

ENGLISH WILLS
IN THEIR HISTORICAL CONTEXT
1383–1800

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Preface

This is the extension volume of Part 1 of *Village Inheritance in Early Modern England Kinship Structure, Inheritance Customs and Generation Continuity* (Matsuyama, 2003). Therefore Chapter 1 and 2 are identical except for minor corrections. Chapter 3 and 4 are the extensions of the 2 Post-scripts of Chapter 2 in the previous volume. Moreover, I have added the new chapter dealing with women's wills. With regard to the arrangement of this material I have published the newly acquired data in three consecutive papers in *The Bulletin of the Faculty of Law and Letters, Comprehensive Policy Making*, Ehime University (17, 19 and 21 ; 2004-6) since the previous volume and I thought it is easier for the users of my data and myself if those data are collected in a single volume.

At this moment Emeritus Professor Peter Spufford, as the ex-President of the British Record Society, has been preparing to write a book on English probate records. The book would cover all aspects of probate records including wills. I hope my data are of some use for the volume.

With Prof. Peter Spufford, Emeritus Professor Margaret Spufford my supervisor when I was a postgraduate student, at the University of Cambridge, has been helping with this study by giving advice and making comments. Furthermore, I owed the idea of the framework of the paper to the International Economic History Congress (IEHC), 2006, Helsinki to Dr. Leigh Shaw-Taylor, of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, Department of Geography, Cambridge University. Chapter 5 of this volume is based on the paper. I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Beatrice Moring, of Essex University, the organiser of session 75, IEHC in which the paper was read and to Mr. Richard Wall, my supervisor during the sabbatical of Prof. M. Spufford, Essex University, the commentator.

As I have counted most of the wills manually, I needed a great deal of help from the assistants listed below : Yuko Kido, Naomi Hayashi, Tomoko Yoshioka, Hiroko Miyamoto, Katsumi Sunano, Naoto Nishitani, Shunsuke Ozaki, Kikuko Suemitsu, Kazuko Kohzu, Miyoko Fukuyama, Naomi Nishihara, Yoshiko Hirata and Chika Tanaka.

I will not continue the counting of wills, as I said when I read a paper based on chapter 5 at the 2006 IEHC. This is partly due to the kind and

caring advice of Prof. Margaret Spufford, and partly due to the digitisation of the indices of the record offices. In future, all the indices for English wills eventually including a well million of Prerogative Court of Canterbury wills, are supposed to be digitalised and so it will become possible to count them in whatever way is required almost instantly. However, it takes some time to do this and the data provided here could be of some use even in facilitating the process of digitalisation.

This is the extension for Part 1 of the previous volume. Accordingly, I am also preparing another extension volume for Part 2, the case study focusing on Willingham. This would come after my current research on the Japanese village, Kami-shiojiri, in Nagano. The study of Kami-shiojiri itself has widened my horizons and opened up many new perspectives by having English and Japanese studies side by side.

I thank my university, faculty and department which funded the publication of this volume as a series of Supplements of Ehime University Economics Society. In particular, I should show my gratitude to all the members of the International Comparative Studies Society headed by Professor Tsutomu Abe. Also, this volume, is part of the annual report on the grants given by the Trust Companies Association of Japan ('The "soil" of English trust wills system observed in the family trees complex and the genealogical data' 3 years: 2007–2009). Furthermore, this study has been financially aided, in particular for the travel expenses for the U. K. research by the 2006 Human and Social Sciences Research Assistance of the Asahi Glass Foundation ('An international comparative study of regional networks based on trust and credit' represented by Prof. Takayuki Matsui, Ehime University). I would like to express my sincere thanks to him too.

I am deeply grateful Mr. Mark Fountain who has done such a painstaking job of proofreading my English drafts. For improving my original English sentences enough to submit my wife as well as partner Jane Susan Bloy has been helping me greatly for a long time. I would like to thank her again.

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Matsuyama, Ehime

Motoyasu Takahashi

Introduction

Large numbers of wills from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries survive in England. These constitute a wonderful historical source. Japan has no equivalent historical source available over such a long period. A significant distinction between the two societies is that in Japan there are no probate wills. Through examining English society from the view point of making wills and the preservation of probate wills as ecclesiastical documents, it might reasonably be expected that we will be able to identify some distinctive features of Japanese society where there had been no such system, although there were written wills. Such a basic foreign perspective is the starting point of this investigation.

Sources

The data used here have been gained from the volumes of indexes published by various record societies including the British Record Society and Yorkshire Archaeological Society, as well as some digitalised indexes.¹

I have already published some of the data in English and the researchers quote them. Furthermore, even the unpublished data has been used in the recent collected essays by the members of British Record Society and Local Population History Society for giving a general overview. Moreover, in the record office I have been asked about possibility of the data being used as the database for wider use.

On the contents of wills

Wills are important in historical research as the contents potentially

¹ British Record Society, *Index Library*, Vol. 1, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 22, 24, 25, 27, 28, 31, 34, 35, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 49, 51, 52, 53, 54, 56, 57, 61, 69, 71, 73, 78, 79, 82, 87, 89, 90, 91, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107; *Index to Wills and Admons 1389-1688* by Yorks Arch. Soc. Record Series, 4, 6, 11, 14, 19, 22, 24, 26, 28, 32, 35, 49, 60, 68, 89. Digitalised Index from Hampshire Record Office and Cheshire Record Office. To gain the digitalised data, I owed to Dr. Leigh Shaw-Taylor. I would like to express my gratitude to him here, again. Also I would like to thank to both of the Record Offices.

reveal so much. Information appearing in the wills can be categorised as follows: firstly, the identity of the testator. Secondly, the relationships of the testator as well as how literate the testator was., and finally, information is abstracted on the bequests or provisions as quantitative data.

The first category includes the name of the testator, the date of the will, the date of probate, the parish and the occupation of the dead person. Examples of the occupation could be yeoman, husbandman, labourer, craftsman and widow. We could add fisherman or waterman to this list as they appear occasionally as descriptions of status in the diocese of Ely.

The second category covers the bequests of the soul, the literacy of the testator or witnesses and the identity of the scribes. In addition there may be bequests for communal use by church and town, and then, the bequests of land and houses and lastly, the bequests of the residuary legatee and executor or overseers (supervisors) are indicated.

Having completed the above information as far as possible, more quantitative data is required as the third category of information, illustrating the allocation of provisions. These include items usually for the sons, such as land, cash, stock, equipment and grain, dowries for daughters and other provisions for the widow. Any provisions for godchildren are also indicated. Finally, details of property and furnishings are stated.

General data

Prior to 1400, the 'national' total remains up to 6,000, but in the fifteenth century the wills number some 35,000. Both Prerogative Courts occupy a third of the total extant wills made in that century. In the sixteenth century the increase is particularly significant after about 1550. The cumulative number of wills made in the course of the century is more than 300,000. Both Prerogative Courts dealt with almost one third of the national totals. The seventeenth century show very fluctuating patterns, partly due to the effect of the Interregnum when the Probate proceedings were supposed to be the responsibility of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. The totals were almost double those of the previous century, around 600,000. As for the eighteenth century, the British Record Society decided to stop compiling the index after 1700, and the index is limited to a few dioceses only and also the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, but still there are more than a half million wills.

Will-making as the social custom : the dual features of the religion and secularity.

By the unprecedented nationwide study based on the systematic and extensive use of church accounts, R. Hutton has revealed the longevity of the ritual customs on the calendar.² Although the definition of such customs is inevitably rather wide, at least Hutton's findings on the ritual customs appeared in the church accounts and this study's local inheritance customs reflected in the wills share the characteristics that they varied from parish to parish and many of them were in fact revised or newly generated to match the economic and social demands of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Of course most contemporaries believed that both the ritual customs and local inheritance customs were 'immemorial customs' which never varied or changed, even if such customs had been created just a few generations before.³

Whatever the ritual customs or local inheritance customs they dealt with, the customs must have been observed taking into account the reality of the daily life of their parishes or communities. Without ever being specially written down, the customs kept changing generation by generation. However, because of the lack of written evidence, the customs were believed by the contemporaries to be a continuation of ancient traditions going back to time immemorial. Nevertheless, such customs were often generated only a few generations before they were written down in the official records. The local inheritance customs were mainly for the individual families, but the customs themselves were the products of the communities to which the families or individuals belonged. Therefore, I would agree with the statement of E. P. Thompson that to understand the complex subject of inheritance, we have to study the inheritance customs practised by a particular family and the inheritance customs of the grid which the community provided and which laid down the rights of inheritance and the regulations governing it.⁴ Such a grid is not well understood until the process of inheritance is studied. B. Todd's comparative case study of the Free Bench in neighbouring parishes in Berkshire shed light on the role played by women

² R. Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 5, 49.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 61, 79.

⁴ E. P. Thompson, 'The grid of inheritance : a comment', J. Goody, J. Thirsk and E. P. Thompson, eds., *Family and Inheritance* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 328, 358-9.

in bridging male generations by adding the extra years lived by the widow to the total lifespan of her late husband.⁵ The widow was effectively the head of the family after her husband's death, and helped maintain the family estates. In these cases, such women did not own the rights of the estates, but handed them over to their sons. Of course, the more complex reality of the customs could not be expressed in the documents.⁶

To express my own view through the study of Willingham, Cambs., the customs themselves were passed down from one generation to another throughout the period. Under the sixteenth century's particular social and economic circumstances, will-making customs became part of the local inheritance customs through trusts, and spread so as to become nationwide customs, and this process was accompanied for the first time by the documentation of the local inheritance customs. This change explained clearly by Chapter 7 of the previous book. From now we need to wait for the accumulation of individual case studies to confirm the data, but even at this moment we have sufficient corroboration. To begin with, R. Houlbrooke points out that during and immediately after the Reformation period the charity given and donations made to relieve poverty and for the welfare of the local community were very prominent in wills, but afterwards this gradually became a good deal less common and almost disappeared by the second half of the seventeenth century.⁷ The period simultaneously saw the wills become less and less religious and more and more private, with the provisions limited to the welfare of close relatives.⁸ Houlbrooke's view seems to be based on his own experiences through the reading of many wills and must therefore be regarded as empirical, but still not based on the quantitative data which this current study is providing. Nevertheless, his statement sounds about right. Furthermore, the annual totals fluctuate to an extent that does not necessarily correspond to the population growth, and this is particularly true after the mid-eighteenth century (Chapter 3).

Wills had had both religious and secular aspects since the medieval period,⁹ but the trend towards secularization was strengthened by the fact

⁵ B. Todd, 'Free Bench and free enterprise: widows and their property in two Berkshire villages', J. Chartres and D. Hey, eds., *English Rural Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Honour of Joan Thirsk* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁶ E. P. Thompson, 'The grid of inheritance', p. 337.

⁷ R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 129-30.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 86, 109.

that a will functioned as a trust document. This function became more important after the mid-sixteenth century. It is in this very period that I have found in Willingham mentions of third or fourth degree or even more distant kin relationships appeared more in wills reflecting the existence of supportive kin networks, in particular those supporting the minor families who had lost fathers when they were young. After the sudden loss of the religious guilds or fraternities which had served to provide care for the vulnerable members of the community they must have required some support system to help them cope with the enormous social and economic changes of that period and until the poor law systems were implemented appropriately.¹⁰ On the other hand, in this period 'trust' was quite important in the society and the equity court was the most likely to guarantee it. The equity court dealt with many cases including money lending which required 'trust'.¹¹ To ensure such trust existed, individuals who were kin, even sometimes fairly distant relatives such as cousins were included in those cases. However, research on the establishment of relationships based on trust has not yet been carried out in sufficient detail, and it is expected that light will in due course be shed on the extended kin relationships.

It is difficult to say there is a solid consensus among students on how to understand the customs prevalent in this period, and this lack of agreement includes inheritance customs. Even until recently social historians or legal historians often tended to assume the customs have existed since time immemorial and therefore have remained unchanged.¹² However, as T. Stretton perceptively remarks, customs are collective forgetfulness as well as collective remembrance.¹³ Customs can be changed, and are flexible in response to the circumstances.¹⁴ It is possible to see sudden changes. On the other hand, it is always rather surprising to be reminded that throughout the period under consideration customs have in general continued to restrict the legal rights of women and to limit the range of their activities in the community. This is significant to remark since customs are thought to

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹⁰ M. Takahashi, *Village Inheritance in Early Modern England* (Matsuyama, 2003), Chapter 7.

¹¹ T. Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 203, 206–7.

¹² T. Stretton, *Women Waging Law in Elizabethan England*, p. 157.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 165.

respond appropriately to the social and economic demands of each period.¹⁵

The customs of any particular historical period are a mixture of past and present, and some aspects will be orally transmitted from generation to generation whereas others will be put into written form.¹⁶ The wills are typical of this latter tendency, particularly in the period between the second half of the sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries. From a broader perspective, it is important to note that in the very sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the shift from an oral to a written culture occurred as various documents indicate.¹⁷ Another example of this increasing tendency to write down the customs can be seen in landholding, as the court records reveal very clearly, with limitations on the ownership of land having been previously regarded purely as an unwritten code.¹⁸ The economic and social demands of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries meant that the local customs as well as ritual customs were documented.¹⁹ The peak period for the documentation of local customs was the period between the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.²⁰ Of course not all customs were written down, and even by the mid-eighteenth century some memory had been kept without being expressed in written form.²¹ However, by that time, wills had become recognised as a national custom and as a way for prosperous people to deal with their property, having undergone a transition from being orally transmitted to being written down, and having also lost their religious characteristics. The references to “yeomen” should have been disappearing in the wider English Society,²² but in wills alone the term had survived as a description of social status even after 1700, as we can see from the Essex data. Nevertheless in parallel with the decline in historical importance of wills, the term ‘yeoman’ is disappearing, being replaced by the word ‘farmer’ which is clearly a description of an occupation.

Of course, there have been many studies based on testamentary data as later (Surveys in Chapter 2 and 5), but these tend to be local and limited to

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

¹⁶ A. Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England 1500–1700* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 279–80.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 11, 50.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 36, 261.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 259.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 290–7.

²¹ R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, p. 109.

²² E. P. Thompson, ‘The grid of inheritance’, p. 329.

relatively short periods of time. In other words, these studies lack a long-term national context. To provide such a context requires the following questions to be posed,

- (1) How many wills survive ?
- (2) How did this vary geographically and over time ?
- (3) How does this relate to the wills that were actually drawn up ?
- (4) What proportion of people left wills ?
- (5) How does this vary geographically, over time and by social class ?
- (6) What proportion of wills were left by women ?
- (7) How did this vary geographically, over time and by social status ?
- (8) What proportion of testators described their occupations and or status ?
- (9) How did this vary geographically and over time ?

We need answers to all these questions to fully contextualise the numerous studies based on testamentary data.

For this purpose, I decided to extend Part I of my previous book, *Village Inheritance in Early Modern England*. Part I is made up of two chapters. They consist of the same first chapters for this book, and are virtually unchanged from the original version. They give a general overview of the survival of wills and the connection between the numbers of wills made with the demographic trends of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as well as a basic discussion on the economic and social context to the making of probate wills. Therefore in the questions listed above, the first five have been answered with suggestions for further research which could be done looking at this area of social and economic history from different perspectives.

Now I have done a substantial amount of further research, and I am able to add Chapter 3 which gives a comprehensive assessment of the survival of the wills proved in England, using the annual data on almost 1.5 million of wills. This chapter is also an extension of Postscript 1 to Chapter 2 in the previous volume. Furthermore, it should be noted that Chapter 4 is an extension of Postscript 2 to Chapter 2. So the chapter concentrates on the matter of the fifth as well as eighth and ninth questions mentioned above. The chapter is an analysis of the declarations of status and occupations in wills. The shift from the social status being declared to the occupations being given instead occurred as a consequence of economic development accompanied by the division of labour generating the subdivisions of occupations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In the final Chapter, the sixth and seventh questions concerning

women's wills are discussed. As a result of the new method of counting women's wills on the basis of the name given, the possibility of inflating the number of women in the final totals is suggested. Moreover, the number of wills made by women where the status is clear, for example in cases where the testator is a widow, wife or spinster, are arrived at by use of several sets of regional data and the different viewpoints taken are indicated.

Chapter 1 The Number of wills proved in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Graphs, with tables and commentary¹

Introduction

Although the existence of wills as historical evidence has been familiar since the eighteenth century, their systematic use is not so old. Less than twenty years ago Dr. Margaret Spufford was one of the pioneers in the systematic use of wills in early modern English social history.²

Among the problems that have constantly perplexed systematic users of probate material is the question of what proportion of the population, at any one time, made wills or had their goods formally administered after death. Beyond this lies the question of whether this proportion changed over time, and, if so, for what reasons. Did the numbers making wills increase within the same social groups? or did the will-making habit spread to other groups? Within these larger problems lie the less significant question of whether the proportion making use of the Prerogative Courts changed.

In order to provide some indication of the answers to these problems the number of wills proved annually in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, the Consistory Courts of Ely and Worcester and the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester have been tabulated and graphed for the period from 1480 to 1629.³ No doubt due to the tremendous labour involved, no such graph has ever been drawn before. It speaks for itself.

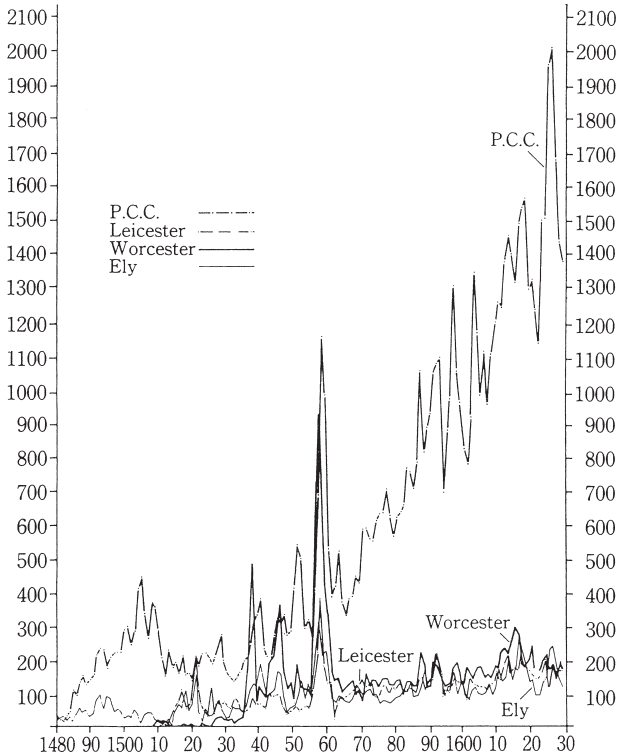
Sources

The graph and tables have been drawn up from the volumes of indexes

¹ The tables and graphs are presented here as I drew them up, but I am much indebted to Dr Peter Spufford for improving the English of my accompanying text when editing it for publication, and to the supervisor of my research in Cambridge, Dr. Margaret Spufford, for much helpful advice, and for suggesting this particular line of enquiry to me. I would also like to thank Dr. Christopher Marsh for his assistance at an early stage in this piece of work.

² For example in *Contrasting Communities*.

³ See Graph I-1, and Appendix Table1 : Wills proved in England 1380-1800.

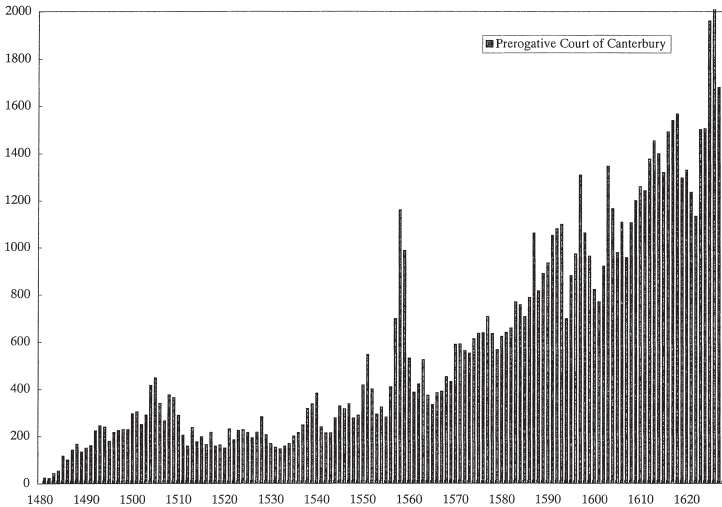
Graph 1.1 *Wills proved in the four courts, 1480–1629 : Annual Totals*

Sources : The number if the volume of *Index Library*. Worcester : 31, 39 ; Leicester : 27, 51 ; Ely : 103, 106, 107 ; PCC : 10, 11, 18, 25, 43, 44, 54, 61, 67, 71.

published, and about to be published, by the British Record Society in their *Index Library* (Appendix Table 1 and Graphs 1.1~1.5).⁴ All wills, whether registered or original, have been counted, but administration and unattached inventories have been excluded. Where bundles or registers cover more than one year, and the indexes do not give any indication of the date of individual wills, the number of wills involved has been arbitrarily divided equally between the years with which the bundle or register concerned is labelled.⁵

The Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury was the supe-

Graph 1.2 Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1480-1629: Annual Totals

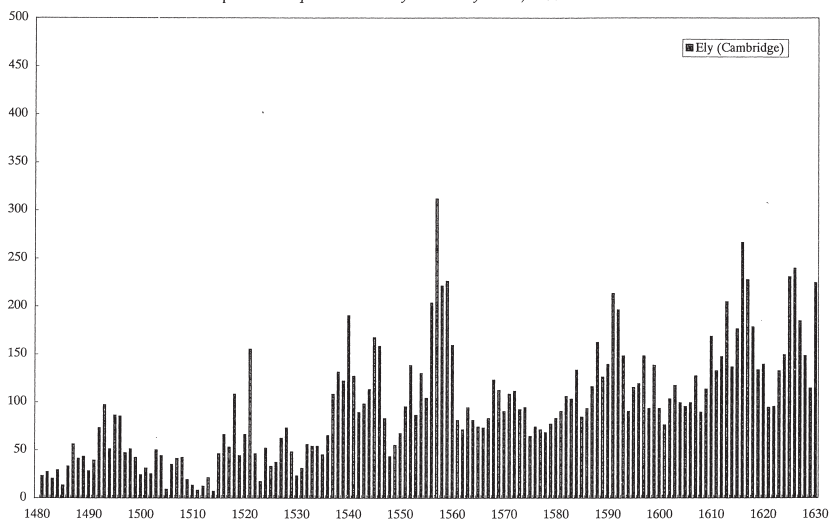
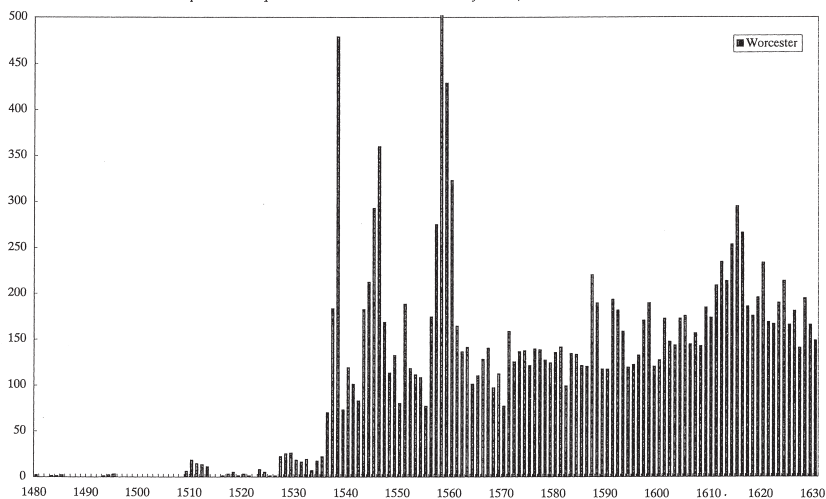


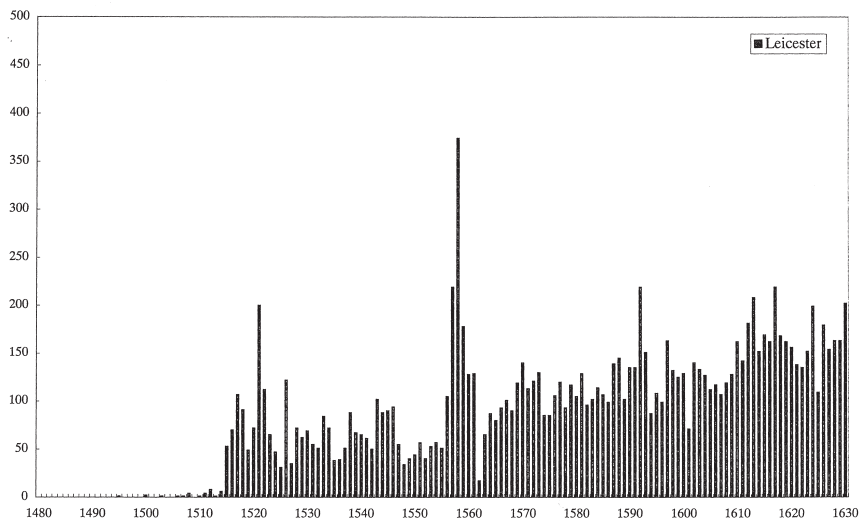
rior probate court for the whole of England and Wales. In theory this only meant that testators dying with property in more than one probate jurisdiction in southern England had to have their wills proved in this court. The Prerogative Court of York had a similar jurisdiction in northern England, whilst executors dealing with property in both the provinces of Canterbury and York had to go to the Canterbury court. In practice large numbers of

⁴ For the Prerogative Court: *Index of Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*, i & ii, 1383-1558, ed. J. Challoner C. Smith (1893 & 1895); iii, 1558-1583, compiled S. A. Smith, ed. Leland Duncan (1898); iv, 1584-1604, compiled S. A. Smith, ed. Edward Alexander Fry (1901); v, 1605-1619, ed. Ethel Stokes (1912); vi, 1620-1629, ed. Ethel Stokes (1912), *Index Library*, vols 10, 11, 18, 25, 43 and 44. For Ely: *Index of the probate records of the Consistory Court of Ely, 1449-1858*, 3 vols, compiled C. A. & D. Thurley, ed. E. Leechham-Green, vols 103, 106 and 107. I am indebted to Dr Rosemary Rodd of the Literary and Linguistic Computing Centre of Cambridge University for access to this unpublished material. For this court I used the date of making the will if given, and the date of registration if the date of making is not given, rather than the date of probate. For Worcester: *Calendar of Wills and Administrations in the Consistory Court of the Bishop of Worcester*, i, 1451-1600 and ii, 1601-1652, ed. E. A. Fry (1904 and 1910), *Index Library* vols 31 and 39. For Leicester: *Calendars of wills and administraliorts... in the Archd. . aconry Court of Le/cester*, i, 1495-1649, ed. Henry Hartopp (1902), *Index Library* vol. 27.

⁵ This affects the totals for Worcester for 1538, 1539, 1542, 1543 and 1544, and for Leicester for 1611, 1612, 1613, 1614, 1615, 1628 and 1629.

The Number of wills proved in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Graph 1.3 *Wills proved in the Ely Consistory Court, 1480-1630: Annual Totals*Graph 1.4 *Wills proved in the Worcester Consistory Court, 1480-1630: Annual Totals*

Graph 1.5 *Wills proved in the Leicester Archdeaconry Court, 1480-1630: Annual Totals*

executors in southern England went to the Prerogative Court even though they did not need to do so, and it thus came to be the normal probate court for many of the more important people in the country.

The provincial jurisdictions were chosen because of the convenience of the indexes to their probate records. However they also represent different geographical areas of the country, East Anglia, and the West and East Midlands respectively. The jurisdiction of the Consistory Court of Ely covered most of the ancient county of Cambridgeshire and the old Isle of Ely, with the exception of the town and university of Cambridge and of the deaneries of Bourne, Shingay and Fordham. The jurisdiction of the Consistory Court of Worcester covered most of the ancient county of Worcestershire, with the exception of some twenty parishes in the diocese of Hereford, but it also included over seventy parishes in Warwickshire, forming the south-western third of that county. The jurisdiction of the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester was almost exactly coterminous with the ancient county of Leicestershire.

General trends

Any discussion of the general trends in the quantities of wills to survive,

is complicated by both the particularly large numbers of wills surviving from years of epidemics, and by the strong impression that in the early years only a very small proportion of the wills made and proved are available to us. The number of wills surviving from Worcester from the second half of the fifteenth century and the first quarter of the sixteenth was very limited. The earliest will to survive from the Consistory Court of Worcester dates from 1439, but a regular annual sequence of wills from that court is not available until 1527. Comparison with figures of wills referred to in the court books in the neighbouring diocese of Hereford,⁶ suggests that the surviving Worcester wills for this period were not representative of the numbers that were likely to have been proved. Although the number of fifteenth century wills surviving at Ely was much more substantial than at Worcester, it was still not up to the level of those proved at Hereford. The earliest wills from the Consistory Court of Ely date from 1450, but the great fluctuation in numbers from year to year suggest that regular keeping of wills only began in 1479, although they may not survive fully until 1537.⁷ The earliest will from the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester dates from 1495, but the regular sequence there only began in 1515.

The surviving wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury began in 1383, but they have not been graphed until 1480 when wills from the Consistory Court of Ely begin to survive in reasonable numbers. For the late fourteenth century never as many as twenty wills proved in the Prerogative Court have survived from any one year. However for the first quarter of the fifteenth century there were nearly always over thirty surviving wills proved each year and frequently over fifty.⁸ The numbers increased markedly from the late 1480s as they also did for the Ely court. Whether it is only that a greater number have survived from this period or that will making increased around this date must be a matter for speculation. By the end of the century there were regularly over two hundred wills a year, that have survived, proved in the Prerogative Court, and in Ely normally over fifty. After a burst of activity in the first years of the sixteenth century the surviving wills from the Prerogative Court returned to the level of the 1490s, some two hundred

⁶ See below pp. 16–7.

⁷ From the decade up to 1536 an average of 51 wills per year have survived, and from the decade after 1537 an average of 148 wills per year have survived, The 1540s may therefore mark the commencement of full record keeping rather than an abrupt increase in will-making.

⁸ See Appendix Table 1.

a year, until the 1530s. Wills proved in the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester only really survived from 1515 onwards. In the following decade the numbers increased both there and at Ely, even discounting the plague year of 1521.

Worcester wills effectively started from 1527. The 1530s show slight increases in numbers at Leicester and sharp rises in the Prerogative Court and at Ely and Worcester. At the latter the surviving wills from the plague year of 1538 even exceeded the Prerogative Court numbers as they did again in the next outbreak of plague in 1546. In the 1540s all the provincial courts proved greater numbers of wills than in the 1530s and this general gradually rising trend continued decade by decade until the second decade of the sixteenth century.⁹

After the influenza epidemic of 1557–9 the fortunes of the Prerogative Court and the provincial courts diverged markedly. Whilst the number of wills proved in the latter only increased in line with the growing population, the numbers proved in the Prerogative Court increased quite startlingly. By the second decade of the seventeenth century over thirteen hundred wills a year were normally proved in the Prerogative Court, compared with only two hundred a year in the early decades of the previous century. This more than sixfold increase in the use of the Prerogative Court contrasts with probably less than a doubling in the numbers of wills in the provincial courts. This is very difficult to calculate because of the problem of survival in the first decades of the sixteenth century. Moreover whereas the numbers of wills proved in the provincial courts probably only continued to keep pace with the number of burials,¹⁰ those passing through the Prerogative Court continued to increase much more rapidly. In the 1620s over fifteen hundred wills a year were normally proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Between 1661 and 1685 they averaged over nineteen hundred a year, between 1686 and 1693 over two thousand two hundred a year, and in the later 1690s around three thousand a year.

⁹ See Graph 1. 1~1. 5.

¹⁰ Only the Ely wills have been counted up to 1700 and there is an intriguing correspondence between the trends in the Ely will figures and in the annual burial totals for England. There is equally a relatively close match with the burial totals for the fen-edge village of Willingham within the diocese itself. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities*, p. 19. Graph 1. Nine year moving averages of Willingham population 1560–1740.

Survival of wills from the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries

We have supposed that the unevenness of each of the provincial series of wills in its early years represents a situation in which it was not yet normal to preserve or copy every will that was presented to the court for probate. The problem is highlighted by the immense number of entries in the court books of the bishop of Hereford for the fifteenth century, each representing a will presented for probate which has not been preserved.¹¹

The diocese of Hereford covered the county of Hereford and parts of six adjacent counties. Herefordshire is the immediate neighbour of Worcestershire to the west and yet the numbers of wills of which we are being made aware are utterly different (Table 1.1).¹²

In the introduction Mr. Michael Faraday explains that in the period 1407-8 to 1540-1 they had calendared no fewer than 12,000 probates. Over the whole period of time some two hundred wills were proved annually. Compared with other figures the Hereford figures are enormous.

For the isolated year 1407-8 there were 82 wills proved in the Hereford Court, coming from only two of the thirteen deaneries in the diocese. This should be compared with 51 surviving wills from the

Table 1.1 *Annual totals of Probate Acts from the Diocese of Hereford, 1442-1541*

year	Acts	year	Acts
1442-3*	216	1491-2*	125
1445-6	412	1494-5	250
1447-8	188	1499-1500	325
1453-4	321	1500-1*	223
1455-6*	173	1501-2	317
1456-7*	184	1502-3	409
1458-9	242	1507-8*	193
1459-60	165	1508-9	434
1467-8	62	1514-15	300
1468-9	215	1517-18	239
1471-2*	213	1522-3	258
1472-3	201	1523-4	244
1473-4*	122	1525-6	272
1475-6*	214	1527-8	399
1479-80*	564	1529-30	351
1480-1	232	1530-1	313
1481-2	228	1534-5	202
		1535-6	227
1486-7	390	1537-8	387
1487-8	317	1538-9	180
1488-9	240	1539-40*	227
1489-90	193	1540-1	273
1490-1	168		

* incomplete, some deaneries missing in this calendar.

Source: M. A. Faraday and E. J. L. Cole, eds., *Calendar of Probate and Administration Acts 1407-1541 and Abstracts of Wills 1541-1581 in the Court Books of the Bishop of Hereford* (London: British Record Society, 1990)

Prerogative Court for 1407 and 44 for 1408. The Hereford probate acts are almost continuous from 1442-3. There are peaks in 1445-6, 1479-80, 1502-3 and 1508-9. In the first of these peaks, 1445-6, over 400 wills were proved in Hereford. At the same time less than fifty survive from the Prerogative Court. By the late 1460s and early 1470s the number of Hereford probates had stabilized at around 200, at the same time the number of Prerogative Court wills had also stabilized, but at around eighty. Despite such initial disparity of numbers the Hereford numbers and the Prerogative Court numbers generally exhibit rises and falls at about the same dates from the 1440s to the 1530s. Although the same phases of change affected both, the Prerogative Court survivals do catch up in number with those which passed through the Hereford court. By the 1490s both are in the two to three hundred range.¹³

Mr. Faraday has analysed his probates by Deanery, and it is quite extraordinary to realise that in a single sparsely inhabited deanery in Herefordshire on the marches of Wales, more wills were proved than have survived from the same period from the whole diocese of Ely in eastern England.¹⁴

In the light of this evidence from Herefordshire we have to push back the period when will making became common at least as far as the middle of the fifteenth century. Earlier commentators who believed that they saw the beginning of widespread will making in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth

¹¹ M. A. Faraday and E. J. L. Cole, eds., *Calendar of Probate and Administration Acts 1407-1541 and Abstracts of Wills 1541-1581 in the Court Books of the Bishop of Hereford* (British Record Society, 1990). I am indebted Dr. Peter Spufford for access in this unpublished material, Mr Faraday has already published a discussion of this material as M. A. Faraday, 'Mortality in the Diocese of Hereford 1442-1541', *Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club*, 42 (1977), pp. 163-74.

¹² No amount of social differentiation could adequately explain such a difference. The survival of gavelkind in parts of Herefordshire, the poverty of many of its inhabitants, the lack of secondary employment there, and the growing emphasis on large scale sheep farming and corn growing may have made minor differences to the numbers of wills made, but cannot account for the totally disparate numbers with which we are concerned. For the economic and social situation in rural Herefordshire see J. Thirsk ed., *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, iv 1540-1640* (Cambridge, 1967), p. 109 and do., 'Industries in the countryside', in F. J. Fisher ed., *Essays in the Economic and Social History of Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1961), pp. 70-88.

¹³ For the annual totals of probate acts calendared in the diocese of Hereford, 1442-1541, see Table 1.1.

¹⁴ Faraday, *Hereford*, Introduction, p. xiv.

century need to be corrected.¹⁵ What began then was not the widespread making of wills, but the widespread survival of the wills made.

Epidemics and other crises of mortality

Dr. Paul Slack has already used probate records to investigate the impact of plague in Tudor England in his recent book on plague and the social responses of the English people to it in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁶ For his probate evidence he also used volumes of the Index Library to help establish the chronology of epidemics between 1485 and 1560. As well as the Consistory Court of Worcester and the Archdeaconry of Leicester, he used the volumes of indices of London Commissary Court wills, of Wills at Chelmsford, of Berkshire Probate Records, of Archdeaconry of Lewes wills, and of wills from the dioceses of Lichfield and Exeter.¹⁷ He did not use the Prerogative Court indexes, and the Ely index had not been compiled when he was undertaking his research. He did not tabulate the numbers of wills involved, nor did he graph his results, apart from the London Commissary Court before 1565, so that for probate evidence of epidemics the work presented here complements and expands that already published by Dr Slack.

In addition to probate material, Dr. Slack also used the extensive parish register material collected by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure,¹⁸ and a range of urban sources from fourteen selected towns. Although he expressed reservations about the weakness of his sources, including both wills and parish registers, as indicators of the frequency and severity of mortality crises, Dr. Slack concluded that there were at least 17 periods of crisis mortality between 1500 and 1670, once

¹⁵ For example Dr. Barbara Hanawalt, using Bedfordshire evidence, believed that will making only became common in the late fifteenth century, *The Ties That Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford, 1986), p. 14; and Dr Cecily Howell and Mr S. Coppel, using Leicestershire and Grantham evidence respectively, believed that will making only became common in the sixteenth century, C. Howell, *Land, Family and Inheritance in Transition*, pp. 62 and 70, and S. Coppel, 'Wills and the Community: A Case Study of Tudor Grantham', in Philip Riden, ed., *Probate Records and the Local Community* (Gloucester, 1985), pp. 77-8.

¹⁶ P. Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1985).

¹⁷ Slack, *Plague*, p. 57, Table 3.1: Years of high mortality 1485-1560, p. 147, graph of wills from London Commissary Court 1478-1565, and p. 358 n. 8.

¹⁸ Summarised in Table A10.2 of E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schoirfield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871*, p. 653.

every decade on average.¹⁹ He also pointed out that his evidence was heavily weighted towards towns, and that rural experience did not always correlate with urban. Probate evidence comprehends the differing experience of towns and countryside alike.

Dr. Slack found that the Commissary Court of London wills greatly increased in numbers between 1497 and 1500, and concluded that this was evidence of plague in the city, which fitted neatly with the strong literary evidence for plague in various parts of the country between 1498 and 1504. However our new evidence helps to confirm Dr Slack's suspicion that it was confined to the city, despite the literary evidence. The Prerogative Court figures rise in 1500 and 1501, but not markedly beyond the general rising trend, whilst the number of wills preserved from Ely actually falls.

Dr. Slack found evidence of an epidemic, possibly plague, in London and Essex in 1504. The considerable rise in the Prerogative Court wills in that year and 1505 suggests that on this occasion the epidemic was much more widespread, but Ely was not affected.

The sweating sickness and plague of 1517–18 which Dr Slack noticed in London, Essex and Leicestershire is also evident in Ely in 1518, but is barely reflected in the Prerogative Court wills.

In his consideration of probate records Dr. Slack found much evidence of disease outside London through the 1520s, in Berkshire in 1521 and 1529, in Leicestershire in 1521 and 1526, and in the diocese of Lichfield in 1524, 1527 and 1530. He also misconstrued the beginning or regular preservation of wills at Worcester in 1527 as an epidemic-related increase in numbers. It is very easy to confuse the aberrations of record survival with external events at this period. Indeed much of the evidence for the 1520s may represent irregular increases in preservation of wills rather than increased mortality. However the new evidence from Ely supports the notion that there was an epidemic in 1521, but not later in the 1520s. On the other hand the new evidence from the Prerogative Court might point to an epidemic in 1528, but not earlier in the decade. Dr Slack's consideration of non-probate evidence suggested to him that there were urban epidemics in Norwich in 1520, in London and York in 1521 and in Worcester in 1528.²⁰

Literary evidence indicates that bubonic plague returned to England from Germany and the Low Countries in 1535, and the urban evidence

¹⁹ Slack, *Plague*, pp. 54–9.

²⁰ Slack, *Plague*, p. 61, Table 3.3 and p. 358 n. 14.

shows just such a return of bubonic plague in the middle and late 1530s, in Bristol in 1535, in Shrewsbury in 1536–7, in Reading, Exeter and Hull in 1537, and in York in 1538–41. Dr. Slack discerned probate evidence of plague in the Diocese of Worcester in 1538, and in London, Essex and Berkshire in 1540. Our new evidence from Ely and the Prerogative Court is confirmatory. Both courts show greater numbers of wills from 1538–40, particularly from 1540. This, particularly the Prerogative Court evidence, suggests that plague was widespread in these years and not merely limited to a few towns.

Plague continued through the 1540s. Dr. Slack's urban evidence particularly emphasises the middle years of the decade, London in 1543, Reading in 1543–4, Bristol, Norwich, Worcester and Newcastle in 1544–5, and Salisbury, Exeter and Lincoln in 1546. His probate evidence confirms this from Berkshire, East Sussex and the diocese of Worcester for 1545 and for the diocese of Exeter for 1546. Our new evidence from the Prerogative Court and from Ely also produces a fresh peak in numbers for these years, again indicating that plague was yet more widespread.

The fact that the numbers of wills available to us so closely reflects the waves of plague suggests both that the onset of the disease was sufficiently slow for those who were to die of it to have the opportunity of making their wills, and that friends or acquaintances were prepared to risk the contagion to come in to act as scribes at the bedsides of the dying.²¹ It was not until Burghley's plague orders of 1578 that continental notions of quarantine were introduced into England, and that harsh and strict rules for the isolation of infected households began to be enforced.²² Dr. Slack discusses at length how far the public was prepared to accept these rules, and cites examples of testators being reduced to making their final wishes known orally when the rules were enforced, even on one occasion to strangers through a window when the house was boarded up.²³

The great influenza epidemic of 1557–9 exerted a terribly baneful influence upon almost all areas of England. Its effects seem to have been worse than any of the visitations of plague in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Ely and Prerogative Court evidence amply bear this out. The

²¹ See C. W. Marsh, 'In the Name of God? Will-Making and Faith in Early Modern England', in G. Martin and P. Spufford, eds., *The Records of the Nation*, pp. 226–30, for a discussion of the time taken to make wills.

²² Slack, *Plague*, pp. 207–26.

²³ Slack, *Plague*, pp. 284–310, particularly pp. 287–8 and 413 n. 17.

number of wills proved at Ely in 1557 was never reached again before I stopped counting in 1700. Although the number of wills proved in the Prerogative Court was regularly exceeded from 1608 onwards with the great general rise in the number of wills passing through that court, as well as in the crises of 1597 and 1603, never again did those proved in any single year so greatly exceed the general number being proved at the time.

In 1563 Dr. Slack observed a 24 per cent increase in the number of wills passing through the London Commissary court, and Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield noted crisis mortality from April to October, with particularly large numbers of deaths in June and July. Our new Prerogative Court of Canterbury figures indicate an increase in will numbers in this year, but not as marked as in London. Our figures from the provincial courts show no significant increase at all.

After the peak years from the 1540s to the 1500s crisis mortality did not recur for a whole generation.

The harvest failures of 1586 and 1587 produced the first of the late Elizabethan subsistence crises. Famine and famine related disease lifted the number of deaths entered in parish registers in 1587 and 1588 more than 25 per cent above the normal level for the period. Our new material from probate records also suggests that deaths greatly increased in these years. The number of wills increased significantly in all three provincial courts that were examined, but more markedly at Worcester than at Ely and Leicester. However at all three the number of wills in these two years was greater than at any time since the influenza epidemic of three decades earlier. In the Prerogative Court too the number of wills increased markedly in 1587.

Plague spread through England from Devon between 1591 and 1593, ravaging London in 1592. The Worcester, Ely and Leicester wills increased as a consequence in 1591, and those in the Prerogative Court during all three years.

Harvest failures produced another subsistence crisis in 1597 and 1598, and Dr Slack found evidence of crisis mortality in eleven of his fourteen towns. Although the Ely, Worcester and Leicester wills increased in number by about a fifth over the preceding years, this was not so marked as in the plague of 1591. However in the Prerogative Court the number of wills proved passed 1300, around 40 per cent more than in the preceding years. This was more marked an increase than in 1591-3. Is it not extraordinary that famine-based diseases should produce such mortality even amongst those substantial enough to have their wills proved in the Prerogative

Court? That surely deserves further investigation.

Plague recurred very seriously in London in 1603, and the number of Prerogative Court wills increased to over 1300 again, presumably reflecting this high metropolitan mortality. Our probate evidence suggests that it may not have spread extensively to the provinces. There were only marginal increases in the wills proved at Leicester in 1602-3, and at Worcester in 1604-5, and no increase at all at Ely at this time. Moreover Dr. Slack only found urban evidence of plague in three towns outside London.

