elizabeth		TNA, SP 15/20 f.140	1572	Political - fled abroad after failure of Northern Rebellion & Ridolfi Plot with husband	Catholic	Richard Norton,	
Parham, Bridget, Lady		Acts of the Privy Council (1613/14), p.59	1613	Religious refuge - husband associated with Bye Plot	Catholic	Husband, Sir Edward Parham & 3 male servants & 1 maid	
Parham, Bridget, Lady		HMC Downshire, V, p.255	1615	Political - met with son of King of Portugal, part of anti-Habsburg faction	Catholic	Husband, Sir Edward Parham	
Parker, Frances	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1619/21), p.218	1620	Health - 'for the recovery of her health'	Catholic	Unknown	Dr Fox
Parkins, Lady	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1629/30), p.361	1629	Unknown	Catholic	2 maids and 2 male servants	
Paston, Margaret	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1621/3), p.276	1622	Health - 'for the recoverie of her health'	Catholic?	1 male servant and 1 maid	
Percy, Lucy, Viscountess of Doncaster, Countess of Carlisle	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1619-21), p.388	1621	Recreation & socialisation - travelled with large assortment of 'with posthorses, hackney naggs, carts, waynes and teames'	Protestant	Lady Isabella Smythe & 'servants'	
Pettet, Mary	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1625/26), p.107	1625	Health - 'for recovery of their healthes.'	Catholic?	Travelled with husband, William Pettet and John Pettet	
Pigot, Mary	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.47	1623	Unknown	Catholic?	Maid and male servant	Dr Browne
Rich, Isabella, Lady Smythe		Chamberlain, II, p.381	1621	Health	Protestant		
Rich, Isabella, Lady Smythe		TNA, SP 84/112 f.210	1623	Health	Protestant	Lady Wallingford	
Robinson, Anne	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1621/23), p.510	1623	Unknown	Unknown	2 servants	
Robinson, Grisell	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.212	1624	Unknown	Unknown	Gentlewoman and 2 servants	
Rootes, Ann	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1616/17), p.260-1	1617	Health - ''to make tryall of that water for curinge of her infirmities'	Catholic	Male servant, Richard Miles & 2 maids, including Mary Greene	Dr Argent & Dr More

	Licensed?	Source	Year of presence	Motive	Religion	Accompanied by	Certificating doctor or reference to medical advisor
Roper, Lady Anne		Hamilton, Augustinian Canonesses, p.120	1611	Unknown	Catholic	Travelled with husband, Sir William Roper.	
Russell, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1615/16), p.165-6	1615	Health - ''to goe to the Spawe for the recovery of health'	Catholic?	Travelled with 1 male servant and 1 maid; also husband, George Russell	Dr John Davis & Dr Richard Andrewes
Scroope, Helena	Y	PC 2/32 f.63	1623	Health - ''for the recouverie of health'		1 waiting woman, 1 male servant and 1 maid	
Seabourne, Ursula	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1625/26), p.98	1625	Health - 'for the recovery of her health'	Unknown	2 male servants & maid	
Shelley, Marie	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1601-4), pp.53-4	1601	Health - 'for the recovery of her healthe'	Unknown	Travelled with 2 daughters, 2 servants	
Shelley, Marie, daughter	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1601-4), pp.53-4	1601	Health - 'for the recovery of her healthe'	Unknown	Travelled with mother, sister & 2 servants	
Shelley, Marie, daughter	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1601-4), pp.53-4	1601	Health - 'for the recovery of her healthe'	Unknown	Travelled with mother, sister & 2 servants	
Sidney, Mary, Countess of Pembroke		HMC Downshire, IV, p.434	1614	Recreation & socialisation - her 'lodging is the court of the English for play, dancing, and all entertainments."	Protestant	Matthew Lister	Dr Matthew Lister
Sidney, Mary, Countess of Pembroke		HMC Downshire, V, p.531	1616	Recreation & socialisation	Protestant	Matthew Lister	Dr Matthew Lister
Smith, Margaret	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1621/3), p.484	1623	Unknown	Unknown	Mrs Ellen Tipper	
Somerset, Ann, Countess of Northumberland		TNA, SP 15/20 f.165	1571	Political - fled abroad after failure of Northern Rebellion	Catholic		
Stanley, Elizabeth, Baroness Morley		CSPD, Elizabeth, Addenda (1566-79), p.491	1575	Political - fled abroad after failure of Northern Rebellion	Catholic	Henry Parker, 11th Baron Morley	
Stoner, Mrs		TNA, SP 14/81 f.53	1615	Religious refuge - present in Spa during selection of Catholic Archbishop of Canterbury	Catholic	Husband, Francis Stoner	Dr Atkins & Dr Gifford
