The Material Culture of Shakespeare's England: a study of the early modern objects in the museum collection of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

by

Peter Hewitt

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the material culture of early modern England as reflected in the object collections of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon. The collection consists of nearly 300 objects and six buildings dating from the period 1500-1650 representing 'the life, work and times of William Shakespeare', with a particular emphasis on domestic and community life in Shakespeare's Stratford. Using approaches from museum studies and material culture studies together with historical research, this thesis demonstrates how objects add depth and complexity to historical and museological narratives, and presents a range of unique and never before examined material sources for the study of the social and cultural history of the period. For different reasons, collectors, scholars and museum practitioners have all tended to place the Trust's objects within existing historical narratives whilst neglecting the physical evidence of the objects themselves. By closely examining the object as well as the cultural context of its manufacture and use, this study seeks to rejuvenate the way this and similar collections are seen and used in studies of the early modern period.

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List of Abbreviations

SBTRO   Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, Stratford upon Avon

SCLA   Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford upon Avon

Online databases:

OED Online – Oxford English Dictionary Online http://www.oed.com/

Oxford DNB - Oxford Dictionary of National Biography http://www.oxforddnb.com

Introduction

This Arts and Humanities Research Council funded Collaborative Doctoral research project represents a partnership between the History faculty and Shakespeare Institute at the University of Birmingham and the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (SBT). The project had the following aims: to develop a methodology or set of methodologies that enable the study of sixteenth and seventeenth century objects as key evidence for early modern history, to create new knowledge about the object collections housed at the SBT, and to disseminate this knowledge via displays and an expanded catalogue used by the Trust's Museum department and the public. This thesis provides the first sustained investigation of the history and context of the SBT's museum collection, as well as focused object-based and historical analysis of the range of objects it holds dating from the early modern period. Importantly, the thesis also addresses the museum and heritage contexts that may be said to inform or influence narratives attached to objects.

The Trust's collection of material culture is a little-known resource for historians of the early modern period. The organisation manages six late-medieval and early modern properties in Stratford-upon-Avon (the Birthplace on Henley Street, Nash's House and New Place on Chapel Street, and Hall's Croft in Old Town), Shottery (Anne Hathaway's Cottage) and Wilmcote (Mary Arden's and Palmer's Farm), which were bought and restored for heritage purposes between 1847 and 1982.[1] The properties were purchased to fulfil the Trust's earliest codified mission statement: to acquire objects, lands and buildings 'belonging to Shakespeare, or [those which] are intimately connected with the memories of his life'.[2] Today, the Trust exists to 'maintain and preserve the Shakespeare properties for the benefit of

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[1] The SBT also manages Harvard House on the High Street, built c. 1594; this property is owned by the University of Harvard and has been closed to visitors since 2010.

[2] See J. O. Halliwell Phillips, *Memoranda on the present state of the Birth-place trust and on the necessity of providing a calendar of the ... contents of the Shakespeare library and museum,* (Brighton, 1883), pp. 8-10

the nation' and to 'promote in every part of the world the appreciation and study of the plays and other works of William Shakespeare and the general advancement of Shakespearian knowledge'.[3] Central to these aims, outlined in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Act of 1961, is the provision of a library and museum holding 'books, manuscripts, records of historic interest, pictures, photographs and *objects of antiquity* with particular but not exclusive reference to William Shakespeare, his life, works and times'.[4] The library and museum were established in the Birthplace itself in the 1860s with a large amount of material displayed at the New Place Museum under the direct curatorship of James Orchard Halliwell. Today the Trust owns in excess of 300 artefacts which are roughly contemporaneous with the life of William Shakespeare, around one third of which are currently in store at the Shakespeare Centre.[5]

These items represent an untapped resource for social, political and cultural historians of sixteenth and seventeenth century England. Aside from its buildings, which constitute well-preserved examples of architecture associated with prosperous yeomen, artisans and town-dwellers of the middling-sort, the object collections contain fine examples of decorative art including panel and canvas paintings, glassware and ceramics, and a particularly important collection of sixteenth and seventeenth century domestic wooden furniture collected under the expert guidance of the late Victor Chinnery. The sheer range of domestic artefacts offer important insights into domestic and family life, the use of domestic space, the meanings conferred upon material culture and its use in the shaping of early modern identities, and with habits of consumption, trade and exchange in early modern society. A small collection of religious objects, including paintings, cutlery-cases, devotional aids and texts, combined with

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[3] Anon, *Shakespeare Birthplace, &c., Trust Act*, 1961, 9 & 10 Eliz. 2 Ch. Xxxviii, pp. 1-5
[4] Anon, *Shakespeare Birthplace, &c.*, p. 5
[5] These figures are accurate as of March 2014. An accurate reading of the Trust's collection of early modern objects is complicated by the removal of the Neish Collection of Pewter in 2010, which comprised almost 500 early modern objects which have yet to been removed from the Trust's catalogue. The Neish Collection was rehoused in Stirling in 2012.

the Trust's unique collection of artefacts associated with Stratford's late-medieval Guild of the Holy Cross, are significant sources for the study of religious life in Europe during the period, whilst the items and records used and produced by the Stratford Corporation from the mid-sixteenth century help us to understand the civic and working lives of men and women in Stratford-upon-Avon.

Aside from their inherent scholarly value, the potential impact of these collections and the wider significance of this research project can be gauged by the Trust's place and reputation within the heritage sector and English cultural life more generally. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is not only an internationally respected educational organisation and a centre for the scholarly study of Shakespeare's world, it is also a hugely popular heritage attraction which places Shakespeare and his Stratford origins at the heart of English national identity.[6] Visitor numbers reached a record high in 2013 – over 818,000 – contributing in excess of £45m to the local economy.[7] The material collections constitute an integral part of the Trust's international appeal, educational importance and cultural value, but these collections have not been a priority until recently and partly because of this collaborative doctoral award project. The collaborative character of the research means that it has fed into and continues to develop the Trust's heritage and educational practice, as well as reaching a large audience through exhibitions and related events.

My thesis makes an important contribution in extending and promoting knowledge about the material collections, as well as in developing methods for studying and interpreting them. Its contribution can be explained by four main phases. Firstly, the identification of previously unknown or unaccessioned items from the museum stores; expanding knowledge regarding

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[6] Diana Owen, 'Record Visitor Numbers at Shakespeare Birthplace Trust', SBT press release, http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/about-us/press-information/ [accessed 31.1.2014]
[7] Kareen El Beyrouty and Andrew Tessler, 'The Economic Impact of the UK Heritage Tourism Economy', Oxford Economics report for the Heritage Lottery Fund, May 2013, http://www.hlf.org.uk/ [accessed 5.2.14]

these items through a process of object-based study and 'creative cataloguing' (see Appendix); the interpretation of these items within the thesis and the cataloguing process; and finally, the dissemination of knowledge via promotion of the collection, and sharing knowledge through written and other outputs with various stake-holders including academics and various constituencies within the general public.

Evidence and method

The primary evidence at the heart of this thesis are the Trust's holdings: the collections of material culture from the early modern period, including the buildings managed by the Trust as well as those structures which are outside the Trust's authority but relevant nevertheless to the scope of this project. These properties include the complex of guild buildings at the junction of Church Street and Chapel Street in Stratford, as well as various private domestic period dwellings around the town (see Chapter 3). This is supported with analysis of a range of contemporary evidence including inventories, accounts, Corporation records, printed treatises on various topics, dramatic texts, as well as antiquarian sources connected with Shakespeare and Stratford-upon-Avon, and museological documents that chart the evolution and practices of the Trust. Another important aspect of this project is the connection made between specific, extant but relatively undocumented objects and the growing body of secondary literature within early modern studies which draws upon material culture as evidence (discussed in Chapter 1). The project is therefore shaped by and indebted to the research of others working within the multi-disciplinary field of early modern material culture studies and draws upon studies of early modern social and cultural contexts, as well as the insights from the disciplines of literature, museum studies, archaeology and anthropology. But central to my research is the emphasis placed upon the examination and study of the object in its physical form. My approach of 'object-based' or 'performative' analysis (see Chapter 1) physically places the object in relationship to the body and to other objects, as

well as conceptually placing it in historical contexts of use. This approach allows me to alternate between first-hand explorations of artefacts and the historical representations of them in written or visual sources. Importantly, moving between these two aspects of material culture, and recovering the 'hidden' or 'working knowledge' embedded in objects, has often challenged dominant museological and historical narratives. The results of this research are presented throughout this thesis and in a catalogue format in the Appendices, which follows museological procedure and records material facts and provenance (where possible). In a development of the catalogue format used by most museums (including the SBT) my 'Creative Catalogue' also places the object within a narrative informed by historical research, or within a range of narrative possibilities. The 'creative catalogue' is already used by SBT's Museum Department and has fed into exhibitions and other collaborative museum projects.[8]

Research questions and thesis structure

My approach to the Trust's museum collection is therefore defined by 1) 'performative' or physical analysis of objects, 2) historical research to inform an understanding of the meanings and functions of material culture in its original period context, and 3) an awareness of the museological factors and narratives that are constructed around objects by the host institution. This trio of research aims or methods were shaped by my wide reading of the available literature (see especially Chapter One and subject itemised Bibliography) and my privileged access to the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's resources, not to mention my role as a Collaborative Doctoral Researcher within the Trust's Collection Department.

Embedded within the organisation itself, it was clear that the Trust held several pre-suppositions that determined its curatorial output and these institutional considerations have

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[8] See for example Jonathan Bate, 'Shakespeare and his World', Online learning project (MOOC) drawing upon my research into Stratford's Corporation (see Chapter 3) https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/shakespeare-and-his-world [Accessed 3.3.2014]; see also 'Treasures' permanent exhibition at the Shakespeare Centre, http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/ [Accessed 5.2.2014]

greatly influenced my own research questions. The first presupposition was the notion of William Shakespeare's intellectual and artistic greatness. This was conceived not merely as a reason for the Trust's existence – for example, to encourage the visiting public to subscribe to this view – but as the assumed position of all of the Trust's visitors. Second was the assumption that the poet continues to exert a fascination in contemporary society, and furthermore that Shakespeare is not merely relevant to modern life, but in a sense 'modern' himself. These presuppositions shall be addressed throughout Chapters Two and Three, where I examine them in detail and in relation to the curatorial practices of the Trust in the nineteenth, twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

Another important factor in shaping my research questions and methods was the organisational structure of the Trust. During my time there (2010-2013), a restructuring of the collections, library and archive departments saw the resignation of the last curator of the Trust's museum collection, and new managers installed. This coincided with a new approach towards material collections of which my research presence was part – but it also linked with the work of a Research Fellow employed by the Shakespeare Institute connected with the University of Birmingham, Dr David Hopes, who undertook numerous digitization and outreach projects. The effect of these changes led to a new vision and appetite for museum objects and their interpretation, moving towards an object-centred, research oriented phase, which had perhaps eluded the previous curator due to overwork and the growth of maintenance and priority conservation issues resulting from rising visitor numbers. Changes in structure by Dr Delia Garratt have meant that the Collections Department can now commit four full-time members of staff to these issues, as opposed to just two prior to 2010, as well as curating new exhibitions in-house with the further appointment of an Interpretation Projects Manager. I have undoubtedly benefitted from these organisational changes: these

staff members greatly assisted me with access to collections and helped to publicise the research through an on-going exhibition programme.

Given these intellectual and cultural presuppositions regarding Shakespeare and the Trust's new organisational structure, a central research issue for me was to interrogate the Trust's own view of its collections. The nature of collecting and the research conducted by James Orchard Halliwell, as well as the loss of his MSS to rival institutions in the 1880s (see Chapter Two), meant that evidence for the acquisition and provenance of objects in the Trust's archives was patchy, and as a result a new methodology, or combination of methodologies, was required to enhance the interpretive value and usefulness of the objects for historic research. As the reader will appreciate from my research into the Trust's first unofficial curator in Chapter Two, it was also by no means clear that each object was especially valued in itself – rather it was the objects' presumed relationship to Shakespeare that determined how it was talked about, how often it was displayed or singled out for further research, or used in academic writing. I have therefore emphasised the physical encounter with the artefact as a priority, as this creates up-to-date knowledge of the item as well as a new layer of interpretation which can be compared against previous research. This method is specifically addressed in Chapter One, where it can be seen to emerge from the complex and somewhat fragmented field of early modern material culture studies. Here, I consider the methodological problems and disciplinary constraints that have contributed towards the marginalisation of objects as evidence across humanities disciplines (with the notable exceptions of archaeology and art history). This chapter also highlights the work of scholars who have influenced the approach adopted here. The method of 'performative' research is explored and demonstrated via the Trust's 'medicine chest' (catalogued at SBT 2001-5) whose physical properties are closely examined and used to challenge standard historical narratives regarding the practice of medicine in early modern England.

This approach alludes to another vital aspect of my research, the museum and heritage contexts in which objects are displayed, and for which object knowledge is created. Chapter Two considers the various museum narratives that have been imposed upon the collection, and discusses in detail the influence of an early collector and patron of the Trust, James Orchard Halliwell. Again, the museological aspect to my own methodology is applied via a case study of a 'knife sheath' donated by Halliwell in 1868. This object, together with the medicine chest, reveals the way in which museums ossify certain interpretations of their objects via an overreliance on secondary sources and ignore the physical properties of things.

In Chapter Three, the relationship between historic and current exhibition practice is explored, together with the attitudes and practical considerations that continue to hamper creative interpretation of the Trust's early modern collections. As noted above, the Trust's assumptions regarding the greatness of Shakespeare – which are here shown to underlie the interpretation and 'period' content of the displays in three properties in Stratford – are part of a tradition of museum display dating back to Halliwell's tenure, which elide evidence and nuanced discussion of architectural and archaeological evidence in favour of 'ritual responses' and 'historical surfaces'. This discussion is informed by a brief overview of recent developments within museum and heritage studies, and is concluded by my own suggestions regarding the effective use of early modern material culture within the Trust's interiors of Shakespeare's Stratford.

From Chapter Four onwards, the thesis addresses specific historical themes and argues for an object-centred approach to early modern history as a means of developing the potential of material culture as primary evidence. Chapter Four explores the late-medieval and early modern significance and use of extant objects in the Trust's collection and recreates the working life and spatial experiences of particular individuals within the Guild of the Holy Cross and post-Reformation Corporation Guildhall in Stratford-upon-Avon. The objects

were chosen partly because the Trust has a rich resource of primary sources relating to the buildings and objects themselves, and because no study has attempted to place the objects within these interiors or argue their cultural significance and social use. This chapter also presents a methodology vital to material culture and museology – the creation through research and object-analysis of provenance.