Our probate evidence would suggest that the next crisis of mortality took place around 1616-17. There were peaks in the numbers of wills proved in the Prerogative Court in 1616-18, and in all three of our provincial courts - in Worcester in 1614-16, and in Ely in 1616-17. This perhaps provides another minor corrective to Dr. Slack's comprehensive survey of epidemics. It does not fit with any of the periods of crisis mortality picked out by him. However, Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield did pick out January 1616 as one of their 'national crisis' months, with a monthly death rate 50-99 per cent above normal. This, combined with the will evidence, might suggest that 1616 ought to be added to Dr. Slack's seventeen selected crises.²⁴

The harvest failures of 1623-5 produced the third and last of the English subsistence crises of this period, exacerbated by a major plague in 1625. Deaths recorded in parish registers leapt to more than 40 per cent above the normal level for the period. Those producing our probate records did the same. In 1625 and 1626 wills in the Prerogative Court increased by around a third, to some two thousand each year; in the Worcester and Leicester courts by much the same proportion; but in Ely by an even larger percentage.

There is a close correlation between probate evidence and parish register evidence for the chronology of crisis mortality, from the inception of parochial registration onwards. This close correlation suggests that, even if we no longer have all the wills that were made and proved, those which survive do so in proportion to those which were made.²⁵ This argument cannot, for lack of parish registers, be pressed further back than 1541 and

²⁴ Slack, *Plague*, p. 339.

²⁵ A. L. Erickson's work on probate accounts suggests that even in the late seventeenth century considerable numbers of wills were made and proved which survive neither as originals, nor as registered or office copies. She hopes to throw further light on this in future research.

we believe that, outside the Prerogative Court, the survival of fifteenth century wills was wholly fortuitous.²⁶

Population growth

Having established that the surviving wills correlate well with the mortality crises of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, we can look at the underlying trends and ask whether or not the growth in the numbers of surviving wills, and by implication the numbers of wills made, correlates with what we now know about the numbers of deaths.

A detailed comparison of our graph with the overall graphs provided by Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield generally coincides.²⁷

Unfortunately they have no firm evidence before 1538 because of the lack of parish registers.²⁸

The graphs, both of burials and of wills in the 1540s and 1550s are dominated by recurrent crises. As already seen the latter follow the former closely. Deaths show a fall, followed by a steep rise in the decade of the 1540s. The Prerogative Court and Worcester wills show almost the same trends, whilst the Ely and Leicester wills exhibit the same pattern but more modestly.

The 1550s contrast with the 1540s, deaths rose at the beginning of the 1550s, fall by the middle 1550s and rise steeply by the end of the 1550s. The same trends are shown by the Prerogative Court and Worcester wills.

The underlying trend of deaths after the crisis year of 1563 was downwards, a natural compensatory movement after a major mortality crisis. The numbers of wills from Worcester remains little changed, but in Ely and Leicester, and even more in the Prerogative Court the numbers of wills rose, against the trend in deaths. In other words this was a period when the proportion of will makers was rising. In the 1580s deaths remained low until the crisis of 1587, but in our provincial courts, except Worcester, the numbers of wills went on creeping upwards, before rising sharply in 1587. The same trend was even more marked in the Prerogative Court. The generation

²⁶ See above pp. 42-3.

²⁷ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, figure 2.3, pp. 58-9, pullout 1, and figure 7.1, p. 207. The latter graph also appeared in R. M. Smith, 'Population and its geography in England 1500-1730', in R. A. Dodgshon and R. A. Butlin eds., *An Historical Geography of England Wales* (London, 1978), p. 205, fig. 8.2.

²⁸ For the period before 1538 see below p. 206.

between the plague of 1563 and the subsistence crisis of 1587 was marked by an increasing proportion of will makers amongst those who died.

The next decade was dominated by mortality crises, but it was followed by another compensatory fall in the number of deaths in the first decade of the seventeenth century. Apart from the London plague of 1603 and the winter epidemic of 1616, there was no major crisis until 1623. The long term trend in the number of deaths was however rising gradually, along with the overall population. All three provincial courts, and, more markedly, the Prerogative Court have rising number of wills at this time. However, once again will makers in a period between crises can be seen to be an increasing proportion of those who died.

Comparing numbers at the beginning and end of the period should determine whether the rising proportion of will makers among those who died in the periods between crises, had any long term effect when combined with what happened in the crisis periods themselves.²⁹

In the first quinquennium for which Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield calculated deaths, 1540-4, they estimated that 425,000 people died in England. For the last quinquennium for which we have counted wills, 1625-9, they estimated that 647,000 people died.³⁰ This is an increase of 52 per cent. Unfortunately both periods were subject to epidemic mortality. In the same quinquennia in the three provincial courts, 1680 people made wills that have survived in 1540-4, and 2527 people in 1625-9. This is an increase of 50 per cent. In other words the number of will makers whose wills have survived from these three provincial courts increased almost exactly in proportion to the number of deaths in the country as a whole. However in the Prerogative Court, 1,325 people made wills that have survived in 1540-4, and 8,464 people in 1625-9.³¹ This is an increase of 538 per cent, and it is quite clear that a vastly increased proportion of executors proved wills in the Prerogative Court in 1625-9 than in 1540-4.

²⁹ I would like to thank Dr Peter Spufford for this idea.

³⁰ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 495. See also below, pp. 212-13, for a more detailed comparison of the 1560s and 1620s. The number of deaths is the proper standard for comparison, not the overall population. The first date for which Prof. Wrigley and Dr Schofield calculated the total population was 1541, when they estimated a total population of 2,774,000 for England. For 1631, the next 'census' date after we stopped counting wills, they estimated the total population at 4,893,000. (*Population History*, pp. 208-9.) This is an increase of 76% : compared with the increase of only 52% in deaths.

³¹ In 1540-4: 697 at Worcester, 617 at Ely, 366 at Leicester; in 1625-9: 844 at Worcester 915 at Ely, 768 at Leicester.

For the period before 1540, although we do not have parish registers to give us a clear picture of the population, some indications can be gleaned from other sources. The muster books of 1522 and the subsidy returns of 1524 and 1525 have been used by Julian Cornwall to suggest that the population of England was then some 2,300,000, and already increasing rapidly towards the 2,700,000 estimated by Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield for 1540.³² Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield have themselves postulated notional figures for deaths for the years before 1540 to fit in with such estimates of population growth. They guess that, in the five years after the 1521 plague, around 67,000 people were dying annually.³³ The numbers of wills surviving from this period include just over two hundred from the Prerogative Court.³⁴ If the numbers from the Prerogative Court are not unusable because of the problem of survival at this period, they would suggest that in the 1520s and 1530s the number of will makers whose wills passed through the Prerogative Court increased by 27 per cent, almost exactly in line with the number of deaths postulated by Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield.

The Prerogative Court and the provincial courts

Our overall impression is that the numbers of wills proved in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries in the Prerogative Court and our three provincial courts followed divergent patterns. The number of wills proved in the Prerogative Court followed the number of burials from at least the 1520s through the crisis years up to 1563, but then expanded much faster than the number of burials. The wills proved in three provincial courts together continued to follow the number of burials as far as we have traced them, although the three courts exhibited rather different characteristics.³⁵

It is clear therefore that not only was there a much greater use of the Prerogative Court by executors from 1563 onwards, but that the total number of wills made increased, for the switch to the Prerogative Court by

³² J. Cornwall, 'English Population in the Early Sixteenth Century', *ECHR.*, 2nd ser., 23 (1970), 32-44.

³³ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 736.

³⁴ See Appendix Table 1. The total for 1522-6 is 1045 from the Prerogative Court.

³⁵ The will makes increased by only 21 per cent at Worcester. by 48 per cent at Ely and by 110 per cent at Leicester. It is not yet possible to know whether the experience of any of these courts was typical. The Ely figure most closely conforms to the overall increase in burials throughout England.

executors did not bring about any diminution in the number of wills proved in the provincial courts. The numbers were kept up by wills made by people whose predecessors would not have made wills at an earlier date.

It is difficult to estimate the overall impact of the sixfold increase in wills proved in the Prerogative Court, for we do not yet know how many wills were proved in the whole range of provincial probate courts. The three courts we have examined are only a small proportion of the whole range. There were no less than fifty major probate jurisdictions in the sixteenth and seventeenth century province of Canterbury of which the largest was the huge Commissary Court of the Bishop of London, and in addition hundreds of minor courts down to those of minute peculiars covering single tiny villages. It is not even clear if the experience of our courts was typical. If it was typical, we would estimate that in the 1620s approximately seven times as many wills were proved in the provincial courts of the province of Canterbury than in the Prerogative Court.³⁶

In the first half of Elizabeth's reign a similar calculation would suggest that only one fourteenth part of the wills of the province of Canterbury passed through the Prerogative Court.³⁷

It is not easy to pick out the social status of the executors who came to use the Prerogative Court whose predecessors would not have done so. The

³⁶ Between 1620 and 1629 an average of 70 wills a year from Worcestershire, Leicestershire, and Cambridgeshire with the Isle of Ely were proved in the Prerogative Court, whilst 480 wills a year were proved in the Leicester Archdeaconry Court and the Worcester and Ely Consistory Courts together. This can be only a very approximate correspondence as it ignores the proportion of Worcester Consistory Court wills which came from Warwickshire, and the proportion of Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely wills proved in the Ely Archdeaconry Court. These omissions probably more or less cancel each other out. In the 1620s the total number of wills proved in the Prerogative Court annually averaged 1,517. On this basis one might conclude that something of the order of ten thousand wills were being proved annually in the provincial courts of the province of Canterbury at this time.

³⁷ Calculated on a similar basis to the 1620s, but for the period 1558 to 1583, covered by the *Index of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*, iii. This period includes the beginning of the vast expansion of the use of the Prerogative Court by executors. In this quarter century the total number of wills proved in the Prerogative Court annually averaged 583, but this is an average of very different figures for the beginning and end of the period. In the 1560s, after the epidemics were over, there were normally fewer than four hundred wills proved each year, but by the 1580s there were normally over seven hundred wills proved each year. If an average of such different figures is of any use at all it might suggest that in the first half of Elizabeth I's reign something of the order of six to eight thousand wills a year were being proved in the provincial probate courts of the province of Canterbury.

occupational index to the Index of Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury for the period 1605–19 reveals that in these fifteen years the wills of over eight hundred husbandmen and even those of fifty two ‘labourers’ and ‘day labourers’ were taken to the Prerogative Court. Common sense would suggest that the wills of husbandmen and labourers were much less frequently taken to the Prerogative Court at the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign, but unfortunately the volume of index for 1558–83 was not provided with a supplementary index of trades and conditions. It is therefore not possible to say how many fewer wills of husbandmen and labourers were taken the Prerogative Court at that period. It is also probable that the number of yeomen’s wills taken to the Prerogative Court also increased considerably in the second half of the sixteenth century and the early years of the seventeenth, but this cannot be measured either. Considerable numbers of yeomen’s wills were of being taken to the Prerogative Court at the beginning course already of Elizabeth’s reign, as well as those of the gentry, the nobility, the higher clergy and leading townsmen. Social and local historians need to know that from Elizabeth’s reign onwards it is worth looking in the Prerogative Court for the wills of quite ordinary people that the might not previously have expected to find there.

Although London was beginning to grow very rapidly indeed at this time, the bulk of the additional wills came from provincial, rural, England. This shift to the Prerogative Court correlates with a growth in centralisation in many fields and is yet one more indicator of the increase in the importance of the ‘nation’ as opposed to the region at this time.

The new computerized index to the Ely wills allows us to measure the downward social spread of will making in one part of provincial England at least. Prof. Hoskins was one of the first to look at the spread of will making. He cited the will of a rich labourer in Leicestershire as early as 1560–1³⁸ and pointed out that such cases were exceptional but not rare. He found a few examples in every year covered by the Leicestershire probate inventories. He nevertheless suspected that the habit of making wills did not spread widely among ordinary people until the 1670s. He placed this in the context of the great improvement of living standards involved in the widespread rebuilding of smaller houses in the late seventeenth century, which followed his ‘great rebuilding’ of larger houses in rural England earlier in the century.³⁹

³⁸ With personal estate of £ 32 18s 8d, W. G. Hoskins, *The Midland Peasant*, p. 174.

It is now possible to see whether Prof. Hoskins was correct in his guesswork. Wills proved in the Ely Consistory Court do not give status or condition in the fifteenth century apart from those of priests and women. In the first half of the sixteenth century a small number of others do so, although it was not yet common, and the large majority have no indication of status. The largest group of those whose status was given were the husbandmen. The numbers of these gradually increased, but averaged just over three a year over the whole half century. The earliest wills of people specified as labourers were proved in 1518, and by the 1540s wills of men picked out as labourers were proved in most years. Can we take it for granted that most of the will makers who did not specify their occupation were in fact yeomen? although no-one bothered to call himself a yeoman when making his will until 1530. In the second half of the sixteenth century it became much more common to specify a status when making a will, and from the 1580s over half of the testators whose wills were proved in the Ely Consistory Court did so (Table 1.2 and Graph 1.6).⁴⁰ In the 1580s and 1590s, of 2,495 wills proved as many as 1,416 gave some indication. Of those which did, the largest group, apart from the 283 women, was still the husbandmen (Table 1.3 and Graph 1.7). There were 430 of them. There were also 232 labourers. There were still only 201 who called themselves yeomen and a mere score of gentry. Of those who declared themselves, 38 per cent called themselves husbandmen and 20 per cent called themselves labourers.⁴¹

In the 1620s and 1630s 3,146 wills were proved in the Ely Consistory Court. By now well over two thirds of the testators gave themselves a status. Again, apart from the 446 women, the largest groups were the 510 husbandmen and the 391 labourers. Yeomen now much more commonly declared themselves. 368 did so. Of those who declared themselves, 29 per cent called themselves husbandmen and 22 per cent called themselves labourers.⁴² If it is borne in mind that self-estimation by will makers was frequently

³⁹ W. G. Hoskins, *The Midland Peasant*, pp. 200 and 301, and for another aspect of this improvement of living standards see Margaret Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1984).

⁴⁰ See Table 1.2, Percentage of Ely wills giving status or occupation, 1540–1639, and Graph 1.6; and Table 1.3, Numbers of different declared status in Ely wills, 1560–1639, and Graph 1.7, Numbers of different declared status in Ely wills, 1580–1639.

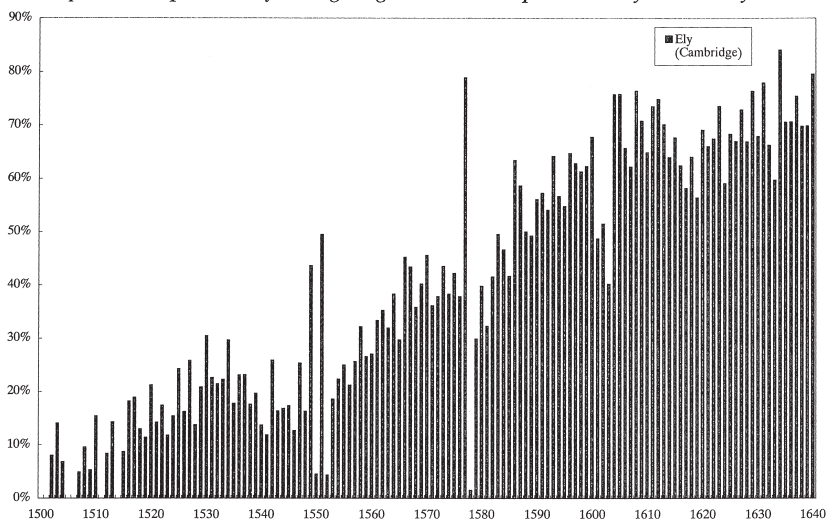
⁴¹ 17 per cent of the whole body of will makers called themselves husbandmen and 9 per cent called themselves labourers.

Table 1.2 *Proportions of Ely wills giving status or occupation, 1540-1639*

Decade	Total No. of Wills	Declaring Status	Not Declaring Status
1540-9	1123	17%	83%
1550-9	1582	25%	75%
1560-9	951	35%	65%
1570-9	849	39%	61%
1580-9	1096	54%	46%
1590-9	1399	59%	41%
1600-9	1011	63%	37%
1610-9	1767	65%	35%
1620-9	1524	69%	31%
1630-9	1622	71%	29%

Sources: *Index Library*, Vols. 103, 106, 107.

Graph 1.6 *Proportions of wills giving status or occupation in Ely Consistory Court*



higher than the estimation put on them afterwards in probate inventories by their neighbours when appraising their goods, it is evident that many of those who called themselves Yeomen were regarded by their neighbours as

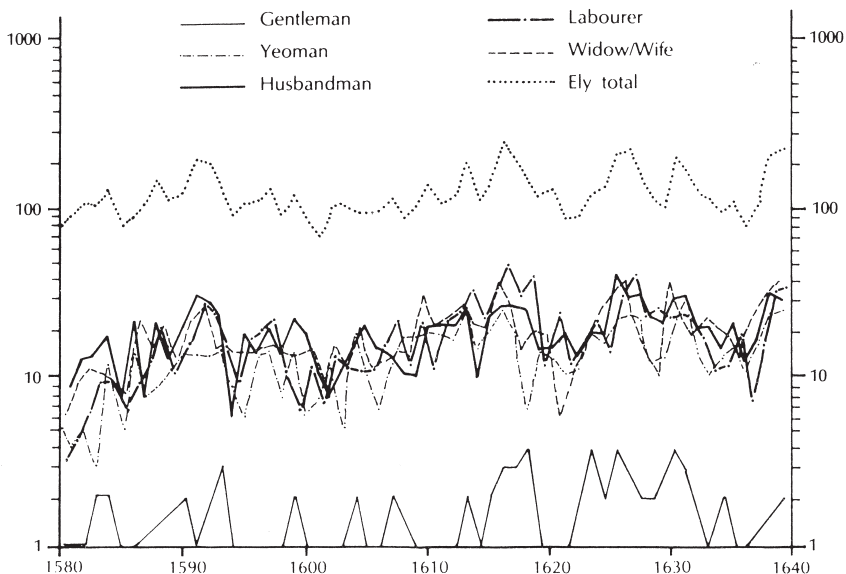
⁴² 16 per cent of the whole body of will makers called themselves husbandmen and 12 per cent called themselves labourers.

Table 1.3 *Numbers of different declared status in Ely wills, 1560-1639*

Decade	Women		Men				Status Declared	No Status Declared
	Gent.	Yeo.	Husb.	Lab.	Misc.			
1560-9	70	4	45	107	32	79	337	614
1570-9	75	5	31	115	57	49	332	517
1580-9	122	9	77	208	88	84	588	508
1590-9	161	12	124	222	163	146	828	571
1600-9	132	9	115	144	131	108	639	372
1610-19	252	19	181	234	263	202	1151	616
1620-9	197	14	174	256	226	177	1044	480
1630-9	249	14	194	254	186	253	1150	472

*The heading 'Lab(ouer)' also includes servants and poor, e.g. almsman.

Graph 1.7 *Numbers of different status declared in Ely wills, 1580-1639*



husbandmen, and that many of those who called themselves husbandmen were regarded by their neighbours as labourers. In other words from the second half of Elizabeth's reign up to the outbreak of the Civil War at least a quarter and possibly well over a half, of the wills passing through the Consistory Court of Ely were made by labourers and husbandmen. Prof. Hoskins had guessed wrong. It was not at the end of the seventeenth century that the habit of making wills spread among ordinary people, but at the end of the sixteenth century. It may even have been earlier, but the proportion giving themselves a status was then too small to make any safe generalisations. This is much more useful as evidence than the small numbers from individual places. Terling in Essex has been intensively studied by Drs. Wrightson and Levine. It was a moderately sized settlement, with 122 households assessed for the hearth tax, and had 192 wills proved in the local probate court. Yet even in a place of this size, the numbers were such that in the sixteenth century husbandmen and craftsmen left only isolated wills. It was not until a century later that it was common for Terling husbandmen and craftsmen to make wills, and for labourers to begin to do so there. Over the whole period from 1550 to 1699 only seven labourers and cottagers did so. On the basis of these small numbers, Drs. Wrightson and Levine had to conclude that, even at the end of the seventeenth century, it was a 'highly unusual step for persons of their social position to make formal wills distributing their small stocks of goods'.⁴³ The new material from the diocese of Ely suggests that, seen on a larger stage than the single village, it was by no means unusual for persons of this social position to make formal wills at the end of the sixteenth century, let alone the end of the seventeenth.

Conclusion

What then has this laborious counting, tabulating and graphing revealed? As well as producing supporting evidence on the crises of mortality in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, particularly on the extent of the influenza epidemic of 1557-9, the tables and graphs have revealed a number of interesting facts.

The Hereford evidence now makes it clear that we have to push the

⁴³ K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village—Terling 1525-1700* (London, 1979), pp. 34, 92-3, 96-7.

period when will making became common back at least to the middle years of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. Previous commentators who believed that they saw the beginning of widespread will making at the very end of the fifteenth century or in the early sixteenth century need to be corrected. What began then was not the widespread making of wills, but the widespread survival of wills. We do not believe that the majority of wills from the courts we have examined survive until the 1530s. It was a change in record keeping that took place in the first half of the sixteenth century, not a change in the habits of the dying. Can the widespread making of wills, now pushed back into the fifteenth century, be associated with the great increase in literacy, now also pushed back into the fifteenth century?

For the period from the 1540s, we do have an adequate proportion of the wills that were made available to us. The close correlation between probate and burial evidence suggests that even if we no longer have all the wills that were made and proved, those which survive do so in proportion to those made. It is therefore from this period that we can begin to answer some of the questions that have been asked. Professor Vann has posed the critical question: what proportion of the whole population left wills.⁴⁴ In the early years of Elizabeth's reign we can tentatively guess that some 6000 wills were proved annually in the provincial courts of the province of Canterbury, and some 400 in the Prerogative Court. By the 1620s we can tentatively guess that some 10,000 wills were proved in the provincial courts, beside the fifteen hundred that we know were proved in the Prerogative Courts.⁴⁵ Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield have suggested that in the 1560s, after the epidemics were over, some 77,000 were being buried annually, and in the 1620s some 123,000.⁴⁶ In other words the percentage that left wills that were proved in the province of Canterbury increased from around 8 per cent to around 9 per cent of the whole population. In addition there were the wills made in the province of York. However, only the adults in the population made wills. Prof. Wrigley and Dr. Schofield have estimated that adults over 25 only formed 46 per cent of the population in the 1560s and 49 per cent in the 1620s.⁴⁷ Assuming nearly all testators were over 25, this suggests that in the 1560s at least 18 per cent of adults made wills and in the

⁴⁴ R. T. Vann, 'Wills and the Family in an English Town: Banbury 1550-1807', *Journal of Family History*, 4 (1979), pp. 264-5.

⁴⁵ See above p. 26, footnotes 36 and 37.

⁴⁶ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 495.

⁴⁷ Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 528.

1620s at least 19 per cent. In view of the uncertainty of many elements in these calculations, it would be proper to propose that virtually the same proportion of adults were making wills in the 1560s and the 1620s.⁴⁸ There is also an imbalance of the sexes to be taken into account. The Ely evidence suggests that around 90 per cent of the testators were male, although slightly under half the whole adult population was. This would suggest that in both the 1560s and the 1620s almost exactly a third of the adult men in England left wills that were proved in the ecclesiastical courts of the province of Canterbury. By the 1620s perhaps as many as a twentieth of adult women left wills.

Other historians had already guessed that there was an increasing use of the Prerogative Court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. We have now been able to make clear how much greater this use of the Prerogative Court by executors was from 1563 onwards. This was at the same time that the total number of wills made increased, for the switch to the Prerogative Court by executors did not bring about any diminution in the number of wills proved in the provincial courts. The numbers were kept up by wills made by people whose predecessors would not have made wills at an earlier date. Even those who used the Prerogative Court were not necessarily sufficiently prosperous to have been immune from the effects of famine-based disease.

The material from the Ely court has shown how the habit of declaring the testators' status increased in the course of the sixteenth century, and how from the 1580s there is enough evidence to show how many of the new will makers were husbandmen and even labourers. Any notion that very ordinary people did not make wills until the end of the seventeenth century now needs to be revised backwards by at least a hundred years. It is now clear that by the end of the sixteenth century extremely large numbers of husbandmen and labourers were making wills. The nature of the evidence will not allow us to discover how much earlier they may have been doing so.

We dare to hope that future makers of indexes to probate material, who have the advantage of using computers to arrange their material, will take the opportunity of counting, tabulating and graphing it, so that comparisons

⁴⁸ The calculations on p. 207 above suggested that the proportion did increase slightly between the 1540s and the 1620s. If there is enough accuracy in the two sets of calculations, they would suggest that the proportion was increasing between the 1540s and the 1560s.

can be made with what we have done, and so that our estimates and conclusions can be refined. There are a number of lines of enquiry which we have not been able to touch on which need further examination. How far did the legislation of the first half of the sixteenth century affect the preservation of wills? How far did the growth of London affect the use of the Prerogative Court?⁴⁹ How far were the numbers of those applying to the probate courts for letters of administration for the estates of intestates affected by the increase in the numbers of those leaving wills? And finally can the increasing numbers of husbandmen, and particularly labourers, making wills from the end of the sixteenth century be correlated at all with the polarization of rural society that was then beginning to take place in some open-field regions of the country? All these are open questions for future workers in this field.

⁴⁹ A. J. Camp, 'The Genealogist's Use of Probate Records' in G. H. Martin and P. Spufford, eds., *The Records of the Nation*, pp. 290-3.

Chapter 2 A discussion revisited : the number of wills proved in early modern England

In the last quarter century English Social and Economic history studies have been deepening astonishingly, especially in the fields of regional society and family. This is partly due to progress in the use of materials and techniques/methods. The use of probate records including wills as well as inventories has been noteworthy in various ways. The use is, however, still rather limited partly because of ignorance of the general or national statistics. That is, without the benefit of the aggregate figures, students seem to use only local or random samples. In order to provide the basis for a more general and systematic understanding of wills as statistical materials, I have already counted the annual numbers of wills, using the volumes of indexes published by the British Record Society in their *Index Library* (Table 2.1 and Graph 2.1, the list of volumes used*).¹ This article² discusses the time-lag in the transference of will-making customs between regions and contributes to the argument about the difficulty of knowing how to differentiate between 'centre' and 'local'. It also investigates the inter-relationships of different social status and occupational groups.

Survey

In recent community or regional studies, students including W. G. Hoskins, M. Spufford, K. Wrightson & D. Levine and C. Howell have been making optimum use of manor court rolls and ecclesiastical records.³ Amongst the ecclesiastical records, probate records as well as registers have assumed greater importance and this is particularly true of wills and

¹ See Chapter 1 ; do., 'The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries England Revisited : English Family History and Records', *The Keizai Gaku*, Annual Report of the Economic Society, Tohoku University, 196 (1994).

² For the use of Mac Reader, I would like to thank for much helpful advice of Ms. Atsuko Toda (ex-research assistant of Ehime University).

³ W. G. Hoskins, *The Midland Peasant* ; M. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities* ; K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety* ; do., *Whickham : The Making of an Industrial Society* (Oxford, 1991) ; C. Howell, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs in the Midlands, 1280-1700' ; do., *Land, Family and Inheritance in Transition*.

Table 2.1 *Wills Proved in England : Regions*

year	S-West		Midland	E · A	Metro	PCC	Total	S-West		Midland	E · A	Metro	PCC	Total									
	west	east						year	west						east								
1337					1		1																
1338					0		0																
1339					0		0																
1340					0		0																
1341					0		0																
1342					0		0																
1343					0		0																
1344					0		0																
1345					1		1																
1346					0		0																
1347					0		0																
1348	17				1		18																
1349	1				0		1																
1350	0				0		0																
1351	0				0	1401	7	8	87	86	40	228	1451	1	0	4	164	98	17	284			
1352	0				1	1402	1	1	11	88	46	147	1452	0	0	3	177	175	21	376			
1353	0				0	1403	2	2	41	109	52	206	1453	1	0	10	168	103	0	282			
1354	0				1	1404	3	2	84	140	45	274	1454	1	0	7	174	112	50	344			
1355	0				0	1405	4	9	52	145	48	258	1455	0	0	2	139	143	60	344			
1356	0				0	1406	4	0	10	128	42	184	1456	1	0	2	296	116	38	453			
1357	0				0	1407	5	3	7	339	51	405	1457	0	0	0	222	164	84	470			
1358	1				0	1408	2	3	32	177	34	258	1458	0	0	1	288	126	63	477			
1359	0				0	1409	5	4	3	217	34	263	1459	0	0	3	256	126	43	428			
1360	1				0	1410	4	9	1	177	38	229	1460	2	0	1	260	74	32	369			
1361	5				2	7	1411	3	5	0	200	29	237	1461	1	0	2	199	92	36	330		
1362	2				0	2	1412	1	7	0	236	32	276	1462	0	0	3	205	133	0	341		
1363	0				0	0	1413	3	7	6	374	46	436	1463	0	0	1	112	98	37	248		
1364	0				0	1	1414	3	4	1	171	31	210	1464	0	0	2	203	123	90	418		
1365	0				0	0	1415	1	14	0	112	61	188	1465	0	0	3	460	93	84	640		
1366	0				0	0	1416	2	9	77	132	54	274	1466	0	0	0	234	131	64	429		
1367	1				0	1	1417	4	7	43	152	55	261	1467	0	0	1	141	153	84	379		
1368	0			189		189	1418	5	8	21	121	58	213	1468	0	0	0	139	139	59	337		
1369	1			60		61	1419	2	10	44	135	61	252	1469	0	0	0	220	107	52	379		
1370	0		16		46	62	1420	4	10	102	187	64	367	1470	0	0	0	212	91	59	362		
1371	2		33		44	79	1421	8	6	67	100	37	218	1471	0	0	0	290	99	74	463		
1372	0		35		67	102	1422	2	5	49	37	32	125	1472	0	0	0	299	100	49	448		
1373	0		43		49	92	1423	6	2	46	36	32	122	1473	0	0	1	578	72	70	721		
1374	4		66		137	207	1424	2	0	54	20	25	142	1474	0	0	0	267	109	105	481		
1375	3		114		237	354	1425	2	0	5	107	34	148	1475	1	0	0	167	69	57	294		
1376	0		49		100	149	1426	2	1	66	144	46	259	1476	0	0	0	168	74	63	305		
1377	0		62		117	179	1427	2	0	49	88	26	165	1477	1	0	0	266	74	38	379		
1378	0		40		82	122	1428	0	0	56	66	37	159	1478	0	0	0	124	68	35	227		
1379	0		60		110	170	1429	0	0	72	68	24	164	1479	1	0	22	375	182	38	618		
1380	2		48		110	160	1430	0	0	55	163	34	252	1480	0	2	6	164	87	27	286		
1381	1		46		70	117	1431	3	4	83	166	26	282	1481	0	0	5	115	73	24	217		
1382	0		47		179	226	1432	1	5	111	174	37	328	1482	0	0	7	178	72	21	278		
1383	0		95		115	2	212	1433	1	8	98	231	26	364	1483	0	1	28	199	89	43	360	
1384	1		53		109	6	169	1434	1	5	88	243	8	345	1484	0	1	25	148	155	54	383	
1385	3		61		121	1	186	1435	1	2	96	131	18	248	1485	0	2	19	166	187	116	490	
1386	1		61		100	2	164	1436	1	1	88	95	34	219	1486	0	0	20	375	143	100	638	
1387	1		45		139	3	188	1437	1	0	94	100	14	209	1487	0	0	24	275	155	141	595	
1388	0		50		106	2	158	1438	0	0	161	131	15	307	1488	1	0	26	265	131	166	589	
1389	0		40		144	2	186	1439	0	0	141	121	30	292	1489	0	0	13	187	89	134	423	
1390	1		70		229	4	304	1440	2	2	76	98	14	192	1490	0	0	20	214	125	149	508	
1391	0		73		111	17	201	1441	2	2	73	81	1	159	1491	0	0	19	216	118	160	513	
1392	1		65		149	18	233	1442	4	9	115	166	27	321	1492	0	0	16	325	138	223	702	
1393	0		67		193	12	272	1443	0	3	100	117	27	247	1493	0	1	12	286	124	244	667	
1394	1		29		198	5	233	1444	2	3	121	129	23	278	1494	0	2	10	178	73	239	502	
1395	3		28		224	7	262	1445	3	4	128	140	20	295	1495	0	3	8	257	62	179	497	
1396	1		59		191	1	252	1446	1	2	140	118	8	269	1496	0	0	14	254	101	216	585	
1397	5		83		127	0	215	1447	1	3	172	130	26	332	1497	0	0	7	224	298	225	754	
1398	2		39		101	0	142	1448	0	0	145	144	35	324	1498	0	0	29	204	366	228	827	
1399	2		27		137	0	166	1449	3	1	135	96	32	267	1499	0	1	14	274	324	228	841	
1400	2		6		72	159	16	255	1450	0	6	125	136	34	301	1500	2	1	81	506	350	295	1235
Total	65		6	1676	4258	98	6103	116	196	3441	7036	1710	12499	Total	121	14	658	15124	13365	6338	35620		

inventories. Knowing how many wills were made and survived nationwide, and how they were distributed, would provide a basis for understanding community or regional studies in a national context.

Looking at other studies, W. K. Jordan placed a heavy reliance on wills for his classic study on philanthropy through bequests.⁴ Wills are also useful

Table 2.1 (cont.)

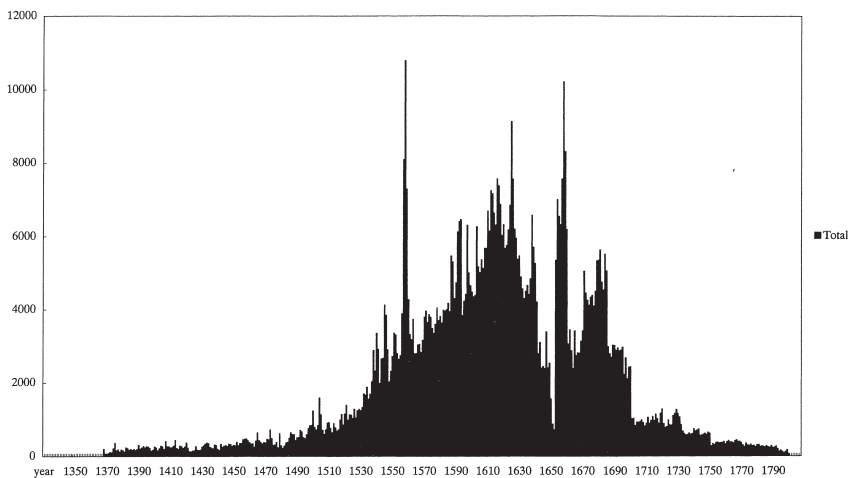
S-West							S-West							S-West										
year	west		east		E · A	Metro	PCC	Total	year	west		east		E · A	Metro	Total	year	west		east		E · A	Metro	Total
1651	120	77	334	132	207		870	1701	210	153	243	177	227	1010	1751	184	0	53	0	34	271			
1652	36	41	373	82	179		711	1702	244	150	201	205	226	1026	1752	211	0	80	0	44	335			
1653	43	3	21	21	46	5205	5339	1703	244	126	215	1	238	824	1753	221	0	44	0	43	308			
1654	13	0	23	5	2	6960	7003	1704	259	115	237	1	303	915	1754	258	0	63	0	41	362			
1655	11	0	36	4	4	6490	6545	1705	248	138	241	0	293	920	1755	269	0	62	0	38	369			
1656	9	1	36	4	5	6257	6312	1706	262	141	229	0	299	931	1756	255	0	60	0	43	358			
1657	17	1	96	7	4	7434	7559	1707	340	124	223	0	294	981	1757	248	0	51	0	61	436			
1658	23	6	650	7	7	9213	10206	1708	316	113	233	0	244	906	1758	259	0	67	0	36	362			
1659	36	1	606	8	8	7649	8308	1709	235	136	190	0	253	814	1759	262	0	71	0	52	385			
1660	588	273	470	359	217	4273	6180	1710	249	152	207	0	274	882	1760	218	0	66	0	34	318			
1661	654	221	844	486	849		3054	1711	327	127	313	0	280	1047	1761	268	0	64	0	57	389			
1662	731	450	970	382	913		3446	1712	232	111	259	0	283	885	1762	307	0	65	0	43	415			
1663	730	422	608	358	747		2865	1713	283	137	276	0	270	966	1763	256	0	49	0	67	372			
1664	655	294	481	244	711		2385	1714	299	173	300	0	304	1076	1764	274	0	69	0	37	380			
1665	609	277	523	266	1735		3410	1715	230	135	359	0	242	966	1765	275	0	46	0	36	357			
1666	574	304	506	343	1010		2737	1716	385	155	360	0	235	1135	1766	270	0	79	0	64	413			
1667	667	342	839	340	624		2812	1717	327	126	293	0	264	1010	1767	304	0	76	0	53	433			
1668	711	417	794	271	799		2894	1718	220	129	283	0	255	887	1768	269	0	55	0	64	388			
1669	794	405	781	444	790		3152	1719	295	149	357	0	360	1161	1769	270	0	59	0	63	392			
1670	893	433	939	350	798		3413	1720	316	160	404	0	403	1283	1770	248	0	67	0	49	364			
1671	827	387	966	300	734	1830	5044	1721	245	161	388	0	86	880	1771	241	0	0	0	57	298			
1672	717	532	693	241	693	1767	4443	1722	292	149	282	0	50	773	1772	192	0	0	0	51	243			
1673	641	305	468	240	633	1957	4244	1723	273	134	322	0	72	801	1773	287	0	0	0	57	344			
1674	675	275	428	328	653	1750	4109	1724	371	184	368	0	60	983	1774	248	0	0	0	54	302			
1675	767	392	468	352	688	1662	4329	1725	327	138	298	0	85	848	1775	248	0	0	0	40	288			
1676	698	341	455	356	673	1850	4373	1726	338	125	332	0	54	849	1776	259	0	0	0	54	313			
1677	771	283	486	278	668	1600	4086	1727	363	194	462	0	90	1109	1777	233	0	0	0	41	274			
1678	619	310	628	431	714	1784	4486	1728	359	223	500	0	76	1158	1778	221	0	0	0	60	281			
1679	631	330	851	541	918	2057	5328	1729	369	272	544	0	90	1275	1779	205	0	0	0	46	251			
1680	757	392	775	580	850	1984	5338	1730	452	273	357	0	81	1163	1780	260	0	0	0	41	301			
1681	711	409	886	570	971	2076	5623	1731	502	144	326	0	91	1063	1781	246	0	0	0	66	312			
1682	605	408	760	431	740	1796	4740	1732	364	121	288	0	81	854	1782	193	0	0	0	57	250			
1683	751	418	633	355	669	1698	4524	1733	363	0	241	0	74	678	1783	220	0	0	0	50	270			
1684	861	730	710	379	796	2033	5509	1734	321	0	222	0	69	612	1784	219	0	0	0	39	258			
1685	831	663	625	403	686	1839	5047	1735	316	0	182	0	70	568	1785	212	0	0	0	36	248			
1686	735	535	515	357	848		2990	1736	302	0	206	0	77	585	1786	238	0	0	0	42	280			
1687	678	480	449	375	810		2792	1737	280	0	270	0	71	621	1787	195	0	0	0	46	241			
1688	647	387	509	345	795		2683	1738	263	0	269	0	55	587	1788	181	0	0	0	48	229			
1689	817	428	513	462	814		3028	1739	305	0	255	0	48	608	1789	228	0	0	0	49	277			
1690	790	442	412	462	910		3016	1740	431	0	260	0	55	746	1790	186	0	0	0	38	224			
1691	659	421	404	454	948		2886	1741	333	0	293	0	55	681	1791	189	0	0	0	51	240			
1692	778	423	491	434	818		2864	1742	357	0	287	0	57	701	1792	225	0	0	0	47	272			
1693	769	453	490	454	698		2861	1743	399	0	273	0	59	731	1793	143	0	0	0	53	196			
1694	718	433	482	436	822		2891	1744	312	0	195	0	46	553	1794	85	0	0	0	38	123			
1695	686	444	698	416	730		2974	1745	293	0	236	0	37	566	1795	98	0	0	0	56	154			
1696	700	388	188	335	609		2220	1746	342	0	203	0	44	589	1796	87	0	0	0	30	117			
1697	631	435	604	359	650		2679	1747	318	0	239	0	56	613	1797	66	0	0	0	22	88			
1698	610	428	210	271	579		2098	1748	319	0	211	0	57	587	1798	86	0	0	0	35	121			
1699	682	376	439	251	675		2423	1749	348	0	241	0	59	648	1799	104	0	0	0	61	165			
1700	770	402	403	272	584		2431	1750	318	0	237	0	60	615	1800	7	0	0	0	51	58			
29472	16416	26529	15581	31771	81464		201233	Total	210	4868	14210	384	7512	42670	10544	0	1193	0	2343	14351				

were abolished along with the ecclesiastical estates during the Reformation.

Since the Medieval period, references to the parish guilds have been found, but after the sixteenth century the references gradually disappeared. However, the development of will-making customs and their increasing numbers partly took the place of the functions of the parish guilds. C. Marsh analysed some forty wills covering the whole of England and found that the choice of witnesses was strongly influenced by closely-knit networks including relatives and neighbours.⁶ Wills maintained their function at least until the establishment of the poor law system, the change of inheritance customs

⁶ C. W. Marsh, 'In the Name of God? Will-Making and Faith in Early Modern England', in G. H. Martin and P. Spufford, eds., *The Records of the Nation*.

Graph 2.1 Wills proved in England - Annual Totals



and the greater economic polarisation and social divergence of the period.

In order to discuss the family in regional studies, further individual documents including probate inventories are used. The advantages have been known since studies such as W. G. Hoskins's multilateral study of Wigston Magna and J. Thirsk's *Peasant Farming* in Lincoln and *The Agrarian History* volumes.⁷ In spite of much criticism, the importance of these documents is apparent. Probate inventories were usually kept with wills.⁸ Probate wills were required to be proved and the church must have influenced the spread of will-making. The general spread of will-making among the peasants took place after the middle of the sixteenth century.⁹ The family reconstitution of parish registers made it easier to gain quantitative data, but for the understanding of family history, especially extended kin networks, it is inadequate. Therefore, in conjunction with landholdings and inheritance

⁷ W. G. Hoskins, *Local History in England* and *The Midland Peasant*; J. Thirsk, *English Peasant Farming*; do., ed. *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, iv 1540–1640 (Cambridge 1967), v, 1650–1750 (Cambridge 1985).

⁸ M. Spufford, 'The Limitations of the Probate Inventory', in J. Chartres and D. Hey, eds., *English Rural Society, 1500–1800* (Cambridge, 1990).

⁹ R. A. Merchant, *The Church under the Law: Justice, Administration and Discipline in the Diocese of York, 1560–1640* (Cambridge, 1969), p. 88; S. Coppel, 'Wills and the Community: A Case Study of Tudor Grantham', in Philip Riden ed., *Probate Records and the Local Community*; C. Howell, 'Peasant Inheritance Customs in the Midlands, 1280–1700', p. 145.

customs, some studies have used wills to obtain qualitative data. Nevertheless, I imagine the limited use was partly due to the assumption that peasants or lower status individuals did not leave wills. Moreover all probate wills have not been counted annually, so we do not have a complete history. Their use is limited to particular regions. Although there are several studies including some of particular epidemic years, the sample was chosen without having the overall picture.

Re-visited discussion on the numbers of wills in England

At this moment the numbers of surviving probate records are assumed to be as follows : two million wills, one million inventories and fifty thousand accounts. If we trust these figures, the numbers of wills available in the *Index Library* volumes cover only one quarter of all surviving wills. It is still possible, however, to know the general trends, because our data covers almost all regions in England under the authority of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. I have not succeeded in counting those in the Prerogative Court of York as I will discuss them later. Nevertheless, it is unlikely that more information would be gathered, even with the collection of non-*Index Library* data. Our data is the results of 110 years of *Index Library* efforts.

The total number of 0.85 million is, if we trust the assumption, approximately one third of all surviving wills so I have not counted all yet (Table 2.2).

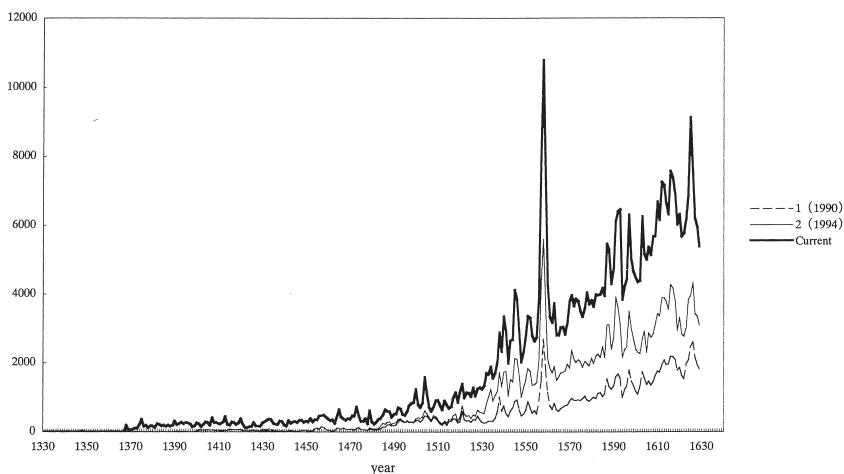
In the fifteenth century the annual average was about four hundred. In the sixteenth century it rose dramatically to around three thousand. It peaked at some five thousand in the seventeenth century, but in the second part of the century, it gradually decreased. Of course, handling such numbers requires caution. I would add that in the 1640's and 1650's the probate proceedings locally virtually came to an end and the numbers fell drastically. In the period between 1653 and 1660 (Interregnum) twenty Judges of Probate were selected to deal with probate jurisdiction at the headquarters in London and it became impossible to distinguish the Prerogative Court and local data.