Talbot, Alethea, Countess of Arundel		HMC Downshire, IV, p.154	1613	Political - during progress of Elizabeth Stuart to Heidelberg	Catholic	Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel	
Talbot, Katherine, Countess of Pembroke		Acts of Privy Council (1571-5), p.11	1575	Health - she was reported as being very weak and was visited by Elizabeth I on two occasions	Protestant		
Thornesse, Mary		HMC Downshire, V, p.315	1615	Unknown	Unknown	Husband, Lionel Wake	
Throckmorton, Anne, Lady Catesby	Y	TNA E157/1 f. 4	1576	Health - "for health'	Catholic	Travelling with husband, Sir William Catesby	
Tipper, Ellen	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1621/3), p.484	1623	Unknown	Unknown	Travellled with Mrs Margaret Smith & 4 servants	
Tompson, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1619/21), pp.206-7	1620	Health - ''for recovery of her health'	Unknown	Travelled with one male servant and one maid	Doctor Atkins and Doctor Gulston
Trentham, Catherine, Lady Stanhope		Acts of the Privy Council (1613/14), p.447	1614	Recreation & socialisation	Protestant	Eustace Hart, 2 daughters, in total 16 people	
Trentham, Catherine, Lady Stanhope, daughter		Acts of the Privy Council (1613/14), p.447	1614	Recreation & socialisation	Protestant	Eustace Hart, Catherine Trentham, sister, and others, in total 16 people	
Trentham, Catherine, Lady Stanhope, daughter		Acts of the Privy Council (1613/14), p.447	1614	Recreation & socialisation	Protestant	Eustace Hart, Catherine Trentham, sister, and others, in total 16 people	
Tufton, Cecily, Countess of Rutland		CSPD, (1619-23), p.412	1622	Recreation & socialisation	Catholic	Elizabeth Savage & her husband	
Vaux, Joyce		HMC Downshire, Vol II, p.158	1605	Religious refuge - accompanied Mary Roper (Jane Lovel)	Catholic	Travelled with Lady Mary Roper (Jane Lovel)	
Vernon, Elizabeth, Countess of Southampton		HMC Downshire, IV, p.351	1614	Recreation & socialisation - her husband serving as a volunteer in the war against Cleves at the time	Protestant	Earl of Southampton	
Ward, Mary		York, Letters of Carleton, p.68	1616	Religious refuge - seen with other members of her order	Catholic		
Westby, Elizabeth	Y	TNA, E 157/1 f.4	1574	Unknown	Catholic	Husband, George Allen	
Wharton, Margaret, Lady Wotton		Everett Green, Electress Palatine and Queen of Bohemia, p.218	1623	Political - networking at the court of Elizabeth Stuart	Catholic	Travelled with Ladies Hatton, Purbeck, Walingford and Harington	

	Licensed?	Source	Year of presence	Motive	Religion	Accompanied by	Certificating doctor or reference to medical advisor
White, Ellen	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1590), p.409-10	1587	Religious refuge - refused oath on return.	Catholic		
Whiting, Elizabeth	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/25), p.282	1624	Health - 'for the recouvery of her health'	Unknown	2 maids and 2 male servants	Dr Price
Wildgoose, Ursula	Y	CSPD (1623-5), p.586	1623	Health - 'for the better recovery of her health'	Catholic	three women & two men servants'	
Wilson, Jane	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1621/3), p.500	1623	Health	Unknown	2 servants	
Wilson, Jane	Y	Acts of the Privy Council (1623/5), p.221	1624	Health	Unknown	2 servants	
Wolley, Phyllis		HMC Downshire, II, p.73 ff.	1608	Recreation & socialisation - part of a party including members of the Edmondes Brussels staff	Protestant	John Searle, Elizabeth Devick, Walter Wray, Mathew Malton, Magdalen Wood	
Wood, Magdalen		HMC Downshire, II, p.73 ff.	1608	Recreation & socialisation - part of a party including members of the Edmondes Brussels staff	Protestant	John Searle, Phyllis Wolley, Elizabeth Devick, Walter Wray, Mathew Malton	Dr Andrews
Woodhouse, Mrs	Y	TNA, SP 14/88 f.107	1616	Religious refuge - mentioned in 1616 census	Catholic		
Woodrowes, Mistress		Lee, Carleton to Chamberlain, p.209	1616	Religious refuge - associated with Mrs Fortescue, a chaperone	Catholic?	Mrs Fortescue & Mistress Camden	
Wylliams, Mary		HMC Salisbury, XI, p.356-7	1600	Religious refuge - refused to take Oath	Catholic	Ursula Ingram & Elizabeth Morgan	
Wyndham, Elinor	Y	TNA, E 157/1 f. 4	1574	Health	Unknown	Her husband, sheriff & MP, Thomas Carne, and son	

B. Table of all known English women associated with diplomatic households (1558-1630).

Name	Family connections	Embassy	Recorded overseas	Start	Finish	Source	Literate (Lit.) / Languages, e.g. Fr., It., Sp.