Similarly in Chapter 5, I identify what can be described as apotropaic objects and items or processes of folk-magic manifest in the Trust collections. Many of these items are unaccessioned and largely unknown to the Trust's staff. Objects such as grain arks and stools cut with alleged magical symbols have been chosen because they represent an increasingly important if problematic category of material culture that speak of the beliefs and practices of early modern people. A cache of early modern and modern leather shoes, discovered in the roof space of Hall's Croft is also analysed – this object has never been studied or even accessioned since its accidental discovery in 1982. This thesis therefore engages with completely new material and heightens access to the Trust's collection, as well as contributing original evidence and research to an emerging field of study.

In the final chapter, a variety of objects pertaining to early modern women's fashion are explored collectively in order to reveal how contemporaries would have experienced these garments and accessories as physical items. A seventeenth century bodice is discussed in the light of recent research into materiality, taste and identity. A second case study within Chapter 6 considers the diversity and interconnectedness of material culture as historical evidence. Early modern clothing-accessories, or to use a contemporary term, 'girdle-furniture' were items gathered upon the belt or girdle and worn by women of the middling-sort and above from the mid-sixteenth to early seventeenth century. Using primary sources I identify the nomenclature used by contemporaries to identify such items and consider them as both individual objects and collective sets.

As a whole the thesis considers how the historic development, collecting practices, and interpretive goals of the museum affect how object-based knowledge about the early modern period is assembled and disseminated. The study of current methodologies in Chapter One reaffirms the importance of first-hand and 'hands on' study of material culture, and the need for accurate museological research into the construction, ownership and meaning of items in British collections. Its overall contribution is to identify and research objects unknown to scholarship, build up provenance for said items, and place these items within historic and narrative contexts. The intended outcome, to be discussed in the Conclusion, was to firstly enhance and improve intellectual access to the collection as a whole for academics and the public alike. Secondly, through the generation of new knowledge about formerly unknown and uncatalogued items, this thesis has sought to make significant contributions to a growing material record of early modern culture.

Chapter One

The object in early modern historical studies

This chapter assesses the disciplines and fields of study known broadly as early modern studies and material culture studies, and identify how objects have been viewed and used by historians of the period. Although there has been a substantial amount of scholarship regarding the significance of objects to human beings or the use of objects in social relations, it is my contention that museum-based and object-centred approaches have not as yet been given sufficient attention within early modern studies. (A caveat may be inserted here, as there have been important developments in this direction during the duration of this project, which are discussed below.) This chapter explores the intellectual and historiographical reasons for this situation by considering the work of leading historians, literary scholars and archaeologists, as well as the contexts of interdisciplinarity which gave birth to material culture studies. This section also introduces some important ideas that have heavily influenced my own approach to the material culture housed in the collections of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. These historiographical discussions outline my own methodology of object-based analysis – a synthesis of 'performative' handling of museum objects, together with museological, and historical research – and this process is explored via a case study of a sixteenth century 'medicine chest' in the Trust's collection.

1.1 Histories of consumption and social history

The 'material turn' – defined as the movement away from purely linguistic, cultural, literary or textual research methods towards an engagement with material evidence – emerged from the vigorous historiographical debates of the last three decades of the twentieth century.[1]

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[1] Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, 'Introduction: Material Culture Studies: a reactionary view', in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, ed. by Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 1-24.

Prior to this 'turn', attitudes to early modern objects were shaped by political economic theory, which understood objects via the market-place value set upon them, their exchange potential in relation to other goods and services, and the impact new consumer industries had upon the host economy.[2] A watershed came when scholars eschewed purely economic conceptions of 'goods' and worked towards an anthropology of consumption, whereby the things people owned could be read as signs, externalisations or representations of their social status and relations.[3]

Fernand Braudel's statement, that 'material life is made up of people and things', reflects an early if ambiguous awareness among historians that objects were not merely evidence for the economist, but an important if problematic source of social and cultural history.[4] In the 1980s and 1990s, surveys of the early modern world tended to side-step analysis of specific objects in favour of broad sociological approaches; these landmark studies of pan-European consumption, consumerism, trade, urbanization, and material production explained Europe's role in a global consumer revolution.[5] In his summary of this research, Kenneth Pomeranz noted that scholars tended to search for records of 'goods charged with social significance', the rate at which these things were exchanged, and the laws and the patterns of trade which regulated the spread and ownership of luxury goods. Relationships between production and

[2] For England, see Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1978)

[3] This approach was pioneered by Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood, *The World of Goods: Towards and Anthropology of Consumption*, (London: Allen Lane, 1979), and substantially developed by Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984). Another important work also introduced the idea of reading objects as cultural representations; see Arjun Appadurai ed., *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Overviews of the relationship between history and material culture studies can be found in Tim Dant, *Material Culture in the Social World: Values, Activities, Lifestyles* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), and Victor Buchli, *The Material Culture Reader* (Oxford: Bloomsbury, 2002). The perspective from anthropology is covered by Chris Hann and Keith Hart eds. *Economic Anthropology: history, ethnography, critique* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2011).

[4] Fernand Braudel, *The Structures of Everyday Life: The Limits of the Possible* (trans. Sian Reynolds) (New York: Harper and Row, 1981) p.31

[5] See Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism 15th-18th Century* (transl. Sian Reynods) 3 vols (New York: Harper and Row, 1982); Richard A. Goldthwaite, *Wealth and Demand for Art in Italy 1300-1600* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1993); Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1996). For studies of materialism from a global perspective see Chandra Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983)

distribution could be deduced from 'the extent to which [said objects] could be acquired by strangers', and in addition, more qualitative evidence was extracted from written sources in order to understand the increase of 'imitative consumption'. Finally, sources began to be read for what they said about objects and the "proper", "tasteful" way to use various commodities.[6] These methods reflect standard practice regarding the use of material culture by historians from the last decade of the twentieth century to the present, and still provide important starting points for my own discussions of objects in this thesis.

It is clear then, that whilst the interpretative value of material culture developed alongside the consumption discourse, early modern cultural historians were also beginning to develop ways of understanding this array of 'goods charged with social significance'. Peter Burke acknowledged the potential of material culture in 1987 when he wrote:

> Another type of evidence which must not be neglected is that of material culture; paintings, furniture, houses, clothes and so on. Although the translation of such mute evidence into verbal statements about the past raises acute problems of its own, which the fashionable metaphor of culture as a 'text' glosses over, material objects must be regarded as a mode or modes of communication. … [Historians] tread on safe ground only when they can support a particular interpretation with evidence of different types; when the testimony of material culture confirms that of written sources, fiction tells the same story as 'fact' and insiders agree with outsiders.[7]

Burke's judicious approach highlights not only the historian's dissatisfaction with post-structuralism and the New Historicism, but in addition the potential pitfalls of working with 'mute' objects without sufficient historical support. But it is also possible to perceive in Burke's writing a sense of the marginalisation of material culture – 'fictions' about objects

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[6] Kenneth Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence: China, Europe, and the Making of the Modern World Economy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), pp. 129-131.
[7] Peter Burke, 'Introduction', in Peter Burke (ed.) *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy: Essays on Perception and* Communication (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 23-4.

must be ratified with the 'fact' of written sources.[8] Burke assumes that the use of objects within the historical discourse will always be subjective and hermeneutic, and whilst selection and interpretation are acknowledged aspects of the historian's craft, documents are inherently 'safer' than objects.

1.2 Social history

According to Burke, material culture is a source which must be inserted into existing historical narratives. That this is still the current situation is largely due to the remarkable achievements of early modern historians. The 'new social history' had attained, over a forty year period, and exclusively using documentary sources, a basic outline of the structure of English society during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[9] Particularly influential has been Keith Wrightson's 'grid of social relations' which took basic data from parish records and manipulated it to answer a variety of social and cultural questions. This approach painted 'a picture of local communities which were subject to a considerable degree of population mobility' and illustrated that communities were held together by relationships of neighbourliness between 'effective equals', as well as ties of patronage and clientage between individuals of differing status.[10] This 'new social history' as it was called, envisaged early modern England as a dynamic society, which nevertheless held 'order, harmony and subordination' as its core ideals. An 'emotional force' was ascribed to 'the values of neighbourliness, paternalism and deference', which sought to make sense out of the 'inconsistencies of reality' and a world where 'conflict between individual neighbours was an

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[8] We may also perceive the sociological and anthropological subtleties of his work in his allusion to insiders (contemporaries) and outsiders (historians); see Peter Burke, 'The sources: outsiders and insiders', in Burke (ed.) *The Historical Anthropology of Early Modern Italy*, pp. 15-24
[9] For a historiography of the 'new social history' and Wrightson in particular, see Philip Withington, *Society in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 104; and Philip Withington, 'Company and Sociability in early modern England' in *Social History*, 32, No. 3 (2007) 291-307.
[10] Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003), p. 61

essential feature of the constant process of readjustment of social relationships'.[11] Wrightson, and other proponents of the 'new social history' opened up the possibility of studying 'specific units of people living together and definable in sociological terms', and as a result, it was also possible to understand more deeply the meanings that contemporaries attached to their personal/impersonal relationships.[12] Neighbourliness, paternalism and deference – to which we should also add patriarchy – were all performed through formal festivities such as 'village sports and games, dancings, wakes and ales, rush-bearings and parish feasts'; and through other rituals such as weddings, churchings, christenings and funerals. As these moments of social interaction grew in significance thanks to sociological, anthropological and interdisciplinary analysis, the role of material culture within these relationships appeared to be ever more critical to a full understanding of them.[13] Wrightson's model provides a solid 'master-narrative' into which social-cultural experiences – or vignettes of 'material life' – may be inserted. Objects are, according to Phil Withington, 'objective factors' that shape social interaction, alongside other elements such as 'rituals and conventions, modes of discourse, [and] the use of physical space'.[14] More recently, Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson have written that studying people's possessions 'is crucial to understanding their experiences of daily life, the way they saw themselves in relation to their peers and their responses to and interactions with the social, cultural and economic structures and processes

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[11] Wrightson, *English Society*, p. 62

[12] Withington, quoting Eric Hobsbawm, *Society in Early Modern England*, p. 104

[13] For example, funerary rituals and elements of their material culture are discussed in Clare Gettings, *Death, burial and the individual in early modern England*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1984), p. 102-118. Wrightson also offered renditions of statistical evidence into vignettes of 'material life' where social, material, local and national elements intersect '… a fish caught off Anglesey, salted with Cheshire salt, and packed in barrels made of Irish barrel staves, [might be] eaten by a Bristol merchant clothed in a gown of Norwich cloth and a shirt of Dutch linen … He might well have cut his food with a Sheffield blade and accompanied it with a French wine drunk from a pewter goblet made locally from Cornish tin and Mendip lead.' See Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (Yale: Yale University Press, 2000) p. 108.

[14] Withington, 'Company and Sociability in early modern England' p. 302

which made up the societies in which they lived.'[15] The turn towards material culture,

therefore, is not a mere methodological innovation, but an attempt to 'recover' sources that

enable a deeper reengagement with social history.

Ulinka Rublack has proclaimed the importance of materials and craft culture in 'shaping the

period's sentiments, ideas and practices', and that 'innovative uses of matter, texture and

form helped to constitute contexts in which [early modern] objects took on meaning.'[16] We

are presented here with a view of the past in which things are both products and producers of

culture, and where historians may unequivocally label objects as historical 'evidence' –

Rublack notes that objects not only 'record the visual interests and tastes of particular social

groups in history' but also 'their social and emotional experiences'.[17]

The importance of craft processes and the materials themselves are highlighted by Rublack's

brief study of Thomas Burman's bust of Edward Cooke (d. 1652) in the church of St.

Bartholomew the Great in West Smithfield, London. Burman carved Cooke's likeness in a

type of stone that 'readily condenses water from the air', which under the right conditions

produced the astonishing effect of Cooke's likeness appearing to weep. What must have

been a powerful encounter between mourner and deceased was narrativized in an inscription:

> Unscluce yor briny floods, what! can yee keepe
> Yor eyes from teares and see the marble weepe,
> Burst out for shame: or if yee find noe vent
> For teares, yet stay, and see the stones relent.[18]

Even the stones weep for Cooke's passing; this 'significant stuff' as Caroline Walker Bynum

terms it was a kind of 'sentient' matter and a carrier of religious and emotional meaning for

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[15] Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, 'Introduction' in Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson eds.
Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010),
p. 1.
[16] Ulinka Rublack, 'Matter in the Material Renaissance', *Past and Present*, 219 (May 2013), 41-85, pp. 41-42
[17] Rublack, 'Matter in the Material Renaissance', pp. 84-85.
[18] Rublack, 'Matter in the Material Renaissance', pp. 43-44

early modern viewers.[19] This relationship between material, context, creator and audience

has been explored in a variety of early modern contexts, including the parish church, and

perhaps more importantly for England, in the homes of the 'middling-sort'.[20] Tara Hamling's

pioneering research has demonstrated how some plaster ceilings in English homes may have

been endowed with agency, or more accurately, 'anthropomorphic vitality' by the patriarchal

householder through carefully planned rituals of daily prayer, meditation and biblical

exegesis within the home. The plaster personages of 'formidable authority figures such as

biblical patriarchs, saints and sybils' located on the vaulted ceilings of galleries or studies,

surveyed the occupants of these rooms 'as a proxy for the "real" patriarch' of the family,

thereby bolstering his authority.[21] Hamling also discusses a variety of materials and

techniques ranging from painted panels and glass, wood carving on walls and furniture, metal

casting of dining-ware and firebacks, and embroidery – and by so doing highlights the vitality

of artistic production in England after the Reformation and the importance of objects in

shaping the devotional practices of what was once thought to have been an 'iconophobic' and

purely print-based Protestantism.[22] It is important to note that these developments in early

modern material culture studies were initiated by an art historian working within an early

modern history faculty and primarily teaching within a department dedicated to Shakespeare

studies.[23] Taking up a similar interdisciplinary approach, the work of Catherine Richardson

has straddled the divide between drama, social history and meanings inherent in early modern

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[19] Caroline Walker Bynum, *Christian Materiality: An Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (New York: Zone Books, 2011), p. 52

[20] For ecclesiastical studies of English material culture see Tara Hamling and Richard Williams eds. *Art re-formed: re-assessing the impact of the Reformation on the visual arts* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007); Robert Whiting, *The Reformation of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For domestic interiors see Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

[21] Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household*, pp. 266-269.

[22] For a brilliant discussion of Protestant piety using objects see Tara Hamling, 'Old Robert's Girdle: Visual and Material Props for Protestant Piety in Post-Reformation England' in Jessica Martin and Alec Ryrie eds. *Private and Domestic Devotion in Early Modern Britain* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) 135-163.