In the eighteenth century the trends do not seem to be upward. This is partly due to the problem of editions. We do not have so many volumes of eighteenth century data in the *Index Library*. However, there is also a demographic explanation. The period between the second half of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth witnessed a static or stable

Table 2.2 *Numbers of wills proved in England*

year	Numbers of Wills	Cumulative Numbers
up to 1400	6103	4631
1500	35995	42098
1600	291009	333107
1700	463306	796413
1800	57021	853434

Graph 2.2 *Wills proved in England - Annual Totals: comparison with data in past*



Notes :

1 M. Takahashi, 'The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Graphs, with Tables and Commentary', in P. Spufford and G. Martin, eds., *The Records of the Nation* (Woodbridge, 1990).

2 do., 'The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries England Revisited: English Family History and Record's, *The Keizai Gaku*, Annual Report of the Economic Society, Tohoku University, 196 (1994).

population coupled with stable death rates. Thus, the number of wills made and surviving fell considerably. Economically, this period seemed to experience the final disappearance of smaller landholders and the gradual creation of a large group of day labourers who could not, or did not, leave wills.

The results of previous articles counting the numbers of wills are as follows :

The impact of the mortality crises in the sixteenth and seventeenth

centuries, particularly on the extent of the influenza epidemic of 1557–9 is once more confirmed. The Hereford evidence made it clear that we have to push the period when will making became common back to at least the middle years of the fifteenth century, if not earlier.

From the 1540s onwards, there was a more constant survival of wills. The close correlation between probate and burial evidence suggests that even if we no longer have all the wills that were made and proved, those which survive do so in proportion to those made.¹⁰

In both the 1560s and the 1620s almost exactly a third of the adult men in England left wills that were validated in the ecclesiastical courts of the province of Canterbury. By the 1620s perhaps as many as a twentieth of adult women left wills.

Greater use of the Prerogative Court by executors took place from 1563 onwards. This coincided with an increase in the total number of wills, for the switch to the Prerogative Court by executors did not bring about any diminution in the number of wills proved in the provincial courts. The numbers were bolstered by wills made by people whose predecessors would not have made wills at an earlier date. Even those who used the Prerogative Court were not necessarily sufficiently prosperous to have been immune from the effects of famine-based disease.

The material from the Ely court has shown how the habit of declaring the testators' status became more widespread in the course of the sixteenth century, and that from the 1580s many of the new will makers were husbandmen and even labourers. Any notion that very ordinary people did not make wills until the end of the seventeenth century now needs to be revised and pushed back by at least a hundred years. It is clear that by the end of the sixteenth century extremely large numbers of husbandmen and labourers were making wills. The nature of the evidence will not allow us to discover how much earlier they may have been doing so.

In the second article the number of wills in four more courts have been counted. General comparison of the previous data with that newly gained shows that the further the diocese from the centre of England, the more the number of wills fluctuate according to the circumstances of each region. Moreover, the wider the field, the more points to discuss; in particular the

¹⁰ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541–1871*, figure 2.3, pp. 58–9, pullout 1, and figure 7.1, p. 207. and R. M. Smith, 'Population and its Geography in England 1500–1730', p. 205, fig. 8.2.

implications of influenza as a turning point in the spread of will-making customs and the interrelationship between will-making customs and the long term economic and social trends.

The influenza period revisited

Here I survey the studies where students used wills to explain the history of epidemics. To observe wills in the longer perspective helps us understand the links with other historical documents and the changes in will-making practices.

E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield studied the frequency and severity of 'mortality crises' and compiled a list of years with higher mortality, or more specifically 10 per cent above average.¹¹

1	1558/9	2	1557/8	3	1625/6	4	1657/8
5	1728/9	6	1727/8	7	1680/1	8	1741/2
9	1729/30	10	1638/9	12	1592/3	17	1597/8

The years 1557 and 1558 showed the highest mortality rates with similarly high rates coming one century later. The third highest year, 1625, shows extremely large numbers in London and the suburbs. The fourth, 1657, does not reflect the regional situation because almost all wills were proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. The years of 1727 and 1728 seem to include many regions with higher rates, reflecting the high mortality.

J. S. Moore has counted all probate events for the period between 1541–1570 in order to reconfirm the impact of the great influenza period which was suggested by F. J. Fisher and for a long time almost ignored.¹² To show the seriousness of the influenza epidemics, Moore did not confine himself only to wills, but counted all probate events including administration bonds. Furthermore, for the same reason, he limited the period to just thirty years. In spite of the different reason for conducting this research his study is useful in expanding or deepening the discussion.

The pattern of all probate events is almost identical to the death rate pattern calculated by E. A. Wrigley and Schofield. However, the death rates

¹¹ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *Population History*, pp. 332–3.

¹² J. S. Moore, 'Jack Fisher's 'flu': a Visitation Revisited', *ECHR*. 46/2 (1993).

include the total population, that is, not only male adults and moderately prosperous widows and spinsters, but also infants and small children and rather poorer women. This suggests that the data from probate events needs more precise treatment, and the calculation of death rates itself requires that more data be collected, as Wrigley and Schofield pointed out. Furthermore, Moore's results are given in blocks of 5 years, and the multiplication of the averages is not necessarily equal to the total which may puzzle the readers.

Nevertheless, the almost identical patterns of total will numbers and total non-will probate events points to the possibility of using will-making numbers as indicators of all probate events (Table 2.3 and Graph 2.3). Furthermore, the data for London and the North are not yet available, as mentioned above. So Moore's data provides us with the information we need for the uncounted area. This is important when we find that, especially in London in the late 1550's, influenza was not such a major factor, at least in the documents.

By limiting the period to focus on the impact of the influenza, the calculations of social status and occupation were quite precise. However, the results are rather concentrated within the upper and richer status groups and it is difficult to see the trend towards making wills by those lower down the social scale becoming a custom. However, it is possible to recognise that influenza seemed to affect all levels of society including prosperous people who were relatively well fed and advantaged in other aspects of life. We do not, however, know the average age of victims, and whether elderly people were more likely to be victims or not. Slack made a graph from part of the London wills, although the graph only showed data until the end of the influenza period.¹³

The reason that Moore used Wrigley and Schofield's mortality data from parish registers (*Population History*, Appendix 4), not Totals of deaths (*Population History*, Appendix 2) could be for convenience of comparison in terms of size. However, he seems to want to offer a different view on the estimates of Wrigley and Schofield. In the conclusion, Moore pointed out the decreasing size of the parish registers and the atypicality as a sample, and suggested this could account for the gap between their estimates and Fisher's. According to the parish registers annual deaths were at a rate of around 6000 on average in the period 1540 to 1570 with almost 10,000 in

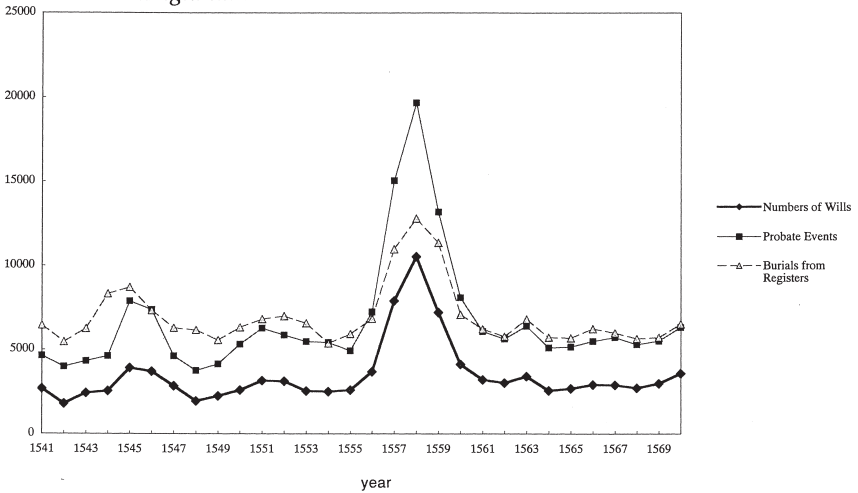
¹³ P. Slack, *Plague*.

Table 2.3 *Numbers of wills, probate events, burials from registers and estimates of deaths in England, 1541-1570*

year	Numbers of Wills	Probate Events	Burials from Registers	Estimates of Deaths
1541	2671	4631	6442	72256
1542	1785	3977	5459	71019
1543	2409	4311	6246	97056
1544	2528	4603	8308	84590
1545	3910	7867	8699	102792
1546	3686	7361	7316	95018
1547	2837	4609	6272	83457
1548	1929	3754	6154	79954
1549	2235	4132	5564	64000
1550	2584	5308	6308	80321
1551	3144	6264	6812	83887
1552	3119	5850	6992	82340
1553	2541	5474	6557	81297
1554	2500	5426	5358	68218
1555	2594	4933	5922	80383
1556	3680	7224	6826	77094
1557	7876	15041	10962	133887
1558	10515	19673	12796	166387
1559	7187	13181	11339	141282
1560	4123	8072	7076	93735
1561	3208	6073	6219	77340
1562	3017	5636	5773	73081
1563	3395	6378	6791	105536
1564	2548	5102	5711	80558
1565	2680	5153	5674	73644
1566	2899	5481	6225	81042
1567	2892	5711	5974	79527
1568	2702	5302	5646	72924
1569	2972	5505	5723	76060
1570	3570	6318	6513	85203

Sources : Number of wills : see the list of *Index Library* used ; Probate events : J. S. Moore, 'Jack Fisher's 'flu': a Visitation Revisited' *ECHR*, 46/2 (1993), p. 295 (Table 5) ; Burial from registers : E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England 1541-1871* (London, 1981 ; Paperback edition, Cambridge, 1989), pp. 537-8 (Appendix 4 Table 4. 1) ; Estimates of Deaths : *ibid.*, pp. 503-4 (Appendix 2, Table 2. 4).

Graph 2.3 *Numbers of Wills, Probate Events, Burials from Registers in England: 1541-1570*

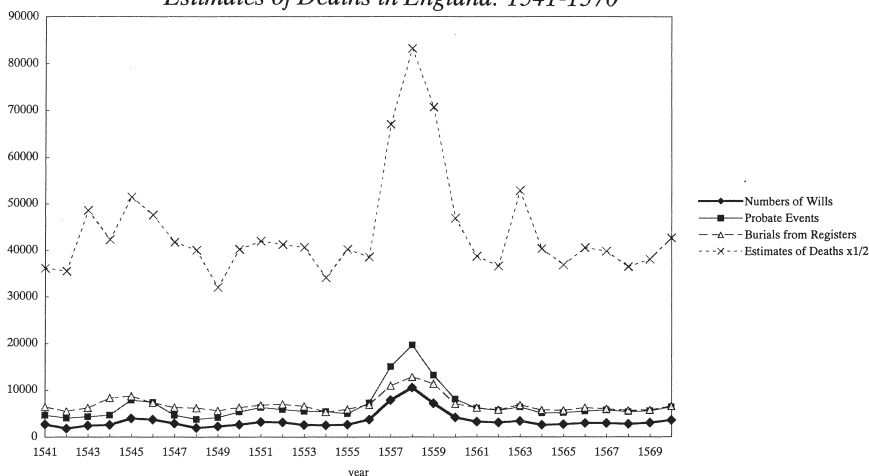


1544-5 and a maximum figure of 12,000 in the influenza period (Table 2.4). Therefore the probate trends coincide with parish register death trends. This suggests the great importance of whole probate events, but there are problems. In this period, parish registrations had just commenced. This fact leads Wrigley and Schofield themselves to admit that the numbers did not therefore represent the national statistics.¹⁴ In the 1550's, in particular, 30 or 40 per cent of months showed gaps in the records.¹⁵ Moreover, Moore explains that the influenza period also witnessed political turbulence under Queen Mary and Elizabeth I causing further breaks in the continuity of record keeping. The influenza period therefore has not been highlighted

Table 2.4 *Numbers of wills, probate events, burials from registers and estimates of deaths in England, 1541-1570: multiplied*

year	Numbers of Wills	Probate Events	Burials from Registers	Estimates of Deaths
1541-1545	13303	25389	35154	427713
1546-1550	13271	25164	31614	402750
1551-1555	13898	27947	31641	396125
1556-1560	33381	63191	48999	612385
1561-1565	14848	28342	30168	410159
1566-1570	15035	28317	30081	394756

Graph 2.4 *Numbers of Wills, Probate Events, Burials from Registers and Estimates of Deaths in England: 1541-1570*



until recently.¹⁶

Moreover, the deaths shown in the parish registers include infants and married women who were not likely to be concerned with probate events. It is probable that those who might be concerned with probate events represent at least half of the cases. On the basis of such an assumption, I made a graph using half of the total estimates of national deaths by Wrigley and Schofield, mortality data from parish registers, probate events by Moore and annual wills totals (Graph 2.4). In 1557-9 all indices show the upward tendency. However, quantitatively there is a deep discrepancy between national death estimates (at an average of 80,000 annually) and the other indexes.¹⁷ Moore's conclusion is on the basis of parish register data only as mentioned above, and requires further research from a wider viewpoint. For example, what percentage of the total population were concerned with probate events?

In the mid-sixteenth century, cases of wills in which status or occupation were declared were few, as in other probate documents. Therefore

¹⁴ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *Population History*, p. 24.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁶ J. S. Moore, 'Jack Fisher's 'flu': a Visitation Revisited', p. 294.

¹⁷ There are several questions remaining; why are Moore's results based on five year totals and why do the totals and the sum of the annual averages for five years differ?

Moore's sample is rather limited with 2,023 cases in 1556-1559 (3.6% of the period total of 55,519), the majority of which were of rather higher status. It is thus possible to recognise that the influenza struck the whole of society including the upper strata. It is difficult to know the precise situation of the lower social groups, although 74 labourers were listed amongst the 2,023 cases. Husbandmen were 71.9 per cent of those with status in wills in the Peterborough diocese (in Salisbury 69.3%). One further point of great interest is whether the elderly were the main victims or not. However, there is a tendency for the social status of intestators to be lower than that of testators, if we simply consider the raw data. Few fifteenth century Ely wills include the testators' status except for churchmen and widows.¹⁸ Even in the first half of the sixteenth century, only a small number of testators stated their status or occupation. Yet, among the small pool where status was declared, 'Husbandman' was the most numerous.¹⁹ From the second half of the sixteenth century, to state the testator's status or occupation was quite normal in the diocese of Ely, and most did so after the 1580's. In the 1580's and the 1590's, 38 per cent of all who declared it were husbandmen and 20 per cent were labourers. In the 1620's and 1630's, the former represented 29 per cent and the latter 22 per cent of the total.²⁰

Nevertheless, the results include the data from non-Index Library sources and provide useful scope for further calculation of will numbers. In London and the North, in particular, we still do not have the whole picture, although in Moore's period, London and the suburbs do not show any particular trends. This could be attributed to the routes of transference which were sustained mainly by movements of people and materials.

Long term perspectives and regional patterns

As mentioned above, F.J. Fisher tried to relate the influenza and inflation of the 1550's using wills as sources. In fact, this idea of using wills was used for the history of harvest fluctuations by W. G. Hoskins one year before.²¹ However, the findings by Fisher were almost forgotten for a long time until highlighted by D. Palliser and J. S. Moore.²²

¹⁸ See pp. 104-5, Table 2P2. 1.

¹⁹ Incidentally, wills made by labourers started appears constantly from the 1540's. Therefore, it could be possible to assume that undeclared wills were made by yeomen, although hardly any wills were declared until the 1530's.

²⁰ See pp. 54-5.

Comparing population trends, deaths, the harvest index,²³ real wage index²⁴ and wills provides the longer perspective (Graph 5). C. J. Harrison's data on harvest fluctuations, in particular which started from Hoskins's and added more precise qualitative analysis (x 10), shows an interesting correlation with the annual totals of wills and therefore contrasts with the real wage index.²⁵

The year of 1592 is listed as a good harvest year. Yet this year is listed 12th in Wrigley and Schofield's table of 'mortality crisis' years and the number of surviving wills also increased. In this period concern for spiritual matters declined at least in the wills. People had more practical concerns, notably providing for their families, and increased prosperity encouraged the making of wills.

The year of 1597 appears 17th in the mortality crisis list and is not so noteworthy, but this year saw great famine, the second worst year after 1556, in the period 1480 to 1620.²⁶ Moreover, not only this year but continuously from 1594–1597 there were bad harvests, and the polarisation of landholdings increased.²⁷ P. Slack pointed out that the death rates increased to reach a 'crisis' in 11 out of 14 cities. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury showed an increase of 40 per cent compared to the previous year. This implies that even those who were able to leave wills in the PCC, and were

²¹ W. G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History 1480–1619', *AgHR*. 12/1 (1964), p. 36; do., *The Age of Plunder. The England of Henry VIII 1500–1547* (London, 1976).

²² F. J. Fisher, 'Influenza and Inflation in Tudor England', *ECHR*, 18(1965); D. M. Palliser, 'Epidemics in Tudor York', *Northern History*, 8 (1973); J. S. Moore, 'Jack Fisher's 'flu': a Visitation Revisited'.

²³ W. G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History 1480–1619'; do., 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History 1620–1759', *AgHR*. 16/1 (1968). Of course, the fact that a high number of people died from the influenza in 1556–8 was known even before Fisher's article. W. G. Hoskins had published his harvest fluctuations article one year before Fisher's, and suggested that the influenza caused the increasing numbers of deaths. Hoskins also used the wills of Worcester, Leicester and Devon as evidence ('Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History 1480–1619', p. 36). It is unknown, however, if and how Hoskins and Fisher communicated on their will numbers calculations.

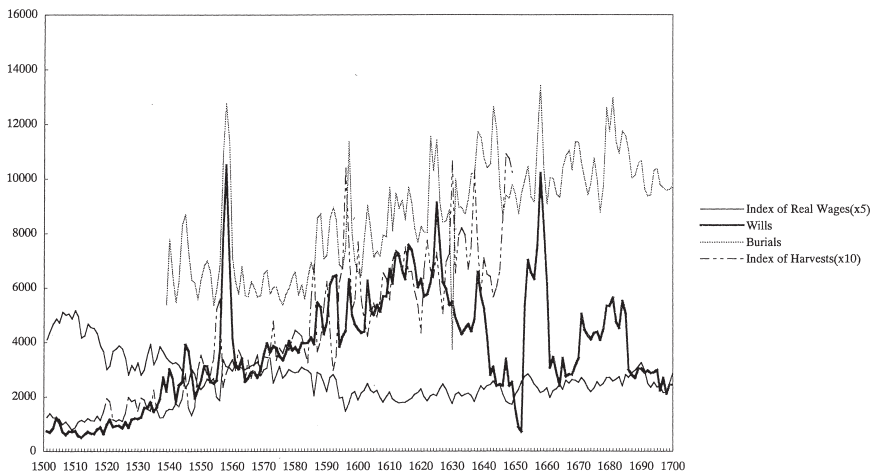
²⁴ E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *Population History*, Table A9.2, pp. 642–4.

²⁵ C. J. Harrison, 'Grain Price Analysis and Harvest Qualities, 1465–1634', *AgHR*. 19/2 (1971), appendix 1.

²⁶ W. G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History 1480–1619', pp. 38–9.

²⁷ M. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities*, pp. 51, 77–8.

Graph 2.5 *Index of real wages, harvests, burials from registers and wills in England, 1500-1700*



relatively prosperous, died mainly due to the epidemics which were a result of the bad harvests.

In the Metropolitan area, particularly in 1603 or 1604, the epidemics had greater effect.²⁸ Essex also shows considerable suffering.²⁹ PCC wills increased again to a figure over 1,300 which would seem to reflect the high death rates. However, in the provinces the epidemics seemed to have had only limited impact.

From the period 1620-1759 Hoskins selected 22 years as bad harvest years (there were 24 between 1480 and 1619).³⁰ The period 1623-25 faced bad harvests and witnessed the third and last mortality crisis due to the subsequent epidemics. The deaths recorded in the registers rose sharply to 40 per cent above that of average years. The will numbers in the PCC also rose by almost 30 per cent in 1625 and 1626. In the seventeenth century, the periods around 1630 and 1647 saw several years of good harvests followed by continuously bad harvest years. 1661 and the 1690's experienced very poor harvests. 1709 was the worst year in this period, but this is

²⁸ P. Slack, *Plague*.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

³⁰ W. G. Hoskins, 'Harvest Fluctuations and English Economic History 1620-1759', pp. 15-6.

not reflected in the numbers of surviving wills.³¹

In the eighteenth century 1728/9 (5th) 1727/8 (6th) and 1729/30 (9th) appear as 'mortality crisis' years. In spite of the limited sample, only these years surpassed 1,000 in the annual will totals. Generally in this period, will numbers rise when these are bad harvests. The poorer people who suffered from bad harvests did not leave wills in this period.

From the viewpoint of good harvests, will numbers basically show a steady increase especially in rural areas for those who were prosperous enough to make and leave them. Will numbers and the harvest index in at least the sixteenth century and the first part of the seventeenth century therefore show some correlation. Only the PCCs dealt with probate proceedings in the 1640s and 1650s when good harvests were also enjoyed. So the numbers of surviving wills increased rapidly in this period, but it is not clear to what extent the increase was due to the economic effect of the good harvest.

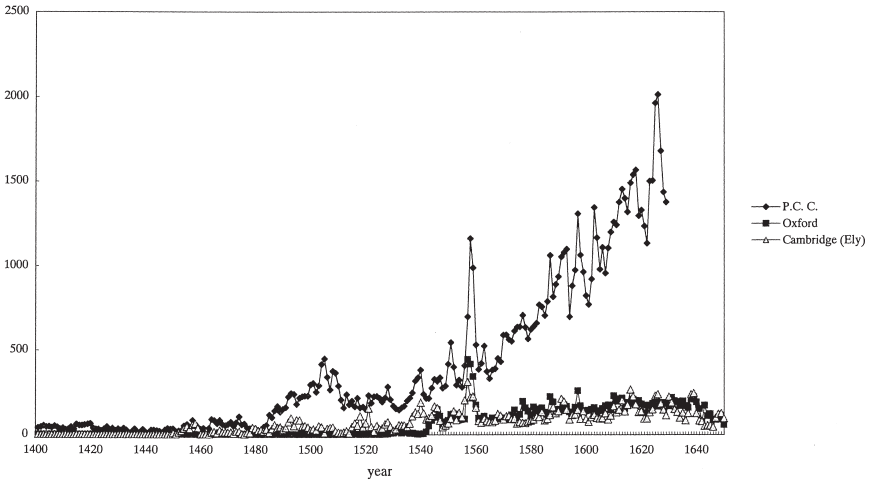
Moreover, up until the mid-seventeenth century, the real wage index (x 5) contrasts sharply with annual will totals and the harvest index. After the influenza period, the trends of will numbers and deaths in the parish registers showed correlation until the 1630's increase. In the same period, the real wage index was static or moved downward. After the mid-seventeenth century, deaths recorded in the parish registers remained constant until the mid eighteenth century. The wills annual totals declined and, at the same time, the real wage index gradually increased. So it could well be that, in the latter half of the seventeenth century, the motivation for will-making became more influenced by economic factors, thus the poorer people could not afford to leave wills. Nevertheless, we should not forget that the numbers of wills made is not the same as the numbers that survived. The earlier the period, the more this applies. As discussed before, however, where will numbers and death rates do correlate, a substantial part of the wills made survive, even today. This is especially true in the local courts. The discrepancy of numbers between wills proved in the PCC and other local courts becomes apparent after the 1560's, and the local courts generally show a gentle increase as if they followed the population increase. The graph of the Ely and Oxford dioceses, both known for their universities, are good examples (Graph 2.6). The comparison between regions is as follows (Graph 2.7).

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 16-8.

The indices of London wills have not been completed yet. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury covered almost fifty jurisdictional areas, and the Commissary Court of London was huge and the biggest institution. The large size of the population, the rapid growth of the city itself involving frequent migration, and the complicated distribution of social statuses and properties seem to be the main reasons for the delay in completion. And it must be pointed out, using only probate records including wills, to assess the magnitude of the epidemics, some error is inevitable. For instance, P Slack found that there was no increase in the number of wills in 1548 when there were many epidemic victims.³² He pointed out the proportions of victims vary according to prosperity as well as living conditions in London.³³ For the individual local situations, the thorough use of probate records provides more information, as E. J. Carlson states.³⁴

Other metropolitan courts such as Chelmsford (Essex) follow the same pattern as London. The results of Essex in Chelmsford (including all Essex

Graph 2.6 Wills proved in PCC, Oxford and Cambridge(Ely)

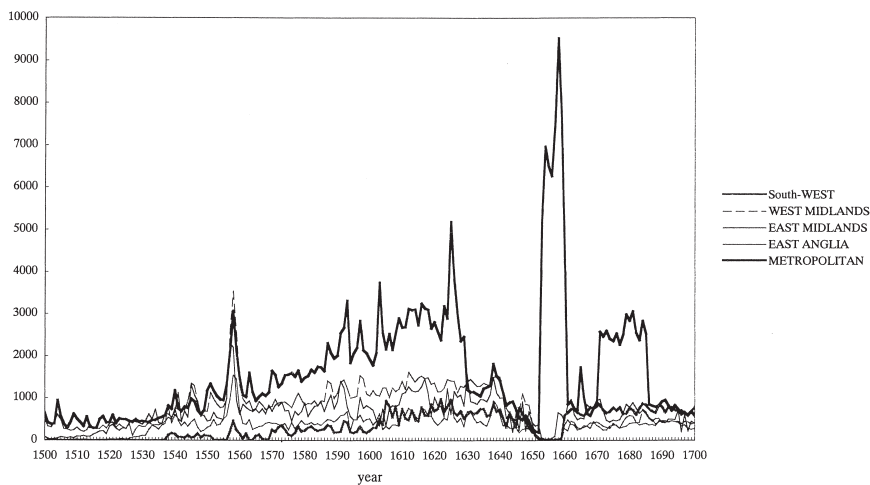


³² P. Slack, *Plague*, pp. 54–60.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 157–8.

³⁴ E. J. Carlson, 'The Historical Value of the Ely Consistory Probate Records', E. Leedham-Green, ed., *Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records. 1449–1858 Part I, Index Library*, 103 (London: British Record Society, 1994), li.

Graph 2.7 Wills proved in regions, 1500-1700



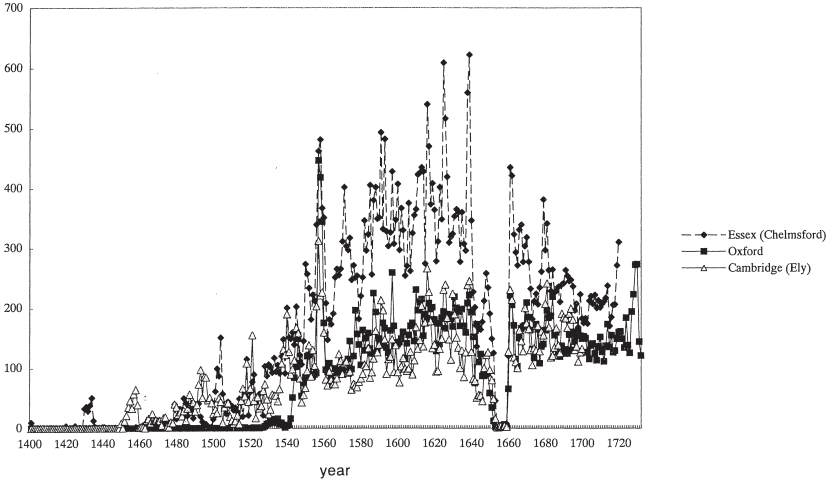
wills and wills from almost one third of Hertfordshire) are particularly valuable in enabling us to check whether Essex is representative of the English nation. Essex appears to receive a great deal of attention amongst researchers, including Drs. K. Wrightson, A. Macfarlane, M. McIntosh and recently L. Poos.³⁵ Compared to Cambridge (Ely) and Oxford, both of which have universities, Essex shows a steeper upward trend (Graph 8). Cambridge and Oxford fluctuated around as few as one or two hundred a year throughout the sixteenth century, but Essex maintained the upward trend of four hundred on average annually in the same period. Though lower status individuals might not have made so many wills until the seventeenth century as in Terling, at least those of higher status could.³⁶

As for the Midlands and East Anglia, these regional data are generally not so significant, probably following the local death rate patterns. Cambs. and Oxford belong to these areas. The data shows high numbers of wills in the influenza period and a gradual gentle upward trend in the late sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century. After the Interregnum when the numbers were negligible, low numbers continued. In the late

³⁵ D. Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 113 (1986).

³⁶ K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, p. 152.

Graph 2.8 Wills proved in Essex (Chelmsford), Oxford and Cambridge (Ely), 1400-1730



sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century, both West and East Midlands yield around one thousand annually, and East Anglia slowly increases from five hundred in the mid-sixteenth century to almost one thousand one century later.

On the other hand, the figures for the South-West (Somerset, Dorset, Wiltshire, Devon, Cornwall) become quite steady only after the mid-sixteenth century. This could be similar to the Northern pattern. Both were mainly pastoral areas in this period. The rather formal and solid partial inheritance custom could have been responsible for the delay in the necessity of will-making as a way of distributing possessions. Otherwise the stronger community ties did not necessitate such individual family maintenance. Nevertheless, the beginning of a trend towards increasing numbers of extant wills indicates the coming together of all the basic factors needed for industrialisation to occur.

Implications

Will-making customs, transference and change

What were the motives for, and conditions of, will-making? The fact that many wills were made and survived after the mid-sixteenth century is

known, but we have not found a good explanation.

Firstly, the infiltration of will-making customs to the lower levels of society suggests that the practice became a necessity. L. Bonfield and L. R. Poos discussed the estate transfers in the late Medieval period and emphasised the usefulness of manor court rolls. According to Bonfield and Poos, to understand not only the normal surrenders in the manor courts, but also the complicated reality of *inter vivos*, including maintenance retirement contracts, the court rolls would provide important information.³⁷ They also used Essex wills in the period between the end of the fifteenth century and the mid-sixteenth century. Although their 113 cases were relatively small and the choice of Essex could be on the grounds of not being typical, the role of wills in the manor court is clarified.³⁸ In the fourteenth century, according to research on Hereford by M. Faraday, we know that at least oral wills were frequently made.³⁹ However, as Bonfield and Poos discussed, wills (and testaments) exist in both a broader/informal and narrower/formal sense.⁴⁰

The apparent change in will content took the form of a disappearance of bequests to the church. Instead in the latter half of the sixteenth century, testators main concern shifted to the passing on of possessions to the family. Originally such possessions were only chattels (money, animals, corn etc.) and personal property or personalty.⁴¹ However, under the 'use' system, bequests or surrenders of land had already been arranged in wills. 'Use' is a kind of legal method that parents used to transfer the occupation rights of the land to their children or heirs.⁴²

However, wills expressed their own functions in inheritance practices. Although wills were only part of the inheritance custom, which decided the amount of land or property to be passed between generations, they had their own functions in bridging monogeniture and partible inheritance. Such

³⁷ L. Bonfield and L. R. Poos, 'The Development of Deathbed Transfers in Medieval English Manor Courts', in Z. Razi and R. M. Smith, eds., *Medieval Society and the Manor Court*, pp. 123-6.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 126-34.

³⁹ M. Takahashi, 'The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', pp. 198-200; M. A. Faraday, 'Mortality in the Diocese of Hereford 1442-1541'.

⁴⁰ L. Bonfield and L. R. Poos, 'The Development of Deathbed Transfers in Medieval English Manor Courts', pp. 137-41.

⁴¹ J. H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History*, 2nd edn. (London, 1st. edn., 1971, 2nd., 1979), pp. 111-2, 321-2.

⁴² *Ibid.*, pp. 210-9.

a bridging function was an inherent part of the manor customs. Nevertheless, wills grew out of the inheritance customs and eventually, although not completely, changed the nature of such customs. Originally there was a distinction between inheritance practices which had not turned into customs and were just written in wills, and inheritance customs which had been the original base of wills but were gradually absorbed into the wills as documents and often therefore lost their original functions in real circumstances in the rapidly changing rural areas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Not only the change of inheritance customs, but also the rising living standards would have encouraged will-making. However, even when testators could not afford to make wills they often managed to leave wills for religious reasons including the bequest of the soul. As their parents who were relatively rich made wills, the next generation, who were rather poor did so too. In particular, when England experienced the great movement of population involving many younger sons in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century, it is likely that generations transferred this custom to other regions. However, by the end of the seventeenth century the localisation of migration became dominant and the spread minimised.⁴³

By the eighteenth century, such interactions caused will-making customs to infiltrate even into the lower social status groups. Formalisation could not be avoided and wills therefore had less effect on the inheritance practices.

What does the declining tendency of will-making customs after the eighteenth century suggest? The simplest explanation could be that the period between the late seventeenth century and the mid eighteenth century saw a stagnant population growth and decreasing death rates. However, the custom of will-making was also spreading downwards in society. But in the mid seventeenth century, there seemed to be a degree of economic polarisation, and many poorer people were unable to make wills. Generally, in the period of depression, the ratio of will-makers in the whole population seemed to decline too.

The calculations of probate events by J. S. Moore, as referred to above, shed some light on the likely numbers of intestates in the mid-sixteenth century. The results indicate an almost competitive situation between wills and administrations. However, the spread of will-making customs down-

⁴³ P. Slack, *Plague*, p. 311.

wards in terms of social status seemed to push up the ratios of wills in probate events as a whole, yet this spread had tailed off by the end of the seventeenth century. According to E. J. Carlson, for instance, in the Ely diocese the ratio of intestate administration increased while will numbers declined from the end of the seventeenth century to the eighteenth century.⁴⁴ Before the period however, generally the numbers of intestate administrations did not surpass the numbers of wills in the dioceses including Ely.⁴⁵ At most they amounted to half, but usually a third.

As for the epidemics, Slack states that their influence declined after the 1650's and 1722 was the last year where the epidemics (including Pest) still had an impact.⁴⁶ The 1550's influenza, not plague triggered the socially downward infiltration of will-making, but the influence also declined after the eighteenth century.

Perspectives : The North and London

In some places, including the ecclesiastical province of York, and London, testamentary freedom was restricted by custom. According to 'The Custom of the Province of York' and 'The Custom of the City of London', the testator was bound to leave one-third of his goods/chattels to his wife and another third was to be divided equally among his children, taking into account such provision as had already been made for them. These customs seem to have remained influential even after their legal cessation.⁴⁷ Partly because of this, the compilation of will indexes in the North, that is the indices of the Prerogative Court of York, has not progressed as much as in Canterbury. I expect that discrepancy decreased after the eighteenth century, but in the north as well as the west it was not until the end of the sixteenth century that the number of surviving wills increased significantly.

Conclusion

This research used just one third of all surviving wills if we work on an assumption of two million in total. However, the national trend after the six-

⁴⁴ E. J. Carlson, 'The Historical Value of the Ely Consistory probate Records', xxxvii.

⁴⁵ *Index Library*, 46 (Salisbury) 56, 59 (Cornwall), 51 (Leicester).

⁴⁶ P. Slack, *Plague*, p. 311.

⁴⁷ G. G. Alexander, 'The Custom of the Province of York', *Thoresby Society*, 28 (1927), pp. 419, 425-6.

teenth century, was that wills consistently survived and gradually increased in number. We have also confirmed the correlation between numbers of surviving wills, probate events and deaths recorded in the parish registers. Moreover in the longer perspective, the influenza period was the turning point for will-making customs with a spread amongst the regions despite a time lag. To use wills not only as documents but also as social and economic indicators helps us understand the extent of their existence and survival. This period provided the economic and social base for will-making although, especially after the second half of the seventeenth century, conditions were such that the poorer people were often unable to leave wills.

Chapter 3 Survivorship of probate wills in England

Introduction

How many probate wills have survived in England? P. Spufford has estimated a figure of 2.25 million wills, one million inventories and fifty thousand accounts which appeared in A. L. Erickson's work *Women and Property*.¹ He made a rough estimate for the purpose of research and has not published any work on this. Those three probate documents were supposed to be bound together for preservation, but the difference between them clearly suggests the difficulty of finding them as a set. It must also be pointed out that the matter of the relationships between wills and administrations for the non-testators is still open to question. Not only will-makers but also non will-makers should be investigated. Here, I have the data on about 0.9 million wills, thirty thousand inventories and 0.13 million administrations from the Index Library of the British Record Society, and newly acquired data from various relevant societies. The new data include about 0.5 million wills proved at the seventeenth and eighteenth century Prerogative Court of Canterbury and 0.12 million at the Prerogative Court of York as well as 0.1 million administrations. Therefore, the number of wills on which this article is based is almost 1.5 million, which represents almost three quarters of P. Spufford's estimate. I am going to examine these figures from several view points.

Sources and data

I have already published some of the data in English and the researchers quote them in their work, as shown in the previous chapters. Furthermore, even the unpublished data has been used in the recent collected essays by the members of the British Record Society and Local Population

¹ P. Spufford, 'The Index Library: a Centenary History, 1988', in G. Martin and P. Spufford, eds., *The Records of the Nation*, p. 119; A. L. Erickson, *Women and Property*, Prof. Spufford did it for a rough guide for the research and not necessarily did make an official announcement.

History Society to give a general overview.² Moreover, in the record office I have been asked about the possibility of the data being used as the database for wider use.³

However, my research has covered published or digitalized Indices only and it should be remembered that there are more unpublished indices in the record offices and archives. The Prerogative Court of the Archbishop of Canterbury was the superior probate court for the whole of England and Wales. In theory this meant that only testators dying with property in more than one probate jurisdiction in southern England had to have their wills proved in this court. The Prerogative Court of York had a similar jurisdiction in northern England, whilst executors dealing with property in both the provinces of Canterbury and York had to go to the Canterbury court. In practice large numbers of executors in southern England went to the Prerogative Court even though they did not need to do so, and it thus came to be the normal probate court for many of the most important people in the country.

In addition to the data which I have already published, I have newly acquired uncounted data from the second half of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury as well as the complete data for York (see the bibliography in Appendix 1).

For seventeenth century Canterbury, J. H. Morrison's volume (1660s) has been added. For the first half of the eighteenth century, the microfiche version by Friends of the Public Record Office has been used. In fact these volumes include administrations, and consequently it takes longer than usual, because wills and administrations have to be counted separately. The counting has been done now for 2 volumes out of 20. Therefore, the results multiplied by 10 are used here. Although I am going to complete all the whole volumes, the annual total of 0.14 million would not be so different from the estimate here. Moreover, A. G. Camp and the British Genealogy Society have completed the index of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury for the period 1750–1800, taking a quarter century to do this. The number of

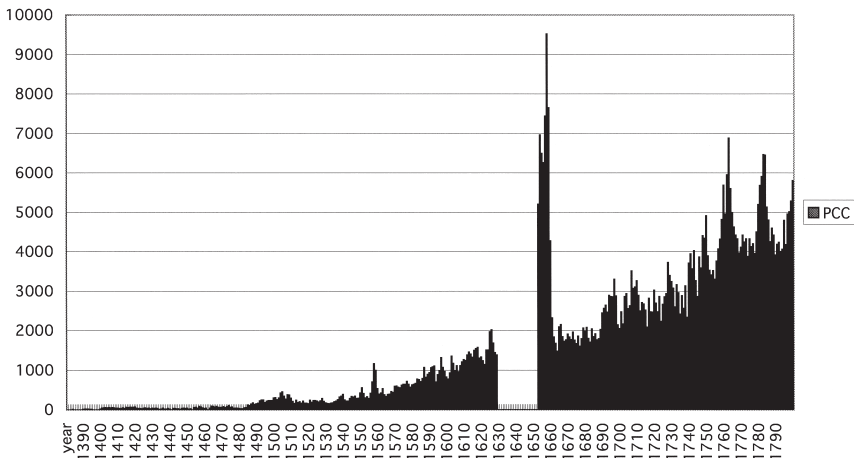
² M. Takahashi, 'The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Graphs, with Tables and Commentary'; do., 'The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries England Revisited: English Family History and Records', *The Keizai Gaku, Annual Report of the Economic Society*, Tohoku University, 196 (1994); do., *Village Inheritance in Early Modern England* (Matsuyama, 2003); T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose, eds., *When Death do us Part* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 39–44, 357–8.

³ I would like to thank Dr. P. C. Thunders who has suggested the possibility of the database and informed conditions of the Huntingdonshire data.

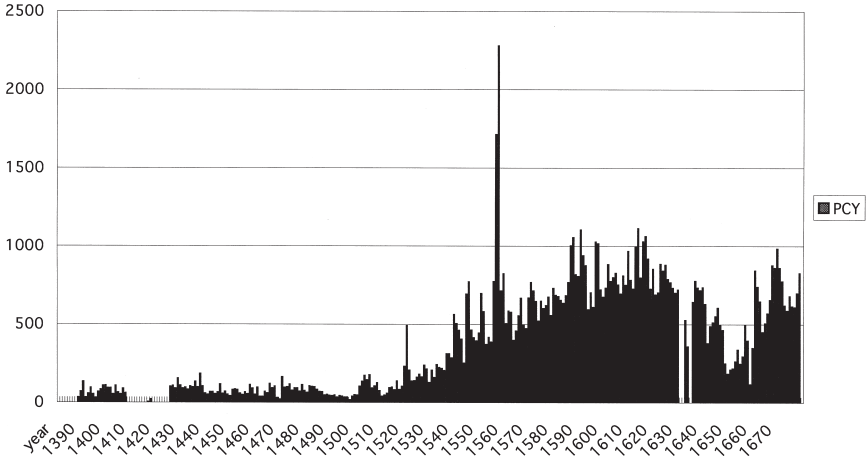
copies is limited and indeed difficult to acquire in Japan. In England I found that this consists of 6 volumes and the total number of components is some 230,000. The data on the basis of a great deal of time and labour are set out in Appendix table and Graph 3. 1.

As for the index for the wills in the Prerogative Court of York, The Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association has started the publication at the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the editorial policy changed sometimes, and the counting is not easy. In particular, the mixture of wills and administrations in the earlier volumes makes the counting harder. The Appendix indicates the characteristics of each volume (Appendix 1). These difficulties with the York indices seems to be connected with the unreliability as the sources according to some researchers. We need to gain data that is more credible and easier to handle such as data in CD-ROM format or on the web, we can however use this data as general guidance (Graph 3.2).⁴ In particular for macro level investigation such as the survivorship or occupational distributions, the data currently in our hands will have to suffice for the time being.

Graph 3.1 *Wills Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury : 1383-1800*



⁴ The Bothwick Institute of York have had a project of making CD-ROM for the probate records reserved there, once. It has been suspended for a while. They might restart the project on the web, but it is quite likely to take time.

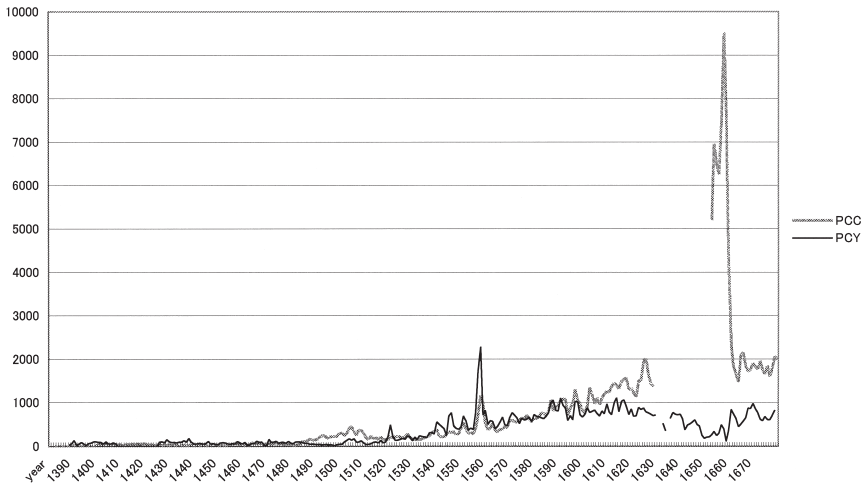
Graph 3.2 *Wills Proved in the Prerogative Court of York : 1389–1680*

Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and York

*Annual totals probate documents in PCY and PCC (Graph 3.3).

The annual totals in the PCY surpasses those in the PCC until 1600, except the period from the end of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the sixteenth century. The numbers of PCC increase after the great influenza period of the late 1550s, but PCY's figures are still higher. In particular the 'Influenza' seems to have been more serious in the northern area, as the figures of 1557 are almost double those of the PCC first peak (2200 : 1100). However, after the influenza period, the PCC became more dominant and increases steeply in comparison with the provincial or local courts.⁵ When the PCC began to surpass the PCY in the 1600s, it might be assumed that the PCY was becoming more localised, despite the fact that it was still an important centre for the North. In the Interregnum period, all English wills should have been proved in Canterbury, and the period witnesses an extremely steep rise.

⁵ See, Chapter 1.