Ball, Elizabeth (1585 -1659)	Wife of Winwood, Ralph	The Hague	1603-13	1603	1613	*De L'Isle*, III, p.48; *Chamberlain*, I, p.473	Lit.
Barrow, Ann (d.1617)	Wife of Cornwallis, Sir Charles	Madrid	1604-10	1604	1610	Winwood, *Memorials of State*, II, p.110	
Bray, Anna (bef.1593-aft.1642)	Wife of Wake, Isaac	Venice	1624-29	1624	1629	*Acts of the Privy* Council,1623/5, p.312; *CSPV*, XXII, p.11	Lit.
Albery, Mistress	Member of William Trumbull's household	Brussels	1613			*HMC Downshire, IV, p.14*	
Carew, Anne	Wife of Throckmorton, Sir Nicholas	Paris	1559-63	1561	1561	*CSPF*, Vol 2, 1559-60, p.31	
Carew (or **Cary**), **Anne** (1564–1611)	Wife of Bodley, Sir Thomas	The Hague	1588-97	1589	1597?	*ODNB*	*Lit; Fr (?)*
Carleton, Alice (will dated 1638, probate 14 Aug 1640)	Sister of Carleton, Sir Dudley	Venice	1610-15			*Chamberlain*, I, p.206, Stoye, p.96	
Carson, Mrs	Member of Sir Henry Wotton's household staff	Venice	1614			TNA, SP 99/6 f.215	
Cave, Eleanor (d.1675)	Wife of Roe, Sir Thomas	Istanbul & Hamburg	1621-28; 1639	1621	1628	*Chamberlain*, II, p.402; Strachan, *Sir Thomas Roe* citing *The Negotiations; Strachan, Sir Thomas Roe, p.239 citing Laud, Works, III, p.576*	Lit.
Cooke, Anne (1564-1571)	Daughter of Hoby, Sir Thomas & Cooke, Elizabeth, Lady Russell	Paris	1566	1566	1566	CSPD, Elizabeth, Addenda (1566-79), p.5 ff	Lit.
Cooke, Elizabeth (1528-160)	Wife of Hoby, Sir Thomas	Paris	1566	1566	1566	CSPD, Elizabeth, Addenda (1566-79), p.5 ff.	
Cooke, Elizabeth (1562-1571)	Daughter of Hoby, Sir Thomas, & Cooke, Elizabeth, Lady Russell	Paris	1566	1566	1566	CSPD, Elizabeth, Addenda (1566-79), p.5 ff.	Lit.

Name	Family connections	Embassy	Recorded overseas	Start	Finish	Source	Literate (Lit.) / Languages, e.g. Fr., It., Sp.
Devick, Elizabeth	Wife of Beaulieu, Jean, secretary to Sir Thomas Edmonde	Brussels & Paris	1605			HMC Downshire, II, pp.419-20	Lit.; Fr
Devick, Frances	Sister of Elizabeth Devick (?)	Brussels	1605-9			*HMC Downshire*, VI, p.574	
Dove, Bess	Niece of Anne Gerard	The Hague	1618	1618	Unknown	CSPD, 1595-7, p.398.	Lit.?
Downe, Debora (- 1638)	Wife of Trumbull, William	Brussels	1609-25	1610	1624	*HMC Downshire*, II, p.378; Add MS 72,439 f.139	Lit.
Forth, Elizabeth (d.1590)	Wife of Dale, Sir Valentine	Paris	1573-6	1573	1575	*CSPF*, 1575-77, p.145	Lit.; Fr (?)
Frodsham, Audrey (1529-1605)	Wife of Chaloner, Sir Thomas	Madrid	1561-65	1563	1564	O'Sullivan, *Reluctant Ambassador*, pp.227-9	
Gerard, Anne (1586 -1627)	Wife of Carleton, Sir Dudley Carleton	Venice, The Hague	1610-15, 1616-25	1616	1625	*HMC Downshire*, V, p.551; *Chamberlain*, I, p.574; Pearsall Smith, *Wotton*, I, p.498, n.1	Lit., It (?)
Godolphin, Thomazine	Wife of Carew, Sir George	Paris	1605-9	1605	1609	Feil Sir Tobie Matthew, p.33	Lit.
Harvey, Margaret (c.1536-93)	Wife of Paulet, Sir Amias	Paris	1576	1576	1579	*CSPF*, 1575-7, p.395	Fr.?
Howard, Douglas (1542/3-1608)	Wife of Stafford, Sir Edward	Paris	1583-1590	1583	1588	*CSPF*, 1583-4, p.117	Fr.