[23] At the time of these publications Hamling was RCUK Research Fellow in the History Department at the University of Birmingham, based at the Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon.

domestic space as informed by inventories and trial depositions.[24] The following section,

therefore, explores the intellectual aspects of material culture studies as conceived as an

exciting, interdisciplinary, yet methodologically fragmented and 'homeless' field of study.

1.3 Interdisciplinarity: history, literature, archaeology and material culture

In 1982 the art historian Jules David Prown defined material culture as:

> … a study … based upon the obvious fact that the existence of a man-made
> object is concrete evidence of the presence of a human intelligence operating
> at the time of fabrication. The underlying premise is that objects made or
> modified by man reflect, consciously or unconsciously, directly or indirectly,
> the beliefs of individuals who made, commissioned, purchased, or used them,
> and by extension the beliefs of the larger society to which they belonged.
> The term *material culture* thus refers quite directly and efficiently, if not
> elegantly, both to the subject matter of the study, *material*, and to its purpose,
> the understanding of *culture*.[25]

This was reaffirmed by Christopher Tilley and Daniel Miller in 1996 who saw material

culture 'as the investigation of the relationship between people and things irrespective of time

and place' and that an 'adequate understanding of any social actions and relations …

demands an understanding of material culture and vice versa.'[26] All these writers see

material culture as an object and subject; it is not merely the things studied but the processes

employed whilst studying them. Further to this, Tilley and Miller claimed that material

evidence was central to a prolonged and successful dialogue across disciplinary boundaries.

In one of the earliest methodological surveys of material culture published in 1982, E.

McClung-Fleming outlined that the first task of artefact analysis was to establish the

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[24] See Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in early modern England: The material life of the household* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006)

[25] Jules David Prown, 'Mind in Matter: An Introduction to Material Culture Theory and Method', *Winterthur Portfolio*, 17, No. 1 (Spring, 1982), 1-19, pp. 1-2.

[26] Daniel Miller and Christopher Tilley (eds.) 'Editorial' *The Journal of Material Culture* 1 1996 5-14, pp. 5-6

biography of the object.[27]   This did not make a significant impact amongst historians of early

modern society until Arjun Appadurai suggested that object 'biographies' could refresh the

early modern consumption discourse. Appadurai augmented the standard 'Marxian total

trajectory of a thing from production, through exchange/distribution, to consumption', by

suggesting that objects have many lives or 'biographies' and pass through changes in

ownership display and use. An object may be damaged, recycled, and reused in many

different ages and contexts completely removed from its origins.[28] Put simply, McClung-

Fleming and Appadurai stated that objects were more than the sum of their parts, and their

meanings were in effect context dependent. This maxim has led to varying reactions. The

archaeologist Ian Hodder expressed his position using the famous *madeleine* biscuit analogy

of Marcel Proust's novel *Swann's Way*.[29] The narrator, upon seeing the biscuit on a tray, is

instantly transported back to his childhood and Sunday mornings; memories of missing Mass

and the faces of housekeepers flood into his mind, all the result of a sensory experience with

a scallop-shaped butter biscuit. The scene is used by Hodder to imply that there is no formal

relationship between meaning and object – the meaning of a thing, being subjective, cannot

be inferred from the thing itself. This scepticism emerges from the processural

archaeological tradition, which holds that all material culture is primarily utilitarian as it

exists to perpetuate the survival of the society which made it. Pots, for example, may 'mean'

something to individuals, they may have evoked certain feelings at certain times, they may

have been utilized in 'ritual' or 'cultic' ceremonies, but essentially all these uses are

secondary to the primary utilitarian principle of survival. However another archaeologist,

Roberta Gilchrist, has devoted an entire volume to the meanings – emotional, magical and

functional – of material culture in the late-medieval period. Using contemporary texts and

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[27] E. McClung-Fleming, 'Artifact Study: A Model' in *Material Culture Studies in America*, ed. by Thomas J. Schlereth (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press, 1982), p. 166.
[28] A. Appadurai (ed.), *The Social life of Things: commodities in cultural perspective*, (Cambridge: 1988), p. 13.
[29] M. Shanks & I. Hodder, 'Processual, postprocessual and interpretive archaeologies' in Simon Knell (ed). *Museums in the Material World*, (London: Routledge, 2007), p. 146.

the application of post-processural anthropological theory, Gilchrist explores the formerly

perilous territory of ritual archaeology, and even investigates the properties inherent in

willow, hazel and poplar magic wands interred with bodies at sites in Barton-upon-Humber.[30]

These two approaches towards material culture within archaeology could not be more

polarized.

We see in these contrasts not only the inheritance of disciplinary language but a philosophical

antagonism between form and meaning that transcends questions of early modern material

culture. This is perhaps best conveyed by Prown, who stated that the very idea of material

culture reveals a deep-seated anxiety regarding western conceptions of history, which are

characterized by 'man's increasing understanding and mastery of the physical environment,

by the progressive triumph of mind over matter.'[31] So prevalent are the assumptions, and so

compelling is the evidence of human history that confirms 'our sense that abstract,

intellectual, [and] spiritual elements are superior to material and physical things'[32], that it is

no wonder that Peter Stallybrass wrote that to many of his fellow academics the term

'material culture' sounded 'like an oxymoron.'[33]

Within early modern literary studies, the foundations of a full-scale interaction with material

culture had been in place since the 1980s, where Marxian approaches towards the 'decidedly

material' nature of culture culminated in the methodology termed Cultural Materialism by

Raymond Williams.[34] Whereas the literary studies of the 1950s through to the 1970s focused

upon texts, the works of the 1990s consisted of parallel 'readings' of objects *and* texts, as

well as objects-as-texts, in an attempt to understand the nature of the relationship between

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[30] See Roberta Gilchrist, 'Magic for the dead? The archaeology of magic in later medieval burials' in *Medieval Archaeology*, 52 (2008) 119-159; Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Boydell: Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 201-204

[31] Prown, 'Mind in Matter', p. 2

[32] Prown, p. 2

[33] Peter Stallybrass, 'Material Culture: Introduction', *Shakespeare Studies* 28 (2000), 123-129, p. 123

[34] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 11-20; Raymond Williams, *Culture*, (London: Fontana, 1981)

objects and individuals. Douglas Bruster notes that this 'New Materialism' gave academic

discourse 'not only a fresh approach to a distant culture', but also 'an approach that seems to

ground us in the *realities* of that culture' by 'reading' material objects and their associated

practices.[35] In response to allegations that their work was not sufficiently rooted in 'historical

actuality', Cultural Materialists and new historicists began to undertake studies of objects, but

this 'turn' toward the material was, according to Alan Sinfield, somewhat tokenistic and half-

hearted. Material culture was inserted into early modern studies via an 'attention to clothes,

pots and pans, needles and pins, and to books and manuscripts as *objects*.' '[Objects] are,

after all, *stuff*,' Sinfield quips, 'they are *made of* material, let's *touch* them, you can't get

more material than that.'[36] Joachim Frenk summarizes Sinfield's critique of early modern

material culture studies, which appears to be:

> driven by an enthusiasm for all things material, an enthusiasm that springs
> from a rather infantile longing for reassuringly tactile hard facts … Hence,
> material culture studies seem, in Sinfield's version, to amount to little more
> than an amateurishly and ideologically sedated hands-on positivism that
> reflects the triviality of its objects.[37]

For Sinfield, the move toward material culture within early modern studies augured a

mollification of Marxist historical materialism and a dulling of the discipline's political edge,

however a cross-disciplinary view would have corrected Sinfield on this point – four years

earlier Matthew Johnson's study of the archaeology of early modern capitalism had

elucidated 'the workings of authority … encoded and mediated through the landed elite's

domestic buildings and gardens.[38]

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[35] Douglas Bruster, 'The New Materialism in Renaissance Studies', in Curtis Perry (ed.) *Material Culture and Cultural Materialisms* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001) 225-38, pp. 233-234.

[36] Alan Sinfield, 'Poetaster, the Author, and the Perils of Cultural Production', in Lena Cowen Orlin ed. *Material London, ca. 1600* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000) 75-89, pp. 75-76.

[37] Joachim Frenk, *Textualised Objects: Material Culture in Early Modern English Literature*, (Heidelberg: Universitatsverlag Winter, 2012), p. 24.

[38] Matthew Johnson, *An Archaeology of Capitalism* (Blackwell: Oxford, 1996). See especially Chapter 6 'Archaeologies of Authority' 117-154, p. 151

Sinfield published his critique of 'pots and pans history' in a collection of varied and penetrative essays that helped to refine much of the tokenism inherent in so-called 'literary' uses of material culture. In *Material London, ca. 1600*, the authors employ 'material traces' such as artefacts, play-texts, documents, graphic arts, and archaeological remains in their reconstructions of 'England's most splendid marketplace and centre of social life', and frame questions regarding the moral and social consequences of conspicuous consumption and 'cultural display'.[39] In another work, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies*, Natasha Korda demonstrated how attitudes to domestic space and work could only be understood via the vast array of objects used within those spaces.[40] Literary studies have also significantly developed the way we perceive the early modern interior. Using descriptions of the 'sights, smells, sounds and textures' of domestic spaces, Catherine Richardson bridged the scholarly gap between 'action and space' which formed part of the assumed knowledge of virtually all early modern play-goers.[41] Elsewhere Richardson and others had allowed contemporary voices to articulate first-hand their concerns regarding sartorial excess and national identity[42], and this approach was expanded by Aileen Ribeiro's synthesis of sixteenth and early seventeenth century portraiture with early modern literary tropes.[43]

The works of archaeologists have also proved vital in this cross-disciplinary sphere. Typologies of medieval and early modern objects have been established via excavations throughout England, and these have undergone pioneering research by Geoff Egan, Roberta Gilchrist and David Gaimster.[44] The latter has recently encouraged archaeologists to look

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[39] Lena Cowen Orlin (ed), *Material London, ca. 1600*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000)
[40] Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002) pp. 1-2
[41] Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in early modern England: The material life of the household* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006)
[42] Catherine Richardson (ed.), *Clothing Culture: 1350-1650* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)
[43] Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion and Fiction: Dress in Art and Literature in Stuart England*, (Yale: 2005).
[44] Geoff Egan, *Material Culture in London in an Age of Transistion: Tudor and Stuart Period Finds c. 1450-1700 from Excavations at Riverside Sites in Southwark*, MoLAS Monograph, 19 (London, 2005). David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist eds. *The Archaeology of the Reformation* (Leeds, 2003).

beyond the discipline's standard hermeneutic devices and embrace the historical pictorial

record. 'Even the most utilitarian of objects held symbolic power in the visual documentary

world' Gaimster writes, '[t]he prospect of structured archaeological/art historical comparative

research offers new opportunities for exploring the "Lebenswelt" – the lifestyles and

mentalities of the early modern household and community'.[45]

Critically for this thesis, archaeologists have led the field in calling for a return to

'materiality' – a term which refers to the social value bestowed on fabricated things, or the

process of sensory engagement with an object and the attendant shaping of cultural

experience. In 2007, however, Tim Ingold highlighted the inadequacy of this term, and noted

that material culture studies were more concerned with the 'currently fashionable social and

cultural theorists' expounding 'in a language of gross impenetrability' the relationship

between materiality and various other 'similarly unfathomable qualities, including agency,

intentionality, functionality, sociality, spatiality, semiosis, spirituality and embodiment.'[46]

Claiming that a kind of 'academic perversion' had led scholars to philosophize on the

materiality of objects rather than handle the materials themselves, he goes on to say:

> might we not learn more about the material composition of the inhabited
> world by engaging quite directly with the stuff we want to understand: by
> sawing logs, building a wall, knapping a stone or rowing a boat? Could not
> such engagement – working practically *with* materials – offer a more
> powerful procedure of discovery than an approach bent on the abstract
> analysis *of* things already made?[47]

To the above definitions of materiality, therefore, we may add a relatively recent interest in

the physical quality of the object, although models for making sense of this materiality are

still being developed. Mary Beaudry has synthesized all three aspects of materiality into her

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[45] David Gaimster, 'Artefacts, art and artifice: reconsidering iconographic sources for archaeological objects in early modern Europe' in *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 46/2 (2012), 304–319, p. 317
[46] Tim Ingold, 'Materials against Materiality' in *Archaeological Dialogues* 14, Vol. 1 (2007) 1–16, p. 2
[47] Ingold, 'Materials' p. 3

'micro-histories' of sewing and needlework in the early modern period – here sewing tools are not merely functional but are shown to be personal affects that helped form individual identities.[48]

In 2010, the field of early modern material culture was given much needed intellectual coherence by Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson's edited volume *Everyday Objects*. The book was divided into themes with essays commissioned to engage the key issues surrounding the study of late-medieval and early modern material culture, ranging from epistemological questions of evidence and interpretation, the materiality of religion, to sensory experiences, particularly of sound and music in the sixteenth century. Importantly for this research project, the book was also cross-sector in its scope, bringing together historians, archaeologists, art historians, conservators and museum practitioners, including Stephen Kelly whose essay considered the role of the museum in our encounter with material culture. Kelly argued that museum objects are often victims of 'metonymic commensurability' – objects 'stand for something else that is not physically present'.[49] Historians and museums are culpable in this, writes Kelly, drawing on Carlo Ginzburg – the historian reads into objects 'what he has already learned by other means, or what he believes he knows, and wants to "demonstrate"'.[50] This project then, emerges out of a multi-disciplinary and multi-sector research network that confronts both the historical method and museological practices that contribute to our understanding of sixteenth and seventeenth century things. I will explore these museological and heritage aspects in the next two chapters.

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[48] Mary Beaudry 'Stitching Women's Lives: Interpreting the Artifacts of Sewing and Needlework' in Mary C. Beaudry and James Symonds eds. *Interpreting the early modern world: transatlantic perspectives* (New York: Springer, 2011) 143-158.
[49] Stephen Kelly, 'In the Sight of an Old Pair of Shoes' in Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson eds. *Everyday Objects,* 57-70, p. 62
[50] Kelly, 'In the Sight of an Old Pair of Shoes', p. 66

1.4 Objects as evidence and methodology: the 'working knowledge' inherent in early modern objects

This analysis of the recent literature published in the field of early modern material culture studies frames a central research question that has driven my project: how are objects used as evidence, and are objects meaningful sources to the early modern historian? As we have seen, searching texts for 'goods charged with social significance', using the pictorial record alongside texts and objects, reading objects-as-texts, or adding objects to a socio-cultural 'grid' of relationships, are all important scholarly approaches. As Tim Ingold as pointed out however, these approaches tend to favour textual sources and side-step engagement with material evidence. My project is as a result thoroughly object-centred and seeks to place the early modern object at the heart of historical debate. As noted above, the cross-sector, museum-based nature of this project has influenced my response to this research question; it could be argued that much meaningful historical research using objects is hampered by incorrect or ambivalent information provided by the the carers of objects, i.e., museums. To overcome this, this thesis shall try to establish basic provenance for objects (see Chapters 4, 5 and 6, as well as the discussion of a medicine chest below), and place these items within wider cultural and social histories of this period. In addition to the extended considerations of the Trusts' objects in this thesis, a wider sample of objects from the Trust's collection are presented in the appendix, providing a compelling resource for scholars, students and visitors to the SBT, as well as a response to the claim that objects are less important sources in historical studies.