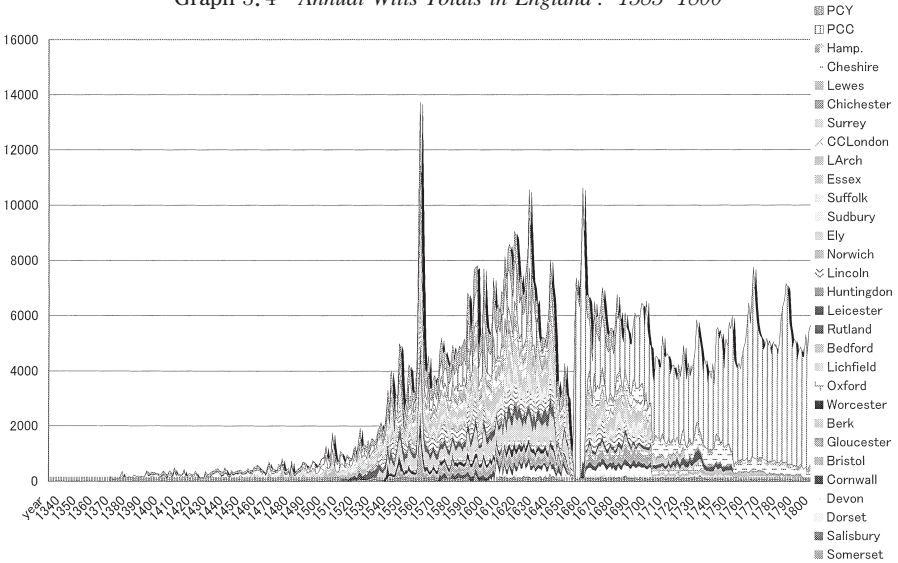
Graph 3.3 *Wills Proved in the Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and York*

Survivorship of the wills

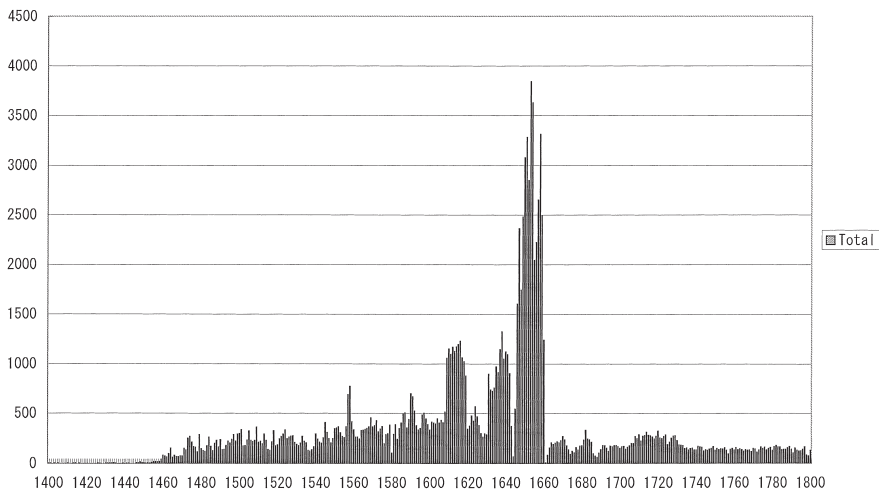
At first we need to distinguish two Prerogative Courts from other local courts, as they are central courts and cover wider range of geographical areas. In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury almost 0.65 million wills were proved in the period between 1383 and 1800. In York, the number is about 0.16 million. Adding up both, the figure is 0.8 million and occupies almost half of all 1.5 millions wills which are counted here. However, The graph indicates the gradual rise, but the second half of the eighteenth century shows rather generational cycle, rather than the steep rise which is expected from the population trend in this period (Graph 3.4). In addition, almost synchronised patterns of the courts overall is intriguing as they are, and this suggests the more generalisation of the custom of making of wills proceeded throughout the nation over the period of this study.

How does this relate to the wills that were actually drawn up? It must also be pointed out that the matter of the relationships between wills and administrations for the non-testators is still open to question. Not only will-makers but also non will-makers should be investigated. Here, I have the data on 0.13 million administrations from the Index Library of the British Record Society, and newly acquired data from various relevant societies.

Graph 3.4 Annual Wills Totals in England : 1383-1800



In theory, the history of intestates complements the history of wills, and therefore it is within the scope of this study. So I have uncovered the numbers of administrations for the intestates. First we must address the issue of what the total number of 132,494 indicates? However, Graph 3.5 shows a concentration in the 1650s, the Interregnum period. The outstanding significance of the period is underlined by a sharp decline in the number of inventories and illuminates the unproportional relationship between the administrations for the intestates and the inventories. Nevertheless such a finding requires further investigation, for the data is scattered across the coutry in local record offices.

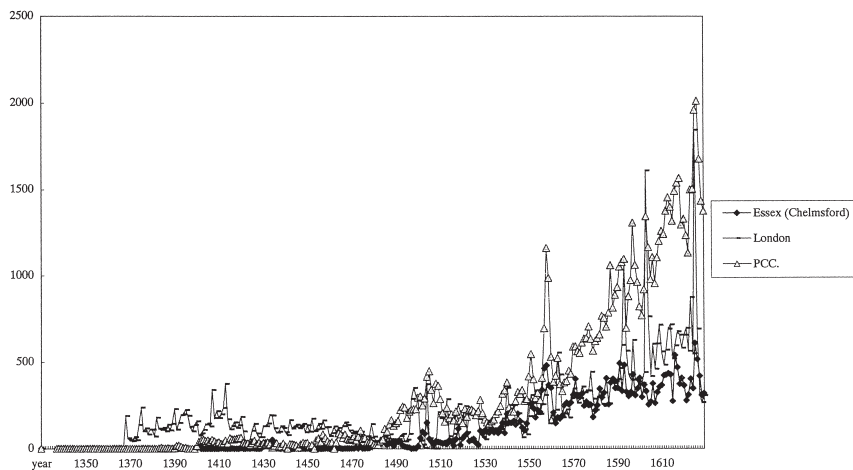
Graph 3.5 *Annual Administrations Totals*

Geographical distribution patterns

The unsystematic allocation of each locality to a diocese is one of the main problems in the Indicisation of probate records. According to J. Gibson, Archdeaconry is normally the lowest of ecclesiastical courts with testamentary jurisdiction. In larger dioceses there might be several, often co-terminous with counties, whereas only one could cover the whole part of a smaller diocese. To explain the complicated system of the testamentary courts we need a guide book.

Metropolitan : PCC, London, Essex, Surrey (Suffolk)

The steady upward trend is particularly apparent between the mid sixteenth and seventeenth century (Graph 3.6). This is comparable to the Midlands local patterns. Despite the lack of information on the 1630s and 1640s the sudden rise, mainly because of the Interregnum registration system is astonishing. In the 1650s, the average numbers of wills proved in PCCs was annually six or seven thousand, once yielding more than ten thousand. This concentration of wills proved to PCC illustrates the stability of probate administration under the rule of the Cromwellian Government.

Graph 3.6 *Comoparison of the surviving wills : Essex(Chelmsford), London and PCC*

London consists of two Courts, or more specifically the Commissary Court of London and London Archdeaconry Court. The compilation of the London data has not been completed yet. At this moment, we know at least two volumes are awaiting publication. Nevertheless, the data available so far shows rising trends in line with the PCC data. As P. Slack and others have shown, London did not record high numbers of wills in the late 1550s. However 1604 was a high year. Other metropolitan courts such as Chelmsford (Essex) follow the same pattern.

Essex, being located adjacent to London was therefore relatively urbanized and progressive. There seem to be a sequence of influential studies of Essex communities including Earls Colne (A. Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin*), Havering (M. K. McIntosh, *Autonomy and Community and A Community Transformed*)⁶ and L. Poos's study and accumulation of analysis of wills by F. Emmison.⁷ However, we have to await comparison with other counties in order to judge how appropriately Essex represents England. The

⁶ A. Macfarlane, *The Family Life of Ralph Josselin*. (Cambridge, 1970) ; M. K. McIntosh, *Autonomy and community : the royal manor of Havering 1200-1500* (Cambridge, 1986) and *A Community Transformed* (Cambridge, 1991)

⁷ L. Poos ; F. G. Emmison, *Elizabethan Life : Home, Work and Land* (Chelmsford, 1976) ; *Elizabethan Life : Morals and Church Courts* (Chelmsford, 1973), also *Wills at Chelmsford*, Vol. I, II and III, Index Library, 78, 79 and 84.

results of Essex in Chelmsford (including all Essex wills and wills from almost one third of Hertfordshire) are particularly valuable in enabling us to check whether Essex is representative of the English nation.

East Anglia : Ely (Cambridge), Suffolk, Sudbury, Norwich.

Midlands

East Midlands : Leicester, Huntingdon, Bedford. (Northampton & Rutland), Lincoln

West Midlands : Oxford, Berk, Worcester, Gloucester. (Lichfield).

These regional data are generally not so remarkable, probably following the local death rate patterns. The data shows high numbers in the influenza period and a gradual gentle upward slope in the late sixteenth century and the first half of the seventeenth century. During and after the Interregnum the numbers are consistently low. However, the Rutland & Northampton data is not typical and in fact it is hard to find a pattern at all. The area, being located between Lichfield and Lincoln, was open to several influences.

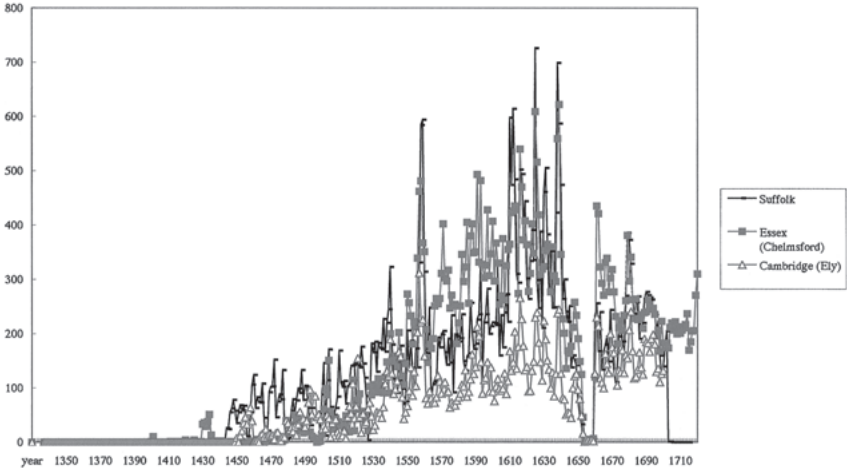
Suffolk consists of two set of data, Suffolk and Sudbury. The former follows the Essex pattern. In fact, comparing Essex, Suffolk and Ely in order we see a clear linear pattern according to the distance from the 'metro' (Graph 3.7). On the other hand, Sudbury, covering the western part of Suffolk attached to Cambridge, shows a more stable pattern similar to Ely.

Although Chichester (West Sussex) is not part of the Midlands, the pattern is very similar. The distance from London seems to have weakened the influence. This is clear on comparison with Lewes, which is located in the Eastern part of the county nearer to London (Graph 3.8).

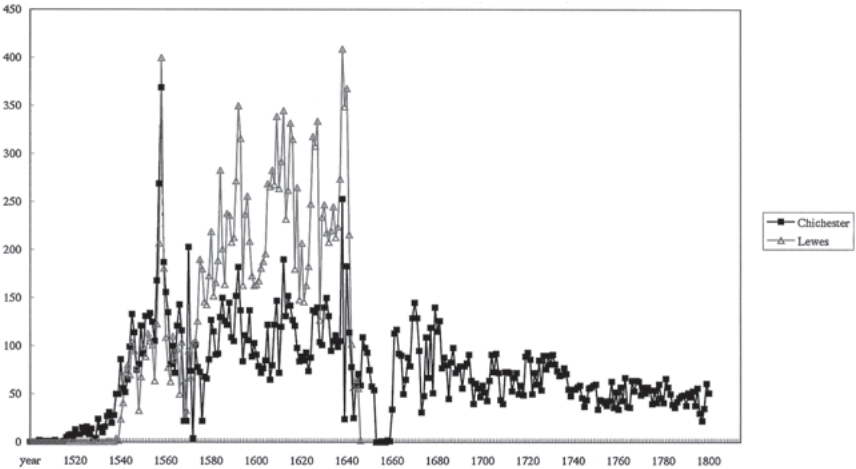
The Norwich data has obvious limitations. The Index Library volume stops at 1603. The data shows that this area has an considerable number of surviving wills from the early part of the fourteenth century. However, if the will-making pattern of this area is related to the economic and industrial prosperity, in the sixteenth century the area could have experienced an economic decline alongside that in will-making. In comparison with Suffolk following the new metropolitan trend, the contrasting pattern is quite obvious.

Ely, or more specifically the Cambridge data, is in this national view, not typical at all. As E. Carlson points out the quality of Ely wills could still

Graph 3.7 *Comparison of the surviving wills : Suffolk, Essex(Chelmsford), Cambridge(Ely)*



Graph 3.8 *Comparison of the surviving wills in the eastern and western Sussex dioceses : Chichester(western Sussex), Lewes(eastern Sussex)*



be exceptional, although the distribution pattern may not be. In comparison with Essex and Oxford, and the West Midlands, this is confirmed. Both university counties show an almost identical pattern. Considering the nature of will-making, although the influence from the university is easily assumed

to be great, it is not reflected in the quantity.

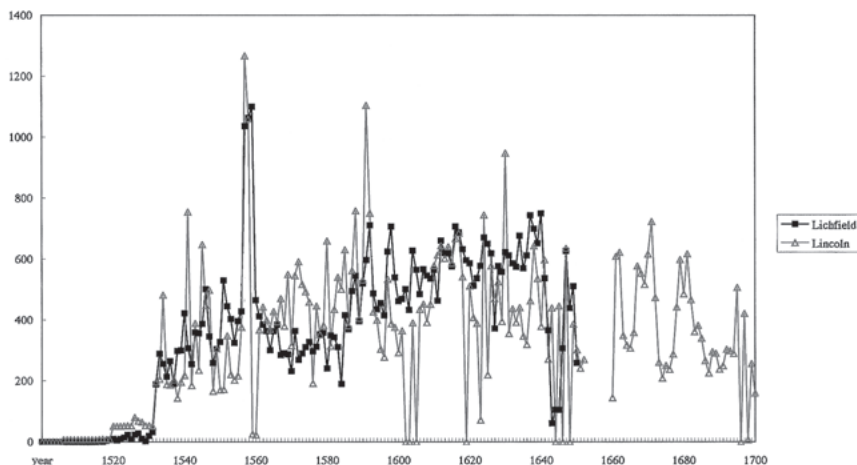
Distant large diocese : Lincoln and Lichfield (Graph 3.9).

These could be included with west and east Midlands respectively. However, each diocese covers a relatively large area sometimes dispersed. In Lichfield, geographically speaking, almost all of Derbyshire and Staffordshire as well as parts of Warwickshire and Shropshire are included. The diocese of Lichfield is located between Leicestershire and Worcestershire so that it is convenient to compare with the previous data. As a result, the numbers of wills remaining are also high. In particular, in the 'Influenza' period, these results surpassed even the PCC results. Both Lincoln and Lichfield recorded almost the same numbers as the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1557 and 1558.

South-West : Somerset (Taunton), Dorset, Salisbury (Wiltshire), Devon, Cornwall, Bristol

This area's data becomes constant and non-fluctuating only after the mid-sixteenth century. This could be similar to the Northern pattern. Both were rather pastoral areas in this period. The rather formal and solid partial

Graph 3.9 *Comparison of the surviving wills in both Lichfield and Lincoln Dioceses*



inheritance custom could have influenced the delay of the necessity of will-making to distribute the possessions. Moreover the stronger community ties did not necessitate such individual family maintenance. Nevertheless, the start of increasing numbers of the surviving wills indicates the accumulation of the fundamentals of industrialisation. Also, the steadily upward pattern of Bristol was more apparent in the seventeenth century than the eighteenth, as the centre of the west the city progressed.

Difficulties for London

The indices of London wills have not been completed yet. The Prerogative Court of Canterbury covered almost fifty jurisdiction areas, and the Commissary Court of London was huge and the biggest institution. The large size of the population, the rapid growth of the city itself involving frequent migration, and the complicated distribution of social statuses and properties seem to be the main reasons for the delay in completion.

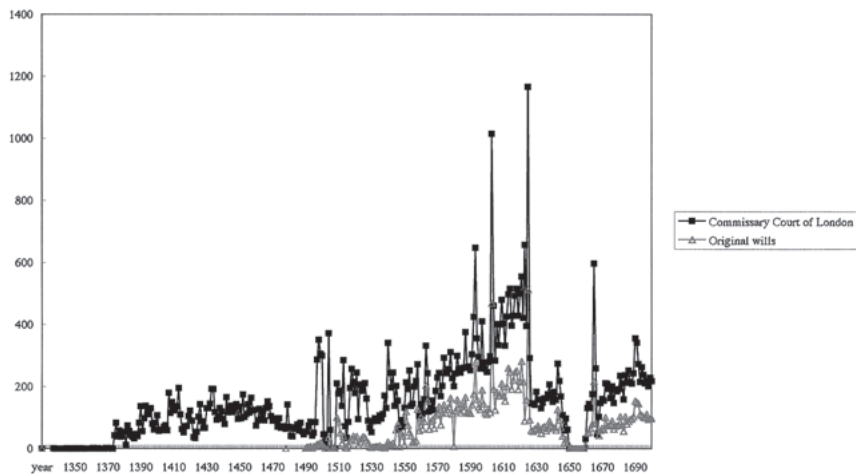
The difficulty is easily noticed even browsing through the complicated and varied keys in the first part of the volumes. And it must be pointed out, only from the second volume of the Commissary Court of London, the key 'O. W. (Original Will)' appears. According to the introduction, all wills proved are recorded. Therefore, P. Slack counted and made a graph for this court, including the numbers of 'admon'.

For confirmation, I have counted the numbers of 'O. W. (Original Will)' in the Commissary Court of London and the Archdeaconry Court of London. The result shows that up to the mid-sixteenth century, the fluctuation is quite significant, but then up until the end of the Seventeenth century 'O. W.'s maintain almost half of the totals (Graph 3.10 and 3.11). However, the Archdeaconry Court of London, whose size and area was smaller, shows rather smaller percentages generally. The others are, in theory, the administrative copies, not original wills.

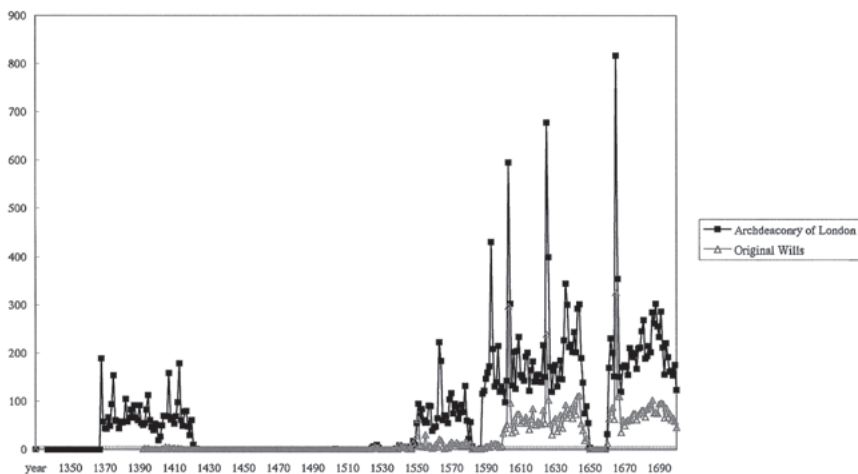
Why did only or as much as half of the original wills remain for more than one century? This phenomenon requires an explanation, but I have not been able to find one. There could have been various reasons; executors were allowed to go home with original wills, but some did not; record keeping in the period relied on occasions and basically they abolished the documents after certain periods; insects or rats ate the documents and fires or theft were often unavoidable. But the fact that after the mid-sixteenth century both London courts kept original wills continuously suggests that

conditions were basically good enough to ensure that documents survived.

Graph 3.10 *The surviving wills and original wills in Commissary Court of London*



Graph 3.11 *The surviving wills and original wills in Archdeaconry of London*



Conclusion

In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury almost 0.65 million wills were proved in the period between 1383 and 1800. In York, the number is about 0.16 million. Adding up both, the figure is 0.8 million and occupies almost 40% of all wills which are reckoned to have survived. Furthermore, summing up all the data on the wills counted so far, the total number is about 1.5 million. The graph indicates a gradual rise, but the second half of the eighteenth century shows a sort of generational cycle, rather than the steep rise which would be expected from the population trend in this period. In addition, the almost synchronised patterns of the courts overall is intriguing and this suggests the the custom of making of wills became increasingly widespread and common all over the country during the period of this study. This issue will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters. However, as the general picture we have from this data seems to be not so far from what was likely to be the reality.

Chapter 4 Status and occupations in wills

Introduction

I have been more particularly concerned with the status and occupations declared in such probate documents. So I have tabulated the annual data on the basis of the status or occupations. Currently, Dr. Leigh Shaw-Taylor, Prof. E. A. Wrigley and some Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure (CAMPOP) researchers have been engaged in a project to investigate the occupational structure of England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries¹ They are going to trace back earlier and use probate wills as the main sources, as the early modern period does not have a national census to help investigate the distribution of occupations. The data shown below would provide some fundamental information to aid this ongoing research.

Setting up for the analysis

The mechanisms of the internal links between both central institution-Prerogative Court of Canterbury and provincial courts has been unclear, in light of the fact that more and more people lower down the social scale were making wills. This is partly due to the fact that records of the distribution of status and occupation data are not complete, and made them in practice impossible to compare with provincial data² This article will provide new data

¹ L. Shaw-Taylor, An E. S. R. C. Funded Research Project, The Occupational Structure of England 1381–1850.

² Using the data of wills in 110 parishes of Hertfordshire, P. Glennie discusses the distribution of trades and occupations. P. Glennie *Distinguishing Men's Trades: Occupational Sources and Debates for Pre-census England*, Historical Geography Research Series, 25, 1990, pp. 32–9. In comparison with J. Patten's cross-sectional research of particular trades, Glennie comments that probate records are more suitable to have the general view of the specialisation of the occupations than to have the precise assessment of regions or times. His comment is reasonable, but it should be reminded that his research field is Hertfordshire which is adjacent to the metropolitan area as Essex. cf. J. Patten, 'Changing Occupational Structures in the East Anglian Countryside, 1550–1700', in H. S. A. Fox and R. A. Butlin, eds., *Change in the Countryside: 1500–1900*, Institute of British Geographers Special Publication, 9 (1979).

to help us with this question.

The *Index Library* Canterbury volumes up to volume III, which were compiled more than one century ago, do not have an index for the occupations or status.³ This must cause them to be ignored, despite the references to them in the text of the volumes. So the systematic counting of the distributions has not taken place. The index for the occupation is an appendix to volume IV (1584–1604),⁴ and the author has already suggested the likelihood of more lower status individuals starting to make wills in the late sixteenth century, by counting the numbers of pages of different occupational groups.⁵ However, these are mere totals which have not been broken down into annual figures. This article has counted the annual totals by status and occupation, manually, or more specifically, by looking closely at the document personally. In the later period, more testators declared their status and occupation, and more individuals made wills.

The Distributions of the status and occupations in the wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (Appendix Table 2-1)

The *Index Library* volumes I and II cover the period between 1383 and 1558. As mentioned above, the index for the status or occupation is not attached, but on average about 20 per cent of wills declared the status. Incidentally, bachelor, burgess, alderman are omitted from the counting. Moreover, in the cases of multiple status or occupation, I counted the first one. As a matter of course, the ‘average’ was about 20 per cent, tracing back to the earlier period when the numbers fluctuate more: this follows the movements of annual number totals. However, the types of status declared in wills are quite limited in this period: firstly, religious ones and those concerned with including clerks, secondly, aristocrats, nobles, gentry or gentlemen, esquires, and finally women (mainly widows).

Although I did not make the table, the period between 1383 and 1400 yields 98 cases. The first category was dominant. It is notable there were 49 clerks, half of the total. In each of the other 3 categories only one case

³ *Index Library*, 10, *Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. I 1383–1558(A-J)*; 11, *Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. II 1383–1558(K-Z)*; 18, *Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. III 1558–1583*.

⁴ *Index Library*, 25, *Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. IV 1584–1604*.

⁵ ‘The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Graphs, with Tables and Commentary’, pp. 207–8.

could be found.

The fifteenth century wills of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury total 6,424, and there are 1,486 in which the status was declared. A quarter declared their status. In 1498, yeoman appeared in the wills for the first time.

However, in the third volume of *Index Library* we see an increase in the descriptions of status or occupations each year (Table 4.1). In 1558, on top of those three (merchant, grocer, draper) another eight (mercier, merchant tailor, carpenter, fishmonger, baker, chandler, tanner, haberdasher, sailor/mariner) appear for the first time. They were likely to be basically prosperous. As a matter of course, the motive was still mainly the piety in many cases. I would add that the most numerous occupation given was 'sailor', of which there are 20 cases. In the following year another thirteen appear and fisherman is one of them. In particular, the striking number of 16 sailors and fishermen in 1561 suggests the making of wills was important for them because of the frequency of accidents at sea or on rivers. This seems to be connected with the fact that making wills was often done to ensure that the family was looked after the testator's death.

The newly appeared status or occupations tended to be prosperous. They include surgeon, saddler, woodmonger, bower, butcher, leatherseller, and goldsmith. Above all the presence of clothmaker/worker/clothier is noteworthy. After this year, the new descriptions of occupation gradually increase, and the number of sorts is 59 by 1583. The occupations mainly consisted of three: merchants, craftsmen and the others. As the textile industry was the major factor in creating the new divisions in the period, occupations were becoming more specialised. In addition to this, the development of wholesale system was in progress, the ruling and being ruled relationships between them were more likely to occur. After the first appearance of baker in 1558, firstly whitebaker who were supposed to serve relatively more prosperous customers appears, and secondly brownbaker who were supposed to be for relatively less prosperous customers comes after an interval of some years. The 1570's and the 1580's witnessed a tendency for people to be increasingly specific about what their occupation was.

The top 10 represent almost 70 per cent of all non-agricultural occupations. Of the ten occupations, the top 7 (merchant-tailor, grocer, clothier, draper, mercier and fishmonger) are merchants.

How did this vary geographically and over time ?

A. Comparison of local courts

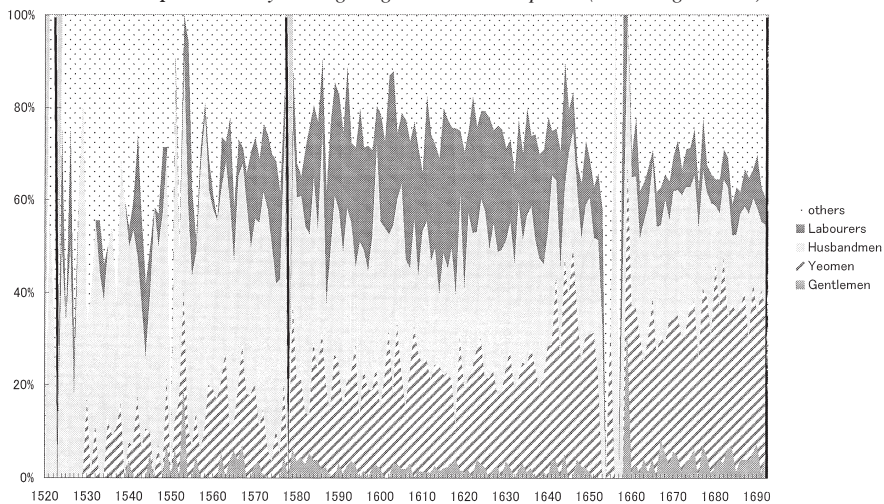
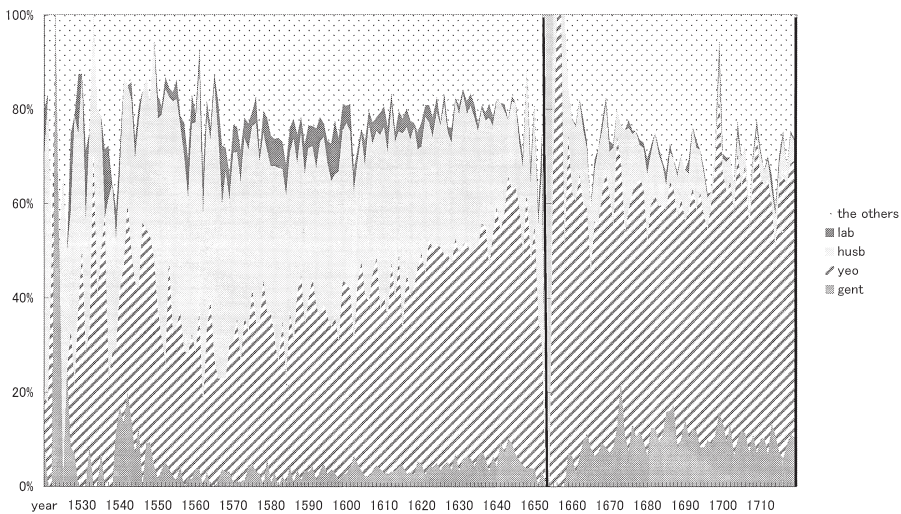
Declaration of status appeared even in fourteenth and fifteenth century wills. They are mostly aristocrats or those of high social status or those involved with the church. Widows were quite common, too. From an examination of the sixteenth century wills, it can be seen that the proportions of declared wills steadily increased from about 20% to more than 70% during the course of one century. This reveals that the declaration of social status or occupation became a part of the will-making customs. Also it shows the divergence between the social status and the occupation, as well as the increase in the variety of occupations.

For the current research, the first step was a listing of the volumes which contain information on social status and occupation. This *Index Library* series itself has a history of more than one century, and the editorship has sometimes changed. The earlier volumes generally indicate only dates, names and localities. As a whole, the volumes for the Western or South-western dioceses are less informative. Those of the Midlands, Metropolitan and East Anglia are comparatively more informative. To count the wills, the scanning machine and the reading computer software (Mac Reader) were used initially, but the more complicated works required more dependence on my own eyesight and on handling each document individually. Inevitably, this work was more time-consuming. As a result, I have counted the volumes for the four dioceses which it is reasonably easy to count: Ely (Cambridge), Huntingdonshire, Worcester and Chelmsford (Essex) (Graphs 4.1-4).⁶

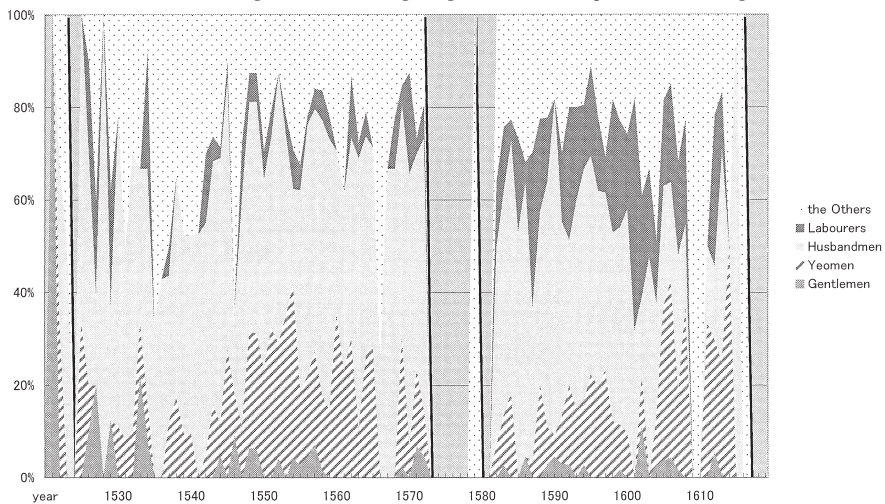
Firstly, the number of cases in which testators declared their status or occupations reveal the striking convergence of the figures for Ely, Huntingdonshire and Worcestershire. If women (widows and spinsters) are included, only about 20% of all testators declared their social status or occupation at the beginning of the Sixteenth century, but more than 70% of the total did at the end of the century.

As for the numbers of wills, the influenza period in the late 1550's was

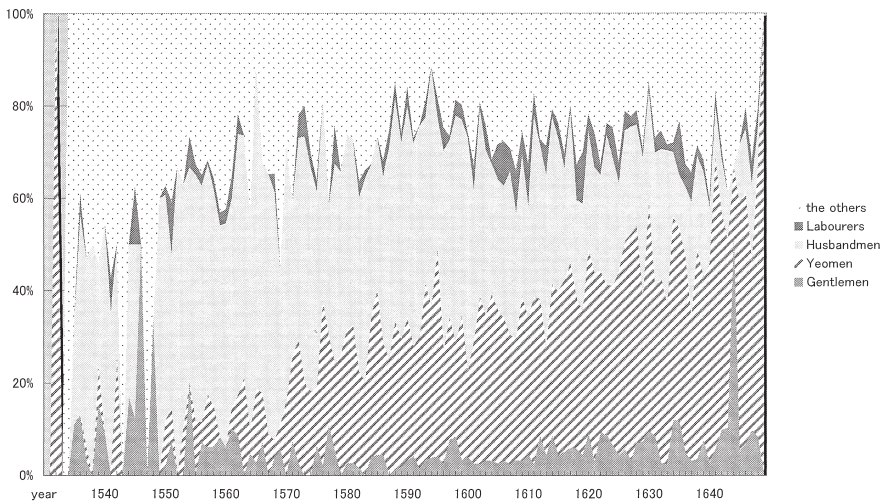
⁶ *Index Library*, 31. Worcester Wills, Vol. I 1451-1600; 39. Worcester Wills Vol. II 1601-1652; 42. Huntingdonshire Wills 1479-1652; 79. Wills at Chelmsford, Vol. II 1620-1720; 103. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449-1858, Vol. I; 106. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449-1858, Vol. II; 107. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449-1858, Vol. III.

Graph 4.1 *Ely wills giving status or occupation(excluding women)*Graph 4.2 *Chelmsford wills giving status or occupation(excluding women)*

Graph 4.3 *Huntingdonshire wills giving status or occupation(excluding women)*



Graph 4.4 *Worcestershire wills giving status or occupation(excluding women)*



the watershed. For the proportion of testators making declarations of social status or occupation, however, the increase occurred even before the influenza period; and did not suddenly increase when the epidemic was at its height; after the period the number of declarations still steadily increased. Thus, the trend seems to correlate to a longer and more fundamental movement such as the development of a division of labour and the clarification of social status. Conversely, the lower the social status the will-making customs spread to, the more various the occupations that could be declared. According to the Essex (Chelmsford) data, the declaration was made by 70–80% of all testators in the 1620's. The graph levels off after the 1620s for at least one century. The types of occupations were still more various than in the other three dioceses.

Ely (Cambridge) and Huntingdonshire are adjacent to each other geographically and show similar trends in the proportion of declarations, including a fluctuation in the 1580's. I have not found an explanation for what happened in these fen-edged counties. Another mystery is why Worcester stopped the declaration of the occupations after the 1620's. This could be connected with the drastic change in the administrative procedures.

In the Civil War period, the numbers of wills themselves declined drastically. However, why did the declarations of social status and occupation decline? Perhaps in this period those who left wills were more likely to do so for more religious reasons beyond the social or economic concerns that traditionally motivated people.

Although the majority of will-making individuals in the population as a whole were of course rather prosperous, the Sixteenth and the first half of the Seventeenth century saw the emergence of more testators from poorer backgrounds. The quantitative increase is already well-known. The current research has put the spotlight shed light on the attitudes towards and ideas about status and occupation: the increase in yeomen, husbandmen and labourers in proportions large enough to confirm the socially downward tendency of will-making customs. Probably Ely wills had some atypical features, for no fewer than 20% of the totals were made by labourers (including non-declared wills).⁷ In spite of the spread of will-making to the lower

⁷ E. J. Carlson, 'The Historical Value of the Ely Consistory Probate Records', E. Leedham-Green, ed., *Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records. 1449–1858 Part I, Index Library*, 103 (London: British Record Society, 1994); N. Evans, 'The Occupations and Status of Male Testators in Cambridgeshire, 1551–1800', in T. Arkell, et al. eds., *When Death do us Part*.

levels of society, social differences in both attitude and practice, remained evident. It could be argued that different will-making customs, demonstrated most clearly in the matter of whether status or occupation should be given or not, helped accentuate the gulf between different levels of society. K. Wrightson argues that in the late Seventeenth century, yeomen and husbandmen as descriptions of the social status faded away.⁸ It is true that the numbers of husbandmen gradually decrease following the decrease in the absolute numbers of all surviving wills: after reaching a peak in the first part of the Seventeenth century. The numbers of yeomen, however, constitute at least a quarter of all declared, even in eighteenth century Essex where Wrightson himself has done some research in Terling.⁹ Yet some yeomen in the period could have been in reality husbandmen in the previous period. So, there could have been a divergence between the current reality and the traditional ideas, in proportion to the change in the production area.

The total number of wills survived in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and York counted here is almost 0.85 million. They are the highest probate courts for England, and were used in particular by testators with estates in the plural counties. The testators for both courts are therefore assumed to be relatively prosperous, in comparison with the local courts. However, testators were not necessarily rich to be proved at both the courts. The motive for leaving a will was often likely to be beyond the testators' economic and social status. In fact, quite a substantial number of labourers and individuals with relatively 'humble' jobs left wills. In addition, until the seventeenth century, the proportion of testators whose status is not declared is higher than declared ones, and would include women. The numbers of women who did not leave their status in the wills are still open to question, but we can by and large make assumptions from the data as follows.¹⁰

This section examines the distribution patterns for the status and occupation of the testators in the dioceses and archdeaconry courts with a par-

⁸ K. Wrightson, 'The Social Order of Early Modern England: Three Approaches', K. Wrightson, R. M. Smith and L. Bonfield, eds., *The World We Have Gained* (Oxford, 1986), p. 189.

⁹ K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety*.

¹⁰ The women's probate records involve another important and difficult matter which has been much discussed over a period of many years: by-employment. M. Overton and his inventories team have written a chapter on the by-employment and women's work and 'unproductive' households in their recent volume (M. Overton, J. Whittle, D., Dean and A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750*, chapter 4).

ticular focus on women. Using the seven data sets (PCC, PCY, Chelmsford, Ely, Cheshire, Hampshire, Worcestershire ; Appendix Table 2-1~7), the period decided on was the two hundred years between 1520 and 1720 which was the time when wills consistently survived. The number of those declaring status or occupation is around 30 or 40% in the second half of the sixteenth century and in the seventeenth century reached 60-80% (Graph 4.5). Usually, women are counted as 'declared', but women themselves make up around 10% of the total in the second half of the sixteenth century and gradually increase to around 20% (Graph 4.6). This is a common pattern in all the data sets. Therefore, the estimate by A. Erickson is confirmed here. Nevertheless, it would be assumed that at the time when women were most likely to describe their status as widow, spinster or wife, men were also much more inclined to give their status rather than occupation. Up to the seventeenth century, it is hard to find any women testators in the wills whose occupation is quite common, such as carpenter and cooper and it is indeed unlikely that female testators specified an occupation. It is more likely that some women are still in the category of 'status or occupation unknown'. So, I would like to postulate that when most men gave their status rather than occupation, women would had exactly the same tendency.

In order to examine the assumption above, I made the comparison between yeomen and 'the others' which are a mixture of various occupations. For 'Husbandman' all seven data sets show a decline in the number of cases where men described themselves as 'husbandman' in the seventeenth century (Graph 4.7). Although there are few points to discuss, but if pressed, I would say that in Ely and Hampshire the number of husbandmen seems relatively high as a proportion of the total. As for women, however, Essex shows the most significant increase. Essex also indicates a remarkable rise for yeomen (Graph 4.8). This is the opposite of what was happening in PCY, Ely and Hampshire. In contrast, in Essex, the number of testators whose occupation falls into the category 'the others' declines dramatically in the late seventeenth century, while they increase steeply in York and Hampshire as well as Ely (Graph 4.9). It could easily be associated with the divisions of labour. If so, it can be assumed that the increasing numbers of yeomen in Essex are in fact a manifestation of the fact that more individuals are using the word 'farmer' to describe their occupation rather than as merely a description of status. The increase of women in that category is sustained by the increase in the number of spouses or daughters of the farmers who adopted the conventional status to describe their social

positions. Essex is known to be the metropolitan suburb county where large farms developed earlier. In the late seventeenth century, Essex faced a wider gap between the 'middling sort' will-making social groups and the poorer non will-making social groups. The study of Terling helps to describe the process.¹¹ Nevertheless, the patterns in Essex described above would suggest that this county is somewhat unrepresentative at least for the period. Therefore, on the basis of the data on wills, the transition from a situation in which status was recorded in wills to one in which occupation was more commonly cited seemed to be accompanied by the development of the division of labour. Women's wills should be investigated from this viewpoint.

Occupations

As for the precise analysis of the occupations, we are waiting for the results of Occupation Project at Cambridge Group (CAMPOP: L. Shaw-Taylor, An E. S. R. C. Funded Research Project, The Occupational Structure of England 1389–1850). Before seeing the results, here we are looking at a transitional period when women slowly began to state their occupation rather than only their status when they drew up wills,

The proportions and numbers of status or occupations declared in PCC and PCY probate documents are shown in Graph 4.10 and 4.11 respectively.

The numbers of status or occupations in York wills are fairly constant at around 40.¹² In the period between the end of the fifteenth century and the early sixteenth century, the numbers show a slight decline. This is attributed to the decreasing numbers of wills. However, the decline is smaller than the proportion. The line for the PCC on the graph barely increases at all. It is as if a declaration of occupation seemed to be frowned upon at that time. The PCC Index for the early 3 volumes do not have an index of occupations, and volume 4 is the first to have the index of occupations.¹³ By counting individual wills, I have found the proportions and numbers, but at least the editors of the earlier volumes did not need to set up the specialised index for the occupations. I realise that we can not draw a definite conclu-

¹¹ K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety*.

¹² M. Takahashi, *Village Inheritance in Early Modern Period*, Chapter 2, Postscript 2.

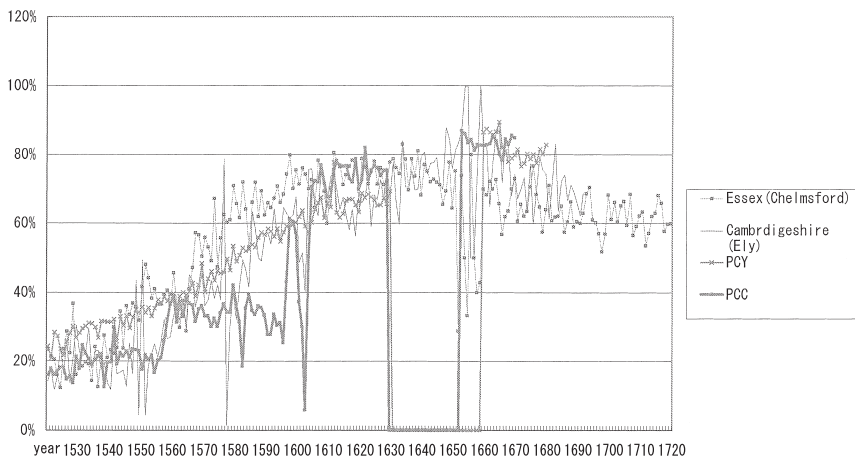
¹³ According to Professor Margaret Spufford, when Dr. Christopher Marsh wrote his Ph. D thesis on Family of Love, he could not find any status or occupation in the PCC wills except yeomen in this period; C. Marsh, *Family of Love in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994).

sion about when 'occupation' appeared besides or instead of status. This seems to be directly connected with the discussion by E. A. Wrigley of the mutual relationship between economic development and the variety of occupations.¹⁴ The 3rd volume of the PCC Index which does not have its own occupation index, indicates the gradual rise in the numbers of occupations between 1559–1589 up to 60, and the 4th volume shows an even steeper rise. Although the 4th volume has its own occupational index, it is not arranged annually. Therefore the figure shown here seems to appear for the first time. Besides, the York whose trends have not been analysed either, shows a gradual increase, not so steep but a constant increase from around 60 in the mid-sixteenth century to more than 100 at the turn of the century. The figures reach a peak at 120–130, but after becoming the 'local centre', the number remains around 150, while the figures for the Canterbury, 'the national centre' reach more than 300 in the second half of the seventeenth century.

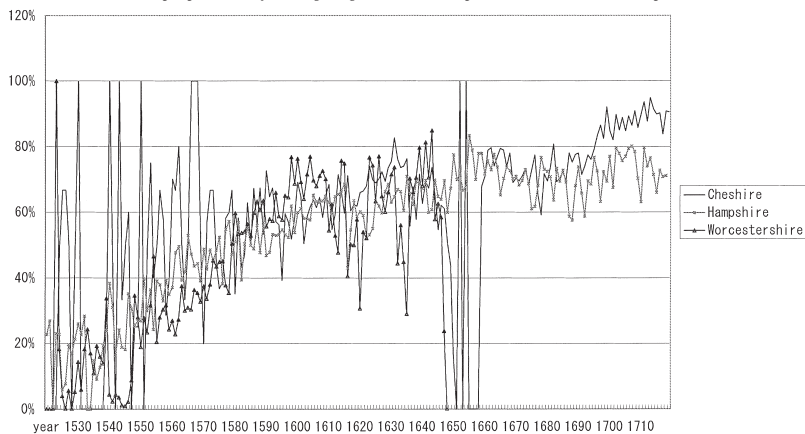
The numbers of administrations occupations are low throughout the period of the research and do not exceed 30.