Lamb, Ann (d.1612)	Wife of Glover, Sir Thomas	Istanbul	1606-1611	1606	1611	William Ford, A sermon preached at Constantinople in the Vines of Perah, at the funerall of the vertuous and admired Lady Anne Glouer, sometime wife to the honourable Knight Sir Thomas Glouer…' (1619), p.81	
Littleton, Mary	Wife of Lesieur, Sir Stephen	Vienna	1612	1612	1612	*Chamberlain*, I, p.379	
Louise, Mrs	Member of Thomas Edmondes' household	Paris	1613			*HMC Downshire*, IV, p.181	
Meredith, Jane (d.1660)	Wife of Wyche, Sir Peter	Istanbul	1627-1639	1628	1638	*ODNB*	Turkish
Paulet, Elizabeth	Daughter of Paulet, Sir Amias & Harvey, Margaret	Paris	1576-79	1576	1579	Jardine & Stewart, Hostage to Fortune, (London, 1998), p.52	
Paulet, Joan	Daughter of Paulet, Sir Amias & Harvey, Margaret	Paris	1576-79	1576	1579	Jardine & Stewart, Hostage to Fortune, (London, 1998), p.52	
Paulet, Sara	Daughter of Paulet, Sir Amias & Harvey, Margaret	Paris	1576-79	1576	1579	Jardine & Stewart, Hostage to Fortune, (London, 1998), p.52	
Porter, Angela (b. c.1563-aft 1628)	Wife of Porter, Edmund and mother of Endymion Porter	Spain	1563	1563		TNA, SP 16/534 f.150	
Raworth, Elizabeth (d.1645)	Wife of Weckherlin, Georg Rudolf	Stuttgart	1618-1622	1618	1622	ODNB; Foster, Leonard, 'The Weckherlin Papers', British Library Journal 19/2 (1993), pp.133-41	
Sadler,Gertrude (bef.1592-1639)	Wife of Aston, Sir William	Madrid	-1620	1620	1635	*Acts of the Privy Council* (1619/21), p.223	
Somers, Mrs	Wife of Somers, John	Paris	1562-3	1562	1563	*CSPF* (1560-2), p.550	
Spelman, Catherine	Wife of Davison, William	Antwerp	1577-79	1577	1579	*CSPF* (1575-7), p.553	
St Barbe, Ursula (d.1602)	Wife of Walsingham, Sir Francis	Paris	1570-2	1570	1572		Lit.
Sutton, Anne (d.1611/12)	Wife of Brooke, Henry, Lord Cobham	Paris	1579-83	1579	1579	BL, *Cotton MS Caligula E.* vii, fol. 205r	Fr.
Trumbull, Anne (1616 - bef.1680)	Daughter of Trumbull, William and Downe, Debora	Brussels	1616-25	1616	1625	HMC Downshire, VI, pp.5-6	
Trumbull, Elizabeth (b.c.1611- d.1624)	Daughter of Trumbull, William and Downe, Debora	Brussels	-1611			HMC Downshire, III, p.65	Lit.; Fr.
Virendeels, Eleonara	Wife of Bennet, Sir John	Antwerp	1617	1617	1617	*Chamberlain*, II, p.60; *HMC Downshire*, Vol VI, p.201	

Name	Family connections	Embassy	Recorded overseas	Start	Finish	Source	Literate (Lit.) / Languages, e.g. Fr., It., Sp.
Walcot, Beatrice (1575-1658)	Wife of Digby, John, 1st Earl of Bristol	Madrid	1610-14, 1614-16, 1617-18, 1622-24	1611	1613	*HMC Downshire*, III, p.111; *HMC Downshire*, IV, p.245; Chamberlain, I, p.489; *HMC Downshire,* V, p.11; *CSPV*, XIV, p.160; *Chamberlain*, II, p.85; *Chamberlain*, II, p.432; CSPD, 1623-5, p.292	Lit.; Sp (?)
Weckherlin, Elizabeth	Daughter of Weckherlin, Georg Rudolf and Raworth, Elizabeth	Stuttgart	1616-	1616	1622	ODNB; Foster, Leonard, 'The Weckherlin Papers', British Library Journal 19/2 (1993), pp.133-41	
Williams, Margery (d.1599)	Wife of Norris, Henry, 1st Baron Norris	Paris	1567-71	1569 (earliest ref)	1571?	*CSPF*, Vol 9 (1569-71), pp.42-3	Lit.
Wood, Anne	Sister of Wood, Magdalen	Paris	1610-16			*HMC Downshire*, II, p.343	
Wood, Magdalen (d. 23 Nov 1614)	Wife of Edmondes, Sir Thomas	Brussels, Paris	1605-9, 1609-17	1606	1609	*HMC Downshire*, II, pp.13 & 16; *HMC Downshire*, II, p.342	
Woolley, Phippe	Member of Thomas Edmondes' household	Brussels & Paris	1608-16			HMC Downshire, II, p.73	