This research question leads to a consideration of method. Peter Burke envisaged material culture as a means of checking a theory already established by the use of written sources, but it could be argued that the historian of nineteenth century science, H. Otto Sibum, has more

accurately assessed the role of the object in the historical record.[51] Sibum's research into the

relationship between scientific texts and objects discovered that written sources documenting

scientific experiments were often inadequate, being 'mostly written for the historical actors

themselves, and not for the historians who try to make sense of the past'.[52] Sibum realized

that these texts were not sufficient to replicate the complex material interactions needed for

the experiment, and that 'even [the] most detailed laboratory notebooks did not provide [the]

historian with the key information about the techniques and working knowledge to perform

that experiment.'[53] Ludmilla Jordanova expands upon Sibum's approach in her discussion of

material culture and the description of objects, and she writes that it is the job of the historian

working with objects to actively 'endow' items with the status of historical evidence, and by

so doing engage in 'active processes involving the self-aware honing of a range of skills'.[54]

For Sibum this means developing what he calls 'different sense economies' that 'require and

prompt cognitive effects'.[55] In short, the 'performative method' or experimenting with

historic material culture, i.e., using objects, imparts to the historian the 'working knowledge'

embodied in physical things.[56] My own methodology, whilst drawing heavily upon these

approaches, adds to it a clear understanding of the objects museological biography, and how

it has been used since its accession into the museum collection.

This 'performative' method rests upon a simple idea that physical engagement with objects is

essential to acquire a 'working knowledge' of the item in question. In practical terms, this

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[51] H. O. Sibum, 'Reworking the Mechanical Value of Heat: Instruments of Precision and Gestures of Accuracy in Early Victorian England' in *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 26, no. 1 (1995), 73–106; H. Otto Sibum, "Experimental History of Science," in Svante Lindqvist ed. *Museums of Modern Science* (Canton: Mass, 2000), 77–86

[52] Leora Auslander, Amy Bentley, Leor Halevi, H. Otto Sibum and Christopher Witmore eds. 'AHR Conversation: Historians and the Study of Material Culture' in *American Historical Review* (December 2009), 1355-1404, p. 1358

[53] H. Otto Sibum et al., 'AHR Conversation', p. 1358

[54] Ludmilla Jordanova, *The Look of the Past: Visual and Material Evidence in Historical Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 17

[55] Sibum et al, 'AHR Conversation', p. 1358

[56] Ibid, p. 1359

methodology has been made possible by the generosity of the AHRC and the progressive attitudes of my colleagues at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust who have allowed me unprecedented access to the object stores in Stratford. The purpose and meaning of a knife-sheath, a chest, or a late seventeenth-century piece of majolica changes significantly when one is able to handle these items for prolonged periods or indeed fill the items with the contents for which they were originally intended.[57] Contrary to our usual experience of museum objects which are stranded behind glass in cases, early modern objects rarely 'worked' in a vacuum but were used in co-operation with other things in order to achieve a specific task or effect. Again, I have been very fortunate to be able to act as an interface between these various subdivisions at the Trust. As a historian of the early modern period, this level of engagement with material culture has changed my perception of an object from an untouchable piece of history encircled with museological and connoiseurial values, to a piece of tangible, everyday culture that was used by historical actors. This approach has also allowed me to access a level of emotional and sensorial engagement with the object and, following Jordanova, hone skills that are central to the identification of material culture as historical evidence. By physically using objects to unlock the 'working knowledge' within them, I have had to acknowledge my own presence in the interpretive process which, whilst subjective, is essential to any historian's honest and serious study of their subject.

We shall now turn to an example of this 'performative' methodology in action. In November 2010, I spent three days researching a 'medicine chest' that was in storage at the Shakespeare Centre on Henley Street. My research was both textual, i.e., sifting through the Object History File relating to the object, and haptic, performative or physical, i.e., measuring,

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[57] This approach has been suggested by other early modern historians, most notably Angela McShane, but conservation concerns at her host institution, the Victoria & Albert Museum, perhaps inevitably, intervened. Angela McShane, "Goldilocks and the three bears routine: a material enquiry into 'too much' and 'just enough' in early modern England", Routine and Ritual in the post-medieval home conference, Kings Manor, University of York, 7 September, 2012

handling, and using the object. The process is explained below, whilst the chest, together with other early modern objects from the collection, are fully documented in the 'creative catalogue' which can viewed in the Appendix.

1.5 A 'medicine chest'

In 1998 an elaborately inlaid 'medicine chest' was bought by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust at Sotheby's in London following a recommendation by the eminent furniture historian Victor Chinnery.[58] The object was originally intended for display within one of the medically themed rooms in Hall's Croft, a seventeenth century house in Old Town in Stratford, and the supposed home of Shakespeare's son-in-law and physician, John Hall.[59]

Provenance of the item was provided by the auction house in terms of ownership and display. Colonel Graham Rees-Mogg, a well-known Warwickshire collector and owner of the chest in the first half of the twentieth century, displayed the item at an exhibition at Coughton Court in July 1931, and again in the *Art Treasures of Warwickshire* exhibition held in Leamington Spa between May 29 and July 3 1948.[60] Labels found within the chest attest to its display history, including a hand-printed card from the Coughton exhibition inscribed 'Elizabethan inlaid box'; these cards also inform us that the piece was donated by 'Mrs Graham Rees-Mogg' for the Leamington display. Such is the documentary evidence for the chest as recorded in the Object History Files at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.[61] The nomenclature of the object – a 'medicine chest' – clearly derives from the Sotheby's sale notes, and has been expanded, perhaps on the authority of Victor Chinnery (or by him personally) for the

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[58] SBT 2001-5; thanks to Ann Donnelly for providing this information - Ann Donnelly, former Museum Curator at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, personal communication, October 2010.

[59] Ann Donnelly, personal communication, October 2010.

[60] See labels within box documenting exhibition history, and the exhibition catalogue, Anon, *Art Treasures of Warwickshire Exhibition, Royal Leamington Spa Art Gallery, May 29th to July 3rd, 1948* (Leamington Spa, 1948).

[61] Documents to be found in these Object History Files include conservation notes, records of movement for example for cleaning or exhibition, correspondence relating to said object, and so on. These documents constitute the 'official' evidences associated with the object and relate to information that either explicitly or implicitly relates to the object, or to similar objects, or related themes.

MODES object catalogue created for each item by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

Museums department. The entry alludes to its use by 'a medical practitioner, possibly a

physician'.[62]

Figure 1 SBT 2001-5
An oak chest, with bog oak and holly wood parquetry, 16th century wallpaper pasted into lid, silk pulls, gouged
leaf and feather pattern on internal folding face (filled with black mastic). Lock is a later addition.

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[62] SBT 2001-5, 'An Anglo-German oak box, very possibly used as a medicine chest, with decorative parquetry
and lined with Elizabethan wallpaper', Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Object Catalogue
http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 15.12.2013]

Provenance of the item was provided by the auction house in terms of ownership and display. Colonel Graham Rees-Mogg, a well-known Warwickshire collector and owner of the chest in the first half of the twentieth century, displayed the item at an exhibition at Coughton Court in July 1931, and again in the *Art Treasures of Warwickshire* exhibition held in Leamington Spa between May 29 and July 3 1948.[63] Labels found within the chest attest to its display history, including a hand-printed card from the Coughton exhibition inscribed 'Elizabethan inlaid box'; these cards also inform us that the piece was donated by 'Mrs Graham Rees-Mogg' for the Leamington display. Such is the documentary evidence for the chest as recorded in the Object History Files at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.[64] The nomenclature of the object – a 'medicine chest' – clearly derives from the Sotheby's sale notes, and has been expanded, perhaps on the authority of Victor Chinnery (or by him personally) for the MODES object catalogue created for each item by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Museums department. The entry alludes to its use by 'a medical practitioner, possibly a physician'.[65]

The performative method

The performative method is a way of testing the museum record by physical or haptic investigation combined with historical contextual research. The chest has nine drawers, five wooden pots (two missing), and thirteen compartments set into its main cavity, covered by an oak inner-lid. In addition to these compartments is a hidden space which is accessed via a brown coloured silk pull or ribbon which contrasts with the red fabric pulls used for the main

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[63] See labels within box documenting exhibition history, and the exhibition catalogue, Anon, *Art Treasures of Warwickshire Exhibition, Royal Leamington Spa Art Gallery, May 29th to July 3rd, 1948* (Leamington Spa, 1948).

[64] Documents to be found in these Object History Files include conservation notes, records of movement for example for cleaning or exhibition, correspondence relating to said object, and so on. These documents constitute the 'official' evidences associated with the object and relate to information that either explicitly or implicitly relates to the object, or to similar objects, or related themes.

[65] SBT 2001-5, 'An Anglo-German oak box, very possibly used as a medicine chest, with decorative parquetry and lined with Elizabethan wallpaper', Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Object Catalogue http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 15.12.2013]

drawers. The outside is decorated with fine parquetry, or inlaid pieces of coloured wood. Similar decoration on mid- to late-sixteenth century pieces were achieved using light holly and dark bog oak, an effect that was especially widespread after 1580, when joiners could be employed to apply similar pre-made patterned bandings to furniture.[66] The chest is entirely covered with this interlocking effect which also extends to the interior drawers, suggesting the piece was specifically commissioned, a notion supported by the high quality of craftsmanship. These two factors maintain Chinnery's notion that the piece came from a workshop of immigrant craftsmen in London circa 1550 – 1625.[67]

The wallpaper on the interior of the lid carries the Elizabethan coat of arms and her insignia, encased by strapwork motifs, grotesque masks, and a stylized pomegranate, and is similar to a design in the Victoria & Albert museum dated 1550 – 1575.[68] The pomegranate was chosen as the symbol for the London College of Physicians from 1513 and may have reinforced the predominant view that the chest was indeed for 'medicine'.[69] Surviving visual evidence seems to uphold a futher possible link to a male professional; William Clowes book on surgery published in 1596 has a highly stylized print showing a similar chest, including bottles, drawers, and even the E.R. monogram in its inner lid.[70] (Figure 2 over).

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[66] Benno Forman, 'Continental Furniture Craftsmen in London: 1511 – 1625', *Furniture History*, 8, (1971), 94 - 120

[67] SBT 2001-5, 'An Anglo-German oak box, very possibly used as a medicine chest, with decorative parquetry and lined with Elizabethan wallpaper', Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Object Catalogue http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 15.12.2013]

[68] E.2431-1918, 'Wallpaper', Victoria & Albert Museum Object Catalogue, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/ [Accessed 22.11.10]

[69] The symbolism of the pomegranate is discussed in passing by Juliet Fleming, 'Damask Papers' in Andy Kesson and Emma Smith, *The Elizabethan Top Ten: Defining Print Popularity in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013) 179-192

[70] William Clowes, *A prooued practise for all young chirurgians*, (London, 1596), p. 140
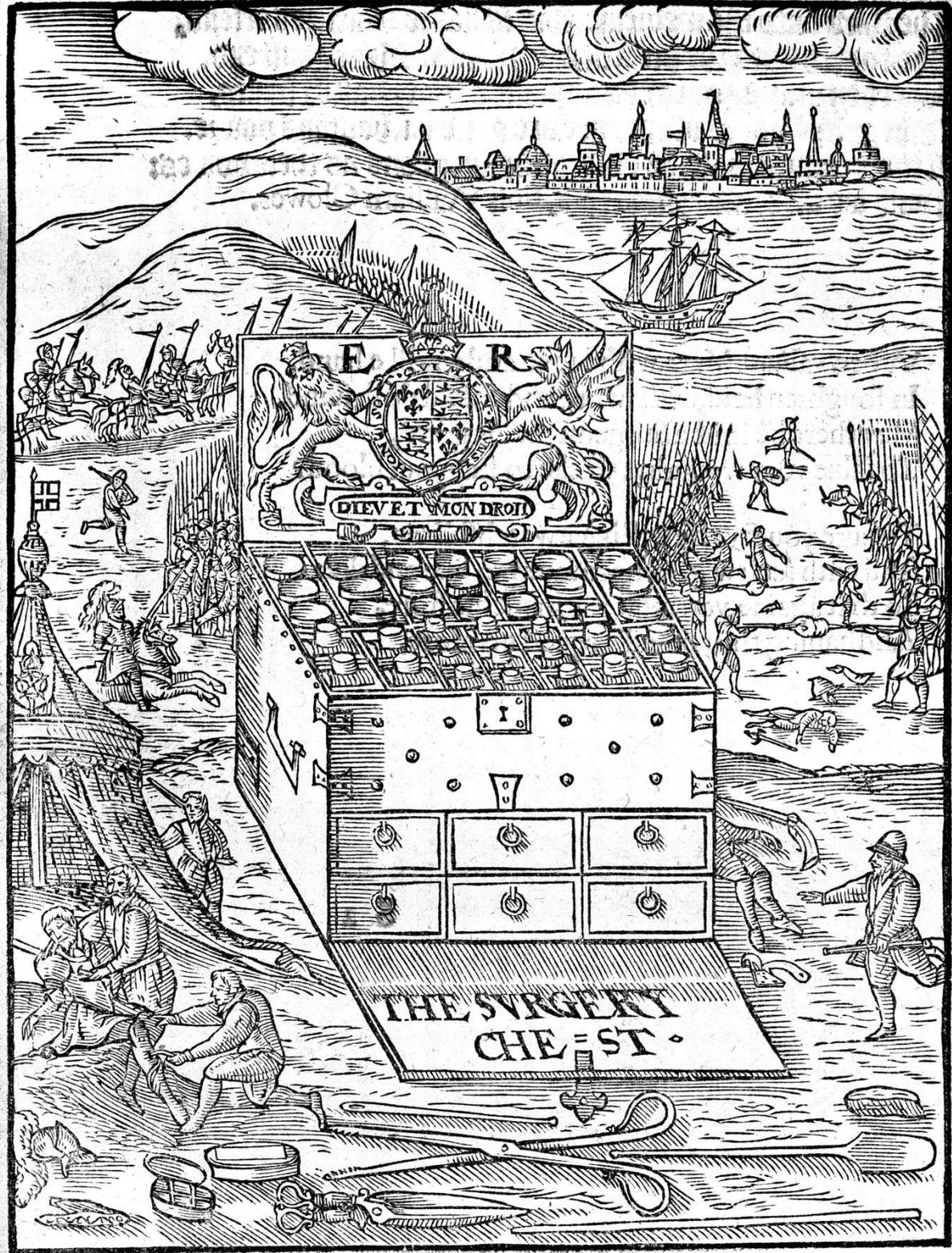
Figure 2 Illustration from William Clowes, *A prooued practise for all young chirurgians,* (London, 1596)

However, the chest simply does not have the capacity to store the range of necessary items recommended to practising surgeons in Clowes' book. Small items such as scissors and bodkins could perhaps fit in some of the compartments, but the gimlets, pliers and saws recommended by the author are too large.[71]

The work of the physician by contrast was characterised by a distinct lack of mechanical tools. The early modern physician has been described as a 'listener and observer' who visited his clients at their bed-side and practised 'differential diagnosis and prognosis' based upon intuitive reading of his patients character and the practical art of uroscopy or the 'seynge of urynes'.[72] The Trust has two seventeenth century glasses used for this purpose, of different shapes but measuring approximately 7 x 18 cm, representing the most common size based upon other survivals and visual evidence.[73]

Figures 3 & 4 SBT L249n and SBT L249o. Blown glass urine flasks, c. 1600-1675.