¹⁴ E. A. Wrigley, *Progress, Poverty and Population* (Cambridge, 2004).

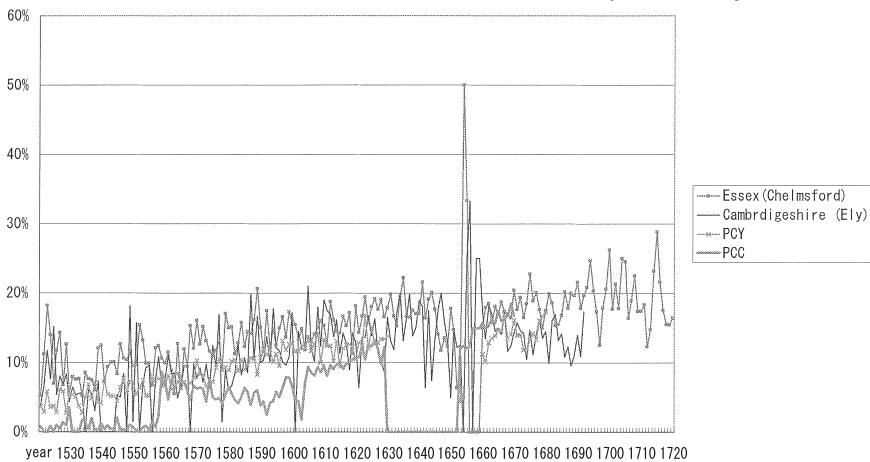
Graph 4.5A *The proportions of wills giving status or occupations : PCC, PCY, Ely and Chelmsford*



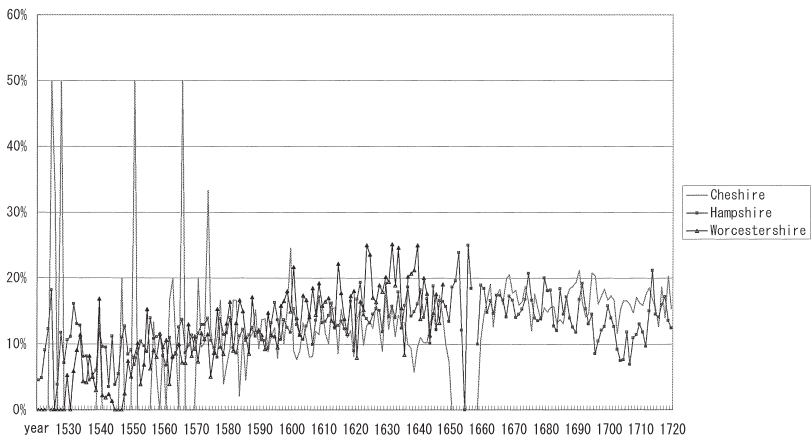
Graph 4.5B *The proportions of wills giving status or occupations : Cheshire, Hampshire and Worcestershire*



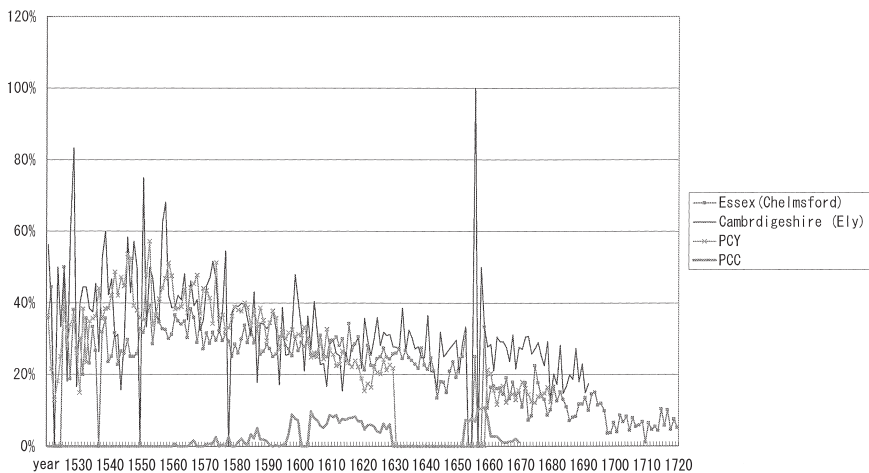
Graph 4.6A *Women's wills in total : PCC, PCY, Ely and Chelmsford*



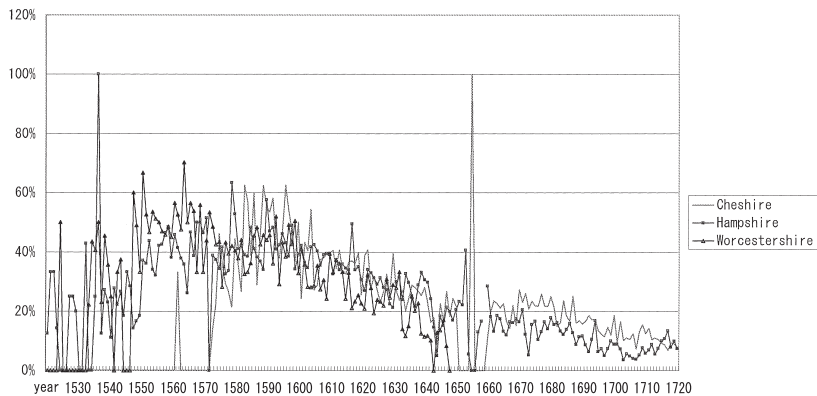
Graph 4.6B *Women's wills in total : Cheshire, Hampshire and Worcestershire*



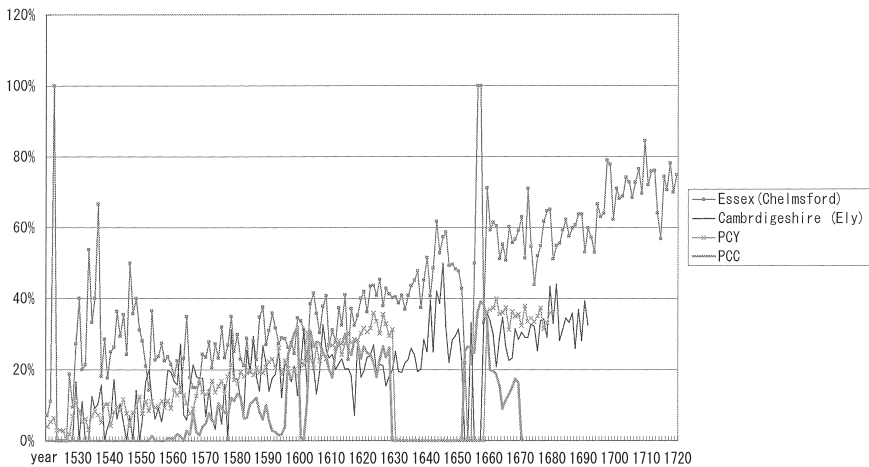
Graph 4.7A 'Husbandman' in wills giving status and occupations : PCC, PCY, Ely and Chelmsford



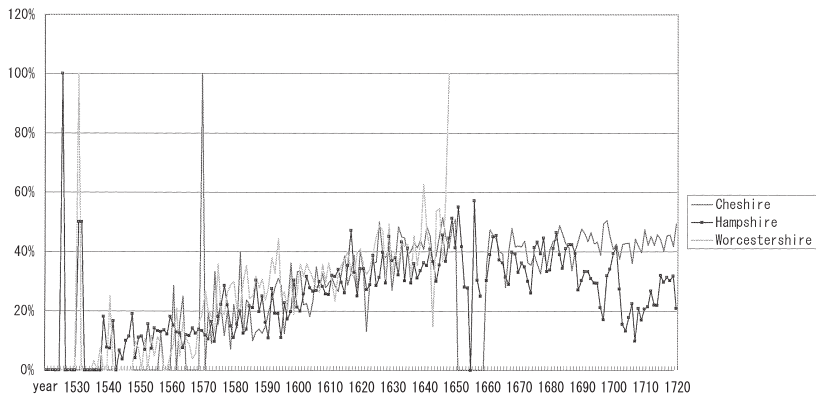
Graph 4.7B 'Husbandman' in wills giving status and occupations : Cheshire, Hampshire and Worcestershire

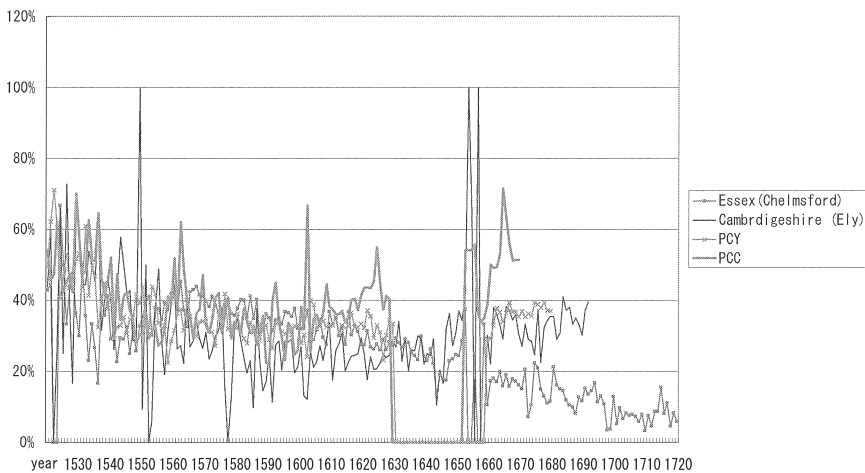
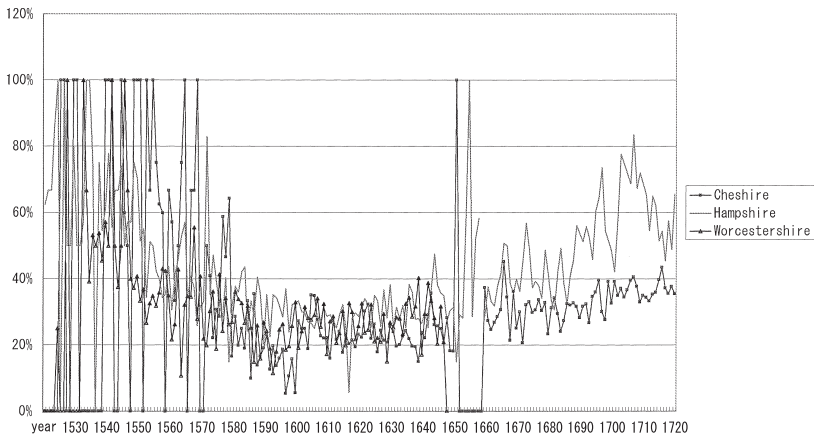


Graph 4.8A 'Yeoman' in wills giving status and occupations : PCC, PCY, Ely and Chelmsford



Graph 4.8B 'Yeoman' in wills giving status and occupations : Cheshire, Hampshire and Worcestershire

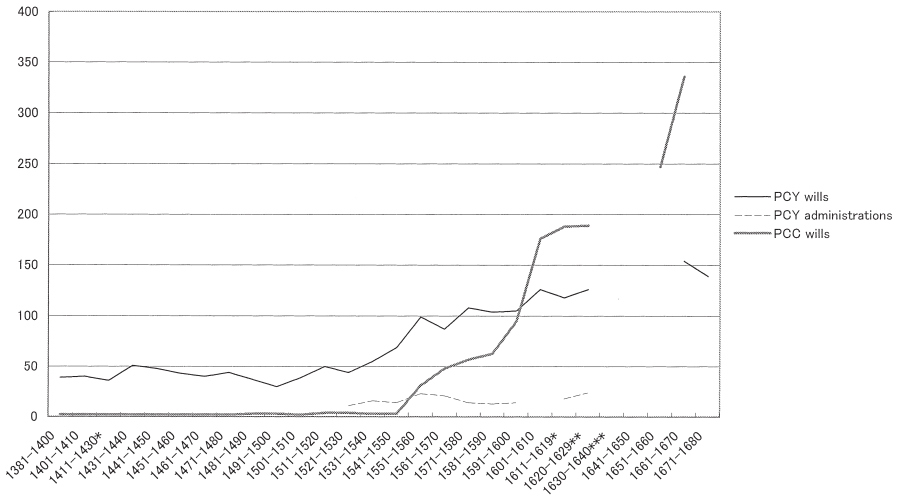


Graph 4.9A *'The others' in wills giving status and occupations : PCC, PCY, Ely and Chelmsford*Graph 4.9B *'The others' in wills giving status and occupations : Cheshire, Hampshire and Worcestershire*

Graph 4.10 *The proportions of wills giving status or occupations : PCC and PCY +administrations*



Graph 4.11 *The numbers of status or occupations declared in PCC and PCY probate documents*



Conclusion

The aims of this chapter are to find the numbers of testators who described their status or occupations, and the geographical and chronological distribution patterns. Here the data are from the two Prerogative Courts and 5 local courts to represent each district.

There is an increasing tendency for sixteenth century and seventeenth century wills to have a declaration of the status of the testator, with the number increasing from about 20% to 70%. This implies the declaration of social status or occupation became a part of the will-making customs and that the divergence between the social status and the occupation, as well as the increase in the variety of occupations became more evident during this period. Secondly, an examination of the number of cases in which testators declared their status or occupations reveal the striking convergence of the figures for Ely, Huntingdonshire and Worcestershire. The lower the social status the will-making customs spread to, the more various the occupations that could be declared. According to the Essex data, the declaration was made by 70–80% of all testators in the 1620's.

If we consider the number of gentlemen, the Prerogative Court of Canterbury has consistently higher percentages than all the others. However, social status is given rather than occupation by testators working in the agriculture sector, and so descriptions such as yeoman or husbandman are the most common throughout the period. In particular the proportion of husbandmen is high from the early sixteenth century onwards. The figures for the Prerogative Court of York could be somewhere between those for Essex and Ely. In the local courts, the more varied the occupations were, the more yeomen there tended to be. As economic development accelerated, the more likely it was that the word or term 'yeoman' would be given as an occupation rather than as a status. Therefore the word 'husbandman', used so often in the past, gradually became less commonly used as a way of describing status in the late seventeenth century at the latest. Even in the case of labourers who were as numerous as gentlemen, York was more like Ely in the sixteenth century but became more similar to Chelmsford in the seventeenth century when the more metropolitan or urban areas expanded and influenced the neighbouring countryside. This is confirmed by using the numbers of occupations which appeared in the both Prerogative Courts, to give some clues as to the developments of the divisions of labour through

the rapid subdivisions of the occupations. The numbers of terms used to describe status or occupation in wills made in the York court are fairly constant at around 40 throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, while Canterbury shows less variety in the number of occupations listed. As for the newly gained data, they indicate that in the second half of the sixteenth century Canterbury can boast of up to 60 different occupations, and afterwards there is an even steeper rise to establish itself as 'the national centre' with a good 300 recorded in the second half of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, in York whose trends have not been analysed either, there is a relatively gradual increase from around 60 in the mid-sixteenth century when it became the 'local centre', to around 150 which is where it remains for the second half of the seventeenth century.

Chapter 5 Proportions of wills left by women

Introduction

In general, it is a common knowledge that women did not leave so many wills as men did in the past. For women's properties and possessions were generally under the control of the head of the family or household who was usually a man, if we assume that the purpose of wills was to make clear how the property was to be dealt with after the death of the testator. However, the motive for making wills was initially the 'bequest of the soul' and went beyond mere considerations as to the size and value of the property. On the other hand, early modern wills often refer to the care of minors and weak relatives or dependents after the death of the testators. Women's wills also refer to such care, but often referring to the wider community beyond the family. The reason for this was that women testators were for the most part widows, spinsters and wives and the contents of the wills reflect such positions. The absolute numbers of women's wills were smaller, and the analysis we attempted has had an initial difficulty in ensuring a valid sample. Moreover, there are several technical points that need to be addressed. Firstly, the counting so far has ignored the names of the testators and it has been unclear in some cases what the exact status or occupation of some of the women was. Secondly, the annual data for the individual occupations such as carpenter, miller, cooper and goldsmith are almost all available, but some women could be included. This could be connected with the large number of spinsters, because spinsters could be men if we assume that spinster is an occupation, not a marital status of a woman. However, on the basis of the results of some extensive research, there seem to be relatively small numbers of such cases. This could be connected with the declaration of women's status and at the same time could be connected with the gradual social changes taking place which affected how people described their status or occupation.

Survey

This section is a brief survey of the studies of the economic and social

activities of women in the late medieval and early modern periods, with particular reference to wills and inheritance.

Recently new evidence or advances in the way existing evidence is analysed has shed light on the regional differences between the social and economic activities of women in the north and south of the country. In general the involvement of women in public documents has been found to be one fifth or at most a quarter of the total, due to the historical gender gap or their legal and social subordination in that period. Women were confined to their 'households' and were further bound by the customs governing a wide range of activities including inheritance. Such customs degenerated in a relatively short period and influenced the characteristics of a 'household' and had an effect on the frequency with which women appeared in documents.

New evidence and new methods of the use of materials

It is only fairly recently that some studies have illuminated the economic and social lives of ordinary women in the late medieval and early modern periods which had not been systematically studied hitherto. They have introduced new historical documents or new methods which can be used to examine familiar materials in a new way, and succeeded in producing a detailed analysis and description. J. M. Bennett used the court rolls and frankpledge documents of pre-plague period Brigstock, a woodland and Royal Forest manor to uncover the subservient positions of women through the course of their lives living a highly restricted life within the narrow confines of the home.¹ Bennett analysed the countryside, but P. J. P. Goldberg uses the poll tax returns, testamentary documents and the previously rather underused cause papers for debt, defamation or disputes to investigate the women in York and Yorkshire. As far as this paper is concerned, the number of wills surviving in the northern area had not been fully and systematically used.² In the study of Kibworth Harcourt, Leicestershire by C. Howell in which the consistent features of families, inheritance and land holding are analysed making extensive use of wills and inventories. Or B. Hanawalt used Bedfordshire wills for the study of family and household in

¹ J. M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside* (Oxford, 1987), p. 20.

² P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c. 1300-1520* (Oxford, 1992), p. 27.

the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries while using the coroners records for the fourteenth century. Furthermore, M. K. McIntosh's recent study of the economic activities in five market towns or cities bridging the late medieval and early modern periods uses not only the testamentary records but also 283 narrative petitions in the royal equity courts.³ The new and underused evidence gives a deep insight into the women's activities in the food and drink trades. McIntosh reveals the variations between regions of England, and draws particular attention to the north whose economic and social environment is different from the south. Her study has another advantage which is that it offers a longer perspective covering both the late medieval and early modern period, while the preceding studies stop around 1500.

McIntosh's study deserves to be praised, as it shows that we can understand women's economic and social activities better by covering the north as well as the south and the late medieval in addition to the early modern periods. However, Havering, Essex which provides the principal data of the southern area, is based on the preceding two continued microhistories of both the late medieval and early modern period.⁴ The 'Particularity' of Essex should be remarked upon, as this paper later points out in the discussion of regional differences. Moreover, it should be remembered manors on which we have so much detail such as both Brigstock and Havering are under the Law of Forest, and therefore operate under different legislative systems and are not necessarily the same as non-Forest areas even if they are woodlands.⁵

Northern wills and the significance

Although, the survivorship itself must be an important issue worth discussing, many wills are extant in the north under the jurisdiction of the Prerogative Court of York. So significant numbers of wills survived in York and Yorkshire. York was not only the principal capital on occasion, but had also been the centre of the Prerogative Court since the seventh century.⁶ It had a population of 12,000 or 13,000 in 1377 at its peak.⁷ Trades were busy in such an important city and the 1381 poll tax returns counts list 126

³ M. K. McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 6.

⁴ See, footnote.

⁵ J. M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, pp. 10 and 16.

⁶ P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy*, p. 1.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

different occupations.⁸ Afterwards, as a result of the famines and outbreaks of plague in the early fourteenth century, the population declined and York had a population of approximately 8,000 as the population around 1500.⁹ Nevertheless, in Yorkshire there are many wills which survived and up to 1500 around six hundred women's wills have been counted.¹⁰ Although wills are such promising documents in terms of the quantity, they had been ignored in the field of political studies and to the domain of antiquarians and genealogists for a long time. The north with its abundance of wills is not an exception to that general rule. It is not surprising that potential data regarding northern women in wills had not been uncovered previous to this study.

Women confined to the households

At present, only wills are numerically substantial and can be traced back in a continuous sequence to the medieval period up until 1538 when the parish registration commenced. As a matter of course, wills have their own bias as historical documents, as to make wills requires the testator to come from a sufficiently solid background so that he has sufficient resources such as economic funds. Testators were more likely to be from the upper social strata. In addition, basically wills were inevitably made a short time before the testator's death, and they could fail to reflect the social and economic activities carried out in the past or more usually may not provide much information on life within this particular household. As for women's wills, they have their own particular characteristics attributable to the historical reality of their subservient position. That is, the subservience resulted in the smaller numbers of women's wills that survived and is reflected in their contents. Such subservience was legal and social, and intertwined with the positions of women in the 'household'. Women were confined to their 'households'. These legal and social conditions were easily found in the countryside, but even in the more urban areas when often they were actively involved in the various trades of the market economy, they had to face various restrictions as long as the society was run on masculine terms.

Goldberg and McIntosh use probate documents extensively and other

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

documents including untapped detailed documents are also utilised most effectively for the analysis of northern women. Those studies focused more on urban women, at least women in the market towns. It would be my assumption that the subservience of women originated with the households in the villages or manors where various customs regulated them. Therefore the study of women in the countryside by J. Bennett is still almost the only one to rely on. Despite the fact that the period studied is up to the Black Death epidemic period and there are few wills available particularly those made by women, it fully investigates the subservient nature of women as seen in the fact they could not inherit.

Bennett is a critic of the idea of 'Golden Age' for women. In fact, she points out the research on medieval women had been limited to rather urban societies.

It is important to realise that the status of women after 1700 was the result not only of the economic change of the previous period but also enduring customs the continuation of customs with their origins much further back in time.¹¹ From this presumption, Bennett finds that women in the medieval countryside were basically confined to their households as the existence. However, the households themselves were influenced by the communities of which they were a part and kin relationships which were often hard to define precisely.¹² That is, in the medieval countryside, the blurred boundary between community (more official) and kin relationships (more private) results in a degree of ambivalence and contradiction because the kin relationships were not based on the rights and obligations but options and choices made by individuals.¹³ Servants reflect such ambiguity well. They are also existence involved in an important part of households, but the distinction between them and kin relations are often not clear. This is true in the early modern period, still more in the late fourteenth century when it was not generally the case that ordinary people had clear and distinct surnames.¹⁴

Households in the late medieval period were regulated by particular demographic patterns and these patterns determined how kin relationships as well as communities were formed. The demographic patterns in the

¹¹ J. M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, p. 4.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 198.

¹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 7, 49 and 54.

¹⁴ P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy*, p. 28.

medieval period show the imbalance between the population and resources.¹⁵ That is the increasing resources encouraged population growth from the late twelfth century to the late thirteenth century, but the surplus population caused a shortage of resources and invited the sequence of famine, disease and epidemics from the end of the thirteenth century to the Black Death period of the mid-fourteenth century. The population continued to decrease rapidly until the fifteenth century. The growth of population and economy stopped and the demographic model reversed. In the longer perspective, this period is in between the time of surplus labour both at the end of the thirteenth century and the end of sixteenth century.¹⁶ The period also generated as it were life-cycle servants. They made up a major percentage of the later marriages and high population of lifelong spinsters.¹⁷

Servants lives as part of the households. Life-cycle servants, in particular were supposed to live in the employer's household and not with their parents and usually moved from one household to another every year. Early modern historians tend to unconsciously assume that the average size of households in the previous period was larger.¹⁸ Nevertheless, the size of the households in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries did not seem to be so large as the co-living unit. Retirement contracts (these documents anyhow are found in abundance up to the early sixteenth century, but afterwards they faded away, and instead wills survive in considerable numbers) suggest a smaller size and simple structure.¹⁹ Also, the court rolls descriptions show the narrowness of the usual kin relationships. For instance, when an uncle mentions his nephew, he does not use 'nephew' but 'son of my brother'.²⁰

On the other hand, there were single or lifelong spinsters to make the boundary between servants and kin relationships more ambiguous. The population of women who never married became higher in the early fifteenth century.²¹ The term 'spinsters' before around 1500 meant a female spinner, and did not refer to her marital status.²² It can be assumed that the increasing numbers of women who never married and the way they made a

¹⁵ J. M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, p. 13.

¹⁶ M. K. McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society*, p. 8.

¹⁷ P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy*, p. 20.

¹⁸ J. M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, p. 48.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 61.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

²¹ P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy*, p. 276.

²² M. K. McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society*, p. 214.

living caused a gradual change in the meaning of the term. In fact, out of those who were engaged in the textile industry 6–20% were women servants and 48–68% were independent women workers in York and Yorkshire.²³ Apart from the textile industry, as a means of livelihood they were engaged in money lending, victualling or small trades. However, even in the late fifteenth century when there were relatively more economic opportunities in the market economy, they had to face the various restrictions which they shared with the domestic households in the countryside.

Women's activities in the market economy in the late medieval and early modern period and the restrictions

The mid-fifteenth century saw an expansion of opportunities in the market economy and women as well as men were also able to take advantage of the economic growth. However, they had to face the restrictions on all their activities including landholdings, inheritance of property and credit. The research shows that women ran between 20 and 25% of all trades and were in a similarly weak position with regard to their rights.

As A. Erickson concluded, the very severe restrictions on the landholdings owned by women were contained in the Common Law. As for the dowry, it was limited to up to one third of the property of the husband. Meanwhile, the customary law ensured that half was secured for the wife as the right of 'Free Bench'. In York, Wales and London in particular, it was the normal practice for ecclesiastical law to set out special regulations governing the making of wills.²⁴ This means that one third of all movables were kept for the widows and another third for the testator's children before the will was made. The remaining third could be bequeathed in whatever way the testator saw fit. In the case where there were no children, the right of the widows was extended so that they could claim up to half of all the movable goods and assets.²⁵

To begin with the landholdings in the fourteenth century countryside, the common law restricted a widow's dowry to one third of her husband's property, while the customary law admitted the right of 'Free Bench' which

²³ P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy*, p. 98.

²⁴ G. G. Alexander, 'The Custom of the Province of York', *Thoresby Society*, pp. 419, 425–6.

²⁵ A. L. Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, p. 28.

meant that she could claim half. However, even the latter was still restricted.²⁶ Women were not able to take complete ownership of land. They were custodians only.²⁷ There were regional variations in inheritance customs, but if there was not complete partible inheritance, then essentially daughters came after sons and the property was divided among daughters equally, without any preference being given to someone because they were born first.²⁸ Also, inheritance customs are reflected in naming practices, as the namings of women was far less important for the families and the communities than men's naming. Boys names were significantly restricted to a handful of names such as John, William, Thomas and George.²⁹ Furthermore, when a woman married, she lost all independent control over properties. The properties became a joint holding with her husband.³⁰

In the 1450s women had more economic opportunities than around 1600, but it does not mean everything was rosy. Their activities were bound by various enduring restrictions even in the economic sphere. For instance, the most specialised occupations such as carpentering, smithing and regional trading, were still solely the preserve of men. Of course they could support men, but only in the role of assistant. Women were engaged in more traditional female occupations. Victualing was one such example. As the term 'alewives' implies, women were focused on victualling ales. It was the same in urban areas, too.³¹ Until beer brewing was operated by men exclusively, the women in this industry were part of the mainstream. Ale was also important for the financing of the parish religious guilds and fraternities of which women were members in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.³²

Although 'credit' is always important for human society, in the late medieval period social credit was quite important and this term can be understood in various ways). Then in such a society, the most important factor was the difficulty in gaining credit for women, even in the period when women had a relatively wide range of economic opportunities. In general, if women's activities were, however, mentioned, it was in negative

²⁶ J. M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside*, p. 144.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³¹ P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy*, p. 104. Also see J. M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (New York, 1996).

³² M. K. McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society*, p. 40.

terms.³³ If we consider the means of livelihood, it can be seen that women were allowed to do money lending and pawning, even though in theory this was not possible. Samples from the central court provide the following figures: 66% loaned cash and pawned. 11% lent money having someone else as obligator's surety, and 23% borrowed cash or pawned something. However, in due course, by around 1600, for economic credit, more formal settings were required and so it became more difficult for women.³⁴ Women had to wait for another expansion of economic credit in the 1660s at the earliest with most of this growth taking place after 1700.

Women's wills at the Prerogative Courts

Although the number of survived wills in England was roughly counted by the predecessors, the annual numbers of totals, in particular according to status and occupations declared, have never been counted. Therefore the data analysed here appears for the first time (Table 5.1 and 5.2). Canterbury's period is 1389–1800. The percentages of women counted here go up to 1670. The proportions of women (widows are dominant) are no more than 1% in general until the 1540s, while the absolute number of totals are lower than York. York's period is 1380–1680 and it constantly surpasses Canterbury until the early seventeenth century, and the proportions of widows are around 5–10% of the totals in the same period and beyond up until the 1620s (Graph 5.1).

The reason for the observable fact that the proportion of women making wills at the Prerogative Court of York is greater than the numbers doing so in Canterbury must be related to the preferential treatment given to widows by 'The Custom of the Province of York'. The prevalence of this particular local custom is partly ascribed to the fact that the Northern area had been more inclined to partible inheritance than the Southern area and the partible inheritance was a custom that involved both men and women.³⁵ This is a characteristic shared with the customs prevailing in Scandinavia, and A. Erickson suggests that it is likely that the customs in the period of Norman rule were still heavily influenced by Scandinavian traditions. The key point here is that these customs allowed wives to keep the right to the property

³³ M. K. McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society*, p. 4.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁵ A. L. Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, pp. 62, 68.

Table 5.1 *Wills proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*

	Total wills	undeclared	status	declared	declared/total	women's number	women's percentage	numbers of occup.	numbers of occup. Exc. Women
1401-1410	440	318	122	28%	3	1%	3	2	
1411-1420	491	355	136	28%	6	1%	3	2	
1421-1430	324	235	89	27%	0	0%	3	2	
1431-1440	222	159	63	28%	10	5%	3	2	
1441-1450	233	160	73	31%	0	0%	3	2	
1451-1460	408	287	121	30%	6	1%	3	2	
1461-1470	565	423	142	25%	7	1%	3	2	
1471-1480	556	429	127	23%	5	1%	3	2	
1481-1490	948	752	196	21%	7	1%	4	3	
1490-1491	2237	1819	418	19%	12	1%	4	3	
1501-1510	3337	2747	590	18%	19	1%	3	2	
1511-1520	1824	1496	328	18%	17	1%	5	4	
1521-1530	2150	1791	359	17%	19	1%	5	4	
1531-1540	2323	1867	456	20%	19	1%	4	3	
1541-1550	2903	2248	655	23%	21	1%	4	3	
1551-1560	5626	4221	1405	25%	169	3%	32	31	
1561-1570	4281	2764	1517	35%	287	7%	49	48	
1571-1580	6122	4033	2089	34%	338	6%	58	57	
1581-1590	8014	5332	2682	33%	406	5%	64	63	
1591-1600	9935	5971	3964	40%	549	6%	96	95	
1601-1610	10806	4836	5970	55%	778	7%	177	176	
1611-1619	11659	2167	9672	82%	1219	10%	139	138	
1621-1629	14881	3297	11584	78%	1787	12%	190	189	
1631-1640									
1641-1650									
1653-1660	53781	8779	45002	84%	7421	14%	252	247	
1661-1670	18741	3180	15561	83%	2949	16%	340	336	

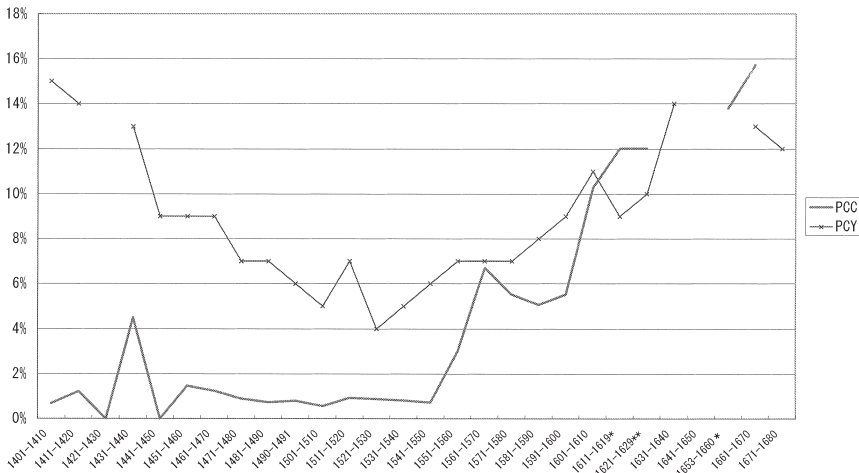
Table 5.2 *Wills proved at the Prerogative Court of York*

year	Total wills	status	undeclared	status	declared/widows	number/widows	percentage	women's number	women's percentage	declared/total	numbers of occup.	numbers of occup. Exc. Women
1401-1400	808	309	400	291	28	4%	104	15%	44%	44	44	40
1411-1410	687	395	291	28	28	4%	104	15%	44%	44	44	39
1411-1430*	677	372	305	40	86	8%	94	14%	45%	41	41	36
1431-1440	1275	661	614	65	5%	161	13%	48%	48%	56	56	51
1441-1450	801	448	353	53	7%	70	9%	44%	45%	53	53	48
1451-1460	935	511	424	76	8%	87	9%	45%	48%	48	48	43
1461-1470	858	395	463	74	9%	78	9%	38%	45%	45	45	40
1471-1480	1289	839	450	84	7%	89	7%	35%	45%	49	49	44
1481-1490	908	804	404	62	7%	67	6%	44%	44%	42	42	37
1491-1500	461	280	181	25	5%	27	3%	39%	39%	32	32	30
1501-1510	1180	583	597	58	5%	80	5%	24%	43%	43	39	36
1511-1520	1725	1421	304	7	0%	114	7%	18%	55%	55	50	50
1521-1530	2380	1750	630	88	4%	89	4%	23%	49%	49	44	44
1531-1540	2880	2068	814	142	5%	153	5%	31%	60%	60	55	55
1541-1550	5205	3589	1620	320	8%	333	8%	31%	61%	74	69	69
1551-1560	9741	6298	3443	671	7%	708	7%	35%	102%	102	99	99
1561-1570	6335	4000	2335	413	6%	481	7%	37%	91%	91	87	87
1571-1580	8412	5246	3166	555	7%	628	7%	38%	111%	108	108	108
1581-1590	11737	7230	4507	794	7%	948	8%	38%	108%	108	104	104
1591-1600	14146	8771	5375	961	7%	1276	9%	38%	112%	112	105	105
1601-1610	9273	4121	5152	811	9%	1061	11%	38%	131%	131	128	128
1611-1619	13725	7859	5866	921	7%	1255	9%	43%	123%	123	119	119
1620-1629	12403	6896	5707	937	8%	1289	10%	46%	131%	131	128	128
1630-1640	5204	1867	3337	640	12%	753	14%	68%	111%	111	105	105
1641-1650												
1651-1660												
1661-1670	10373	3807	6676	1054	10%	1333	13%	64%	263%	263	257	257
1671-1680	11303	5067	6236	1023	9%	1308	12%	55%	144%	144	139	139
	134892											

which had been bequeathed to them when they were daughters. It would appear that there were many cases where widows made wills so that their property could be treated as a dowry. On the other hand, it is possible to interpret by the fact that originally Canterbury was superior to York as the Prerogative Court, and men were more likely to choose the former, while women tended to choose the relatively inferior York.

M. Prior analysed 1068 wills made by wives in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in the period 1558 and 1700.³⁶ The wives belonged to relatively higher social groups and led unusually privileged lives. Moreover, the distribution is concentrated in the second half of the seventeenth century. Compared to the diocese of Oxford in particular, a provincial court whose cases

Graph 5.1 *The proportions of women in the Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and York*



numbered only five, the Canterbury data is indeed impressive, because even in the Prerogative Court of York which sees a relatively large number of womens' wills, the wills made by wives are still few in number.

Women in cases where testator's status or occupation is unknown

At the moment, the index volumes do not necessarily have the index of occupations. The newer they are, the more likely they are to have an index. From now the digitalisation of the catalogues in the record office and archives will complete indexes for occupation and sex. However, the currently available data is fairly limited and I have so far managed to acquire data from the seven courts. Some of it I have published elsewhere, but some is new.

The treatment of women requires some care, as I have mentioned in the Introduction. In the annual count of wills, women are categorized as widow, spinster or wife. They are included in the figures/totals for the 'status or occupation declared'. Being a woman can hardly be considered 'status', let alone an occupation, but they are included under such head-

³⁶ M. Prior, 'Wives and wills, 1558-1700', J. Chartres and D. Hey, eds., *English Rural Society, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 207-9; A. L. Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, pp. 141-3.

ings. However, there seems to be the period when women started to have their own occupation as the division of labour started to occur combined with the development of what we would recognise as the beginnings of a modern economy. For instance, the data from Essex (Chelmsford) provide some 150 cases of wills with women's names where there is no reference to the status or occupation, or where the occupations do not indicate the sex.

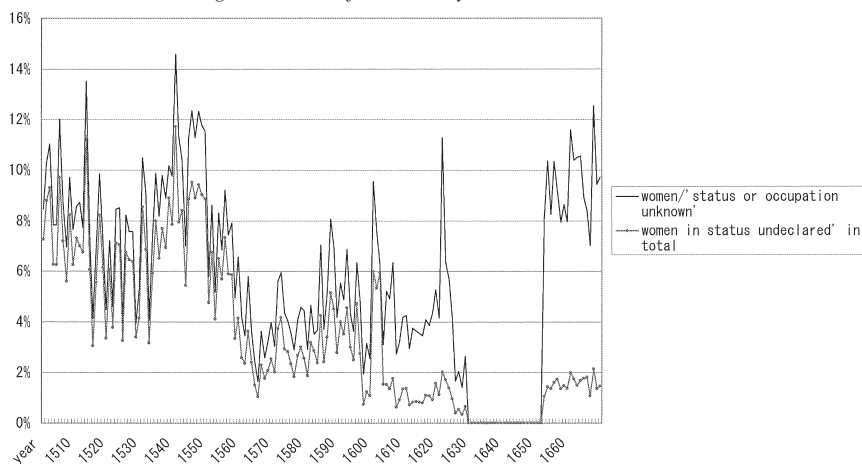
In the period 1620–1720, in 60 or 70% of the wills of Chelmsford (Essex) there is reference to the occupation or status. In fact I anticipated some women would fall into this category, but there are only around 150 cases in a century; averaging out at 1.5 cases a year. Furthermore, I assumed there would be some women in the wills where there is a reference to occupation such as cooper, baker and miller. For this, there are only literally a handful of cases: 1634 Bess Edward, inn holder; 1642 Mary Carleton, gent; 1712 Alice, housekeeper, Wanstead; 1718 Mary Brock, maiden. However, even in these four cases, Mary Carleton ('gent.') could be simply an abbreviation of gentlewoman (although there are some cases of gentlewomen), and 'maiden' used as a term to describe Mary Brock might be marital status, rather than indicating she was a maid servant.

For comparison, I have listed the results of the same investigation of the Ely (Cambridgeshire) data. Although the period covered by Ely was much longer than for Chelmsford, 1487–1720, the number of cases falling into the same categories is 18. Only one woman (1611 Agnes Baker, Shepreth, thatcher) falls into the category where occupation is referred to but there is no direct hint of the sex except the name. Essex and Ely have similar percentages of wills where testators' status or occupation is declared: around 60–80% as we will see at the next section.

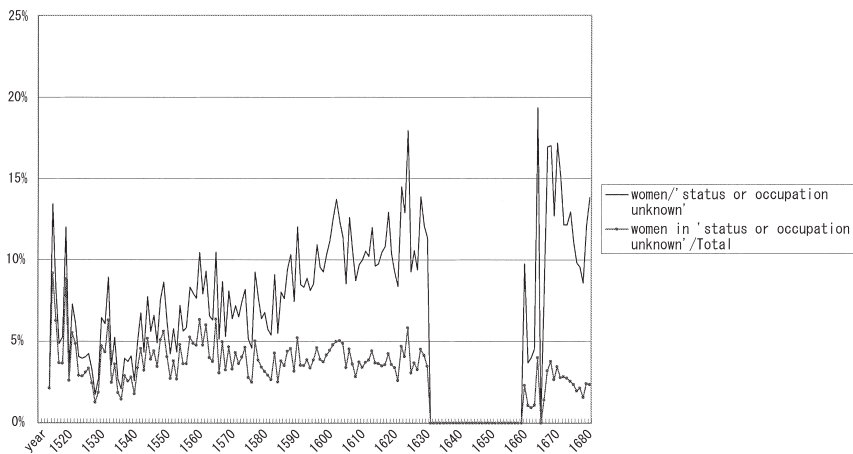
Here I am employing the same method of examination for the wills in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury and York as was used for the data from Chelmsford and Ely (Graph 5.2 and 5.3).

M. Prior's pioneering analysis of wives who made wills estimates that the women who did so make up under 1% of the total wills in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in the period 1558–1700. Combining the women's wills where the status is declared and the wills in which the sex is judged by name and the status is not declared, even in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury where the number of women's wills has been assumed to be negligible shows that women as a whole occupy at least around one tenth of the total number of will-makers from the beginning of the sixteenth century. In the seventeenth century the proportion surpasses 10% and in the second

Graph 5.2 *The proportions of women (judged by name) in status or occupations unknown and total : the Prerogative Court of Canterbury*



Graph 5.3 *The proportions of women (judged by name) in status or occupations unknown and total : the Prerogative Court of York*



half of the century sees a steady rise to nearly 20%. The period experienced two simultaneous trends—an increasing number of different professions coming into existence and being cited in wills, and a tendency for testators to give their occupation rather than their status.

However, probably as M. Prior has done for her identification of the wives on the wills of Prerogative Court of Canterbury and Oxfordshire, the above mentioned findings were only the result of adding the data for the wills in which the sex is judged by the name. Otherwise, the proportions of women whose status such as wife, spinster or widow was known are quite small, in particular before the 1550s. The absolute number of wills and the number of wills where the status or occupation is known are both low. Therefore, unless the wills are judged by the names appearing on them, one would not notice the fact that around 8% of the total are women. In the second half of the sixteenth century, the absolute numbers of wills increase and accordingly the wills made by women whose status is known add to the total number. On the other hand, those women's wills where the status is not declared decrease. The trend that can be observed is that the more the status or occupations are declared in wills, the more women left wills in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. This period saw the development of the social and economic division of labour and the constant and fairly speedy subdivision of occupations. It could be said that the period also experienced qualitative changes in the status which had been recognised by society in the past. Also the same trend led women who were of a legally and socio-economically lower status to express their status with greater confidence. Therefore the number as a whole steadily increased. This trend seems to be combined with the increasing tendency for testators in the earlier wills to add the phrases 'formerly Smith' or 'als (alias) Smith' although such phrases disappear in the later wills. Those phrases seem to express the fact that those who wrote these names were, in general, married but there may still be another reason why they kept the names from the mother's side of the family. Moreover it is not certain whether they are wives or widows even if they were married. So they fall into the category of 'status unknown', as a result. Of course in the sixteenth century, in particular in the early years of that century the surnames of ordinary people were not necessarily established fully. Therefore the phrases used to describe marital status such as 'Mrs' were also not well-established, and there are many cases of such ambiguous phrases which have been discussed here.

As for the Prerogative Cour of York, due to technical reasons the data

for some years is missing, but in my judgement, to have a general overview of the current data is enough. To begin with, the data for 1389–1514 and that for 1514–1680 are separated. The former is from the earliest volume of the Index Series whose editorial settings were not fully settled and the analysis of the data requires special treatment. Nevertheless, to gain some understanding of the general patterns those are still sufficient, and the results by and large support the findings of previous studies discussed above.

The earlier the period, the higher is the proportion of wills in which the testator's status or occupation is not known. Therefore, in the early sixteenth century women made up around 10% of the wills in which the testator's status or occupation is unknown, and the proportion is not so much more when we examine the overall totals. The relatively small numbers of women's wills is the result of the subservient position they held in various areas of life despite the fact that the economic opportunities of women increased relatively speaking with the advent of the market economy in the previous period. However, through the sixteenth century the proportion of women in wills in which the testator's status and occupation is not known shows an upward trend, and in the seventeenth century the proportion easily surpasses 10%. On the other hand women whose wills fall into the same category remain just around 5% of the totals. This 5% figure is not large. However, the absolute number is more than 3,000. Because of the very subservient position of women in society, here we find an underestimated or neglected group of women whose status or occupation is not obvious or unambiguous enough for a declaration to be made in wills even when they can make one. So far, the proportion of women's wills in total is assumed to be roughly around one fifth. However, if one adds the 5%, some of the previous data could be inflated. From my own experience, the counting of wills is not necessarily done by name so the sex cannot always be determined. That is, when one manually counts wills one should use the index or the descriptions of spinster (single woman), wife and widow, or some occupation suggesting women such as maid servant, gentlewoman, dame, countess, and so on. As a result, women who did not leave any such clue are easily neglected. In future, digitalised catalogues could solve such problems.

In the case of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, it is in the second half of the seventeenth century that the number of women, whose status is either known or unknown, reaches 20%. Compared to the Prerogative

Court of York where the numbers of women making wills had already reached nearly 20% even at the end of the sixteenth century, it appears as if 'gaining in seats won by women' in York took place rather earlier than in Canterbury. However, investigation of the contents discourages such hasty assumptions. It is true that the Prerogative Court of York had seen the relatively higher percentages of just under 20% at an earlier stage, but the percentages were sustained by the number of wills where the status is unknown and the sex is judged by the name. Such cases make up around 5% of the total. After around 1600 in the Prerogative Court of York 70 or 80% of wills give the status or occupation and the numbers of wills made by women whose status is unknown decrease relatively. Nevertheless, the number of wills where the status or occupation is unknown keep increasing. Therefore it can reasonably be concluded that the social and economic background to will making in the administrative area of the Prerogative Court of York is different from the situation in Canterbury where most of the women writing wills declare their status. It suggests that there were more women testators in the Prerogative Court of York whose personal circumstances were such that they decided not to declare their status, and more specifically, it is likely that they were in economic difficulties. Of course, it is possible to think that the testators were required to write down more precisely in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury as it is a higher court than York in the case of the testator having estates in both areas. Otherwise the editorial policy for Canterbury could have become more precise than that adopted in York. Nevertheless, for the period after the 1550s. the wills made by women whose status is known in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury are rarer. Instead, nearly one tenth of the total were wills made by women, but they are the wills where the sex of the testator is judged by the name. In the same period, in the Prerogative Court of York, the number of wills made by women where the status or occupations is given had surpassed the cases where it was unknown, and mean that the number of wills made by women rise as a proportion of the total. This period also saw more testators whose ancestors would generally not have left wills in local courts anywhere in England. They can be assumed to be from the less prosperous strata of society as we discussed in Chapter 1 and 4. Again they often are under the category of 'status unknown'.

Regarding the Prerogative Court of York as the 'centre of locals', it is possible to find similar cases in local courts. In the case of Ely (Cambridgeshire) and Chelmsford (Essex), the declaration of women's status is quite

well documented and the minimal unknown figures do not need to be tabulated here. Accordingly, the other two sets of local data from Chapter 4, Huntingdonshire and Worcestershire are considered to be appropriate for the purposes of comparison. Although the data fluctuate, but the evidence is that women's wills occupy around 20% of the totals and wills where women are named make up about 5%. The 5% sounds small, but they constitute at least one quarter of the women wills. The '20%' has also been estimated by M. Prior and A. Erickson. Their estimate is quite right, but it should be remembered that the numbers include the nominal women testators whose data has not necessarily been counted as properly and systematically here as we did in the first trial (Graph 5.4-5.7).

Perspectives : proportions of women's wills whose status are declared

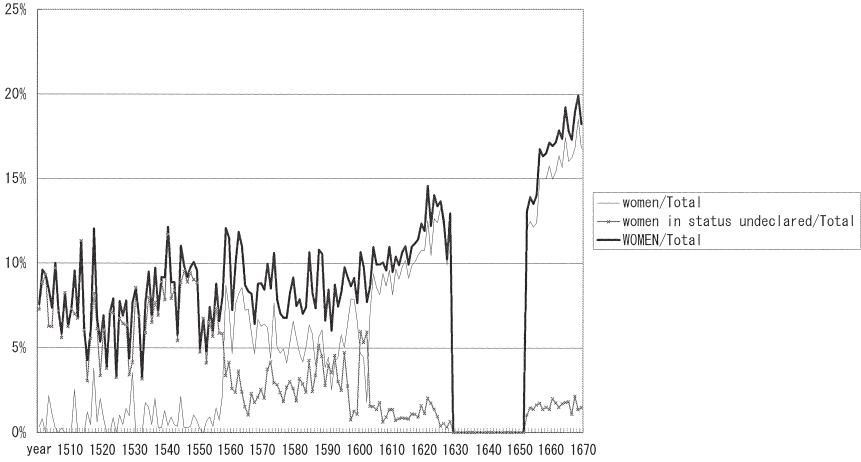
A. Erickson estimates that about one fifth of all testators are women. This article supports the estimate. Erickson further assumes that around 80% of women testators are widows and spinsters and that single women make up almost 20% of the total.³⁷ In general, the property of wives was under the supervision of their husbands. Accordingly, the wills made by wives were supposed to be specially arranged by their husbands, and were rather exceptional. However, if so, the percentages of wives in various areas collected by A. Erickson range from between 3 to 8% and not negligible, and are therefore, the existence of such wives' wills suggest the motive for will-making was not limited to the management of the property after death. As Erickson assumes, there must have been numerous cases where the wills were made in order to set out the family responsibilities or to bolster the self-esteem of the woman. We often note that women's wills refer to provisions for the relatives or people in the neighbourhood outside the family or household.³⁸

To establish the marital status of each woman testator, the only way is to read the contents of each will. To do so, the best way is to wait for the digitalisation of the indices of record offices which keep the probate records including wills. Nevertheless, even with the advent of digitalisation, there will probably be no distinction made for sex. Hopefully the suggestion in this article that archivists realise the importance of making clear the sex of

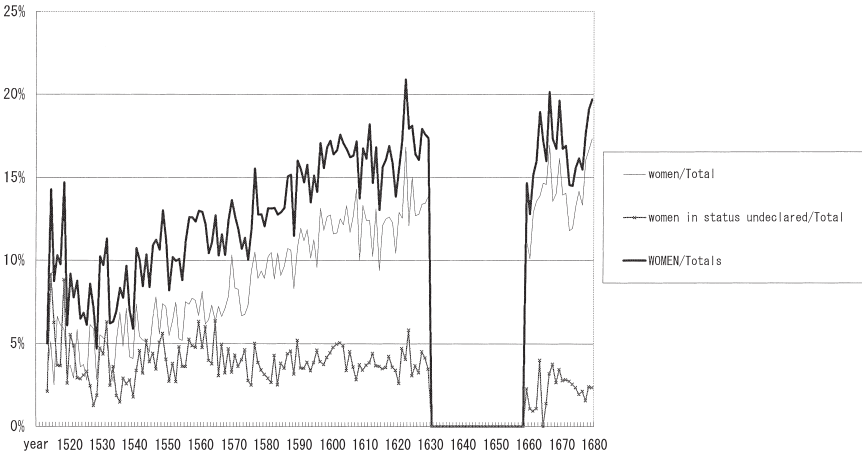
³⁷ A. L. Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England*, p. 204.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Graph 5.4 'Women' in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury

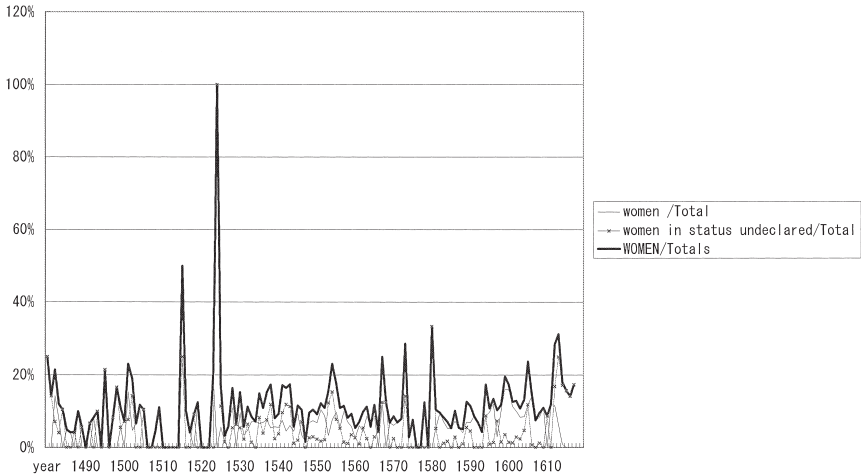


Graph 5.5 'Women' in the Prerogative Court of York

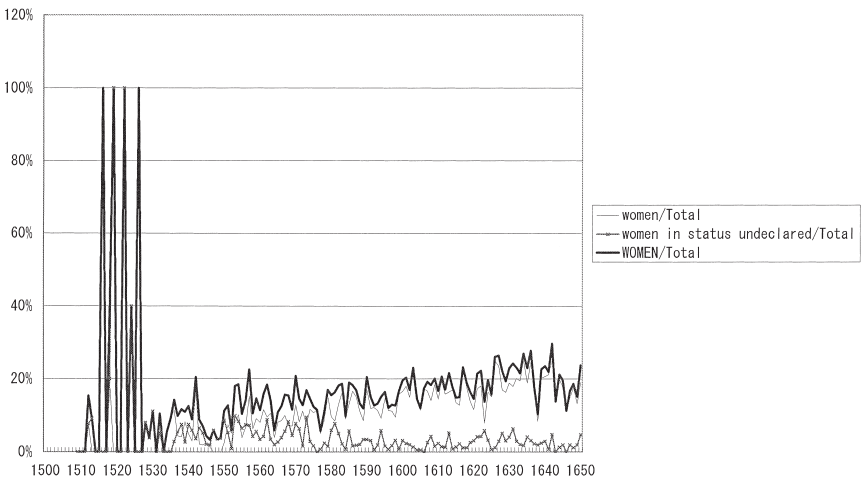


the testator and the standardisation of the editions of the digitalised index. For example, there are digitalised index data for Ely, Cheshire and Hampshire in my possession, and the Ely data does not have columns giving the sex of the testator. We occasionally find the cases with notes such as

Graph 5.6 'Women' in Huntingdonshire



Graph 5.7 'Women' in Worcestershire



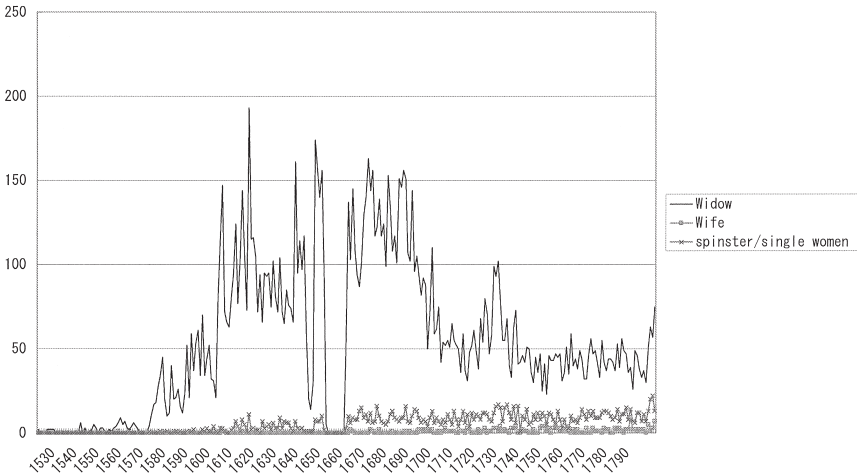
'someone's wife' in the data, but such important information is not listed in an independent index. Furthermore, in the cases that predated the eighteenth century even notes of that kind are not added to the data. So I present only the data from the database of Cheshire and Hampshire, both of which

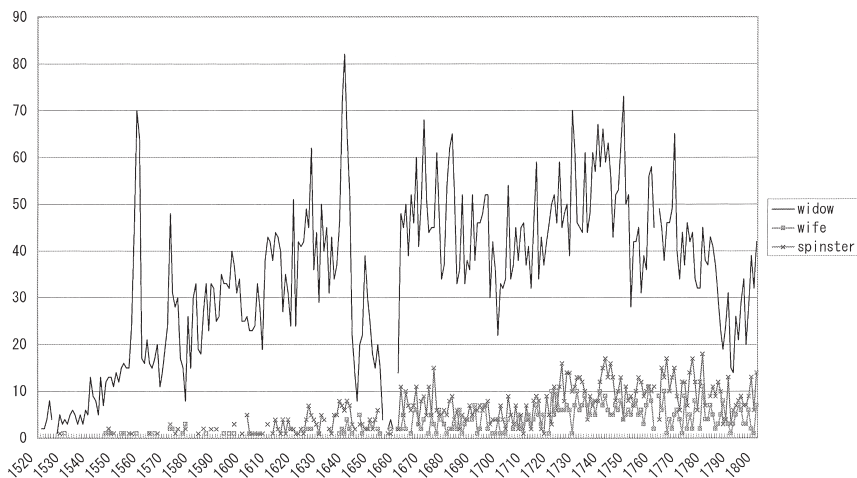
have recently been compiled.

The Cheshire data indicate the preponderance of widows (Graph 5.8). In the period 1521 to 1700, 10,447 cases have been documented. On the other hand, there are only 575 spinsters and the number of wives is also small, with only 27 recorded cases. The divergence is apparent. However, in the period 1701 to 1800, the number of widows is 4,877, while spinsters number 990 and there are 156 wives. Therefore, there were a number of women who remained unmarried and had a good reason for making a will. This could be attributed to the rise in the age of marriage. In general, those from the less prosperous strata of society seem to have left more wills. Such strata included spinsters as typical members.

Compared to Cheshire, Hampshire spinsters and wives make up a relatively high proportion of the total (Graph 5.9). In particular, after the mid-seventeenth century the proportion of widows decline while both spinsters and wives gradually increase. This suggests that more women stayed single throughout their lives and that married women enjoyed personal circumstances which were more advantageous for making wills. This would be sustained by the increased economic opportunities for women in general, although the absolute numbers are less than 50% of the total cases in Cheshire. In the period 1520–1700 the total number of wills made by

Graph 5.8 Women testators in Cheshire



Graph 5.9 *Women testators in Hampshire*

widows is 5,206, with wives making 174 and spinsters 440. Between 1701 and 1800, 4,726 widows wills were made by widows in Hampshire, 503 by wives and 902 by spinsters. As for the numbers of cases, in Cheshire the rate of increase seems notably greater.

In summary, if we examine all the cases documented up to 1700, we should accept as correct Erickson's estimate that 80% of all women who made wills are widows, but after the eighteenth century, the percentage of women leaving wills decreases to around 70% and spinsters and wives are the largest groups within that figure.

Conclusion

In the Prerogative Court of Canterbury almost 0.65 million wills were proved in the period between 1383 and 1800. In York, the figure is almost 0.14 million. Adding up both and the local courts data, the figure is about 1.5 million. Using the data, the estimate that women generally made up more or less 20% of all testators throughout the period is confirmed. In particular, the northern data from the York Prerogative Court indicate that more women made wills up to the end of the sixteenth century. This would be partly due to the relatively increased economic opportunities available to northern women and partly due to the particular inheritance customs that

governed women, that is 'the Custom of Province of York. By the time men gave their status rather than occupation in wills, women would have been doing exactly the same.

The increase in the number of women is sustained by the increase in the number of spouses or daughters of the farmers who adopted the conventional custom of describing their social positions. By the late seventeenth century, Essex, the metropolitan suburb county where large farms developed earlier, experienced a wider gap between the will-making social groups and the poorer non will-making social groups, and the number of testators whose occupation falls into the various non-agricultural categories declines, while they increase steeply in PCY as well as Ely. It could easily be associated with the divisions of labour, and it can be assumed that the increasing numbers of yeomen in Essex are in fact a manifestation of the fact that more individuals are using the word 'farmer' to describe their occupation rather than as merely a description of status. The patterns in Essex described above would suggest that this county is unrepresentative at least for the period. There was a transitional period during which people moved from recording their status to giving their occupation and this applied to women too. In the seventeenth century, in particular in the latter half, this change was accompanied by the development of the division of labour. Women's wills should also be studied from this viewpoint.

Conclusion

This study started with the annual totals of wills in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries using the *Index Library* series by the British Record Society. The data illuminate that the trends in the statistics coincide with demographic patterns, in particular the numbers of deaths. Moreover the trends show the dramatic effects of the influenza epidemic, a disease which struck the whole of England in the 1550's. Following the influenza period the custom of will-making filtered down even to people of lower social status to the extent that at least one third of the adult male population of England practised the custom. investigations at an earlier stage found that not only the demographic trends but also social and economic factors were likely to be intertwined with the custom of making wills. With this in mind it was decided to extend the data from other records beyond the *Index Library* series and to collect data up to the eighteenth century, in particular for the Prerogative Courts. I think the data themselves confirm the estimate of 2 million wills as a reliable figure. Moreover, the extensions shed new light on the findings, and reveal facts that had not been noticed until we had in our possession such a huge amount of data on wills covering such a wide geographical area. The key points to note are firstly the shift from declaring social status towards giving instead the occupation on the wills, which corresponded with the development of the economy and the increasing division of labour. This happened in the relatively short period from the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth century, or this is what at least the declarations made on the wills themselves would suggest. The Second point concerns women. Wills made by women are confirmed to constitute around 20% of the totals, but this is if we count wills which we assume to be have been made by women judging by the names, and which are frequently mixed up with other 'status or occupation unknown' testators. Such wills which are only nominally women's wills would include substantial numbers of wives who were not legally permitted to leave wills and who were often in such economically difficult circumstances that to leave wills would not be feasible. And the number of women making wills is an important but often ignored factor in the shift from status being given on wills to occupation being declared instead, something which can be observed at all levels of society.

Looking back at the results, the national trend after the sixteenth century was that wills are consistently extant and gradually increased in number keeping the correlation between the deaths recorded in the parish registers. Moreover from the longer perspective, the influenza period was the turning point for will-making with this custom spreading into the regions despite a time lag. By studying wills as documents and by seeing them as social and economic indicators we can learn more about the extent and survival of will-making customs. This period saw the establishment of a firm economic and social base for will-making, but conditions later became such that the poorer people were often unable to leave wills after the second half of the seventeenth century.

Of course, economic factors were not the only reason for the making of wills. The custom has its own logic for each period. The Hereford probate documents remind us of this fact. The Hereford evidence has pushed the period when will making became common back to at least to the middle years of the fifteenth century, if not earlier. At the very least we can assert that what began then was not the widespread making of wills, but the widespread survival of wills. It was a change in record keeping that took place in the first half of the sixteenth century, not a change in the habits of the dying combined with the great increase in literacy.

The period of the influenza in the 1550s coincided with the great political and social changes associated with the Tudors. As far as the wills are concerned, another remarkable phenomenon occurred. The data show much greater use of the Prerogative Court by executors from 1563 onwards. Simultaneously the total number of wills made increased, for the switch to the Prerogative Court by executors was not accompanied by any decrease in the numbers of wills proved in the local courts. The numbers were maintained by wills made by people whose previous generations would not have made wills. The evidence from the Ely court has shown that the habit of declaring the testators' status increased in the course of the sixteenth century, and from the 1580s many of the new will makers were husbandmen and even labourers. This fact is not necessarily widely accepted among historians, partly because of the conditions discussed below.

To gain sufficient data to discuss the issues above, the wills of both the Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and York have been counted. In Canterbury almost 0.65 million wills were proved in the period between 1383 and 1800. In York, the number is about 0.16 million. Adding up both, the figure is 0.8 million and makes up almost 40% of all wills which are

estimated to have survived. Summing up all the data on wills counted so far, the total number is about 1.5 million. In particular with regard to the Canterbury data in particular, the second half of the eighteenth century shows a generational cycle, not the steep rise which is expected from the population trend in this period which was the eve of the Industrial Revolution or Industrialisation. However, at least the almost synchronised (synchronised) statistical patterns of all the courts is very interesting and unexpected. For this reveals the increasingly widespread custom of making wills, a process which further developed and spread ever more widely in the England of this period. This seems to be connected with social and economic development generating increasingly specialised skills and the creation of more occupations which originally gave someone their social status. The declaration of social status or occupation became a part of the will-making customs and there was an increasing divergence between the social status and the occupation, as well as an increase in the variety of occupations.

The data of the two Prerogative Courts and 5 local courts representing each district show that the frequency with which declaration of status was added to a will steadily increased from about 20% to more than 70% in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As for the proportion of gentlemen, the Prerogative Court of Canterbury records a consistently higher figure than all the others. However, the words 'yeoman' or 'husbandman' to describe social status are the most common throughout the period. Interestingly, in the local courts, the more varied the occupations, the more yeomen there tended to be, as the metropolitan Essex data highlights. As economic development accelerated, the more likely it was that the term 'yeoman' would be given as an occupation rather than as a status. Therefore the earlier general status term 'husbandman' gradually became less commonly used as a way of describing status in the late seventeenth century at the latest. If we are interested in finding cases where the number of labourers was as large as the number of gentlemen, then we should look at York as it was in many ways the 'centre of the local' and was more similar to Ely in the sixteenth century but became more similar to Essex in the seventeenth century when the more metropolitan or urban area expanded and influenced the neighbouring areas. Furthermore, the numbers of occupations appeared in the both Prerogative Courts, to give some clue as to the development of division of labour through the rapid subdivisions of the occupations. The number of words to describe status or occupation in

York wills are fairly constant at around 40 throughout the fifteenth and early sixteenth century, while Canterbury shows only a very small number of different terms. Nevertheless, in the second half of the sixteenth century Canterbury records up to 60, and afterwards an even steeper rise to establish itself as 'the national centre' with a good 300 in the second half of the seventeenth century. On the other hand, York shows a relatively gradual increase from around 60 in the mid-sixteenth century as it became the 'local centre', but the number remains around 150 in the second half of the seventeenth century.

Finally it is necessary to discuss women testators who are key factors if we wish to understand changes in the history of making wills. The estimate that women generally made up more or less 20% of all testators throughout the period is confirmed. In particular, the northern data from the York Prerogative Court indicate that more women made wills up to the end of the sixteenth century. This would be partly due to the relatively increased economic opportunities available to northern women and partly due to the particular inheritance customs associated with that region. By the time men gave their status rather than occupation in wills, women would have followed them. By the late seventeenth century, Essex, the metropolitan suburb county where large farms developed earlier, experienced a wider gap between the will-making social groups and the poorer non will-making social groups. It was associated with the increasing trend towards division of labour, and it can be assumed that it was also due to the increasing numbers of yeomen in Essex. There more individuals were using the word 'farmer' to describe their occupation rather than using it merely as a description of status. The patterns in Essex seem to reveal the fact that this county is unrepresentative, at least for the period. There was a transitional period during which people moved from recording their status to giving their occupation and this applied to women too.

Appendix British Record Society, Index Library¹

The data has been collected from the volumes of indexes published, and about to be published, by the British Record Society in their *Index Library*. All wills, whether registered or original, have been counted, but administration and unattached inventories have been excluded. Where bundles or registers cover more than one year, and the indexes do not give any indication of the date of individual wills, the wills have been equally divided between the years with which each bundle or register is concerned.

S: Scanner and Mac Reader used

1. Northamptonshire & Rutland Wills 1510-1652 ; S
7. Lichfield Wills & Administrations 1515-1652
8. Berkshire Wills & Administrations 1508-1652 ; S
10. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. I 1383-1558
11. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. II 1383-1558
12. Gloucestershire Wills, Vol. I 1451-1650 ; S
17. Bristol Consistory Wills 1572-1792, with wills in the Great Orphan Bobks 1379-1674 ; S
18. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. III 1558-1583
22. Dorset Wills and Administrations 1568-1799 ; S
24. Sussex Wills at Lewes 1541-1652
25. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. IV 1584-1604
27. Leicester Wills 1495-1649
28. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. I Wills 1320-1600
31. Worcester Wills, Vol. I 1451-1600
34. Gloucestershire Wills, Vol. II 1600-1800 ; S
35. Wills and Administrations Exeter Registry 1559-1799
39. Worcester Wills Vol. II 1601-1652
41. Wills & Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. II Wills 1601-1652
42. Huntingdonshire Wills 1479-1652 ; S
43. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. V 1605-19
44. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. VI 1620-29
45. Taunton Archdeaconry Wills 1537-1799 ; S
46. Exeter Consistory Wills and Administrations 1532-1800

49. Chichester Consistory Wills 1482-1800 ; S
51. Wills and Administrations at Leicester 1660-1750 ; S
52. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. III Administrations 1540-1659
53. Dorset Wills and Administrations, Vol. II ; S
54. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. VII 1653-1656
56. Cornwall Archdeaconry Wills and Administrations Vol. I 1569-1699 ; S
57. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. IV Archdeaconry of Stow
59. Cornwall Archdeaconry Wills and Administrations Vol. II 1700-1799 ; S
61. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. VIII 1657-1660
67. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. IX 1671-1675
69. Wills in the Consistory Court of Norwich, Vol. I 1370-1550 ; S
71. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. X 1676-1685
73. Wills in the Consistory Court of Norwich, Vol. II 1550-1603 ; S
78. Wills at Chelmsford, Vol. I 1400-1619
79. Wills at Chelmsford, Vol. II 1620-1720 ; S
82. Commissary Court of London Wills, Vol. I 1374-1488
86. Testamentary Records in the Commissary Court of London, Vol. II 1489-1570
87. Berkshire Probate Records 1653-1710
89. Archdeaconry Court of London Probate Records, Vol. I 1363-1649
90. Archdeaconry Court of Suffolk Probate Records at Ipswich 1444-1700 Vol. I ; S
91. Archdeaconry Court of Suffolk Probate Records at Ipswich 1444-1700 Vol. II ; S
93. Probate Records of Bishop and Archdeacon of Oxford 1516-1732, Vol. I ; S
94. Probate Records of Bishop and Archdeacon of Oxford 1516-1732, Vol. II ; S
95. Probate Records of Bishop and Archdeacon of Sudbury 1354-1700, Vol. I
96. Probate Records of Bishop and Archdeacon of Sudbury 1354-1700, Vol. II
97. Testamentary Records in the Commissary Court of London, Vol. III 1571-1625
98. Testamentary Records in the Commissary Court of London, Vol. II 1661-1700
99. Archdeaconry Court of Surrey Probate Records, 1480-1649
101. Lincoln Consistory Court Wills Vol. V, 1660-1700 ; S

102. Commissary Court of London Probate Records IV, 1626–1700–Part I
103. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449–1858, Vol. I
104. Bedfordshire Probate Records 1480–1858, Vol. I; S
105. Bedfordshire Probate Records 1480–1858, Vol. II; S
106. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449–1858, Vol. II
107. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449–1858, Vol. III

S: scanned and OS software used

Wills

Annual totals already counted and the PC data available on occupation

10. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. I 1383–1558 (A-J)
11. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. II 1383–1558 (K-Z)
18. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. III 1558–1583
25. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. IV 1584–1604
31. Worcester Wills, Vol. I 1451–1600
39. Worcester Wills Vol. II 1601–1652
42. Huntingdonshire Wills 1479–1652; S
43. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. V 1605–19
44. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. VI 1620–29
78. Wills at Chelmsford, Vol. I 1400–1619
79. Wills at Chelmsford, Vol. II 1620–1720; S
103. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449–1858, Vol. I
106. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449–1858, Vol. II
107. Consistory Court of Ely Probate Records, 1449–1858, Vol. III

Annual totals already counted and the PC data available, but not analysed, on occupation distributions

69. Wills in the Consistory Court of Norwich, Vol. I 1370–1550; S
73. Wills in the Consistory Court of Norwich, Vol. II 1550–1603; S
90. Archdeaconry Court of Suffolk Probate Records at Ipswich 1444–1700
Vol. I (A-K); S
91. Archdeaconry Court of Suffolk Probate Records at Ipswich 1444–1700
Vol. II (L-Z); S

¹ I have already counted the annual numbers of wills, using the volumes of indexes published by the British Record Society in their *Index Library*. It shows the annual numbers of wills according to each diocese, using *Index Library* volumes published since 1888.

93. Probate Records of Bishop and Archdeacon of Oxford 1516–1732, Vol. I (A-K) ; S
94. Probate Records of Bishop and Archdeacon of Oxford 1516–1732, Vol. II (L-Z) ; S
101. Lincoln Consistory Court Wills Vol. V, 1660–1700 ; S
104. Bedfordshire Probate Records 1480–1858, Vol. I ; S
105. Bedfordshire Probate Records 1480–1858, Vol. II ; S

Annual totals already counted but no data on occupation

1. Northamptonshire & Rutland Wills 1510–1652 ; S
7. Lichfield Wills & Administrations 1515–1652
8. Berkshire Wills & Administrations 1508–1652 ; S
12. Gloucestershire Wills, Vol. I 1451–1650 ; S
17. Bristol Consistory Wills 1572–1792, with wills in the Great Orphan Books 1379–1674 ; S
22. Dorset Wills and Administrations 1568–1799 ; S
27. Leicester Wills 1495–1649
28. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. I. Wills 1320–1600 (occasionally on gentleman)
34. Gloucestershire Wills, Vol. II 1600–1800 ; S
35. Wills and Administrations Exeter Registry 1559–1799
41. Wills & Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. II Wills 1601–1652
45. Taunton Archdeaconry Wills 1537–1799 ; S
46. Exeter Consistory Wills and Administrations 1532–1800
49. Chichester Consistory Wills 1482–1800 ; S (occasionally)
51. Wills and Administrations at Leicester 1660–1750 ; S (occasionally on gent)
52. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. III Administrations 1540–1659 (occasionally on gent)
53. Dorset Wills and Administrations, Vol. II ; S
56. Cornwall Archdeaconry Wills and Administrations Vol. I 1569–1699 ; S
59. Cornwall Archdeaconry Wills and Administrations Vol. II 1700–1799, pp. vi+243 ; S

Annual totals already counted but the PC data on occupations not counted yet

24. Sussex Wills at Lewes 1541–1652
54. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. VII 1653–1656

- 57. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. IV Archdeaconry of Stow
- 61. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. VIII 1657–1660
- 67. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. IX 1671–1675
- 71. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Wills, Vol. X 1676–1685
- 82. Commissary Court of London Wills, Vol. I 1374–1488
- 86. Testamentary Records in the Commissary Court of London, Vol. II 1489–1570
- 89. Archdeaconry Court of London Probate Records, Vol. I 1363–1649
- 95. Probate Records of Bishop and Archdeacon of Sudbury 1354–1700, Vol. I (A-K)##
- 96. Probate Records of Bishop and Archdeacon of Sudbury 1354–1700, Vol. II (L-Z)##
- 97. Testamentary Records in the Commissary Court of London, Vol. III 1571–1625
- 98. Testamentary Records in the Commissary Court of London, Vol. IV 1661–1700
- 99. Archdeaconry Court of Surrey Probate Records, 1480–1649##
- 102. Commissary Court of London Probate Records IV, 1626–1700
##: This date should be gained from the compiler (record office)

Additional Index Library volumes (until 1999)

- 87. Berkshire Probate Records 1653–1710 (British Record Society ; 1975)
(not counted and not analysed in terms of the occupation distributions)
- 109. Oxfordshire Probate Records 1733–1857 and Peculiars 1547–1856
- 110. Consistory Court of Carlisle Wills 1661–1750 (British Record Society ; 1998)
- 111. Commissary Court of London Probate Records IV, 1626–1700 T to Z (British Record Society ; 1998)

Non Index Library Volumes

- J. H. Morrison, ed., Wills, Sentences and Probate Acts, 1661–1670, Prerogative Court of Canterbury (London, 1935)
- A. J. Camp, ed., An Index to the Wills Proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury 1750–1800 Vo. 1–6 (London, 1976–1992)
(Few references to occupations) ⇔ How about 1700–1750 microfiche volumes.

Kent Archaeological Society: Index of Wills Proved in the Rochester

Consistory Court 1440–1561 (Kent Archaeological Society ; 1924)
 Index of Wills Proved in the Consistory Court of Norwich 1604–1686
 (Norfolk Record Society 28 : 1958)

Index of Wills Proved in the Consistory Court of Norwich 1687–1750
 (Norfolk Record Society)
 (annual numbers totals counted, but not the occupation distributions)

Index of Wills Proved in the Norfolk Archdeaconry Court 1453–1542
 (Norfolk Genealogy 3 ; 1971) (Few references to occupations)

Index of Wills Proved in the Norfolk Archdeaconry Court 1542–1560
 (Norfolk Genealogy 5 ; 1975)

‘The North’ Index

- 1 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1389–1514 (The Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association. Record Series vol. 6, 1889)
- 2 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1514–1553 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 11 1891)
- 3 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1554–1568 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 14 1893)
- 4 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1568–1585 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 19 1895)
- 5 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1585–1594 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 22 1897)
- 6 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1594–1602 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 24 1898)
- 7 Wills in the York Registry 1603–1611 (The Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association. Record Series vol. 16, 1899)
- 8 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1612–1619 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 28 1900)
- 9 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1620–1627 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 32 1902)
- 10 Index of Wills in the York Registry 1627–1636 ; Administrations 1627–1652 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 35 1905)
- 11 Index of Wills, Administrations, and Probate Acts, in the York Registry, 1660–1665 and also of The Unregistered Wills and the Probate Acts,

- Aug. 1, 1633–July 31, 1634 and etc. (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 49 1913)
- 12 Index of Wills, Administrations and Probate Acts in the York Registry 1666–1672 (The Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association. Record Series vol. 16, 1920)
 - 13 Index of Wills. Administrations, and Probate Acts, in the York Registry, 1673–1680 and also of The Unregistered Wills and etc. (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 58 1926)
 - 14 Wills in the York Registry 1636–1652 (The Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association. Record Series vol. 4 1888) (annually arranged, by and large)
 - 15 Index to the Yorkshire Wills (Proved in London during the time of the Commonwealth 1649–60) (The Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Association. Record Series vol. 1 1885)

Index of Wills etc. from the Dean and Chapter's Court at York 1321–1636 with Appendix of Original Wills 1524–1724 (The Yorkshire Archaeological Society. Record Series vol. 38 1907)

Appendix 2: Inventories and Administrations

The annual numbers total of inventories in the Index Library Series

Inventories are documents which are supposed to be kept with the wills. These are the lists of the movable (goods) principally after the death of the testators. In spite of the numerous criticisms, inventories have been heavily and extensively used as probate documents since local history classics such as W. G. Hoskins's comprehensive study on Wigston Magna, A. H. Alison's study on Sheep-Corn Husbandry in Norfolk, or J. Thirsk's series of Agrarian History volumes.

However, the index of the inventories in the Index Library Series are only parts of the volumes below and the total numbers are just 13,300. As inventories are supposed to be kept with the wills and the surviving numbers are assumed to be around one million, this figure sounds too small. On this matter I have asked scholars such as M. Overton who has developed the research further using these inventories, but they have not given certain answers. In my experience the indexing inventories in the record offices are not sufficiently systematic compared to the way wills have been catalogued. There seems not to have been so much choice, except visiting the local record offices or waiting for the results of database projects organised by all

the record offices which are now in progress.

If a graph is made for the annual totals of inventories, it can be seen there are twin peaks in the first half of the century and the first quarter of the eighteenth century. This does not contradict the trend of the extant wills. It would be safe to say they mirror each other and this period saw the social or economic groups accumulating enough property to leave wills and inventories in the following local areas.

- 7. Lichfield Wills & Administrations 1510–1652
- 22. Dorset Wills and Administrations 1568–1799
- 35. Wills and Administrations Exeter Principal Registry 1559–1799
- 46. Exeter Consistory Wills and Administrations 1532–1800
- 50. Wills and Administrations at Canterbury 1396–1558 and 1640–50
- 52. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. 3 Administrations 1540–1659
- 53. Dorset Wills and Administrations, Vol. 2
- 57. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. 4 Archdeaconry of Stow
- 70. Northamptonshire Administrations 1677–1710
- 79. Wills at Chelmsford, Vol. 2 1620–1720
- 92. Northamptonshire Administrations, from 1710

Recently, M. Overton has discussed the inter relationship between production and consumption in English Households in his collaborative work on 8,103 probate inventories in Kent and Cornwall in the period of 1600–1750.² He found the inventories are not necessarily biased to the richer groups in particular in the local courts and so it can be said that these records are sufficiently reliable to be representative.³

Overton estimated the number of inventories made were ‘perhaps’ two million between the mid-sixteenth and the mid-eighteenth centuries.⁴ His estimate seems to be based on the guess of J. S. Moore and T. Arkell coupled with his own long experience.⁵ The latter’s guess is ‘one million or so’ and P. Spufford’s estimate was more similar to his. However, the making of

² M. Overton, J. Whittle, D., Dean and A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600–1750*.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 22–6.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁵ J. S. Moore, ‘Probate Inventories: Problems and Prospects’, in P. Riden ed., *Probate Records and the Local Community* (Gloucester, 1985), pp. 16–7; T. Arkell, ‘Interpreting Probate Inventories’, in T. Arkell, et. al., eds., *When Death do us Part*, p. 72.

a will and its survival are of course different matters and the investigation into the survival of inventories requires more accumulation of Indices data.

The annual numbers total of administrations for the intestate in Index Library Series

In theory, the history of intestates complements the history of wills, and therefore it is within the scope of this study. So I have uncovered the numbers of administrations for the intestates. First we must address the issue of what the total number of 132,494 indicates? However, graph shows a concentration in the 1650s, the Interregnum period. The outstanding significance of the period is underlined by a sharp decline in the number of inventories and illuminates the unproportional relationship between the administrations for the intestates and the inventories. Nevertheless such a finding requires further investigation, for the data is scattered across the country in local record offices.

7. Lichfield Wills & Administrations 1510-1652
22. Dorset Wills and Administrations 1568-1799
35. Wills and Administrations Exeter Principal Registry 1559-1799
50. Wills and Administrations at Canterbury 1396-1558 and 1640-50
52. Wills and Administrations at Lincoln, Vol. 3 Administrations 1540-1659
55. The Act Books of the Archbishop of Canterbury part 1
59. Cornwall and Devon in the Consistorial Archidiaconal Court of Cornwall part 2 1700-99
63. The Act Books of the Archbishops of Canterbury 1663-1859 part 2
64. Consistory Court at Chichester 1555-1800
70. Northamptonshire Administrations 1677-1710
74. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Administrations, Vol. 2 1655-1660 (A-F)
75. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Administrations, Vol. 2 1655-1660 (G-Z)
83. Prerogative Court of Canterbury 1609-1619
92. Northamptonshire Administrations, from 1710
100. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Administrations, 1631-1648

year	Somer.	Sa. Is.	Berk	Worc.	Bear/Leaves	Hunts.	Linc.	Worc.	Ely	Sud.	Surf.	Ess.	LArch	Od.	Ches.	Sur.	Chic.	POC	POY	Total		
1451	1					4	109	0			55	0	0	98	0			17	81	385		
1452	0	1				3	97	12			68	1	0	174	0			21	86	461		
1453	1					7	72	35			69	0	0	112	0			50	58	402		
1454	0	1				2	41	46			52	0	0	143	0			60	48	392		
1455	0	1				2	252	33			11	0	0	116	0			39	66	515		
1456	0	1				1	169	64			55	2	0	123	0			63	113	590		
1457	0	1				3	111	39			106	1	0	125	0			43	90	518		
1458	0	1				2	134	2			67	1	0	91	0			36	95	495		
1459	0	1				3	120	2			83	5	0	128	0			0	38	379		
1460	0	1				3	38	0			74	2	0	96	0			37	37	285		
1461	0	1				3	336	16			108	2	0	91	0			84	69	700		
1462	0	1				0	180	9			45	0	0	131	0			64	119	548		
1463	0	1				0	114	24			3	1	0	152	0			54	92	471		
1464	0	1				0	114	14		1	91	1	0	105	1			52	30	410		
1465	0	1				0	98	12			102	1	0	90	0			59	20	382		
1466	0	1				0	142	5			153	7	0	98	0			46	95	543		
1467	0	1				1	142	15			153	7	0	98	0			46	95	543		
1468	0	1				0	174	18			46	1	0	71	0			70	100	821		
1469	0	1				0	87	2			78	2	0	72	0			63	97	396		
1470	0	1				0	123	10			133	3	0	71	0			38	92	471		
1471	0	1				0	83	9			32	4	0	64	0			35	71	298		
1472	0	1				0	121	35			7	16	0	70	0			27	75	361		
1473	0	1				0	79	23			17	32	0	41	0			24	63	289		
1474	0	1				0	100	20			78	26	0	64	0			43	101	487		
1475	0	1				0	67	29			36	16	0	69	0			54	100	483		
1476	0	1				0	16	13			67	30	0	78	0			116	82	372		
1477	0	1				0	128	56			38	53	0	83	0			67	116	572		
1478	0	1				0	24	0			56	38	0	85	0			141	68	663		
1479	0	1				0	91	41			89	32	0	55	0			166	47	636		
1480	0	1				0	82	28			72	40	0	65	0			154	41	614		
1481	0	1				0	75	39			24	78	0	55	1			160	43	557		
1482	0	1				0	189	73			23	40	0	74	0			223	47	749		
1483	0	1				0	75	39			24	78	0	55	1			160	43	557		
1484	0	1				0	64	51			20	42	0	42	0			239	43	545		
1485	0	1				0	98	88			3	38	8	51	1			3	59	433		
1486	0	1				0	0	0			9	39	7	85	0			216	33	518		
1487	0	1				0	97	51			14	42	1	351	0			14	228	16	643	
1488	0	1				0	217	42			14	42	1	306	0			228	40	881		
1489	1	0	1	0	7	0	384	24			35	53	1	300	0			295	48	1283		
1500	1	12	2	12	74	3	6982	1473			482	2844	578	5442	3			461	2	4714	3467	2896

Year	Sum	Sat.	Sun.	Mon.	Tue.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.	Sun.	Ess.	Larch.	Col.	Diem.	Sur.	Shice.	Lewis.	Hamp.	POC	PCV	Metel.	
1501	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	40	46	0	0	0	0	0	303	47	828	
1502	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	22	31	27	0	0	0	0	0	207	17	529	
1503	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	290	235	972	
1504	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	8	8	0	0	0	0	0	415	172	1764	
1505	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	44	44	0	0	0	0	0	445	172	1815	
1506	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	40	40	0	0	0	0	0	340	175	1814	
1507	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	40	40	0	0	0	0	0	264	91	864	
1508	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	23	44	44	0	0	0	0	0	375	104	837	
1509	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	288	75	1010	
1510	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6	6	0	0	0	0	0	205	40	807	
1511	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	64	64	0	0	0	0	0	157	46	897	
1512	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	32	32	0	0	0	0	0	177	84	879	
1513	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	64	6	0	0	0	0	0	198	88	838	
1514	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	64	53	1	8	109	46	10	154	93	1654	
1515	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	64	107	16	90	56	24	115	158	92	1768	
1516	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	64	49	11	8	90	44	10	158	92	1768	
1517	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29	64	91	24	9	98	108	21	121	115	0	
1518	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	33	78	200	4	52	121	155	27	115	77	0
1519	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	23	78	112	10	52	110	46	21	117	89	0
1520	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	20	78	65	11	53	176	17	159	44	0	
1521	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	18	63	31	2	53	113	35	0	119	57	7
1522	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	1	24	7	163	122	35	81	264	37	0	
1523	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	33	154	72	81	66	119	72	0	7	103	0
1524	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	26	3	11	33	154	72	81	66	119	72	0
1525	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	51	26	7	3	46	169	62	73	54	117	48	74
1526	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	18	5	20	21	199	82	71	54	130	23	54
1527	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	19	19	15	189	39	242	51	87	196	233	56	73
1528	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40	7	9	289	65	78	84	62	206	129	54	83
1529	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	7	16	216	34	73	36	60	182	124	45	76
1530	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	70	7	265	33	73	39	60	187	110	65	120
1531	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	163	9	190	47	207	51	100	205	168	108	80
1532	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	52	64	204	65	122	218	240	190	137	186	200
1533	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	30	52	134	87	92	196	123	121	124	91	2	131
1534	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	73	1	300	52	334	67	100	175	153	127	0
1535	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	64	101	5	307	55	90	61	46	175	153	127	0
1536	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	81	43	182	51	6	359	57	20	102	109	389	211
1537	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	170	113	212	84	356	64	20	88	132	121	113	16
1538	159	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	396	168	263	102	397	117	119	90	244	448	488	157
1539	159	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	161	50	168	108	346	53	248	55	57	498	117	83
1540	141	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	97	40	113	53	259	43	273	34	64	166	91	43
1541	72	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	106	110	62	55	328	48	117	44	67	30	55	112
1542	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	176	110	62	55	328	48	117	44	67	30	55	112
1543	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1340	1294	2511	844	6160	1690	5262	2562	4621	1676	4816	1676
1544	108	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27	64	101	5	307	55	90	61	46	175	153	127
1545	95	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	81	43	182	51	6	359	57	20	102	109	389	211
1546	95	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	170	113	212	84	356	64	20	88	132	121	113	16
1547	150	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	396	168	263	102	397	117	119	90	244	448	488	157
1548	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	161	50	168	108	346	53	248	55	57	498	117	83
1549	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	97	40	113	53	259	43	273	34	64	166	91	43
1550	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	106	110	62	55	328	48	117	44	67	30	55	112
1551	30	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	176	110	62	55	328	48	117	44	67	30	55	112
1552	1308	13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1340	1294	2511	844	6160	1690	5262	2562	4621	1676	4816	1676
Total	1308	13	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1340	1294	2511	844	6160	1690	5262	2562	4621	1676	4816	1676