However these important tools could not physically fit into any of the chests compartments or drawers. In addition, surgeons and physicians were peripatetic, but the Trust's chest does not accommodate such use. Unlike the object illustrated in Clowes work, the inlaid chest has no brackets or handles to aid lifting. The turned feet, barrel lid and the projecting base moulding

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[71] Clowes, *A prooued practise for all young chirurgians*, pp. 133-136, 140-141
[72] Andrew Wear, *Knowledge and Practice in English Medicine, 1550-1680*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) pp. 121-123
[73] SBT 1994-17, Osias Dyck, 'A Doctor Casting the Water', oil painting on wooden panel, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Object Catalogue http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 13.11.2013]; see also 1987-200, Jacob Folkema 'The Physician', print published 1763 taken from a Dutch painting by either Hendrik Heerschop or Caspar Netscher, Science Museum, www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/ [accessed 13.11.2013].

make the chest difficult to carry under the arm, and suggest instead that it was intended to be displayed in a fixed location. It is clear therefore, that the relationship between the chest and its assumed use by a male medical professional is problematized by my reading of both the object and, as we shall see, the surrounding historical narratives.

Whilst the social and cultural differences between physicians and surgeons in the sixteenth century should not be overstated, recent research into the professions of early modern England has demonstrated that medical authority was invested in a relatively porous hierarchy of physicians, surgeons and apothecaries, professions which seldom, if ever, allowed female participants.[74] Outside this 'established' medical authority, and largely ignored by contemporary male writers, were the forms of 'popular' medicine – 'herbe wives' who collected plant materials for the professions, or sold them directly in the marketplace, as well as the entire body of knowledge circulated by word-of-mouth and recorded in manuscript form and printed books as the period progressed.[75] Elite manuscripts, such as Elinor Poole's receipt book (c. 1604), or Hannah Woolley's *The Accomplish'd lady's delight* (1675) attest to this culture of 'receipts' or 'recipes', which refer both to their culinary use but also to their *received* nature as authorized and authoritative cures and remedies.[76] Other extant 'medicine' chests from the early modern period are usually associated with the medical professions or male humanist intellectuals with a passion for collecting rare medical materials.[77] This,

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[74] See Rosemary O'Day, *The Professions in Early Modern England, 1450-1800*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000, 2014) 192-204

[75] Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts, 1550-1650*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 1-10

[76] Elinor Poole's recipe for syrup of tobacco was endorsed by Sir Walter Raleigh for its medicinal properties, see Hilary Spurling, Elinor Fettiplace's Receipt Book: Elizabethan Country House Cooking (London: Faber&Faber, 2008); this recipes are brilliantly analysed by Elaine Leong, 'Collecting knowledge for the family: recipes, gender and practical knowledge in the early modern english household', *Centaurus*, 55 (2013), 88-103.

[77] For an excellent catalogue of chests used to store geological medicinal material see Christopher J. Duffin, 'Some early eighteenth century geological Materia Medica' in Christopher J. Duffin, R.T.J. Moody and C. Gardner-Thorpe eds. A History of Geology and Medicine, (London: Geological Society Publishing, 2013), 209-233

combined with the 'de-feminization' of medical knowledge by early modern male writers[78], has perhaps led to a situation where unprovenanced objects that fit into a general typology are automatically defined as chests, cabinets, or boxes for the curios of *materia medica*.[79]

By questioning the narrative of physicians and surgeons imposed upon the chest by means of object-centred and performative analysis, and by embedding the object into a historical context of culinary and medical 'practical knowledge', I have offered an alternative framework to understand this object. It could be argued that this item was a 'recipe' or 'receipt' chest, with the capacity for holding small amounts of herbs suitable for domestic, personal, but not commercial use. The elegant and fashionable design may suggest a noble or upper middling-sort owner, whilst the rather clumsy addition of a lock in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, may intimate that this box was originally a communal household item, which changes again our notion of how this chest was used and the meanings it had throughout its early modern biography.[80]

Conclusion

Historians are trained to assess documentary sources, not to analyse objects. Unsurprisingly when historians discuss material culture they do so using language gleaned from other disciplines such as anthropology or art history, or most commonly, from the influential, if fragmented history of consumption discourse. In addition, historians are rightly critical of the seemingly subjective descriptive processes which may reflect the writers own bias, or which cannot be checked by written sources. A situation arises therefore, where researchers are

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[78] Rebecca Laroche, *Medical Authority and Englishwomen's Herbal Texts*, p. 32
[79] An outstanding sixteenth century example is the medicine chest of Vincenzo Giustiniani, Item No. A641515, in the Science Museum, http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/objects/ [accessed 23.7.14]
[80] My reading of the chest is supported by the general trend of current scholarship on the nature of domestic or 'kitchen physic', as well as notions of privacy in the early modern period, see Sara Pennell ed, *Women and Medicine: Remedy Books, 1553-1865*, (Detroit: Primary Source Media, 2004); for privacy see Erica Longfellow, 'Public, Private, and the Household in Early Seventeenth-Century England' in *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (April 2006) 313-334.

reluctant to trust their own first-hand study of an object – if indeed such access to the material culture is granted – and disinclined to follow what has been written about the object by museum professionals. This may explain the tone of some recent research into early modern material culture, where writers prefer to use typologies of objects that depict or illustrate complex narratives of social and economic consumption at the national or international level, or to use generalized narratives about objects where a vague sense of 'materiality' obscures the singularity of the specific.[81] As a result, the subtle variations between 'types' of objects, and the possibility of objects being used as evidence in significant historical arguments are often diluted or missed.

As a response to this, this chapter has outlined the theoretical field of early modern material culture studies and applied some of its conclusions to the practical matter of museum-based object research. Whilst Sibum or Ingold's ideas can help develop a model of material culture and the relationship between the examined object and the academic text, this project is also an actual document of a museum collection. The study of the Trust's 'medicine chest' outlines the process each object catalogued in this thesis and in the Creative Catalogue Appendix has undergone. Returning to the central issue of this research – the epistemological questions surrounding the objects in the Trust's collection – this chapter has argued for the use of objects, texts, and visual culture to question historical statements made about the Trust's material culture. But herein lies the most important factor facing historians of material culture: the role of the museum as custodian and incubator of object-based knowledge. The chest was bought to illustrate John Hall's physician status, and as a result the object was locked (almost immediately upon its accession) into a groove of interpretation that only performative analysis and a return to the evidence of the item itself could divert.

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[81] For a recent example see Paula Findlen 'Introduction' and 'Early modern things: objects in motion, 1500—1800' in Paula Findlen ed. *Early Modern Things: Objects and their Histories, 1500-1800* (London: Routledge, 2013), 1-3, 3-28. It must be added that this collection was intended as 'a historical sampler of what we can learn by writing the history *of* objects as well as histories *from* objects', p. 6

Historians are trained to judge the reliability and validity of sources, but when the museum catalogue itself is unreliable, it is hardly surprising that a lack of sympathy exists between early modern historical research and early modern material culture studies. This museological aspect of the problem, studied in the context of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Collecting Shakespeare: the legacy of James Orchard Halliwell

This chapter is about what museum curators write about their collections, and how such writings effect our readings of early modern material culture. More specifically, it explores the work of James Orchard Halliwell, a collector and prolific Shakespearean biographer, who in his role of 'scholar-curator' helped the Trust to acquire numerous artefacts and buildings, and was the driving force behind the Shakespeare Library and Museum from 1861.

Halliwell established a framework of object interpretation that has changed little over the last 150 years. What he wrote about the objects he collected for or acquired on behalf of the Trust, continue to influence object-based knowledge and exhibition practices to this day. This chapter is an appraisal of Halliwell as a biographer and collector of 'relics' of William Shakespeare, and reveals the extent of his influence as the Trust's principal cataloguer of material culture. It is a study that critically assesses – using methods borrowed from museum studies and in particular the work of Susan M. Pearce[1] – his role in the Trust's collections history. Whilst Chapter One considered an object that was acquired relatively recently to explore the medical practice of Shakespeare's son-in-law, this chapter explores the history of a 'knife-sheath' that Halliwell personally owned and wrote about. By examining this item in detail, in the context of Halliwell's own biography and working methods, museological history is foregrounded as a vital aspect of museum-based object research.

2.1 The 'scholar-curator'

James Orchard Halliwell (1822 – 1889) was born into an 'age of gentlemen collectors', a period when wealthy scholars, entrepreneurs, and members of the aristocracy 'vied with one

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[1] See Susan M. Pearce, 'Collecting Reconsidered', in Susan M. Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), Susan M. Pearce, *On Collecting: An Investigation into Collecting in the European Tradition*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995).

another to amass collections of scientific and aesthetic interest'.[2] Men like Halliwell were the backbone of local 'learned societies', whose members exhibited their prized possessions in their homes or in the increasing number of public museums that were opened by local authorities and private individuals in the nineteenth century. Since the Renaissance, the museum was seen as a place that mediated private and public space, whilst later eighteenth century definitions conceived the museum almost as a private study.[3] In the nineteenth century, and particularly in England, a 'museum' described the kind of personal collecting and display conducted by learned societies, and conveyed a sense of the collection's private nature – being the product of a single collector's vision or passion – and its private, intimate or exclusive means of access and display.[4] Whilst these museums developed from closed and exclusive temporary events to permanent institutions devoted to the promotion of public knowledge, one aspect of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century museum governance survived and continued to exert an influence well into the twentieth century. At the helm of these institutions was the 'scholar-curator', whose work mirrored that of the traditional 'antiquarian' or connoisseur, a private collector who also doubled as the specialist academic researcher.[5] In the 1860's Halliwell was asked to fulfil the role of 'scholar-curator' for the newly founded Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and began an unpaid role in which he undertook responsibility for almost all of the museum's specialised work, from acquisition of artefacts, research, cataloguing, documentation, to interpretation through galleries, temporary exhibitions and publications.

In this guise Halliwell helped to define the nineteenth century Shakespeare museum and like his contemporaries at other institutions played a pivotal role in the organisation and

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[2] Amiria Henare, *Museums, Anthropology and Imperial Exchange,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 38

[3] Susan A. Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany*, (New York: Cornell University Press, 2000) p. 107

[4] Crane, *Collecting and Historical Consciousness in Early Nineteenth-Century Germany*, p. 107

[5] Patrick J. Boylan, 'The Museum Profession' in Sharon Macdonald ed, *A Companion to Museum Studies*, (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 415-430, p. 418

dissemination of knowledge through the selection, classification and display of material culture.[6] Simon Schaffer has expressed the view that much of our knowledge of the material past is in fact derived from nineteenth century curators and collectors rather than the objects they collected.[7] The following discussion explores this idea and presents Halliwell as a central figure in the development of the Trust's approach to material culture, and one whose conflation of Shakespearean dramatic exegesis and analysis of material culture has proved enormously influential even into the twenty-first century. Prior to this analysis of Halliwell's milieu and collecting philosophy, I will explore the methodological tools and concepts that have informed my interpretation of the Trust's nineteenth century approach to object based knowledge.

2.2 Collecting Shakespeare: Susan M. Pearce and the study of collecting

What drives people to collect? The scholar of museums and anthropologist Susan M. Pearce identified three broad attitudes to collecting or 'three possible individual relationships to the object world', which place the collecting person and/or institution at the heart of a cultural and psychological matrix and presents collecting habits and motives defined by the souvenir, the fetish and the systematic approach. By collecting 'souvenirs':

> the individual creates a romantic life-history by selecting and arranging personal memorial material to create what … might be called an object autobiography, where the objects are at the service of the autobiographer.[8]

Objects acquired via 'biographical collecting' are often called 'personalia' or 'memorabilia' by museum curators and occasionally, as at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, the person

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[6] Christopher Whitehead, *Museums and the Construction of Disciplines: Art and Archaeology in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, (London and New York: Bloomsbury, 2009), p. 8
[7] Nick Thomas and Simon Shaffer, 'Material Cultures of the Long Eighteenth Century: Artefacts' presentation for the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Cambridge, October 11 2011.
[8] Susan Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 32

associated with the object is 'sufficiently interesting or notorious to throw a kind of glamour-by-association over the pieces'.[9] We will see the effect of Shakespeare's 'glamour' upon Halliwell in relation to his personal collecting at an exhibition curated in Brixton Hill in 1852, and in Halliwell's excavations of New Place in the 1860s. Souvenirs are also described by Pearce as:

> intrinsic parts of a past experience, … because they … possess the survival power of materiality not shared by words, actions, sights and the other elements of experience, they alone have the power to carry the past into the present.[10]

A unique capacity of objects therefore, derived in part by their indestructible or slowly deteriorating materiality, is their ability to represent the past in the present. The souvenir is an object around which *a* past is created but in the process may merely become a peg on which to hang various statements about history, Shakespeare, early modern domestic life and so on.

Fetishistic collecting has also been described as 'obsessive' or 'devoted' collecting; in this form the 'objects are dominant and the collector responds to his obsessive need by gathering as many items as possible: here, in contrast to souvenir collecting, the objects are allowed to create the self'.[11] 'Obsessive' or 'fetishistic' practice, is defined by the absence of rationale – the individual usually seeking to acquire as much as they possibly can of the same type of object. It is clear that for collectors these assemblages articulate, when complete, a degree of desirability, reflected perhaps by monetary value or the immediate impact they possess when displayed. This type of collecting, according to Pearce, is motivated by a desire to collect 'samples, and as many of them as possible, rather than … examples' which defines more appropriately systematic collecting, whereby the presence of an intellectual rationale moves

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[9] Susan M. Pearce, 'Collecting Reconsidered', in Susan M. Pearce, *Interpreting Objects and Collections*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1994), p. 195.
[10] Susan Pearce, 'Collecting Reconsidered', p. 195.
[11] Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 32

the collector to acquire complete sets of objects in order to display and demonstrate knowledge *achieved*:

> Collecting is usually a positive intellectual act designed to demonstrate a point. The physical arrangement of the finds sets out in detail the creation of serial relationships, and the manipulation implicit in all this is intended to convince or to impose, to create a second and revealing context, and to encourage a cast of mind.[12]

As we shall see, after demonstrating a clear systematic rationale in its early years, the Trust quickly developed a disorganised strand of 'obsessive' collecting under Halliwell and the 'scholar-curator' system from the 1860s onwards. Pearce's notion of the imposition of a cast of mind is hugely important with regard to Halliwell's cataloguing habits c. 1865-1868. In this vein, we have already seen how objects were bought to evoke (or 'impose') a particular narrative within a historical context (Hall's Croft).

Drawing upon these ideas, I will now explore the 'pre-history' of Shakespearean collecting prior to the Trust's foundation. This awareness of the 'Shakespeare Trade' is an important counterpoint to the Trust's own approach. Under Halliwell, the Trust reinforced and intellectualized an earlier hermeneutic tradition that imposed 'Shakespearian' narratives upon early modern objects. This will be explored via a 'knife sheath' that Halliwell himself owned and donated to the Trust in 1868.

2.3 Collecting Shakespeare prior to 1847

In the 1850s the number of tourists visiting the town of Stratford-upon-Avon was approximately 2,500, but this number swelled to 30,000 annually at the beginning of the twentieth century. Facilitated by the railways, the majority of visitors were not merely drawn by the performances of Shakespeare's plays in the Memorial Theatre (from 1879), but 'for Shakespeare the man' as exhibited in the heritage sites dispersed around the town, and at

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[12] Pearce, 'Collecting Reconsidered', p. 202

Shakespeare's supposed birthplace (officially acquired by the Trust in 1847) in the famous

timber-framed house on Henley Street.[13] The fascination with Shakespeare's personality

originated a century earlier however, at the first ever Shakespearean 'museum' built by the

actor David Garrick near his Hampton villa on the banks of the river Thames in 1755. This

brick octagonal domed building with Ionic pillared portico housed Louis-

François Roubiliac's enormous marble statue of the poet modelled on Garrick's own

countenance.[14] Garrick claimed that he possessed 'relics' of William Shakespeare including

various domestic and personal items: a Delftware salt-cellar, with blue and yellow designs, a

dagger, a 'pair of gloves with blackened embroidery', and a gold signet ring, with the carved

initials 'W. S'.[15] The gloves for example, according to a journalist in *The Dublin University*

Magazine, were acquired by Garrick from an unknown actor attached to the Warwick Theatre

who had received them from a Stratford glazier, also named William Shakespeare, whose

father had been John Shakespeare's cousin.[16] This unlikely account is one of the earliest

stories of the legitimacy of Shakespearean relics, and this basic model was to be reused with

slight emendations throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1769 the Stratford

Jubilee, planned by Garrick, celebrated Shakespeare's legacy and reoriented the tourist trail

away from the Hampton 'Temple' towards the material culture of Shakespeare's Stratford.

2.3.1 Souvenirs and relics: The Hornbys

In 1793, the Henley Street building traditionally associated with Shakespeare's birth was a

public house called the Swan and Maidenhead, which also comprised a butcher's shop and

first-floor tenement occupied by Joan Hart, who claimed to be a descendent of William

Shakespeare. Hart had received a steady flow of visitors ever since the Jubilee effectively

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[13] Julia Thomas, 'Shakespeare and Commercialism' in Gail Marshall ed., *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 251

[14] The sculpture is now in the British Museum, M&ME 1823,1-1,1.

[15] Another ring, with the same initials, was reportedly found in a Stratford field in 1810, and is one of the foremost Shakespearean objects in the Trust's collection

[16] Anon., 'Garrick the Manager at Home' in *The Dublin University Magazine*, Feb (1867) 212-231, p. 221-222

enshrined the house as a site of literary pilgrimage.[17] The furnishings of this building fast

became the relics of Shakespeare's material life, and particularly popular was the wooden

chair presented by Hart to her visitors as the poet's own. This was, according to Horace

Walpole in 1777, 'pretty much cut by different visitors', and in 1785 the Hon. John Byng

took from it a 'slice … equal to the size of a tobacco stopper', together with a piece of the

pavement below Shakespeare's monument in Holy Trinity church.[18] Whilst the pilfering of

artefacts fuelled a market for 'relics', the trade of 'legitimate' souvenirs was buoyed by

Thomas Sharp's carved mulberry-wood items, including card-cases, boxes, tobacco stoppers

and other memorabilia. Objects of this type include SBT 1871-8, a 'Mulberry-wood card

case', 'Made at the workshop of Thomas Sharp, about 1760-1799'; SBT 1868-3/449, 'a

mulberry wood box', carrying the inscription 'This box was made of the real mulberry tree

planted by Shakespeare in Stratford upon Avon just after it was cut down and before it was

used up at the time of the [Garrick] Jubilee, when much fictitious mulberry wood supplied its

place, for the purpose of memorial articles'.[19] More prestigious pieces were also constructed

for the participants in the Jubilee pageants, including a medal and goblet that Garrick himself

used.[20] In addition, a similar run of inexpensive 'crabtree' objects suitable for the working

classes became popular in the nineteenth century. These were invented to uphold a local

tradition in which Shakespeare as 'man of the people' sheltered under a crab-apple tree after

an epic and ultimately fatal drinking bout in Bidford-upon-Avon.[21] In this potent climate of

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[17] The best study of Garrick's Jubilee is by Kate Rumbold, 'Shakespeare and the Stratford Jubilee' in Fiona Ritchie and Peter Sabor eds. *Shakespeare in the Eighteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) 254-276. See also Vanessa Cunningham, *Shakespeare and Garrick*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 111-119.

[18] Levi Fox, *The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: A Personal Memoir* (Peterborough: Jarrold, 1997) p. 3

[19] See various object numbers, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Object Catalogue http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 20.8.2014].

[20] SBT 1961-14, 'The medal worn by David Garrick as Steward of the 1769 Jubilee'; SBT 2003-28/5, 'A carved mulberry wood goblet'. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Object Catalogue http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 20.8.2014].

[21] Tradition holds that Shakespeare's sheltered under a crab-apple tree after drinking in Bidford-upon-Avon, see Sidney Lee, *Stratford-on-Avon: From the Earliest Times to the Death of Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890, 2012) 235-237

commercialism and class-based claims to ownership of Shakespearean culture, it is unsurprising that forgery was rife. The infamous William Henry Ireland (1775 –1835) studied sixteenth and seventeenth century wax seals and created his own amalgam of wax to legitimate love-letters he wrote on behalf of Shakespeare to Anne Hathaway – he also produced his own 'mixture of Shaksperian ink'.[22]

In 1793, Mary and Thomas Hornby moved into the Hart tenement, keeping the furnishings and fittings intact. Hart, according to Ireland, had sold the 'Shakespeare Chair' to Princess Izabela Czartoryska of Poland in 1790 for twenty guineas[23] but the Hornbys nevertheless replaced it with another and added a small companion-piece that were jointly displayed as belonging to the poet and his son Hamnet.[24] The current incarnation of 'Shakespeare's Chair' now displayed at Anne Hathaway's Cottage is a seventeenth century structure previously owned by William Henry Ireland's father – the inscription 'W A S' (William Anne Shakespeare) dates to the time of the Ireland's ownership, however the armorial motifs, depicting a crest which are similar to the arms granted to Shakespeare in 1596, are original.[25]

Mary and Thomas Hornby consistently claimed that the items acquired in 1793 were genuine Shakespeare 'relics' resting upon an unquestionable local provenance.[26] Much of this 'legitimacy' was based upon the testimony of Joan and Thomas Hart, but additional verification was established via a programme of collecting from local sites and Warwickshire families that were traditionally connected with the poet. As a relative (by marriage) of Joan

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[22] See William Henry Ireland, *The Confessions of William Henry Ireland. Containing the particulars of his fabrication of the Shakspeare Manuscripts; Together with anecdotes and opinions of many distinguished persons in the literary, political, and theatrical world.* (London: 1805), p. 37, pp. 106-107.
[23] Julia Thomas, *Shakespeare's Shrine: The Bard's Birthplace and the Invention of Stratford-upon-Avon*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010) pp. 101-102.
[24] An account of the Hornbys acquisition of various items can be found in the newspaper article 'Shakespeare Relics' in *The Graphic*, 1 April 1893, p. 342.
[25] See SBT 2002-49, 'A mid seventeenth-century oak and walnut panel back armchair', Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Object Catalogue http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 2.4.2013]. See also Tarnya Cooper ed. *Searching for Shakespeare* (Yale: New Haven, 2006) p. 140.
[26] The testimonials for and charges against Mary Hornby are published in William Thomas Moncreiff ed. *Excursion to Stratford Upon Avon*, (1824), pp. 276-280.

Hart and by extension, Shakespeare, Mary Hornby also defended her enterprise against cynics by appeals to her own lineage and familial legitimacy and similarly defended her 'dealers' in Shakespeariana with the same criteria. A 'card and dice box', for example, displayed at the Birthplace and labelled as a 'true relic' of Shakespeare's, was authenticated by Jane Iliff (the daughter of Joan Hart). Iliff testified that the box was 'given up to [Thomas Hornby] by William Skinner, of Shottery', who was, as all local residents knew well, from an ancient and reliable family.[27] Iliff targeted her nephew, William Shakspeare Hart [sic], with these weapons of familial authority when he called the Hornby's trade 'spurious and deceptive'. Hart's non-residency in Stratford (he was born and then lived in Tewkesbury) was enough for Iliff to dispute his status as a reliable witness – in addition, at the time the objects were purchased from the Hart's, the accuser was but 'a little boy, and never was in the house many times while my father was living'.[28] For Hornby, the Shakespeare trade was a livelihood, but in addition collecting was a means of creating and sustaining 'material and social networks' which rested upon dearly held values of kinship, 'ancient' lineage and reputation.[29]

These defences of the Hornbys aside, their understanding of a 'genuine relic' did not necessarily correspond with that of their visitors – an example of a blatant forgery was the series of vellum cards mounted with 'The Hair of the Head of William Shakespere when 16 and the Year of his Death'.[30] It is clear that the Hornbys employed various narratives to massage the facts. Washington Irving, who met Mary Hornby in 1815, was shown the sword 'with which [Shakespeare] played Hamlet; and the identical lantern with which Friar

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[27] Mary printed cards giving testimonials as to the legitimacy of the objects, see SBTRO DR317/64. For Skinner see William Thomas Moncreiff *Excursion to Stratford Upon Avon*, (1824), p. 279

[28] Moncreiff, *Excursion to Stratford Upon Avon*, pp. 278-279

[29] For a discussion of material and social networks in the twenty-first century, see Sarah Byrne, Anne Clarke, Rodney Harrison, and Robin Torrence eds, *Unpacking the Collection: Networks of Social and Material Agency in the Museum* (New York: Springer, 2011)

[30] See SBT 1971-12/1, Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Object Catalogue http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 1.2.2011]

Laurence discovered Romeo and Juliet at the tomb!'[31] The lantern – which was fabricated by 'Hart the glazier, a descendent of the poet's sister' and formed 'out of the broken glass of the birth house'[32] – was for Hornby a genuine relic despite its modern provenance. Constructed from glass taken from the Birthplace, it attained the status of 'relic' not because it belonged to Shakespeare but because it was a 'tradition bearer', an object that allowed Shakespeare's memory to be materialized and contemplated in the present.[33]

It is also important to note that, nearly 60 years prior to the Trust's official takeover of the Birthplace, the Hornbys were imposing narratives onto objects to illustrate key moments from Shakespeare's plays for their audiences. It was under control and management of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust however, and in particular the influence of Halliwell, that this mode of interpretation was conflated with the allure and material reality of early modern objects.

2.3.2 The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and James Orchard Halliwell

The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust had its roots in a Stratford based 'monument committee' established in 1835 to preserve Shakespeare's tomb in Holy Trinity Church.[34] This later developed into a Birthplace Committee with London and Stratford assemblies who instituted the 'Shakespeare Fund' to acquire the building traditionally associated with Shakespeare's birth on Henley Street.[35] Comprised of local men and Shakespeare scholars from across the country, the dilapidated public-house-cum-butcher's shop was bought using £3000 raised by

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[31] Richard Savage and William Salt Brassington eds, *Stratford-upon-Avon from "The Sketch Book" of Washington Irving*, (Stratford, 1900), p. 31
[32] Savage and Brassington, *"The Sketch Book" of Washington Irving*, p. 114
[33] 'Tradition' continues to be fundamentally important to claims of legitimacy made by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's today, particularly with regard to the Birthplace – no evidence aside from tradition exists to establish the site of Shakespeare's birth, although it is known that John Shakespeare owned property somewhere on Henley Street.   See Michael Rosenthal, 'Shakespeare's Birthplace at Stratford: Bardolatry Reconsidered' in Harald Hendrix ed, *Writers' Houses and the Making of Memory*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 31-44.
[34] Julia Thomas, *Shakespeare's Shrine: The Bard's Birthplace and the Invention of Stratford-upon-Avon*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), p.
[35] Julia Thomas, *Shakespeare's Shrine: The Bard's Birthplace and the Invention of Stratford-upon-Avon*, pp. 3-4; Anon, *London Committee for the Purchase of Shakespeare's House* (London, 1847), p. 3

public subscription.[36] It was assumed that ownership of the Birthplace would be transferred to the government, but instead permanent trustees and an executive committee were established in 1866 which took over legal management of the site.[37] From 1866 therefore, the Trust was established with the aim of preserving the Birthplace and associated houses as a national memorial and for the construction of a library and museum.[38] Halliwell's involvement emerged from his financial and academic support of the monument committee and Shakespeare Fund. In 1861 he funded the purchase of William Shakespeare's home known as New Place at the junction of Chapel Lane and Church Street in Stratford, for which service he was appointed as a life trustee, and following this he gradually became ensconced within the executive committee as a diligent although often absent 'scholar-curator'.[39] In this role Halliwell put into effect a codified collection policy: to acquire any documents and buildings 'belonging to Shakespeare, or are intimately connected with the memories of his life'.[40] To this end, a range of objects from early medieval religious sculpture from the Guild Chapel to nineteenth century watercolours of local landmarks were immediately displayed in the Shakespeare Library and Museum housed within the Birthplace. Anne Hathaway's Cottage was bought in 1892 and throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century the Trust continued to organise and catalogue the vast amount of printed material, manuscripts and material culture that had been donated or actively acquired via bequests or collecting agents since its initial foundation in 1847.