Year	Sum.	Sa. Is.	Dom.	Brit.	G. auc.	Bark.	Worc.	Oxford	Beauford	Rut.	La. Coas.	Hants.	L. inc.	Norm.	Elv.	Suff.	Ess.	Latoh.	COL	Ches. Ohc.	Hamp.	POC	POV	Totall
1651	1	0	1	17	0	6	31	34	60	32	0	242	39	0	52	149	0	102	58	1	0	208	1221	
1652	1	0	3	12	0	0	29	12	60	22	0	210	0	0	43	54	0	0	44	0	0	5205	245	6968
1653	1	1	2	34	0	4	0	2	18	22	3	0	1	0	16	46	0	0	33	0	0	6660	336	7374
1654	0	1	1	9	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6990	747	6915
1655	0	0	7	6	0	2	0	0	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7444	484	8092
1657	0	0	3	8	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1658	2	0	9	11	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9613	395	10621
1659	1	0	3	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1660	159	8	38	125	224	13	208	65	137	138	0	145	0	17	232	32	31	95	34	84	4233	188	6232	
1661	126	17	76	225	152	30	245	221	192	225	0	610	235	200	256	438	170	131	331	113	221	2313	443	6897
1662	112	27	78	276	200	38	245	623	249	214	0	623	249	214	168	421	231	144	371	117	204	1830	739	6839
1663	122	17	64	231	206	22	179	318	115	110	0	318	115	110	134	253	152	176	314	90	197	1874	449	4834
1664	122	17	64	231	206	22	179	318	115	110	0	318	115	110	134	253	152	176	314	90	197	1874	449	4834
1665	89	29	43	255	156	37	174	308	138	100	108	308	138	100	166	271	817	597	339	50	168	2086	505	6846
1666	101	13	43	224	154	39	154	359	123	162	0	359	123	162	180	331	355	259	339	65	165	2145	659	6079
1667	101	13	43	224	154	39	154	359	123	162	0	359	123	162	180	331	355	259	339	65	165	2145	659	6079
1668	97	28	57	395	168	41	248	463	169	149	0	463	169	149	277	120	103	340	79	193	1724	977	6064	
1669	145	17	88	273	175	58	232	171	134	130	232	517	120	200	244	303	171	147	353	129	234	1758	861	6458
1670	157	11	87	453	231	55	254	209	123	139	0	209	123	139	175	150	397	125	338	102	536	1802	884	6763
1671	134	25	71	261	200	26	169	163	81	126	0	169	81	126	111	132	155	211	392	95	229	1767	75	5896
1672	134	25	71	261	200	26	169	163	81	126	0	169	81	126	111	132	155	211	392	95	229	1767	75	5896
1673	52	20	64	266	206	33	174	261	84	105	135	182	211	209	359	31	176	1957	618	5481	0	0	0	0
1674	52	20	64	266	206	33	174	261	84	105	135	182	211	209	359	31	176	1957	618	5481	0	0	0	0
1675	135	12	85	394	171	49	239	173	90	127	0	173	90	127	142	192	183	333	100	212	1650	63	5857	
1676	86	30	49	254	235	44	177	164	87	120	0	238	79	170	186	206	189	201	348	67	199	1850	613	5612
1677	142	22	37	395	233	31	175	288	174	129	113	288	174	129	150	234	168	147	308	119	217	1600	607	5392
1678	142	22	37	395	233	31	175	288	174	129	113	288	174	129	150	234	168	147	308	119	217	1600	607	5392
1679	52	35	14	295	190	44	190	440	109	143	0	599	106	155	366	581	212	185	432	140	172	2057	827	6659
1680	143	30	30	356	151	47	229	163	114	175	0	486	93	207	373	297	246	192	385	115	197	1884	5893	0
1681	144	77	17	289	179	55	213	196	106	162	0	619	74	241	329	341	269	235	470	176	151	2078	6288	0
1682	144	77	17	289	179	55	213	196	106	162	0	619	74	241	329	341	269	235	470	176	151	2078	6288	0
1683	144	29	15	389	160	34	251	187	127	144	0	362	49	118	237	228	194	159	322	89	211	1898	5166	0
1684	178	37	27	366	202	51	511	219	104	223	0	383	64	212	258	264	215	237	386	80	229	2033	6168	0
1685	181	39	46	386	211	38	398	155	124	156	0	405	154	149	228	262	213	215	435	225	189	5939	0	
1686	181	39	46	386	211	38	398	155	124	156	0	405	154	149	228	262	213	215	435	225	189	5939	0	
1687	119	25	64	288	170	42	354	126	86	127	0	276	64	138	237	255	282	215	268	98	160	1756	5950	0
1688	119	25	64	288	170	42	354	126	86	127	0	276	64	138	237	255	282	215	268	98	160	1756	5950	0
1689	128	24	58	327	115	38	318	124	64	105	0	239	55	175	244	234	353	432	76	79	919	2440	6195	0
1690	128	24	58	327	115	38	318	124	64	105	0	239	55	175	244	234	353	432	76	79	919	2440	6195	0
1691	117	26	82	258	157	39	290	250	76	183	211	263	287	342	316	56	173	2560	6011	0	0	0	0	0
1692	67	18	75	276	200	42	289	124	77	110	0	304	112	167	267	254	212	273	286	79	170	2638	9151	0
1693	67	18	75	276	200	42	289	124	77	110	0	304	112	167	267	254	212	273	286	79	170	2638	9151	0
1694	145	21	67	325	167	42	303	130	83	99	0	290	42	159	237	247	221	263	565	91	149	2890	6479	0
1695	64	25	76	322	154	45	284	160	78	113	0	507	83	181	235	238	192	238	477	64	150	2857	6491	0
1696	127	76	113	250	136	50	244	94	64	94	0	497	90	130	205	395	162	211	365	40	49	2948	6889	0
1697	127	76	113	250	136	50	244	94	64	94	0	497	90	130	205	395	162	211	365	40	49	2948	6889	0
1698	64	25	81	268	125	47	267	161	83	120	0	79	111	160	168	154	201	338	56	155	2873	5543	0	
1699	64	25	81	268	125	47	267	161	83	120	0	79	111	160	168	154	201	338	56	155	2873	5543	0	
1699	68	18	99	296	134	47	222	105	77	105	0	257	129	126	125	223	176	229	237	47	177	2442	5108	0
1700	68	18	99	296	134	47	222	105	77	105	0	257	129	126	125	223	176	229	237	47	177	2442	5108	0
1701	442	929	2085	12318	7599	1699	4590	61	12	5323	4388	54	16415	4316	6367	4984	10979	8769	3612	4381	4381	1446	16309	32405

Year	Sum	Sta. Is.	Days	Overn.	Brst.	Overf.	Beauf.	La. Sess.	Marv.	Stif.	Exp.	Ches.	Chis.	Ham.	ROC	Tota
1701	70	23	82	3	40	153	85	158	83	177	115	265	52	123	2170	3951
1702	100	13	82	0	49	150	81	120	89	205	183	300	43	137	2160	3712
1703	14	22	0	0	36	126	63	139	9	174	277	64	128	2880	4518	
1704	179	21	110	1	47	138	109	132	116	220	550	73	142	2550	4280	
1705	128	23	63	0	48	141	96	133	224	207	465	92	119	2620	4359	
1706	119	27	116	0	57	113	87	146	113	200	475	44	143	3010	4782	
1709	72	34	56	2	71	136	76	114	329	213	436	40	157	3100	4836	
1710	101	20	71	0	57	152	71	130	206	201	358	73	118	3260	4834	
1711	101	21	70	1	56	111	121	138	150	211	382	72	125	2490	4633	
1712	122	25	71	0	65	137	94	182	149	217	393	53	139	2700	4347	
1713	122	25	71	0	65	137	94	182	149	217	393	53	139	2700	4347	
1714	121	23	61	0	64	132	137	163	159	257	524	57	122	2570	4380	
1715	121	23	61	0	64	132	137	163	159	257	524	57	122	2570	4380	
1716	140	32	137	0	76	155	107	253	300	185	340	55	135	2080	3909	
1717	152	28	68	1	78	126	91	202	170	205	268	59	149	2810	4407	
1718	83	33	78	0	81	149	120	237	83	219	367	89	146	3010	4578	
1719	82	28	62	0	81	149	120	237	83	219	367	89	146	3010	4578	
1720	139	25	65	1	85	160	134	270	89	278	414	86	148	2690	4211	
1721	87	12	67	1	78	161	108	280	79	310	505	83	115	3020	5012	
1722	83	19	99	0	72	134	81	231	116	332	72	161	2680	4405		
1723	80	20	102	1	69	184	107	261	224	445	60	156	2230	4038		
1724	148	22	131	1	89	184	107	261	224	445	60	156	2230	4038		
1725	127	21	98	0	81	138	82	210	113	381	85	140	2650	4142		
1726	127	21	98	0	81	138	82	210	113	381	85	140	2650	4142		
1727	191	13	76	0	83	164	120	342	329	415	59	150	254	3930	5013	
1728	141	29	96	1	92	223	122	378	206	674	76	286	3720	6054		
1729	105	31	107	0	116	272	128	416	158	521	90	353	3390	5267		
1730	105	31	107	0	116	272	128	416	158	521	90	353	3390	5267		
1731	176	34	132	1	159	144	98	238	149	467	91	152	3070	4801		
1732	87	12	114	1	132	87	12	151	158	381	81	130	2590	4113		
1733	106	16	102	0	107	150	102	202	102	375	69	122	2850	4451		
1735	59	26	106	1	107	150	102	202	102	375	69	122	2850	4451		
1736	97	27	88	0	90	189	178	287	189	407	77	163	2880	4213		
1738	56	22	97	0	88	111	138	150	168	305	55	142	3130	4533		
1739	94	15	105	1	91	97	158	79	492	48	104	2330	3813			
1740	107	31	164	0	129	164	97	162	172	879	55	116	3240	5222		
1741	107	31	164	0	129	164	97	162	172	879	55	116	3240	5222		
1742	98	18	129	0	112	104	183	224	751	57	149	3560	5395			
1743	117	29	119	1	134	89	184	113	552	59	124	4020	5540			
1744	103	16	106	0	117	103	153	174	161	327	47	88	2650	4405		
1745	41	17	78	0	157	41	16	157	206	560	44	121	3860	5356		
1746	101	16	106	0	117	103	153	174	161	327	47	88	2650	4405		
1747	87	20	102	0	108	108	72	167	138	606	56	118	3680	5065		
1748	86	20	102	0	108	108	72	167	138	606	56	118	3680	5065		
1749	66	7	131	1	141	66	7	131	149	412	59	119	4340	5688		
1750	85	16	95	1	122	85	16	95	122	346	60	118	4800	6143		
total	5142	1131	4936	18	4493	4889	4604	9606	7576	394	4226	3288	726	131176	232476	

Year	Sal.	Sa. s.	Dors.	Brist.	Bedford	Glouc.	Hamp.	PCC	Total	
1624	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1625	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1626	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1627	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1628	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1629	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1630	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1631	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1632	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1633	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1634	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1635	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1636	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1637	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1638	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1639	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1640	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1641	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1642	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1643	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1644	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1645	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1646	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1647	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1648	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1649	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1650	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1651	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1652	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1653	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1654	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1655	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1656	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1657	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1658	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1659	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
1660	57	14	69	80	269	44	109	3525	4238	
Total	3256	686	3761	3025	12446	13012	2377	7191	231284	258338

Key : -Som. : Somerset, Salis. : Salisbury, Dors. : Dorsetshire, Devon : Devonshire, Corn. : Cornwall, Bris. : Bristol, Glouc. : Gloucestershire, Berk : Berkshire, Worc. : Worcestershire, Oxford : Oxfordshire, Lich. : Lichfield, Bedford : Bedfordshire, Rut. : Rutlandshire, Leices. : Leicestershire, Hunts. : Huntingdonshire, Linc. : Lincolnshire, Norw. : Norwich, Ely, Sud. : Sudbury, Suff. : Suffolk, Ess. : Essex, Larch : London Archdeaconry, CCL : Consistory Court of London, Ches : Cheshire, Sur. : Surrey, Chic. : Chichester, Lewes, Hamp. : Hampshire, PCC : Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PCY : Prerogative Court of York

Appendix Table 2-1 *Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury : 1501-1670* (1)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1501	1	18		24	303	43	42	260
1502	2	8		26	250	36	34	214
1503	0	19		26	290	45	45	245
1504	9	34		40	415	83	74	332
1505	5	32		54	448	91	86	357
1506	1	32		32	340	65	64	275
1507	0	22		24	264	46	46	218
1508	1	32		40	375	73	72	302
1509	0	26		29	364	55	55	309
1510	0	20		33	288	53	53	235
1511	0	13		17	205	30	30	175
1512	4	15		12	157	31	27	126
1513	0	17		13	237	30	30	207
1514	0	14		15	177	29	29	148
1515	0	14		21	198	35	35	163
1516	2	20	1	20	164	43	41	121
1517	1	21	0	20	216	42	41	174
1518	6	7	0	13	158	26	20	132
1519	1	10	0	14	163	25	24	138
1520	3	17	0	17	149	37	34	112
1521	2	16	0	19	231	37	35	194
1522	0	18	0	15	185	33	33	152
1523	0	19	0	17	225	36	36	189
1524	2	14	0	23	227	39	37	188
1525	0	20	0	19	215	39	39	176
1526	2	19	0	14	193	35	33	158
1527	1	17	0	14	217	32	31	185
1528	4	21	0	19	282	44	40	238
1529	2	15	0	11	206	28	26	178
1530	6	9	0	21	169	36	30	133
1531	0	12	0	16	152	28	28	124
1532	0	19	0	17	146	36	36	110
1533	0	18	0	17	158	35	35	123
1534	3	12	0	20	169	35	32	134
1535	3	17	0	18	200	38	35	162
1536	1	21	0	22	215	44	43	171
1537	5	17	0	31	247	53	48	194
1538	1	37	0	32	317	70	69	247
1539	1	24	0	17	337	42	41	295
1540	5	38	0	32	382	75	70	307
1541	1	22	0	24	239	47	46	192
1542	2	42	0	20	214	64	62	150
1543	1	21	0	19	214	41	40	173
1544	1	40	0	21	276	62	61	214
1545	7	37	0	26	327	70	63	257
1546	1	41	0	30	315	72	71	243
1547	1	44	0	26	337	71	70	266
1548	1	42	0	22	276	65	64	211
1549	3	46	0	18	288	67	64	221
1550	3	65	0	28	417	96	93	321
1551	1	66	0	29	546	96	95	450
1552		55	0	32	400	87	87	313

(2)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1553	2	41	0			17	292	60	58	232
1554	3	45	1			21	323	70	67	253
1555	1	31	0			15	281	47	46	234
1556	6	56	0			21	409	83	77	326
1557	5	101	0			40	697	146	141	551
1558	26	187	0			88	1160	301	275	859
1559	86	135	2			96	987	319	233	668
1560	39	95	1			61	531	196	157	335
1561	18	61	1	1		68	386	149	131	237
1562	32	61	2	0		37	421	132	100	289
1563	43	56	2	0		95	524	196	153	328
1564	32	47		0		44	373	123	91	250
1565	24	58	3	0		42	332	127	103	205
1566	28	70	2	1		40	383	141	113	242
1567	23	72	10	2		35	390	142	119	248
1568	21	74	3	0		44	451	142	121	309
1569	29	75	2	0		46	432	152	123	280
1570	37	85	7	0	1	83	589	213	176	376
1571	38	97	8	1	0	52	591	196	158	395
1572	35	92	12	1	0	47	562	187	152	375
1573	24	83	8	1	1	49	552	166	142	386
1574	47	78	8	4	0	62	613	199	152	414
1575	32	75	17	0	0	67	636	191	159	445
1576	30	111	17	1	1	58	639	218	188	421
1577	35	125	18	0	0	81	707	259	224	448
1578	26	94	14	5	0	78	634	217	191	417
1579	30	96	20	0	0	48	566	194	164	372
1580	41	120	25	0	1	75	622	262	221	360
1581	36	104	26	2	0	62	640	230	194	410
1582	31	96	22	4	0	55	659	208	177	451
1583	32	61	7	1	0	42	768	143	111	625
1584	38	136	15	1	0	78	756	268	230	488
1585	45	130	24	8	0	72	705	279	234	426
1586	46	122	26	5	0	75	787	274	228	513
1587	42	174	38	16	0	86	1061	356	314	705
1588	46	145	20	5	0	78	815	294	248	521
1589	54	148	16	5	0	94	889	317	263	572
1590	36	182	28	4	1	62	934	313	277	621
1591	47	175	14	1	0	55	1052	292	245	760
1592	27	155	8	0	0	109	1079	299	272	780
1593	46	169	8	1	0	146	1098	370	324	728
1594	31	117	3	0	0	61	698	212	181	486
1595	51	152	4	1	0	66	880	274	223	606
1596	49	143	8	1	0	46	973	247	198	726
1597	84	182	117	18	2	162	1308	565	481	743
1598	84	177	157	50	1	182	1062	651	567	411
1599	76	187	154	39	1	126	963	583	507	380
1600	54	144	134	30	1	108	822	471	417	351
1601	36	154	2	0	0	96	770	288	252	482
1602	41	159	1	0	0	75	920	276	235	644
1603	24	12	6	0	0	36	1345	78	54	1267
1604	83	168	156	49	3	128	1165	587	504	578
1605	92	183	159	47	1	208	978	690	598	288

(3)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1606	95	202	197	52	2	254	1108	802	707	306
1607	78	207	168	35	1	199	956	688	610	268
1608	104	247	186	38	2	273	1105	850	746	255
1609	104	194	178	47	0	336	1200	859	755	341
1610	121	237	146	64	4	280	1259	852	731	407
1611	101	268	132	60	3	277	1241	841	740	400
1612	133	268	230	78	2	327	1376	1038	905	338
1613	132	302	273	65	0	362	1454	1134	1002	320
1614	137	257	254	71	5	345	1399	1069	932	330
1615	134	251	263	64	2	295	1318	1009	875	309
1616	136	301	261	79	9	358	1491	1144	1008	347
1617	152	265	235	77	4	390	1539	1123	971	416
1618	158	211	277	80	9	392	1567	1127	969	440
1619	136	243	244	61	7	329	1296	1020	884	276
1620	143	219	182	55	4	327	1329	930	787	399
1621	133	191	203	35	2	333	1234	897	764	337
1622	142	201	195	46	1	344	1133	929	787	204
1623	157	241	228	56	3	406	1500	1091	934	409
1624	190	254	206	51	4	429	1505	1134	944	371
1625	243	286	227	53	3	695	1961	1507	1264	454
1626	267	354	291	48	8	567	2013	1535	1268	478
1627	201	305	277	65	2	389	1679	1239	1038	440
1628	142	284	221	45	2	388	1435	1082	940	353
1629	169	234	228	53	3	350	1376	1037	868	339
1653	626	480	986	285	38	2110	5205	4525	3899	680
1654	868	611	1356	348	34	2777	6960	5994	5126	966
1655	787	504	1213	362	41	2506	6490	5413	4626	1077
1656	775	537	1111	307	35	2516	6257	5281	4506	976
1657	1117	752	1785	510	76	1794	7434	6034	4917	1400
1658	1425	977	2534	672	96	2187	9513	7891	6466	1622
1659	1149	753	1986	565	63	1815	7649	6331	5182	1318
1660	674	531	962	234	30	1102	4273	3533	2859	740
1661	346	418	313	43	8	788	2313	1916	1570	397
1662	282	349	244	34	3	610	1830	1522	1240	308
1663	273	332	216	32	5	571	1667	1429	1156	238
1664	231	293	155	19	1	538	1474	1237	1006	237
1665	364	236	118	14	4	935	2086	1671	1307	415
1666	344	328	154	13	1	842	2145	1682	1338	463
1667	299	374	165	17	1	701	1842	1557	1258	285
1668	290	365	172	16	2	584	1724	1429	1139	295
1669	326	340	206	25	1	606	1758	1504	1178	254
1670	319	398	212	15	3	667	1902	1614	1295	288

Appendix Table 2—2 *Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of York: 1514–1680* (1)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1514	1	2				3	94	6	5	88
1515	5	6	1	1		18	98	31	26	67
1516	2	5	0	1		11	80	19	17	61
1517	9	7	0	5		12	136	33	24	103
1518	5	7	0	2		11	82	25	20	57
1519	6	5	1	7		8	102	27	21	75
1520	8	10	0	8		28	230	54	46	176
1521	18	10	4	37		50	490	119	101	371
1522	6	4	2	8		23	206	43	37	163
1523	8	3	2	4		22	137	39	31	98
1524	5	6	1	6		20	139	38	33	101
1525	6	10	1	8		13	161	38	32	123
1526	5	4	1	13		16	180	39	34	141
1527	10	6	0	9		17	163	42	32	121
1528	14	11	1	18		23	238	67	53	171
1529	6	8	4	21		25	213	64	58	149
1530	7	3	3	7		14	127	34	27	93
1531	11	10	4	7	1	25	206	58	47	148
1532	8	5	2	15	0	17	159	47	39	112
1533	9	6	4	15	0	39	242	73	64	169
1534	6	13	2	22	0	26	222	69	63	153
1535	11	4	4	20	0	28	216	67	56	149
1536	14	3	4	17	1	22	204	61	47	143
1537	15	11	5	30	0	22	310	83	68	227
1538	22	14	4	27	0	31	310	98	76	212
1539	12	5	8	30	0	35	285	90	78	195
1540	23	16	16	59	4	58	561	176	153	385
1541	37	12	5	51	2	51	503	158	121	345
1542	25	16	10	60	1	36	460	148	123	312
1543	21	11	8	35	2	27	403	104	83	299
1544	13	8	6	33	0	23	251	83	70	168
1545	31	12	21	80	3	63	691	210	179	481
1546	50	13	16	110	3	63	770	255	205	515
1547	36	6	4	53	3	35	462	137	101	325
1548	23	16	9	44	3	40	413	135	112	278
1549	29	7	10	41	5	45	392	137	108	255
1550	32	9	15	43	6	47	443	152	120	291
1551	38	22	16	74	6	92	695	248	210	446
1552	37	10	18	77	4	52	579	198	161	381
1553	27	1	9	60	1	34	371	132	105	229
1554	22	10	13	39	3	51	416	138	116	278
1555	20	9	11	43	5	49	386	137	117	249
1556	58	25	23	97	11	79	772	293	235	479
1557	126	43	57	224	19	163	1713	632	506	1081
1558	176	44	66	332	33	233	2279	884	708	1395
1559	54	19	24	109	13	48	712	267	213	445
1560	55	19	25	129	21	77	823	326	271	497
1561	41	14	23	61	11	50	503	200	159	303
1562	36	11	22	66	10	62	583	207	171	376
1563	37	14	27	73	3	70	575	224	187	351
1564	29	9	17	57	6	41	397	159	130	238
1565	29	14	16	56	4	60	456	179	150	277

(2)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1566	40	11	14	81	12	65	553	223	183	330
1567	44	23	22	109	11	75	665	284	240	381
1568	35	7	20	75	8	47	493	192	157	301
1569	37	8	28	60	11	55	471	199	162	272
1570	69	8	35	112	12	87	667	323	254	344
1571	64	12	32	106	11	83	767	308	244	459
1572	59	19	35	105	15	80	713	313	254	400
1573	43	23	43	87	22	79	645	297	254	348
1574	35	8	26	98	7	52	519	226	191	293
1575	47	14	39	90	16	93	647	299	252	348
1576	56	15	37	80	13	73	600	274	218	326
1577	65	16	29	71	11	91	618	283	218	335
1578	60	25	50	91	21	88	673	335	275	338
1579	52	13	45	75	10	63	555	258	206	297
1580	65	14	56	126	23	105	729	389	324	340
1581	70	12	43	101	13	96	684	335	265	349
1582	71	14	53	103	18	85	677	344	273	333
1583	58	15	52	115	21	84	653	345	287	308
1584	65	18	51	103	19	74	634	330	265	291
1585	62	17	59	100	20	100	682	358	296	324
1586	74	18	63	129	24	105	767	413	339	354
1587	107	38	88	145	30	124	1002	532	425	466
1588	112	32	92	184	32	137	1054	589	477	465
1589	68	19	77	141	33	131	818	469	401	349
1590	87	25	77	109	37	122	806	457	370	349
1591	132	17	114	177	56	148	1103	644	512	459
1592	105	24	101	165	31	116	938	542	437	396
1593	104	14	80	139	25	130	875	492	388	383
1594	60	21	75	77	16	97	592	346	286	246
1595	79	18	57	99	36	95	701	384	305	317
1596	58	19	66	87	30	89	608	349	291	256
1597	135	20	96	150	53	153	1026	607	472	419
1598	120	33	86	158	61	147	1015	605	485	410
1599	91	26	68	104	29	111	719	429	338	290
1600	86	20	58	100	36	106	674	406	320	268
1601	85	21	83	114	47	103	732	453	368	279
1602	103	20	98	153	49	139	883	562	459	321
1603	97	26	110	105	33	87	774	458	361	316
1604	97	20	84	89	22	143	798	455	358	343
1605	110	27	80	101	30	150	826	498	388	328
1606	88	23	105	98	42	126	752	482	394	270
1607	88	21	83	107	37	121	693	457	369	236
1608	116	19	105	105	55	147	810	547	431	263
1609	75	21	89	126	25	125	749	461	386	288
1610	129	29	137	136	39	167	967	637	508	330
1611	97	26	110	105	33	135	781	506	409	275
1612	104	28	121	103	45	162	725	563	459	274
1613	102	27	149	120	65	165	995	628	526	367
1614	146	31	131	144	56	178	1112	686	540	426
1615	75	25	116	103	44	137	797	500	425	297
1616	125	27	171	131	49	183	1029	686	561	343
1617	133	34	160	128	46	211	1063	712	579	351
1618	116	31	143	119	45	162	918	616	500	302

(3)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1619	89	32	109	85	34	125	725	474	385	251
1620	89	32	136	85	47	150	852	539	450	313
1621	89	39	122	59	41	124	689	474	385	215
1622	88	32	118	67	25	143	701	473	385	228
1623	149	46	145	75	29	162	885	606	457	279
1624	102	31	168	103	28	137	842	569	467	273
1625	132	26	153	94	32	150	878	587	455	291
1626	100	35	125	83	42	128	787	513	413	274
1627	98	32	143	97	37	93	766	500	402	266
1628	98	28	130	84	34	119	731	493	395	238
1629	94	22	108	83	26	126	699	459	365	240
1630	100	31	125	87	23	133	719	499	399	220
1660	43	26	94	55	8	75	348	301	258	82
1661	99	50	235	129	37	187	843	737	638	243
1662	105	49	200	83	26	177	739	640	535	175
1663	96	34	183	53	14	173	645	553	457	154
1664	67	32	115	50	7	118	449	389	322	93
1665	87	35	132	61	13	124	505	452	365	141
1666	83	35	144	47	18	140	569	467	384	102
1667	111	49	131	61	14	165	655	531	420	124
1668	119	55	205	82	15	207	877	683	564	194
1669	121	63	196	72	22	206	861	680	559	181
1670	159	68	223	98	16	222	984	786	627	198
1671	120	52	188	104	23	215	861	702	582	159
1672	109	37	184	78	14	172	775	594	485	181
1673	73	52	136	58	12	147	618	478	405	140
1674	70	62	138	50	8	142	586	470	400	116
1675	90	53	149	54	14	175	679	535	445	144
1676	87	40	142	56	9	157	613	491	404	122
1677	81	37	146	54	5	148	607	471	390	136
1678	112	54	144	67	12	180	697	569	457	128
1679	138	50	174	86	19	195	827	662	524	165
1680	154	69	210	72	16	216	889	737	583	152

Appendix Table 2—3 *Wills in Chelmsford (Essex) : 1480–1720*

(1)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1480							16			16
1481	5		1	1		1	32	8	3	24
1482	0		1	1		1	32	3	3	29
1483	4		0	1		1	25	6	2	19
1484	3		0	0		0	50	3	0	47
1485	2		0	1	1	2	42	6	4	36
1486	5		0	0	0	0	21	5	0	16
1487	1		0	1	0	1	34	3	2	31
1488	3		1	1	0	1	32	6	3	26
1489	4		1	1	0	1	17	7	3	10
1490	2		1	1	0	1	40	5	3	35
1491	7	1	1	2	0	2	39	13	6	26
1492	2	0	0	1	0	1	41	4	2	37
1493	1	0	0	0	1	1	19	3	2	16
1494	1	0	0	0	0	0	11	1	0	10
1495	0	0	0	1	0	1	8	2	2	6
1496	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	7
1497	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1498	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
1499	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
1500	4	0	3	3	0	3	15	13	9	2
1501	4	0	0	0	0	0	61	4	0	57
1502	5	1	3	0	1	1	99	11	6	88
1503	8	0	1	2	0	2	87	13	5	74
1504	11	0	2	4	1	7	151	25	14	126
1505	9	0	2	2	0	2	57	15	6	42
1506	4	1	0	0	0	0	40	5	1	35
1507	2	0	0	2	0	2	24	6	4	18
1508	2	1	0	2	0	2	44	7	5	37
1509	5	1	2	1	0	1	38	10	5	28
1510	3	0	0	1	0	1	37	5	2	32
1511	1	1	0	1	0	1	30	4	3	26
1512	2	0	0	0	0	0	34	2	0	32
1513	5	0	0	1	0	1	27	7	2	20
1514	7	1	0	3	0	3	49	14	7	35
1515	4	1	0	0	0	0	42	5	1	37
1516	1	0	0	2	0	2	19	5	4	14
1517	6	0	0	0	0	0	55	6	0	49
1518	10	1	0	4	0	4	115	19	9	96
1519	6	0	0	1	0	1	21	8	2	13
1521	4	1	1	5	1	6	77	18	14	59
1522	10	0	1	4	0	4	89	19	9	70
1523	8	0	1	0	0	0	44	9	1	35
1524	7	1	0	0	0	0	50	8	1	42
1525	4	1	0	0	0	2	57	7	3	50
1526	4	0	0	2	0	2	34	8	4	26
1527	3	1	0	1	0	1	21	6	3	15
1528	7	1	3	3	2	7	103	23	16	80
1529	11	1	2	8	0	10	87	32	21	55
1530	6	0	3	3	1	4	106	17	11	89
1531	8	0	4	3	0	3	101	18	10	83
1532	7	0	2	2	1	5	92	17	10	75

(2)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1533	9	1	3	5	0	5	117	23	14	94
1534	5	0	7	3	0	3	94	18	13	76
1535	9	0	2	2	0	2	105	15	6	90
1536	7	1	6	4	0	4	91	22	15	69
1537	9	0	4	0	1	1	120	15	6	105
1538	9	0	4	7	2	9	148	31	22	117
1539	11	0	4	5	0	5	91	25	14	66
1540	25	2	3	4	1	7	200	42	17	158
1541	11	4	6	6	1	7	151	35	24	116
1542	14	2	5	6	0	6	149	33	19	116
1543	16	4	8	5	0	5	159	38	22	121
1544	14	4	10	9	1	10	139	48	34	91
1545	17	2	11	8	1	9	202	48	31	154
1546	20	4	9	11	1	12	158	57	37	101
1547	13	0	14	7	0	7	122	41	28	81
1548	11	2	10	7	0	9	106	39	28	67
1549	17	3	14	9	0	9	145	52	35	93
1550	26	2	19	20	0	20	273	87	61	186
1551	25	1	23	26	3	29	257	107	82	150
1552	36	2	16	27	1	30	233	112	76	121
1553	24	2	8	22	1	23	181	80	56	101
1554	22	2	23	18	1	19	222	85	63	137
1555	21	1	15	24	1	25	212	87	66	125
1556	23	1	24	35	3	38	339	124	101	215
1557	56	4	31	37	2	39	462	169	113	293
1558	60	0	29	42	7	51	481	189	129	292
1559	39	2	26	33	8	41	367	149	110	218
1560	35	1	20	29	4	39	351	128	93	223
1561	24	2	13	26	1	29	208	95	71	113
1562	13	1	9	14	1	15	147	53	40	94
1563	10	0	6	15	3	20	181	54	44	127
1564	22	1	10	15	1	16	173	65	43	108
1565	12	0	15	13	1	14	191	55	43	136
1566	30	0	13	28	1	31	251	103	73	148
1567	25	1	15	36	5	43	265	125	100	140
1568	39	3	16	31	10	47	255	146	107	109
1569	32	3	19	42	5	49	265	150	118	115
1570	50	3	26	29	5	44	311	157	107	154
1571	51	1	41	55	8	69	402	225	174	177
1572	46	1	32	33	5	44	303	161	115	142
1573	39	1	22	34	6	44	297	146	107	151
1574	37	2	48	52	6	68	317	213	176	104
1575	27	3	21	29	4	33	247	117	90	130
1576	32	5	38	35	3	38	271	151	119	120
1577	33	3	29	39	5	48	251	157	124	94
1578	23	3	35	38	2	52	254	153	130	101
1579	31	0	28	20	3	29	182	111	80	71
1580	33	6	31	35	7	44	220	156	123	64
1581	38	1	38	33	7	48	251	165	127	86
1582	39	4	40	52	8	70	346	213	174	133
1583	38	0	37	59	9	70	296	213	175	83
1584	51	3	45	45	8	55	323	207	156	116
1585	50	1	32	55	9	68	405	215	165	190

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1586	37	5	37	38	6	46	256	169	132	87
1587	54	1	50	73	7	88	380	273	219	107
1588	65	6	64	47	10	57	402	249	184	153
1589	72	2	64	45	5	54	349	242	170	107
1590	53	5	45	47	9	60	351	219	166	132
1591	57	7	83	73	11	94	493	325	268	168
1592	58	6	56	39	6	49	332	214	156	118
1593	59	3	84	68	19	91	482	324	265	158
1594	49	5	50	56	8	64	328	232	183	96
1595	38	7	47	50	4	54	303	200	162	103
1596	49	4	50	49	7	64	326	223	174	103
1597	71	8	65	67	17	90	428	318	247	110
1598	42	5	56	51	19	72	307	245	203	62
1599	60	2	45	56	11	69	347	243	183	104
1600	67	5	83	64	11	77	407	307	240	100
1601	46	4	56	48	5	53	297	212	166	85
1602	49	8	72	64	11	75	367	279	230	88
1603	49	12	44	59	8	73	330	245	196	85
1604	30	7	57	38	4	42	254	178	148	76
1605	37	5	66	40	2	46	270	196	159	74
1606	49	4	69	50	9	61	375	242	193	133
1607	37	3	51	52	4	58	262	205	168	57
1608	49	6	73	49	8	57	325	242	193	83
1609	57	8	77	47	5	52	355	246	189	109
1610	56	5	44	48	6	60	365	219	163	146
1611	53	6	76	72	9	81	423	297	244	126
1612	80	6	73	80	12	92	426	343	263	83
1613	70	7	101	76	5	81	435	340	270	95
1614	62	8	87	80	5	87	428	329	267	99
1615	39	6	64	37	6	43	274	195	156	79
1616	90	11	71	106	8	114	540	400	310	140
1617	72	7	107	77	10	87	470	360	288	110
1618	64	6	74	65	8	75	373	292	228	81
1619	46	6	95	82	2	84	408	315	269	93
1620	66	9	70	42	6	48	364	241	175	123
1621	40	8	75	38	9	49	278	219	179	59
1622	52	4	67	52	4	58	311	237	185	74
1623	78	8	91	47	7	56	402	287	209	115
1624	55	8	90	46	8	54	348	261	206	87
1625	110	16	149	89	10	101	609	475	365	134
1626	99	9	122	67	1	70	516	368	269	148
1627	74	10	93	67	4	71	419	319	245	100
1628	59	8	69	40	2	42	309	220	161	89
1629	53	6	73	43	5	50	319	230	177	89
1630	58	12	78	50	1	53	324	252	194	72
1631	70	6	84	54	3	61	353	278	208	75
1632	61	11	84	59	2	61	365	278	217	87
1633	55	12	87	52	5	57	360	268	213	92
1634	54	9	65	47	4	51	277	230	176	47
1635	80	8	83	50	5	57	360	283	203	77
1636	51	10	71	39	2	41	307	214	163	93
1637	49	13	83	42	1	45	296	233	184	63
1638	98	18	150	68	5	73	559	412	314	147

(4)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc. women	Undeclared total
1639	106	11	149	109	10	119	622	504	398	118
1640	59	11	80	40	3	43	346	236	177	110
1641	49	5	65	27	0	29	227	175	126	52
1642	33	10	48	29	0	31	201	151	118	50
1643	26	5	35	15	1	16	136	98	72	38
1644	34	10	55	12	0	12	169	123	89	46
1645	29	8	47	16	1	17	164	118	89	46
1646	25	7	58	18	0	18	177	126	101	51
1647	25	7	67	17	3	20	212	139	114	73
1648	35	7	71	30	3	33	258	179	144	79
1649	29	5	76	36	0	36	234	182	153	52
1650	34	4	43	17	3	22	191	123	89	68
1651	22	3	43	22	0	22	149	112	90	37
1652	8	0	12	7	1	8	125	36	28	89
1653	2	1	7	10	2	12	46	34	32	12
1654	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1
1655	1	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	2
1656	0	0	2	1	0	1	5	4	4	1
1657	0	0	2	0	0	0	4	2	2	2
1658	0	0	2	0	0	0	5	2	2	3
1659	0	0	1	1	0	1	7	3	3	4
1660	18	5	47	7	0	7	120	84	66	36
1661	78	15	130	36	0	38	435	297	219	138
1662	78	7	139	38	1	41	421	304	226	117
1663	51	11	106	28	0	30	323	226	175	97
1664	53	16	82	26	4	32	293	213	160	80
1665	46	17	73	19	2	21	271	178	132	93
1666	62	14	64	24	0	24	331	188	126	143
1667	59	12	91	20	4	24	339	210	151	129
1668	47	11	72	23	0	23	277	176	129	101
1669	50	16	92	23	3	28	303	212	162	91
1670	65	14	99	25	2	27	318	232	167	86
1671	49	10	75	13	3	18	277	168	119	109
1672	45	10	55	19	1	22	232	152	107	80
1673	30	12	59	6	0	6	182	113	83	69
1674	39	25	52	8	0	10	211	134	95	77
1675	51	12	47	24	0	24	224	158	107	66
1676	39	9	62	21	2	25	206	158	119	48
1677	47	17	62	16	1	17	234	160	113	74
1678	46	15	76	16	0	16	261	169	123	92
1679	57	23	105	14	2	18	381	219	162	162
1680	52	16	90	14	2	16	297	190	138	107
1681	68	13	89	29	6	37	341	242	174	99
1682	49	16	61	14	2	18	263	160	111	103
1683	35	15	59	16	0	16	228	141	106	87
1684	41	14	73	16	2	18	264	164	123	100
1685	38	15	68	12	1	13	226	147	109	79
1686	46	18	49	6	3	9	228	131	85	97
1687	42	20	60	8	2	10	235	142	100	93
1688	42	22	59	8	0	8	210	139	97	71
1689	47	10	60	11	1	12	239	141	94	98
1690	52	12	60	11	0	11	241	146	94	95
1691	47	20	59	15	0	17	263	158	111	105

(5)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1692	50	14	66	11	4	15	254	160	110	94
1693	51	16	67	17	0	17	245	168	117	77
1694	61	15	60	17	2	19	247	174	113	73
1695	48	10	64	11	0	11	236	144	96	92
1696	34	9	53	10	1	11	196	118	84	78
1697	26	13	59	9	1	10	207	118	92	89
1698	30	8	45	2	0	2	168	87	57	81
1699	46	12	63	3	0	3	223	127	81	96
1700	48	11	48	5	3	10	183	125	77	58
1701	31	14	54	3	1	4	175	107	76	68
1702	39	10	56	7	1	8	183	121	82	62
1703	31	13	51	5	0	5	174	105	74	69
1704	53	8	63	7	0	7	212	138	85	74
1705	54	11	67	4	3	7	220	146	92	74
1706	34	14	61	7	0	7	207	123	89	84
1707	42	16	80	6	0	8	222	152	110	70
1708	45	8	52	4	0	4	200	113	68	87
1709	37	13	62	6	1	7	213	126	89	87
1710	35	8	76	1	2	3	201	125	90	76
1711	38	12	67	6	1	7	207	131	93	76
1712	26	13	66	4	0	4	211	113	87	98
1713	32	8	70	5	1	8	217	124	92	93
1714	55	17	59	4	4	8	237	147	92	90
1715	49	9	33	6	1	9	170	107	58	63
1716	40	8	64	5	2	7	185	126	86	59
1717	36	7	70	10	1	11	205	135	99	70
1718	32	11	68	4	0	4	206	119	87	87
1719	42	16	84	9	1	10	271	162	120	109
1720	51	18	101	7	1	8	310	186	135	124

Appendix Table 2-4 *Wills in Ely (Cambridgeshire) : 1450-1692*
(1)

year	Women	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1450			0	8	0	0	8
1451			0	0	0	0	0
1452			1	12	1	1	11
1453	4		2	21	6	2	15
1454	10		3	35	13	3	22
1455	7		0	46	7	0	39
1456	5		0	33	5	0	28
1457	17		2	57	19	2	38
1458	6		3	64	9	3	55
1459	2		1	39	3	1	36
1460	0		0	1	0	0	1
1461	0		0	2	0	0	2
1462	0		0	2	0	0	2
1463	0		0	0	0	0	0
1464	0		0	13	0	0	13
1465	0		0	16	0	0	16
1466	1		1	9	2	1	7
1467	4		1	24	5	1	19
1468	1		0	13	1	0	12
1469	1		1	14	2	1	12
1470	1		1	12	2	1	10
1471	4		1	13	5	1	8
1472	1		0	5	1	0	4
1473	4		0	17	4	0	13
1474	3		0	18	3	0	15
1475	1		0	3	1	0	2
1476	0		0	2	0	0	2
1477	0		0	10	0	0	10
1478	0		1	9	1	1	8
1479	0		3	40	3	3	37
1480	1		4	35	5	4	30
1481	2		0	23	2	0	21
1482	1		2	27	3	2	24
1483	1		0	20	1	0	19
1484	2		0	29	2	0	27
1485	1		1	13	2	1	11
1486	1		2	33	3	2	30
1487	1		2	56	3	2	53
1488	3		4	41	7	4	34
1489	4		4	43	8	4	35
1490	1		0	28	1	0	27
1491	1		0	39	1	0	38
1492	0		2	73	2	2	71
1493	2		3	97	5	3	92
1494	2		4	51	6	4	45
1495	2		1	86	3	1	83
1496	6	1	4	85	11	5	74
1497	2	0	1	47	3	1	44
1498	4	0	1	51	5	1	46
1499	2	0	3	42	5	3	37
1500	0	0	0	24	0	0	24
1501	0	0	0	31	0	0	31

(2)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1502	1				0	1	25	2	1	23
1503	3			3	0	1	50	7	4	43
1504	3			0	0	0	44	3	0	41
1505	0			0	0	0	9	0	0	9
1506	0			0	0	0	35	0	0	35
1507	0			1	0	1	41	2	2	39
1508	3			1	0	0	42	4	1	38
1509	1			0	0	0	19	1	0	18
1510	1			1	0	0	13	2	1	11
1511	0			0	0	0	8	0	0	8
1512	0			1	0	0	12	1	1	11
1513	3			0	0	0	21	3	0	18
1514	0			0	0	0	7	0	0	7
1515	3			1	0	0	46	4	1	42
1516	5			2	0	5	66	12	7	54
1517	5			1	0	4	53	10	5	43
1518	5			3	2	4	108	14	9	94
1519	0			3	0	2	44	5	5	39
1520	7			2	0	5	66	14	7	52
1521	6			9	0	7	155	22	16	133
1522	3			2	0	3	46	8	5	38
1523	2			0	0	0	17	2	0	15
1524	4			2	1	1	52	8	4	44
1525	5			1	0	2	33	8	3	25
1526	2			2	1	1	37	6	4	31
1527	5			2	1	8	62	16	11	46
1528	5			3	0	2	73	10	5	63
1529	4			5	0	1	48	10	6	38
1530	1		1	1	0	4	23	7	6	16
1531	2		0	2	0	3	31	7	5	24
1532	3		1	4	0	4	56	12	9	44
1533	3		0	4	1	4	54	12	9	42
1534	3		0	5	1	7	54	16	13	38
1535	0		1	3	0	4	45	8	8	37
1536	4		1	5	0	5	65	15	11	50
1537	6		2	5	0	12	108	25	19	83
1538	4		3	10	0	6	131	23	19	108
1539	9		0	9	0	6	122	24	15	98
1540	0	1	1	11	1	12	190	26	26	164
1541	0	0	1	7	1	6	127	15	15	112
1542	0	0	4	7	6	6	89	23	23	66
1543	0	0	1	5	3	7	98	16	16	82
1544	0	0	2	3	3	11	113	19	19	94
1545	9	1	1	6	2	10	167	29	20	138
1546	8	0	0	7	0	5	158	20	12	138
1547	7	0	1	6	1	6	83	21	14	62
1548	0	0	0	4	1	2	43	7	7	36
1549	10	1	2	7	0	4	55	24	14	31
1550	1	0	0	0	0	2	67	3	2	64
1551	15	2	2	24	1	3	95	47	32	48
1552	0	0	1	2	0	3	138	6	6	132
1553	6	2	2	5	1	0	86	16	10	70
1554	12	0	2	8	6	1	130	29	17	101