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[36] Donors included Prince Albert, Alfred Tennyson and Charles Dickens; see Miles Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement: A History of Architectural Preservation, Antiquity to Modernity* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

[37] Thomas, Shakespeare's Shrine, pp. 3-6

[38] Stanley Wells, *Shakespeare: For All Time*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 317-318

[39] See Marvin Spevak, *James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps: the life and works of the Shakespearean scholar and bookman*, (New Castle, Delaware: Oak Knoll Press, 2001), pp. 522-527

[40] The Grammar School, despite its heavy associations with Shakespeare's education, was excluded from the Trust's purview on the grounds that it had been heavily modified in the nineteenth century, see J. O. Halliwell Phillips, *Memoranda on the present state of the Birth-place trust and on the necessity of providing a calendar of the ... contents of the Shakespeare library and museum,* (Brighton, 1883), pp. 8-10

According to Patrick Boylan, the scholar-curator system was widespread in nineteenth century Britain and could be defined by an expert who occupies the institutions' single senior role and identifies himself as a chief curator rather than a chief executive or manager. Characteristically, the scholar-curator directs short-term projects close to his own interests often to the detriment of long-term planning, the supervision of administrative policies, and operations of the institution – indeed the latter were 'seen at best as an irritation, at worst as an unwelcome sacrifice of valuable academic time'.[41] Boylan notes that the absence of professional staff was indicative of this system which tended to employ only non-professional manual workers to undertake security, cleaning, maintenance, and secretarial assistance.[42] Whilst it is difficult to replicate Boylan's research of contemporary institutions onto the historic Trust, it may be argued that the 'scholar-curator' system was in place in Stratford as early as 1848 when a perpetual curatorship fully funded by Charles Dickens was turned down by the Birthplace Committee.[43] Instead the trustees decided to employ a resident non-professional custodian, Mrs. Jarrett, on 12 shillings a week.[44] Whilst Dickens' agenda may have been to groom his friend James Sheridan Knowles for the curatorship, it is telling that the Trust nevertheless chose to reject a substantial financial offer so soon after the outlay of £3000 to purchase the Birthplace. In the following years, as can be seen in the Trust's first printed catalogue, Halliwell adopted sole charge of acquisitions or 'presents to the Museum', as well as 'offers of books, &c., for purchase' for the Library.[45] In a later document, drafted for the trustees, we clearly see that Halliwell was supervising the transfer of objects and

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[41] Patrick J. Boylan, 'The Museum Profession', p. 418

[42] Boylan, 'The Museum Profession', pp. 418-419

[43] See Valerie L. Gager, *Shakespeare and Dickens: The Dynamics of Influence*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 95-119

[44] Levi Fox, *A Personal Memoir*, pp. 3-4

[45] See Clarence Hopper and James Orchard Halliwell eds, *Catalogue of the Books, Manuscripts, Works of Art, Antiquities and Relics Illustrative of the Life and Works of Shakespeare and of the History of Stratford upon Avon; which are preserved in the Shakespeare Library and Museum in Henley Street*, (London: 1868), p. vi; see also Fox, *A Personal Memoir*, pp. 3-6

documents to and from the Birthplace and New Place museums.[46] Halliwell did lobby the

Trustee's to fund a full-time librarian, and occasionally his workload necessitated

collaboration with Clarence Hopper and the Stratford town clerk Thomas Hunt, but in general

the mind-set of the Trust was geared towards the employment of non-professional staff. In

Halliwell, the Trust had a seemingly indefatigable Shakespearean biographical researcher

who, being unpaid and unsupervised, pursued his own interests and endeavours. Given the

broad 'scholar-curator' system in which Halliwell operated, it could be argued that the

Trustees were more than happy to allow Halliwell's ideas to indirectly and unsystematically

inform their own curatorial programme.

Halliwell's approach can be seen as early as 1852 when, seven years before the foundation of

the Shakespeare Museum, he and his friend F. W. Fairholt curated the first exhibition 'of

authentic materials in illustration of [Shakespeare's] life and writings'.[47] The exhibition

consisted of Halliwell's collection held at his home, Avenue Lodge in Brixton Hill, Surrey,

for which he printed eighty cloth-bound catalogues illustrated by Fairholt. Halliwell's

collection of material culture ranged from his most 'singular and unique Shakespearian

relique' – the 'Original Impression of the Seal of John Shakespeare of Stratford on Avon,

Father of the Great Dramatist'; to comparatively mundane items, such as counters or 'jettons'

which were used by the 'illiterate and vulgar' in daily business transactions. Halliwell also

displayed art objects; an 'image in silver of a domestic fool, with the winged cap, a curious

relic of the time of Queen Elizabeth', a series of sixteenth and seventeenth century memorial,

posy and gimmel rings, a silver Apostle spoon, and an Elizabethan silver pomander.[48]

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[46] James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps, A brief report on the interchange of books, relics, &c., between The New Place and the Birthplace Museum, and on the re-arrangement of the Library, (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1881).
[47] James Orchard Halliwell, *Some Account of the Antiquities, Coins, Manuscripts, Rare Works, Ancient Documents, and other Reliques, Illustrative of the Life and Works of Shakespeare, in the possession of James Orchard Halliwell, Esq., F.R.S.* (Brixton Hill, 1852), p. v-vi
[48] James Orchard Halliwell, *Some Account of the Antiquities, Coins, Manuscripts, Rare Works, Ancient Documents, and other Reliques, Illustrative of the Life and Works of Shakespeare, in the possession of James Orchard Halliwell, Esq., F.R.S.*, (Brixton Hill: 1852), p. 1, 4-5ff.

Halliwell often relied on the testimony of expert correspondents to authenticate his collection. In this way a memento mori ring was endorsed in the catalogue by a quote taken from a private letter to Halliwell from the collector T. Crofton Croker:

> If my opinion, after inspecting minutely some thousand rings, is of the slightest value, I can assure you that, to a collector, your death's-head ring is the very finest specimen I have ever seen of this very rare kind of ring … I should not have hesitated to give £10 for it, nor would I *now* for one which *once* was offered to me for as many pence – indeed I believe I would be tempted to turn the 10 into a 20 should such a specimen again turn up.[49]

Figure 5 F.W. Fairholt, Illustration of a death's head ring in the collection of J. Halliwell. From James Orchard Halliwell, *Some Account of the Antiquities, Coins, Manuscripts, Rare Works, Ancient Documents, and other Reliques, Illustrative of the Life and Works of Shakespeare* (1852)

In addition to the authoritative connoiseurial voice that certified the object's 'ancient' credentials, Halliwell constantly drew upon the legitimating authority of Shakespeare. Most entries are laced with a relevant quote from Shakespeare's plays or sonnets and Halliwell's own collection of posy rings appears to have been inspired by Shakespeare's tantalizing reports of them in *The Merchant of Venice* and from a reference in *Hamlet*.[50] For the memento mori ring *Love's Labours Lost* ('A death's face in a ring') is invoked, whilst the pomander is seen as a piece of 'trumpery' in the words of Autolycus.[51] For Halliwell these objects illustrate Shakespeare's life and writings, but he often allows their monetary value as

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[49] Halliwell, *Account of the Antiquities,* pp. 130-131.
[50] Halliwell, *Account of the Antiquities,* pp. 21-22
[51] Ibid., pp. 130-131

testified to by leading authorities, to be embedded in the object catalogue and to glamourize the objects before the eyes of his visitors.

Importantly Halliwell tried to offset this materialist turn by a desire to erect an intellectual and moral distinction between his own motives and those of the notorious Stratford traders. In the catalogue's preface, the 'genuine Shakespearian' items in Halliwell's possession are contrasted with the Hornby's 'museum of supposititious Shakespeare reliques'.[52] Here Halliwell is alluding to the *real* sixteenth and seventeenth century objects in his possession, as opposed to an array of humdrum personalia that furthered a cult of Shakespeare, and represented Mary Hornby's own collecting networks rather than any legitimate history of the bard. Halliwell insists that his own 'pursuit [of relics] commenced … from an intense regard of the importance of the subject' rather than from any mercenary intention.[53] Halliwell's comfortable economic circumstances certainly allowed him to collect objects of value that seemed in keeping with the intellectual 'glamour' and 'moral reknown' of his subject.[54]

According to Trust historian and former director Levi Fox, the 'groundswell of literary and theatrical opinion' from the mid-1840s was decidedly against Hornby profiteering: 'the time had come' he writes, 'to put an end to misrepresentation'.[55] Given Halliwell's disposition towards the culture of 'supposition' in Stratford in the 1850s, it is unsurprising that under his guidance the Trust eschewed the practices of the local 'vulgar' Shakespeare trade, and welcomed instead donations from gentlemen with scholarly credentials and connections with learned, historical, archaeological and antiquarian societies.[56] Marvin Spevak portrays

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[52] Ibid., p. v
[53] Ibid., p. v.
[54] Ibid., p. vi
[55] Fox, *The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust: A Personal Memoir*, pp. 3-4
[56] The Trust and its appeal to these respectable networks with their culture of 'correspondence' and 'invisible collegiality' is discussed in Barbara Ronchetti, *Antiquarian and Archaeological Scholarship in Warwickshire, 1800-60* (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Birmingham, 1952); see also a broader survey in Phillippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England 1838-1886* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

Halliwell as 'a centre' around which 'so many satellites revolved and communicated'; he was a bright star in the constellation of amateur and professional editors, scholars, printers and collectors who flocked to him as the unofficial director of the Shakespeare library and museum.[57] For example, donations were received from George Scharf, a fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries, and more significantly, the Stratford lawyer and local historian Robert Bell Wheler (1785-1857) who informally promised his vast collection of local historical artefacts to the museum.[58] Importantly, Wheler was a correspondent of Halliwell long before this bequest, and was also noted as an authority in Halliwell's 1852 catalogue.[59]

Through Halliwell's network of friends and clients therefore, the Shakespeare Museum and Library swelled with late-medieval and early modern objects. The earliest recorded purchase of an object dates to 1861, when the Trust bought the base-stone of Stratford's medieval market cross from Thomas Heritage, a local builder.[60] In 1864, William Oakes Hunt, an original committee member, presented seventeen objects to the Trust including another fragment of the market cross, a portrait of the poet (now known as the 'Stratford Portrait'), a silver Jubilee medal, an 'ancient' green glass jug, and a short sword or 'hanger' which was owned by an eighteenth century alderman of the Stratford Corporation and alleged to have been Shakespeare's.[61] The donation acknowledged the local importance of the Jubilee, and provided items that, despite their poor provenance, were more-or-less contemporary with the

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[57] Marvin Spevak, *A Shakespearean Constellation: J.O. Halliwell-Phillipps and Friends*, (Münster, 2013), pp. ix-xii.

[58] The Wheler collection was officially gifted by his daughter Anne Wheler c. 1864-1868. These items were accessioned or indexed by Hunt in 1868, drawing upon Robert Wheler's monumental manuscript *Collectnea of Stratford*, SBTRO ER/1. The bequest included tiles from Holy Trinity Church; oak figurines from the Guild Chapel, an oak desk box from the medieval ecclesiastical College, various archaeological assemblages from local excavations c. 1800 – 1856, including a series of Roman coins, papal seals, and an abbot's ring from Cross-on-the-Hill, and a host of mulberry objects.

[59] Halliwell, *Account of the Antiquities*, p. v

[60] Clarence Hopper and James Orchard Halliwell eds, *Catalogue of the Books, Manuscripts, Works of Art, Antiquities and Relics Illustrative of the Life and Works of Shakespeare and of the History of Stratford upon Avon; which are preserved in the Shakespeare Library and Museum in Henley Street*, (London: 1868), p. 72

[61] For Hunt's donation see Hopper and Halliwell eds, *Catalogue*, pp. 63-72.

poet.[62] The collection of the market-cross – where it was thought John Shakespeare sold his gloves – articulated the Trust's interest in objects and sites expressly linked with the poet's family, and which corresponded with Halliwell's own collecting impulse.

In a move characteristic of Halliwell's pivotal and yet unofficial role, the New Place site was conveyed to the Corporation of Stratford in March 1862 but effectively managed by Halliwell under the auspices of the Trust until the mid-1880s. From 1861 to 1864 Halliwell discovered the foundations and well of the Clopton's eighteenth century house together with a number of bricked recesses which were interpreted as outhouses belonging to Shakespeare's original building. He also uncovered a well that, due to its construction of stones set in clay without mortar, could be effectively dated to the late-sixteenth century.[63] Halliwell was particularly careful to ensure that none of the debris from the site should enter the hands of Stratford traders. He wrote to Hunt in 1864, that 'there is the greatest danger of [timber and rubble] being repurchased by some speculator, and no matter what rubbish, an advertisement of "relics from Shakespeare's last residence" would do mischief.'[64]

2.3.3 Exhibitions at the Birthplace

Halliwell exhibited his New Place finds in the Birthplace museum in 1865 amid a broad history of the poet that drew upon a variety of early modern documents and objects. The accompanying pamphlet only indirectly attacked the Hornbys' trade, preferring instead to praise those visitors who, intrigued by objects of 'historical and literary interest … are anxious to form an independent judgement as to their value, and, in the present ease, to

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[62] The hanger is comparable to other mid-seventeenth century blades illustrated in Anthony North, 'English Hunting Swords', *The V&A Album*, (London, 1984). The brass pommel and hilt, overlaid with an incised horn handle is late eighteenth century. Strangely, this item has no modern accession number, although Hopper catalogued it as Object No. 391 in 1868.