(3)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1555	10	0	1	6	3	6	104	26	16	78
1556	0	2	4	15	1	21	203	43	43	160
1557	24	0	3	35	2	16	312	80	56	232
1558	24	0	5	32	1	9	221	71	47	150
1559	15	0	9	19	3	14	226	60	45	166
1560	12	0	6	12	1	12	159	43	31	116
1561	9	0	3	7	0	8	81	27	18	54
1562	6	1	3	8	2	5	71	25	19	46
1563	8	0	6	9	1	6	94	30	22	64
1564	4	1	2	13	5	6	81	31	27	50
1565	5	1	1	6	2	7	74	22	17	52
1566	7	1	4	12	2	7	73	33	26	40
1567	8	2	6	11	1	8	83	36	28	47
1568	0	0	8	18	3	15	123	44	44	79
1569	11	0	6	11	7	10	112	45	34	67
1570	7	1	6	12	6	9	90	41	34	49
1571	10	1	2	13	4	9	108	39	29	69
1572	8	0	5	16	5	8	111	42	34	69
1573	9	0	2	16	5	8	92	40	31	52
1574	6	0	1	14	6	9	94	36	30	58
1575	8	0	2	6	5	6	64	27	19	37
1576	7	0	1	8	4	8	74	28	21	46
1577	12	2	7	24	4	7	71	56	44	15
1578	1	0	0			0	68	1	0	67
1579	7	1	5	6	2	2	77	23	16	54
1580	5	1	5	11	2	9	83	33	28	50
1581	6	1	4	9	1	8	90	29	23	61
1582	9	1	4	14	6	10	106	44	35	62
1583	13	2	3	15	9	9	103	51	38	52
1584	11	2	13	18	8	10	133	62	51	71
1585	9	1	5	8	6	6	84	35	26	49
1586	8	1	15	22	8	5	93	59	51	34
1587	23	1	8	8	11	17	116	68	45	48
1588	17	0	9	22	18	15	162	81	64	81
1589	21	0	11	14	10	6	126	62	41	64
1590	14	2	14	21	16	11	139	78	64	61
1591	22	1	14	34	26	25	213	122	100	91
1592	27	2	14	30	24	9	196	106	79	90
1593	15	3	15	26	14	22	148	95	80	53
1594	16	1	9	6	9	10	90	51	35	39
1595	14	0	6	19	14	10	115	63	49	52
1596	14	1	14	16	14	18	119	77	63	42
1597	15	0	15	20	21	22	148	93	78	55
1598	9	1	8	16	9	14	93	57	48	36
1599	15	2	15	34	6	14	138	86	71	52
1600	16	1	6	19	11	10	93	63	47	30
1601	0	0	8	12	7	10	76	37	37	39
1602	15	0	12	8	13	5	103	53	38	50
1603	14	1	5	12	11	4	117	47	33	70
1604	12	2	19	17	9	16	99	75	63	24
1605	20	1	11	21	8	11	95	72	52	23
1606	12	1	7	17	16	12	99	65	53	34
1607	13	2	13	15	18	18	127	79	66	48

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1608	16	0	17	12	11	12	89	68	52	21
1609	14	1	17	11	18	19	113	80	66	33
1610	32	1	18	22	10	26	168	109	77	59
1611	23	1	18	22	20	13	132	97	74	35
1612	25	1	17	22	23	22	147	110	85	37
1613	28	3	25	29	26	32	204	143	115	61
1614	22	1	15	10	19	20	136	87	65	49
1615	20	2	20	26	31	20	176	119	99	57
1616	38	3	26	29	41	29	266	166	128	100
1617	29	3	19	29	27	25	227	132	103	95
1618	16	4	7	28	35	24	178	114	98	64
1619	19	1	16	17	8	14	133	75	56	58
1620	18	1	14	17	23	23	139	96	78	43
1621	6	1	11	20	10	14	94	62	56	32
1622	13	0	12	15	15	9	95	64	51	31
1623	18	3	19	20	18	19	132	97	79	35
1624	25	2	17	19	12	13	149	88	63	61
1625	32	3	24	45	27	26	230	157	125	73
1626	39	0	26	34	34	27	239	160	121	79
1627	21	2	24	36	23	28	184	134	113	50
1628	15	2	13	26	23	20	148	99	84	49
1629	10	0	14	24	20	19	114	87	77	27
1630	37	4	23	32	23	33	224	152	115	72
1631	25	3	31	34	22	33	190	148	123	42
1632	18	0	16	22	16	28	151	100	82	51
1633	23	1	11	22	10	13	134	80	57	54
1634	20	2	14	17	12	19	100	84	64	16
1635	17	1	17	24	17	15	129	91	74	38
1636	14	1	12	14	7	12	85	60	46	25
1637	25	0	17	19	16	18	126	95	70	31
1638	33	0	26	37	30	40	238	166	133	72
1639	37	2	27	33	33	39	245	171	134	74
1640	24	0	22	19	19	17	127	101	77	26
1641	15	2	13	19	5	13	83	67	52	16
1642	5	2	21	11	6	13	78	58	53	20
1643	7	0	6	5	6	7	40	31	24	9
1644	4	2	16	6	10	4	54	42	38	12
1645	9	0	17	14	4	9	67	53	44	14
1646	8	0	12	6	2	4	45	32	24	13
1647	20	2	16	13	3	16	100	70	50	30
1648	17	2	17	21	9	28	107	94	77	13
1649	16	2	25	25	12	24	123	104	88	19
1650	5	1	21	21	6	22	100	76	71	24
1651	12	0	17	11	6	20	81	66	54	15
1652	6	0	8	10	5	12	49	41	35	8
1653	2	0	0	4	3	5	16	14	12	2
1654	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0
1655	1	0	1	0	0	2	4	4	3	0
1656	2	0	0	1	0	0	6	3	1	3
1657	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	1	1
1658	1	0	0	1	1	0	4	3	2	1
1659	1	1	1	1	0	0	4	4	3	0
1660	22	1	30	23	4	25	127	105	83	22

(5)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1661	31	5	53	45	20	35	230	189	158	41
1662	39	1	30	21	10	38	214	139	100	75
1663	20	3	15	22	6	26	118	92	72	26
1664	16	1	23	23	6	26	110	95	79	15
1665	15	3	25	21	2	21	100	87	72	13
1666	23	0	25	26	7	36	163	117	94	46
1667	25	8	22	23	8	36	145	122	97	23
1668	15	5	21	28	5	31	128	105	90	23
1669	25	3	35	24	9	40	200	136	111	64
1670	25	6	30	29	8	32	175	130	105	45
1671	26	4	26	23	9	23	165	111	85	54
1672	19	1	21	22	4	24	130	91	72	39
1673	15	2	18	19	5	18	105	77	62	28
1674	14	3	23	18	6	20	133	84	70	49
1675	19	5	26	22	8	20	129	100	81	29
1676	19	0	21	24	7	31	170	102	83	68
1677	18	5	24	18	8	16	128	89	71	39
1678	26	5	35	23	6	33	161	128	102	33
1679	21	1	28	28	6	33	155	117	96	38
1680	30	3	54	16	7	44	207	154	124	53
1681	24	5	41	25	9	44	241	148	124	93
1682	27	3	41	16	6	27	168	120	93	48
1683	20	5	22	22	5	24	118	98	78	20
1684	16	4	19	9	4	25	121	77	61	44
1685	19	1	27	13	8	29	134	97	78	37
1686	18	4	35	21	5	40	166	123	105	43
1687	17	3	27	14	6	25	138	92	75	46
1688	12	3	20	21	6	27	125	89	77	36
1689	21	6	41	20	7	37	191	132	111	59
1690	26	7	27	22	11	29	185	122	96	63
1691	20	1	37	14	7	35	183	114	94	69
1692	29	4	28	15	5	34	167	115	86	52

Appendix Table 2—5 *Wills in Cheshire : 1520–1800*

(1)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1520	1					1	4	2	1	2
1521	0					0	2	0	0	2
1522	0					0	0	0	0	0
1523	0					0	0	0	0	0
1524	0					0	0	0	0	0
1525	1					0	2	1	0	1
1526	1					1	3	2	1	1
1527	0					4	6	4	4	2
1528	1					0	2	1	0	1
1529	0					0	0	0	0	0
1530	0					1	2	1	1	1
1531	0					2	2	2	2	0
1532	0					0	1	0	0	1
1533	0					0	0	0	0	0
1534	0					0	1	0	0	1
1535	0					0	0	0	0	0
1536	0					0	0	0	0	0
1537	0					0	1	0	0	1
1538	0					0	0	0	0	0
1539	0					0	0	0	0	0
1540	1					1	7	2	1	5
1541	0					2	2	2	2	0
1542	0					2	5	2	2	3
1543	0					0	0	0	0	0
1544	1					0	1	1	0	0
1545	0					1	3	1	1	2
1546	0	2				3	10	5	5	5
1547	1	1				1	5	3	2	2
1548	0	0				0	0	0	0	0
1549	0	0				1	4	1	1	3
1550	0	0				1	4	1	1	3
1551	1	0				1	2	2	1	0
1552	0	0				0	1	0	0	1
1553	0	0				2	4	2	2	2
1554	0	1				2	4	3	3	1
1555	0	0				2	5	2	2	3
1556	0	1				3	8	4	4	4
1557	2	2	1			5	15	10	8	5
1558	1	4	0			6	19	11	10	8
1559	0	2	0			0	7	2	2	5
1560	1	1	0			2	10	4	3	6
1561	0	1	2			4	10	7	7	3
1562	1	1	0		1	1	6	4	3	2
1563	2	2	1		0	3	10	8	6	2
1564	1	0	1		0	3	10	5	4	5
1565	0	0	0		0	2	6	2	2	4
1566	1	0	0		0	0	2	1	0	1
1567	0	1	0		0	2	3	3	3	0
1568	0	1	0		0	2	3	3	3	0
1569	0	0	0		0	2	2	2	2	0
1570	0	0	1		0	0	2	1	1	1
1571	1	0	0		0	0	5	1	0	4

(2)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1572	2	3	2			5	21	12	10	9
1573	4	8	2	3		9	39	26	22	13
1574	9	2	3	2		2	27	18	9	9
1575	5	1	2	6		4	41	18	13	23
1576	4	2	3	5		4	49	18	14	31
1577	7		2	5		10	62	24	17	38
1578	6	1	3	4		7	36	21	15	15
1579	1	1	1	3		9	25	15	14	10
1580	2	3	4	8		3	30	20	18	10
1581	5	3	2	5		4	54	19	14	35
1582	6	2	6	4		3	36	21	15	15
1583	5		1	5		2	30	13	8	17
1584	1		5	12		4	47	22	21	25
1585	4	1	4	7		6	35	22	18	13
1586	1	2	1	6		1	22	11	10	11
1587	6	7	4	9		11	55	37	31	18
1588	11	10	6	20	1	6	96	54	43	42
1589	7	1	3	15	1	4	46	31	24	15
1590	10	4	7	26	1	9	107	57	47	50
1591	13	2	11	30	0	13	95	69	56	26
1592	15	3	13	32	0	7	108	70	55	38
1593	13	8	24	36	1	17	147	99	86	48
1594	7	5	9	11	0	4	63	36	29	27
1595	16	5	16	26	0	9	128	72	56	56
1596	4	1	2	10	0	3	51	20	16	31
1597	13	6	8	20	1	2	84	50	37	34
1598	10	3	17	22	0	5	100	57	47	43
1599	8	3	4	7	2	3	52	27	19	25
1600	13	2	6	9	0	1	53	31	18	22
1601	5	4	11	8	1	9	55	38	33	17
1602	14	10	23	45	0	26	182	118	104	64
1603	18	10	19	34	0	21	202	102	84	100
1604	37	5	23	69	6	24	279	164	127	115
1605	16	11	18	21	0	27	151	93	77	58
1606	12	1	29	24	0	29	149	95	83	54
1607	11	5	20	27	0	20	135	83	72	52
1608	21	6	30	35	0	21	175	113	92	62
1609	21	7	24	34	2	19	183	107	86	76
1610	41	10	37	50	1	28	257	167	126	90
1611	22	13	33	43	0	17	187	128	106	59
1612	19	8	24	29	0	23	188	103	84	85
1613	42	13	32	49	0	26	273	162	120	111
1614	39	13	46	48	0	34	252	180	141	72
1615	15	11	39	33	0	18	175	116	101	59
1616	56	16	47	60	2	38	367	219	163	148
1617	35	14	55	62	2	34	284	202	167	82
1618	26	3	45	42	1	25	235	142	116	93
1619	26	14	30	43	0	21	215	134	108	81
1620	13	9	35	22	0	20	160	99	86	61
1621	27	7	33	40	0	23	197	130	103	67
1622	23	12	10	31	0	23	149	99	76	50
1623	23	11	42	38	1	44	234	159	136	75
1624	32	15	56	49	0	34	251	186	154	65

(3)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1625	31	12	47	35	1	34	229	160	129	69
1626	22	9	50	23	0	18	177	122	100	55
1627	38	11	50	34	1	31	235	165	127	70
1628	26	10	48	41	0	27	210	152	126	58
1629	17	12	48	30	1	24	190	132	115	58
1630	45	10	39	57	1	37	257	189	144	68
1631	25	14	47	35	2	31	204	154	129	50
1632	34	12	71	35	0	29	219	181	147	38
1633	29	13	76	46	0	34	260	198	169	62
1634	29	15	53	24	0	27	201	148	119	53
1635	26	15	46	29	0	29	196	145	119	51
1636	24	10	46	33	0	25	181	138	114	43
1637	31	13	61	40	0	28	310	173	142	137
1638	22	17	57	37	0	27	236	160	138	76
1639	14	19	55	32	1	19	242	140	126	102
1640	25	12	67	46	0	39	264	189	164	75
1641	27	8	61	29	0	28	244	153	126	91
1642	15	8	39	14	0	25	146	101	86	45
1643	5	3	10	5	0	10	49	33	28	16
1644	5	5	9	2	1	6	38	28	23	10
1645	9	2	14	7	0	8	61	40	31	21
1646	38	9	70	23	0	34	318	174	136	144
1647	51	10	59	35	0	27	293	182	131	111
1648	39	15	54	24	1	37	278	170	131	108
1649	28	11	55	28	0	21	281	143	115	138
1650	11	5	28	12	0	10	150	66	55	84
1660	14	11	27	8	1	28	131	89	75	42
1661	49	10	90	38	0	52	337	239	190	98
1662	49	10	83	43	1	45	293	231	182	62
1663	75	12	105	54	3	64	393	313	238	80
1664	38	14	74	39	5	53	301	223	185	78
1665	44	11	59	34	0	46	252	194	150	58
1666	47	16	44	26	0	71	257	204	157	53
1667	50	21	80	28	0	68	313	247	197	66
1668	60	13	78	36	1	35	302	223	163	79
1669	73	12	85	31	2	74	355	277	204	78
1670	62	10	75	49	0	45	349	241	179	108
1671	60	9	72	40	0	52	331	233	173	98
1672	56	18	82	49	0	39	351	244	188	107
1673	45	14	54	31	2	48	273	194	149	79
1674	57	13	59	39	0	55	304	223	166	81
1675	52	14	64	36	1	49	315	216	164	99
1676	38	20	69	42	3	59	317	231	193	86
1677	57	13	63	50	2	65	323	250	193	73
1678	32	8	42	23	0	32	209	137	105	72
1679	40	12	47	29	2	44	294	174	134	120
1680	51	20	75	46	0	43	328	235	184	93
1681	40	6	64	31	0	46	269	187	147	82
1682	47	12	77	26	0	60	301	222	175	79
1683	49	10	99	33	1	60	312	252	203	60
1684	47	13	93	48	0	49	361	250	203	111
1685	49	21	86	37	2	55	356	250	201	106
1686	53	22	99	40	1	78	405	293	240	112

(4)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1687	60	14	63	47	3	60	355	247	187	108
1688	52	17	68	27	1	55	282	220	168	62
1689	47	11	62	24	0	45	251	189	142	62
1690	72	16	103	34	2	61	371	288	216	83
1691	54	8	67	24	0	46	255	199	145	56
1692	43	8	63	27	0	47	263	188	145	75
1693	37	14	73	27	1	42	262	194	157	68
1694	35	7	64	26	1	52	239	185	150	54
1695	47	8	54	17	1	45	226	172	125	54
1696	48	13	54	17	0	55	236	187	139	49
1697	27	10	56	13	0	34	168	140	113	28
1698	46	13	93	27	0	51	266	230	184	36
1699	64	8	101	27	0	88	349	288	224	61
1700	44	16	81	37	0	65	264	243	199	21
1701	38	11	63	14	2	58	219	186	148	33
1702	40	17	59	26	0	55	240	197	157	43
1703	25	16	71	17	1	62	214	192	167	22
1704	32	17	62	16	0	50	208	177	145	31
1705	37	15	69	17	1	59	223	198	161	25
1706	35	16	52	18	1	57	211	179	144	32
1707	36	13	73	12	0	67	225	201	165	24
1708	37	12	75	24	1	68	251	217	180	34
1709	45	22	77	30	1	64	263	239	194	24
1710	32	7	65	17	0	48	197	169	137	28
1711	33	13	65	22	1	53	208	187	154	21
1712	33	16	65	15	0	48	189	177	144	12
1713	44	18	69	18	1	58	237	208	164	29
1714	33	11	70	16	1	55	196	186	153	10
1715	29	9	62	13	1	56	186	170	141	16
1716	30	14	74	16	0	80	238	214	184	24
1717	42	16	73	11	1	60	225	203	161	22
1718	32	15	73	15	0	57	229	192	160	37
1719	42	17	61	13	0	55	207	188	146	19
1720	31	10	75	12	1	54	202	183	152	19
1721	41	20	68	17	1	75	257	222	181	35
1722	39	12	72	15	1	55	222	194	155	28
1723	44	12	90	16	3	83	299	248	204	51
1724	45	12	92	20	3	61	270	233	188	37
1725	27	8	66	21	3	65	219	190	163	29
1726	30	8	82	12	0	85	253	217	187	36
1727	59	12	148	20	3	96	393	338	279	55
1728	73	20	187	31	2	112	464	425	352	39
1729	66	22	230	42	0	129	543	489	423	54
1730	57	17	151	37	0	102	405	364	307	41
1731	30	14	87	19	1	86	270	237	207	33
1732	46	15	76	18	1	55	237	211	165	26
1733	57	20	94	22	2	89	313	284	227	29
1734	38	23	66	7	0	64	212	198	160	14
1735	31	13	57	15	1	60	190	177	146	13
1736	49	16	87	23	1	87	296	263	214	33
1737	38	15	72	14	1	79	264	219	181	45
1738	42	14	59	17	1	87	235	220	178	15
1739	27	6	55	11	0	66	181	165	138	16

(5)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1740	36	18	58	14	0	59	207	185	149	22
1741	34	12	72	15	0	80	230	213	179	17
1742	50	13	67	22	0	80	248	232	182	16
1743	31	25	55	11	1	75	222	198	167	24
1744	27	18	51	11	0	52	174	159	132	15
1745	31	10	42	9	1	55	160	148	117	12
1746	35	14	52	10	1	74	205	186	151	19
1747	34	17	50	9	0	76	200	186	152	14
1748	37	11	45	7	1	78	200	179	142	21
1749	31	17	55	15	0	77	205	195	164	10
1750	35	12	44	10	1	59	181	161	126	20
1751	23	12	33	5	0	34	113	107	84	6
1752	43	8	46	8	1	53	177	159	116	18
1753	40	18	49	13	2	67	203	189	149	14
1754	35	13	55	10	1	58	191	172	137	19
1755	37	13	65	16	3	62	215	196	159	19
1756	40	12	48	8	0	69	198	177	137	21
1757	25	16	51	6	4	71	204	173	148	31
1758	22	10	61	13	1	64	184	171	149	13
1759	27	11	40	16	1	68	182	163	136	19
1760	31	14	58	7	0	66	202	176	145	26
1761	21	12	39	11	0	56	157	139	118	18
1762	45	14	59	19	1	78	240	216	171	24
1763	31	12	76	8	5	68	218	200	169	18
1764	36	15	33	18	5	79	202	186	150	16
1765	24	16	53	10	0	82	207	185	161	22
1766	34	15	59	9	0	59	201	176	142	25
1767	38	15	57	13	2	74	219	199	161	20
1768	29	24	75	16	6	64	228	214	185	14
1769	30	27	60	13	0	65	208	195	165	13
1770	42	8	66	5	0	75	213	196	154	17
1771	42	11	56	17	3	70	223	199	157	24
1772	38	10	66	15	4	78	236	211	173	25
1773	36	16	54	8	1	63	201	178	142	23
1774	38	15	64	4	0	75	210	196	158	14
1775	28	17	68	10	0	80	218	203	175	15
1776	41	11	69	9	0	64	220	194	153	26
1777	41	14	54	14	4	60	204	187	146	17
1778	31	16	57	11	0	63	198	178	147	20
1779	39	17	66	4	1	56	202	183	144	19
1780	34	10	54	7	1	83	208	189	155	19
1781	36	10	42	9	0	58	169	155	119	14
1782	32	16	64	5	1	78	213	196	164	17
1783	44	14	56	6	2	70	217	192	148	25
1784	34	16	46	2	1	61	175	160	126	15
1785	43	19	58	3	2	78	228	203	160	25
1786	44	18	63	4	3	58	206	190	146	16
1787	40	20	53	2	2	86	227	203	163	24
1788	28	21	62	2	1	71	203	185	157	18
1789	47	17	37	5	3	73	197	182	135	15
1790	18	22	42	3	1	84	187	170	152	17
1791	27	23	57	2		81	220	190	163	30
1792	34	13	53		1	86	212	187	153	25

(6)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1793	30	13	57	4	2	85	213	191	161	22
1794	26	16	37	1	3	62	161	145	119	16
1795	28	17	51	1	1	69	189	167	139	22
1796	20	9	50	3	1	79	179	162	142	17
1797	41	27	48	6	5	95	250	222	181	28
1798	55	21	86	6	6	114	317	288	233	29
1799	65	24	80	6	3	128	323	306	241	17
1800	64	33	69	4	4	118	323	292	228	31

Appendix Table 2—6 *Wills in Hampshire : 1500–1800*

(1)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc. women	Undeclared total
1500	0					1	2	1	1	1
1502	0					0	9	0	0	9
1503	1					0	25	1	0	24
1504	0					0	5	0	0	5
1505	0					0	4	0	0	4
1506	0			1		0	4	1	1	3
1507	2			0		0	7	2	0	5
1508	0			0		3	16	3	3	13
1509	1	1		0		2	44	4	3	40
1510	0	0		0		0	20	0	0	20
1511	0	0		0		0	12	0	0	12
1512	0	1		0		0	10	1	1	9
1513	0	0	1	0		0	4	1	1	3
1514	0	0	0	0		0	12	0	0	12
1515	2	0	0	0		6	57	8	6	49
1516	0	0	1	0		4	23	5	5	18
1517	3	0	0	0		8	42	11	8	31
1518	2	0	3	1		6	50	12	10	38
1519	1	1	0	1		1	7	4	3	3
1520	1	0	1	0		4	17	6	5	11
1521	2	2	0	1		5	44	10	8	34
1522	2	0	0	3		6	41	11	9	30
1523	4	0	0	4		36	44	0	0	44
1524	8	0	0	1		6	65	15	7	50
1525	4	0	0	0		1	22	5	1	17
1526	0	0	1	0		0	17	1	1	16
1527	1	0	0	0		1	26	2	1	24
1528	6	1	0	1		2	51	10	4	41
1529	3	1	0	1		2	42	7	4	35
1530	5	0	0	1		4	47	10	5	37
1531	3	0	2	0		2	27	7	4	20
1532	5	0	1	0		1	31	7	2	24
1533	6	0	0	3		4	46	13	7	33
1534	5	0	0	0		34	39	0	0	39
1535	3	0	0	0		34	37	0	0	37
1536	5	0	0	1		3	61	9	4	52
1537	3	0	0	3		0	66	6	3	60
1538	6	1	0	1		6	110	14	8	96
1539	5	0	2	3		6	83	16	11	67
1540	13	1	1	3		8	108	26	13	82
1541	9	1	2	3		21	94	36	27	58
1542	8	0	3	5		10	84	26	18	58
1543	5	2	0	4		12	141	23	18	118
1544	13	0	1	4		10	116	28	15	88
1545	7	1	1	5		20	181	34	27	147
1546	13	2	3	10		15	237	43	30	194
1547	16	1	4	10		20	145	51	35	94
1548	15	0	4	3	2	12	118	36	21	82
1549	12	1	1	4		18	142	36	24	106
1550	14	0	3	5		19	153	41	27	112
1551	12	0	4	13		18	175	47	35	128
1552	16	1	4	21		32	186	74	58	112

(2)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1553	17	1	5	14	1	11	163	49	32	114
1554	15	3	3	14	0	21	154	56	41	98
1555	16	1	4	9	0	14	181	44	28	137
1556	25	1	6	19	0	19	179	70	45	109
1557	46	5	15	49	0	46	425	161	115	264
1558	71	5	19	65	3	48	639	211	140	428
1559	64	4	19	75	2	55	558	219	155	339
1560	17	0	10	21	0	24	206	72	55	134
1561	16	4	11	33	2	22	237	88	72	149
1562	21	3	9	29	0	29	191	91	70	100
1563	18	3	12	36	0	44	228	113	95	115
1564	15	2	4	19	0	28	173	68	53	105
1565	18	2	5	11	0	24	143	60	42	83
1566	21	3	7	28	1	21	153	81	60	72
1567	11	3	7	19	0	20	127	60	49	67
1568	14	0	6	24	0	18	142	62	48	80
1569	20	4	8	29	2	15	176	78	58	98
1570	25	4	11	38	3	26	274	107	82	167
1571	53	4	20	87	2	56	455	222	169	233
1572	33	5	8		0	63	255	109	76	146
1573	31	6	14	33	2	30	239	116	85	123
1574	32	4	7	27	0	34	230	104	72	126
1575	17	3	11	21	2	24	161	78	61	83
1576	16	3	16	30	0	23	168	88	72	80
1577	13	4	14	16	1	14	162	62	49	100
1578	26	3	17	26	0	31	188	103	77	85
1579	15	2	9	38	2	9	131	75	60	56
1580	30	2	10	48	2	29	256	121	91	135
1581	34	3	14	37	2	34	243	124	90	119
1582	20	0	20	42	2	36	211	120	100	91
1583	18	4	8	25	0	27	208	82	64	126
1584	29	3	14	39	1	44	258	130	101	128
1585	34	6	26	58	1	29	278	154	120	124
1586	24	3	19	37	1	30	228	114	90	114
1587	35	3	35	44	0	33	307	150	115	157
1588	32	3	22	41	0	45	255	143	111	112
1589	27	3	22	30	2	31	241	115	88	126
1590	26	5	16	57	1	20	220	125	99	95
1591	35	7	13	56	1	42	329	154	119	175
1592	34	1	33	58	1	27	322	154	120	168
1593	33	5	30	64	2	55	355	189	156	166
1594	33	4	19	42	0	34	249	132	99	117
1595	40	8	10	42	2	29	246	131	91	115
1596	41	6	28	53	1	35	300	164	123	136
1597	32	6	22	49	3	47	299	159	127	140
1598	34	5	19	47	2	23	248	130	96	118
1599	26	3	31	35	0	33	207	128	102	79
1600	25	6	19	35	0	29	212	114	89	98
1601	31	4	18	38	0	30	202	121	90	81
1602	25	5	24	34	2	28	193	118	93	75
1603	24	3	31	34	1	29	210	122	98	88
1604	26	3	32	48	1	31	243	141	115	102
1605	34	4	32	51	1	32	267	154	120	113

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1606	29	7	28	42	1	26	204	133	104	71
1607	20	5	32	38	1	31	201	127	107	74
1608	38	5	39	54	2	38	279	176	138	103
1609	46	3	32	49	1	39	268	170	124	98
1610	42	8	42	65	2	47	317	206	164	111
1611	39	8	46	47	1	42	290	183	144	107
1612	48	5	48	57	0	42	335	200	152	135
1613	45	8	46	46	1	34	278	180	135	98
1614	41	6	52	63	3	51	330	216	175	114
1615	31	9	34	45	0	42	242	161	130	81
1616	36	8	52	50	0	37	267	183	147	84
1617	35	5	41	43	3		284	122	87	162
1618	29	4	33	34	1	28	236	129	100	107
1619	53	12	38	53	3	45	321	204	151	117
1620	26	8	49	44	1	41	288	169	143	119
1621	43	8	38	30	0	35	256	154	111	102
1622	43	3	24	30	1	30	222	131	88	91
1623	45	7	34	39	0	38	312	163	118	149
1624	53	6	58	47	1	38	382	203	150	179
1625	54	11	49	50	1	60	409	225	171	184
1626	69	7	73	73	2	78	475	302	233	173
1627	40	8	48	34	0	31	260	161	121	99
1628	47	9	41	38	0	51	311	186	139	125
1629	31	6	64	32	0	40	261	173	142	88
1630	55	5	52	30	0	54	286	196	141	90
1631	44	9	58	46	1	39	312	197	153	115
1632	45	4	45	44	3	44	286	185	140	101
1633	33	5	54	30	1	35	236	158	125	78
1634	44	4	36	39	2	38	246	163	119	83
1635	39	6	62	45	0	38	314	190	151	124
1636	42	9	43	37	1	56	265	188	146	77
1637	55	8	50	30	1	50	295	194	139	101
1638	81	32	85	79	1	76	568	354	273	214
1639	89	16	109	108	1	91	597	414	325	183
1640	76	15	90	76	1	66	472	324	248	148
1641	61	8	58	49	0	49	335	225	164	110
1642	26	10	42	25	0	26	185	129	103	56
1643	16	4	15	6	1	15	95	57	41	38
1644	8	7	12	2	0	19	79	48	40	31
1645	28	6	27	14	0	29	149	104	76	45
1646	26	4	51	17	0	40	213	138	112	75
1647	41	8	43	25	0	41	247	158	117	89
1648	34	9	49	22	0	30	207	144	110	63
1649	29	1	42	14	0	25	185	111	82	74
1650	23	5	38	19	1	29	171	115	92	56
1651	19	3	33	14	1	9	102	79	60	23
1652	28	5	30	16	0	21	143	100	72	43
1653	16	1	9	13	0	9	67	48	32	19
1654	4	1	5	1	0	11	33	22	18	11
1655	0	0	0	0	0	15	22	15	15	7
1656	3	1	4	0	0	2	12	10	7	2
1657	7	1	7	3	0	12	38	30	23	8
1658	2	0	3	2	0	7	20	14	12	6

(4)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1660	18	6	17	16	1	16	95	74	56	21
1661	61	9	77	36	1	74	331	258	197	73
1662	55	17	95	28	1	70	371	266	211	105
1663	62	6	100	41	3	70	373	282	220	91
1664	46	14	68	32	0	69	314	229	183	85
1665	59	14	74	27	4	85	339	263	204	76
1666	59	7	60	23	4	97	339	250	191	89
1667	77	7	65	37	3	112	461	301	224	160
1668	48	7	76	31	3	74	340	239	191	101
1669	61	12	78	35	3	71	353	260	199	93
1670	81	25	90	45	4	109	487	354	273	133
1671	56	12	81	46	4	81	399	280	224	119
1672	57	13	77	27	4	100	392	278	221	114
1673	55	8	57	10	7	108	359	245	190	114
1674	63	12	52	31	6	98	376	262	199	114
1675	69	8	72	29	0	65	333	243	174	90
1676	58	9	78	19	4	71	348	239	181	109
1677	43	13	57	19	1	55	308	188	145	120
1678	46	7	73	27	1	56	340	210	164	130
1679	60	9	78	33	0	114	432	294	234	138
1680	73	14	70	37	0	86	365	280	207	85
1681	76	17	95	36	6	77	420	307	231	113
1682	60	9	83	29	3	55	330	239	179	91
1683	41	9	73	25	1	79	322	228	187	94
1684	44	6	65	23	2	93	366	233	189	133
1685	58	7	71	24	4	67	315	231	173	84
1686	40	9	64	24	5	49	275	191	151	84
1687	46	6	63	19	0	61	268	195	149	73
1688	43	9	67	15	1	78	308	213	170	95
1689	62	5	62	26	7	128	493	290	228	203
1690	51	7	60	23	2	106	432	249	198	183
1691	53	9	54	14	2	83	316	215	162	101
1692	55	6	52	10	1	87	286	211	156	75
1693	61	3	62	21	9	105	397	261	200	136
1694	66	10	68	39	8	106	505	297	231	208
1695	62	8	69	15	1	142	427	297	235	130
1696	33	12	49	17	4	149	385	264	231	121
1697	47	5	51	15	8	219	450	345	298	105
1698	41	8	65	15	5	111	338	245	204	93
1699	30	3	41	12	2	62	237	150	120	87
1700	41	3	58	13	2	71	260	188	147	72
1701	37	5	61	13	6	62	265	184	147	81
1702	38	7	53	14	6	113	300	231	193	69
1703	67	7	66	15	7	329	727	491	424	236
1704	39	7	50	21	17	280	520	414	375	106
1705	42	5	69	19	16	277	550	428	386	122
1706	55	7	67	12	7	204	465	352	297	113
1707	45	6	45	17	7	380	649	500	455	149
1708	52	11	68	17	10	219	475	377	325	98
1709	50	4	51	23	6	215	436	349	299	87
1710	48	9	50	14	2	166	368	289	241	79
1711	50	10	53	17	6	161	422	297	247	125
1712	37	9	55	18	11	112	383	242	205	141

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1713	59	15	56	14	4	165	393	313	254	80
1714	75	11	41	14	5	116	354	262	187	92
1715	47	8	64	20	5	103	323	247	200	76
1716	48	4	58	21	6	106	340	243	195	97
1717	43	7	42	18	6	61	268	177	134	91
1718	51	5	50	13	2	95	297	216	165	81
1719	53	16	71	22	5	109	390	276	223	114
1720	63	8	62	22	10	194	505	359	296	146
1721	68	5	66	17	6	138	414	300	232	114
1722	62	9	55	13	5	90	333	234	172	99
1723	76	4	46	10	12	167	435	315	239	120
1724	67	11	76	12	2	126	445	294	227	151
1725	62	10	59	14	10	124	381	279	217	102
1726	71	10	56	9	8	154	415	308	237	107
1727	59	7	73	10	6	136	391	291	232	100
1728	81	12	80	14	10	293	674	490	409	184
1729	80	15	91	14	5	190	531	395	315	136
1730	69	7	82	19	17	123	427	317	248	110
1731	64	9	84	31	12	162	467	362	298	105
1732	63	12	60	12	9	134	381	290	227	91
1733	80	11	76	18	14	96	425	295	215	130
1734	55	12	68	17	17	227	467	396	341	71
1735	62	11	65	16	8	247	482	409	347	73
1736	76	15	59	20	12	178	407	360	284	47
1737	70	14	73	11	17	150	389	335	265	54
1738	83	8	61	19	10	170	405	351	268	54
1739	80	10	63	13	8	269	492	443	363	49
1740	88	19	74	19	20	567	879	787	699	92
1741	85	9	67	15	19	498	805	693	608	112
1742	83	17	69	27	24	435	751	655	572	96
1743	77	12	50	27	15	335	552	516	439	36
1744	61	9	64	16	21	543	827	714	653	113
1745	67	19	55	10	7	351	582	509	442	73
1746	69	6	57	10	16	350	580	508	439	72
1747	84	17	43	16	22	367	606	549	465	57
1748	81	14	55	23	21	392	656	586	505	70
1749	66	14	43	16	16	204	412	359	293	53
1750	67	8	54	13	11	147	346	300	233	46
1751	42	9	30	11	13	78	210	183	141	27
1752	56	12	45	18	9	105	269	245	189	24
1753	60	8	51	14	14	90	263	237	177	26
1754	63	12	55	11	15	116	301	272	209	29
1755	49	15	43	15	11	107	269	240	191	29
1756	51	13	56	17	13	143	320	293	242	27
1757	53	13	53	13	9	103	267	244	191	23
1758	78	7	49	7	7	113	285	261	183	24
1759	76	10	61	23	20	127	342	317	241	25
1760	58	11	52	16	9	139	308	285	227	23
1761	0	8	48	12	15	158	262	241	241	21
1762	62	13	65	21	17	115	326	293	231	33
1763	66	14	72	14	18	143	355	327	261	28
1764	61	15	55	12	20	126	319	289	228	30
1765	64	16	63	12	11	103	296	269	205	27

(6)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1766	60	16	66	13	18	99	304	272	212	32
1767	64	12	53	24	12	111	293	276	212	17
1768	85	12	58	12	13	98	310	278	193	32
1769	55	12	44	17	13	111	270	252	197	18
1770	44	10	61	13	13	103	267	244	200	23
1771	57	24	47	16	21	124	306	289	232	17
1772	58	10	51	21	13	117	288	270	212	18
1773	55	11	47	11	21	98	262	243	188	19
1774	61	9	57	13	10	112	282	262	201	20
1775	63	13	66	10	12	117	298	281	218	17
1776	54	14	55	9	10	131	290	273	219	17
1777	38	9	54	14	10	106	251	231	193	20
1778	46	10	49	11	7	104	250	227	181	23
1779	74	10	51	15	10	105	279	265	191	14
1780	49	10	79	9	14	124	305	285	236	20
1781	41	11	61	8	13	106	256	240	199	16
1782	59	18	49	13	8	121	291	268	209	23
1783	57	15	51	10	11	118	276	262	205	14
1784	48	11	43	5	5	95	219	207	159	12
1785	45	18	47	9	7	93	231	219	174	12
1786	38	10	36	7	5	70	188	166	128	22
1787	30	7	43	9	7	75	187	171	141	16
1788	32	7	43	4	8	90	201	184	152	17
1789	47	8	36	5	8	75	200	179	132	21
1790	19	8	38	3	4	82	162	154	135	8
1791	24	9	32	6	9	69	155	149	125	6
1792	38	12	51	2	6	72	202	181	143	21
1793	36	8	42	8	7	74	188	175	139	13
1794	44	13	44	2	4	83	204	190	146	14
1795	44	11	53	5	8	92	226	213	169	13
1796	30	10	54	3	10	72	192	179	149	13
1797	43	10	42	7	11	94	226	207	164	19
1798	54	16	54	7	8	103	259	242	188	17
1799	39	7	43	8	8	114	238	219	180	19
1800	63	15	47	6	15	103	264	249	186	15

Appendix Table 2—7 *Wills in Worcestershire : 1509–1649*

(1)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1509						0	6		0	6
1510						2	18	2	2	16
1511						0	14	0	0	14
1512	1					1	13	2	1	11
1513	0					0	11	0	0	11
1514	0					0	0	0	0	0
1515	0					0	0	0	0	0
1516	1					0	1	1	0	0
1517	0		1			0	3	1	1	2
1518	1		0			0	5	1	0	4
1519	0		0			0	1	0	0	1
1520	0		0			0	3	0	0	3
1521	0		0			0	8	0	0	8
1522	0		0			0	5	0	0	5
1523	0		0			0	1	0	0	1
1524	1		0			0	1	1	0	0
1525	0	1	0	2		1	22	4	4	18
1526	0	0	0	0	1	0	25	1	1	24
1527	0	0	0	0	0	0	26	0	0	26
1528	0	0	0	0	0	1	18	1	1	17
1529	0	0	0	0	0	0	16	0	0	16
1530	1	0	0	0	0	0	19	1	0	18
1531	0	0	1	0	0	0	7	1	1	6
1532	1	0	0	0	0	0	17	1	0	16
1533	2	0	0	0	0	2	22	4	2	18
1534	8	1	0	2	0	6	70	17	9	53
1535	8	3	0	10	1	9	183	31	23	152
1536	20	1	1	13	0	17	479	52	32	427
1537	6	0	0	4	0	4	73	14	8	59
1538	6	2	1	3	0	7	119	19	13	100
1539	3	1	0	5	0	5	101	14	11	87
1540	14	0	0	5	1	8	83	28	14	55
1541	4	0	1	1	0	2	182	8	4	174
1542	4	0	0	0	0	1	212	5	1	207
1543	7	1	0	2	0	3	293	13	6	280
1544	5	1	0	3	1	3	360	13	8	347
1545	0	1	0	0	0	1	168	2	2	166
1546	0	0	0	0	0	1	113	1	1	112
1547	0	1	0	0	0	2	132	3	3	129
1548	2	0	0	3	0	2	80	7	5	73
1549	14	1	5	25	1	19	188	65	51	123
1550	6	2	2	9	3	11	118	33	27	85
1551	9	0	0	8		4	111	21	12	90
1552	11	0	2	10	0	7	108	30	19	78
1553	3	3	0	7	1	4	77	18	15	59
1554	12	0	5	23	1	14	174	55	43	119
1555	42	6	4	44	2	30	275	128	86	147
1556	59	8	15	66	1	42	935	191	132	744
1557	39	5	7	38	2	29	429	120	81	309
1558	26	6	0	33	2	31	323	98	72	225
1559	19	2	0	16	1	14	164	52	33	112
1560	13	2	1	9	1	7	136	33	20	103

(2)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1561	15	2	2	13	1	5	141	38	23	103
1562	4	0	4	10	0	5	101	23	19	78
1563	9	1	1	10	0	9	110	30	21	80
1564	11	1	6	26	0	4	128	48	37	80
1565	14	2	3	14	0	9	140	42	28	98
1566	7	0	2	13	0	8	97	30	23	67
1567	8	1	1	14	1	9	112	34	26	78
1568	10	1	1	6	0	10	77	28	18	49
1569	13	0	7	24	0	12	158	56	43	102
1570	14	2	5	9	0	11	125	41	27	84
1571	10	1	11	18	2	9	136	51	41	85
1572	16	0	6	16	2	6	137	46	30	91
1573	13	0	6	16	1	10	121	46	33	75
1574	16	3	6	20	1	17	139	63	47	76
1575	7	1	19	23	0	10	138	60	53	78
1576	11	5	9	13	0	19	127	57	46	70
1577	19	2	7	16	3	9	124	56	37	68
1578	13	0	10	15	0	13	135	51	38	84
1579	12	1	11	16	0	10	141	50	38	91
1580	13	1	11	15	0	10	99	50	37	49
1581	22	1	12	22	2	21	134	80	58	54
1582	12	0	12	26	1	20	133	71	59	62
1583	16	2	15	16	0	16	121	65	49	56
1584	20	2	16	15	0	12	120	65	45	55
1585	33	4	22	33	3	29	220	124	91	96
1586	21	0	20	36	3	20	189	100	79	89
1587	10	1	19	29	2	9	117	70	60	47
1588	20	1	15	23	1	14	117	74	54	43
1589	23	3	29	43	4	15	193	117	94	76
1590	22	4	22	41	1	25	181	115	93	66
1591	18	1	20	32	0	17	158	88	70	70
1592	11	2	22	21	2	11	119	69	58	50
1593	18	2	17	27	0	6	122	70	52	52
1594	15	3	32	21	3	13	132	87	72	45
1595	19	2	20	35	4	20	170	100	81	70
1596	18	7	24	35	1	24	189	109	91	80
1597	19	5	12	29	2	11	120	78	59	42
1598	21	2	19	26	2	12	127	82	61	45
1599	31	4	19	51	1	26	172	132	101	40
1600	22	2	21	26	4	26	147	101	79	46
1601	31	2	28	32	1	15	143	109	78	34
1602	24	3	30	34	5	23	172	119	95	53
1603	20	3	33	26	1	29	175	112	92	63
1604	25	2	26	22	6	22	144	103	78	41
1605	26	3	29	27	9	26	120	156	94	36
1606	20	2	22	28	4	23	99	142	79	43
1607	34	3	24	25	8	31	125	184	91	59
1608	25	3	35	30	5	25	123	173	98	50
1609	40	5	33	27	10	36	151	208	111	57
1610	37	3	46	50	6	22	164	234	127	70
1611	35	7	24	27	1	22	116	213	81	97
1612	43	5	27	43	7	33	158	253	115	95
1613	40	10	38	42	2	24	156	295	116	139

(3)

year	Women	gentleman	yeoman	husbandman	labourer	others	Totals	Declared total	Declared exc.women	Undeclared total
1614	34	4	33	31	3	22	266	127	93	139
1615	41	5	37	24	3	30	185	140	99	45
1616	31	6	40	33	1	20	175	131	100	44
1617	27	3	17	11	4	17	195	79	52	116
1618	27	4	28	21	10	27	233	117	90	116
1619	29	5	22	14	2	12	168	84	55	84
1620	30	2	27	15	5	17	166	96	66	70
1621	15	4	15	9	1	14	189	58	43	131
1622	35	7	26	26	2	19	213	115	80	98
1623	25	4	21	17	4	15	165	86	61	79
1624	45	4	37	18	4	30	180	138	93	42
1625	33	4	32	17	3	15	140	104	71	36
1626	33	3	44	21	2	20	194	123	90	71
1627	27	7	47	22	3	21	165	127	100	38
1628	28	5	21	21	1	20	148	96	68	52
1629	31	7	36	18	1	11	173	104	73	69
1630	41	8	30	27	3	25	203	134	93	69
1631	28	2	30	21	3	19	144	103	75	41
1632	42	2	28	27	1	23	167	123	81	44
1633	37	6	22	7	1	14	196	87	50	109
1634	47	7	25	7	7	14	191	107	60	84
1635	21	2	17	6	2	13	136	61	40	75
1636	13	1	10	8	2	11	155	45	32	110
1637	34	3	38	17	2	24	168	118	84	50
1638	36	6	28	18	2	25	174	115	79	59
1639	31	2	31	9	1	29	146	103	72	43
1640	16	2	22	4	1	6	64	51	35	13
1641	13	5	24	6	1	15	94	64	51	30
1642	16	5	20	5	0	19	80	65	49	15
1643	9	14	4	0	0	9	51	36	27	15
1644	6	2	21	5	0	11	53	45	39	8
1645	15	3	24	6	2	9	102	59	44	43
1646	16	4	15	7	2	13	91	57	41	34
1647	7	2	14	2	1	5	53	31	24	22
1648	4		1			0	21	5	1	16
1649						0	12	0	0	12

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