[63] James Orchard Halliwell, *An Historical Account of New Place, Stratford-on-Avon: The Last Residence of Shakespeare* (London: 1864), p. 197, 199

[64] Quoted in Marvin Spevak, *James Orchard Halliwell-Phillips: the life and works of the Shakespearean scholar and bookman* (London: Shepheard-Walwyn, 2001), p. 314

comprehend what there is now in Stratford of real association with the memory of the great dramatist'.[65] Objects were presented with cards detailing dates and relevant information including donors, with the most important bequests from William Hunt, Anne Wheler and the Stratford Corporation being well represented.[66] Halliwell's concern for accuracy was palpable and he even cast doubt over Hunt's 'Stratford Portrait' – an object of some personal value and significance to the donor – suggesting that it was probably an eighteenth century copy of Shakespeare's bust in Holy Trinity, whilst conceding that others could and did affirm 'it to be the original painting whence the bust was taken'.[67] With the collections of others, Halliwell was capable of an even-handed scepticism.

Comparision of the 1865, 1868 and 1910 catalogues reveal little change in the Trust's exhibition policy. The Shakespeare Museum consisted of two ground floor rooms at the Birthplace which incorporated the present day 'glover's workshop', whilst the first floor (which currently displays a recreated early modern bedroon) housed the Shakespeare Library which was stacked with public records, historical documents, Shakespearean scholarship and early modern printed books. Halliwells' choices ranged from deeds 'proving that John Shakespeare, father of the Poet, resided in the House called the Birthplace', to 'original precepts in the Borough Court in Shakepeare's suit against John Addenbrooke, 1609'.[68] Downstairs, collections spilled out into liminal areas – items were hung upon the garden door, and sculptures adorned the shrubbery paths.[69] Inside, the exhibition educed a brand of late nineteenth century formalism where typologies of artefacts were displayed according to form and materials amid the cosy 'ease' of the savant's study: paintings were hung along the

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[65] See Halliwell, *A brief guide to the Shakespeare Library and Museum,* p. 3
[66] Documents included the original fine levied on the purchase of New Place 1597; a grant of 4 yard lands from William and John Combe to William Shakespeare dated 1602; See James Orchard Halliwell, *A brief guide to the Shakespeare Library and Museum* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1865). Sir Joshua Reynold's also loaned his *Portrait of Garrick in the Character of Kiteley*.
[67] Halliwell, *A brief guide to the Shakespeare Library and Museum*, pp. 3-4
[68] Halliwell, *Guide*, pp. 4-5
[69] Levi Fox, *In Honour of Shakespeare: the history and collections of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, (Straford: Jarrold, 1983) p. 23

staircase and cabinets were packed with hundreds of small items. The catalogues from Halliwell's curatorship may be usefully compared with the detailed inventory of his London residence at Tregunter Road, where the 'objects' of his Shakespearean studies were deposited in 328 drawers over three rooms – a lumber-room of minutiae from 'candle ends' to 'old pins' and 'wafers'.[70]

In the Birthplace Museum, precious metal objects were grouped together on the ground floor with Elizabethan coins sitting in cabinets alongside Garrick Jubilee medals, silver capped snuff boxes, and, at the periphery, seventeenth century brass pocket ring-dials.[71] (Following my research these two dials, displayed during Halliwells' time as signifiers of Shakespeares' gentry status could also be considered as significant items in a Protestant *momento mori* tradition.[72]) Tables of objects steadily progressed to items of larger dimensions such as the silver maces of the Corporation and 'Shakespeare's' hunitng sword or 'hanger' (considered in detail in the Creative Catalogue); and finally an array of precious, dainty and 'curious' items were unified thematically by their preciousness both as material objects and items of personalia. Here, visitors looked upon the splendour of fifteenth and sixteenth century England – an abbot's gold ring set with an uncut sapphire; a gold annular brooch or buckle engraved with the motto + AMOR VINCIT OMNIA; the ring of Shakespeare's son-in-law, John Hall (inscribed I H, in brass); Robert Quyney's silver and agate seal; and finally, a gold ring labelled 'Shakespeare's Seal-ring', together with 'an account of the Finger Ring with the initials W.S. found at Stratford'.[73] This display in particular reworked Halliwell's earlier Brixton Hill exhibition and used objects to invoke the presence of their alleged former owners.

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[70] James Orchard Halliwell, *A list of the contents of the drawers in my study and in two other rooms* (London, 1870), pp. 1-18

[71] Anon, *Catalogue of the Books, Manuscripts, Works of Art, Antiquities and Relics at Present Exhibited in Shakespeare's Birthplace*, (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1910), pp. 1-30.

[72] See Creative Catalogue entries SBT 1870-1 and SBT 1910-14 in the Creative Catalogue Appendix

[73] C. Hopper and J. O. Halliwell, *Catalogue of the Books, Manuscripts, Works of Art, Antiquities and Relics*, (Stratford-upon-Avon: 1868), p. 129.

Even seemingly irrelevant objects in the context of a Shakespeare exhibition were given a poetic and biographical gloss so as to guarantee their relevance to the museum. Halliwell's copy of Nicholas Geffe's *Discourse on the Meanes and Sufficiencie of England for to have abundance of fine silke by feeding of silke-wormes within the same*, was an early seventeenth century treatise on the cultivation of silkworms and their primary food-source, mulberry leaves. This book was donated to the Library in 1868, but was initially displayed alongside 'a phial, hermetically sealed, containing juice from Mulberries gathered from Shakespeare's Mulberry Tree' to which Halliwell wrote the accompanying text: 'It was probably soon after this period [Geffe's book published in 1607] that the mulberry-tree was planted in the gardens at New Place'.[74] Thus objects from the Shakespeare trade, formerly renounced by Halliwell, found their place among legitimate items of Shakespearean history; as curator Halliwell was able to transform a treatise on silk-worms into an authentic Shakespearean artefact. In the 1868 exhibition and catalogue therefore, the Trust employed a culture of display and interpretation where objects were valued for their ability to invoke the presence of Shakespeare within the humble confines of the Birthplace, and if possible, to transcend the humility of the built context by an appeal to their aesthetic or material value. When the objects were unconnected to the overarching trope, a 'glamour of association' with the poet was shone upon them, effectively eliding all other aspects of the objects themselves.

The personal resonance these interpretive methods had for Halliwell may be briefly alluded to by a further example. A knife with carved bone handle, discovered in 1862 'amongst the rubbish' of New Place, was described in Halliwell's account of the site as a 'personal relic … possessing strong claims to have belonged to the house in the poet's time' – although even

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[74] C. Hopper, *Catalogue of the Books, Manuscripts, Works of Art, Antiquities and Relics*, (Stratford-upon-Avon: 1868), p. 57

this equivocal label was toned down in the 1865 exhibition (Fig. 7).[75] Halliwell's claim

could be substantiated – it was discovered in an archaeological context directly associated

with Shakespeare, and from the illustration could easily fit into established typologies of

carved bone hafts of post-medieval date.[76] It is remarkable therefore that this item has

disappeared from the Trust's collection. Given Halliwell's initial ownership of the site, his

subsequent disputes with the Town Council, and allegations of theft made against him in his

youth (see below) it is possible that he took the knife (supposing it to be his own property)

when he disassociated himself from the Trust in the 1880s.

Figure 6 A corroded knife with bone handle, carved with concentric circles in a flower-pattern, from Halliwell's
An Historical Account of New Place, Stratford-on-Avon: The Last Residence of Shakespeare (1864).

Whatever happened to 'Shakespeare's knife', Halliwell's impulse to collect and possess

'personal relics' of Shakespeare has led some scholars to claim that he suffered from a 'deep-

seated aberration of character'.[77] D.A. Winstanley has noted that this aberration extended

back to his time as a student when it was alleged he stole materials from both his father-in-

law, the great collector Sir Thomas Phillipps, and the library at Trinity College, Cambridge.[78]

Samuel Schoenbaum has also documented Halliwell's working practices and his proclivity to

'vandalize' early modern printed works – including one of two extant copies of the first

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[75] Halliwell, *An Historical Account of New Place*, p. 165. The items were collectively described in the catalogue as 'A variety of interesting articles discovered in making excavations at New Place', see Halliwell, *A brief guide to the Shakespeare Library and Museum,* p. 5.

[76] See for example the range of knives catalogued by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, http://finds.org.uk/, for example LON-146A48 and LON-8F6E14 [accessed 19.6.14].

[77] See Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), p. 286, pp. 396-432. Another example of Halliwell's 'desecration' of a First Folio can be seen at SBTRO ER1/50/3, where he created a collage out of pages printed with 'Names of the Principall Actors'

[78] D.A. Winstanley, 'Halliwell-Phillipps and Trinity College Library', *The Library*, 2 (1947-8), 250-82

quarto of *Hamlet* – cutting out title-pages and sticking them into his scrapbooks, or reformatting texts from different works in order to create a collage-like archetype.[79] His lack of ethics in this regard may be contrasted with the diligence and generosity with which he carried out his work in the 1860s for the Shakespeare Library. In furtherance of Shakespearean study Halliwell purchased Droeshout's engraved portrait of Shakespeare for a hundred guineas in 1864, and having later found a buyer, vowed to 'place the excess £315 [profit on the transaction] to the credit of the Shakespeare Library at Stratford'.[80] Privately printed inventories of his collections, attentive memoranda, and reports on his doings as curator for the Stratford committees, communicate an impression of Halliwell as a fastidious organizer, a conscientious servant of the Trust's vision and a master of 'factual research'.[81]

Although Halliwell was an antiquary, archaeologist, book-lover, dealer and collector, he was principally a Shakespeare biographer, and his collection and use of materials was fixed upon this end. Shortly after work began at New Place in 1861, Halliwell commissioned the artist J. T. Blight to make a visual document of the project, and to render for posterity the Birthplace renovations that had begun in 1859. Under Halliwell's instruction, Blight also undertook the ambitious task of 'illustrating the Life of Shakespeare by representation of every morsel that could be found of his own contemporary England, - that is to say, of every object that he himself was likely to have seen.'[82] Blight was sent out to sketch bridges, churches, domestic architecture and village vistas, as well as a variety of objects including bedsteads, door locks

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[79] Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives*, p. 401

[80] Marvin Spevak, 'James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps and the British Museum Library', in *British Library Journal*, 23 (1997), 237-258, p. 253.

[81] A contemporary of Halliwell, F. G. Fleahy, noted that Halliwell was factually accurate and diligent, but 'plainly shows an incapacity to grasp more than minute details and [an] absolute inability to co-ordinate his materials'. He has also been described by J.A.B. Somerset as an important historian and the first 'REED researcher' for his prodigious work among local records – it is thought that Halliwell studied first-hand the collections of at least eighty-one different towns. See J. A. B. Somerset, 'James Orchard Halliwell-Phillipps and his Scrapbooks' in *REED Newsletter*, 4.2 (1979) p. 8, pp. 14-15.

[82] James Orchard Halliwell in the preface to Ernest E. Baker ed., *A Calendar of the Shakespearean Rarities, Drawings and Engravings, formerly preserved at Hollingbury Copse, near Brighton*, (London, 1891), pp. xvi-xvii.

and pottery that the poet may have seen on route between Stratford and London. The nineteenth century concern for a vanishing cultural heritage in the face of rapid industrialization may have also influenced such a project, but it is clear that Halliwell's investment in it was something more. His approach to collection seems closer to Pearce's notion of 'fetishistic' practice where 'the collector responds to his obsessive need by gathering as many items as possible'.[83] In his report on the New Place excavations, Halliwell wrote:

> [T]hey … whose minds have not been attracted by Shakespeare's inspirations of greatness and loving kindness to his race to regard him as a friend and benefactor, the minutest relic respecting whom is of surpassing interest, may dismiss a book like this with a smile at my prosaic idolatry.[84]

This 'idolatry' was also referred to, perhaps jokingly, as his 'madness', as can be seen in a letter from his friend Alexander Dyce who wrote in 1863: 'There is really no end to your Shakespearian undertakings: they quite astonish me; and, as you speak positively of your "madness," I shall not be rude enough to contradict you'.[85] Whilst the attempt to catalogue 'every object that [Shakespeare] himself was likely to have seen' was systematic in scope, it derived from a sentimentality that Halliwell best expressed in his account of New Place. Musing upon the close relationship between the nearby Guild Chapel and Shakespeare's last residence, he writes:

> No object in Stratford could have been more familiar to Shakespeare. When a boy he must almost have daily passed [the Guild Chapel] tower on his way to school. Later in life, the eastern end of it must have been a familiar object from his garden, out of the lane-door from which he could never have passed without the antique porch with its quaint gargoyles presenting themselves to his view. When at New Place, too, how often must he have heard and been charmed with the sounds of one of the sweetest bells ever framed by man … tones which are still heard and still inexpressibly charm, and which may have been the last –

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[83] Pearce, *On Collecting*, p. 32
[84] Halliwell, *An Historical Account of New Place*, p. v
[85] Halliwell had written to Dyce to report upon the excavations at New Place. Quoted in Spevak, *A Shakespearean Constellation*, p. 54

must have been amongst the latest – sounds that fell upon his ears during the last night that he spent on earth.[86]

The excavations, and Halliwell's project of visualization of Shakespeare's England, could be read as mere creative attempts to enter into the mind of Shakespeare, and as such, are entirely consistent with his role as biographer – but Halliwell was also a collector and curator, and his deepening sense of the tangibility of Shakespeare, combined with the elusiveness of such evidence, could not help but colour his readings of the early modern material culture he acquired, interpreted and displayed on behalf of the Trust.

2.3.4 'A sheath for a pair of knives, formerly carried by ladies, and by Juliet'

Halliwell intended to pass on his immense written correspondence, manuscript scrapbooks, and uncatalogued material to the Trust upon his death, but following an acrimonious split with the Stratford Town Council in 1883, these were sold privately or donated to libraries during his last years.[87] In terms of the Trust's object collections, this meant that Halliwell's primary research, notebooks, and other manuscripts detailing his work as the 'first curator and cataloguer (unpaid)' of Trust's collection were lost.[88] What remains in the Trust's collections are the published works such as pamphlets, minutes, and catalogues that were penned by Halliwell, and as such they are qualitative evidence regarding Halliwell's own view of the collection, as well as hugely influential sources for succeeding generations of curators. I will now consider the impact of this printed matter upon the interpretation of a 'knife sheath' donated by Halliwell to the Trust in 1868.

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[86] Halliwell, *An Historical Account of New Place,* pp. 43-44
[87] The University of Edinburgh Library holds significant amounts of Halliwell's manuscripts, which have been actively collected from other libraries since 1964. Halliwell's scrapbooks are held by the Folger Shakespeare Library; they have been catalogued by Alan Somerset, *Halliwell-Phillipps Scrapbooks: An Index* (Toronto: REED, 1979).
[88] Alan Somerset, 'Local Records', in Arthur F. Kinney ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Shakespeare*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 373-389, p. 382

Halliwell's sheath is inscribed with the date 1602, the name of the maker, an artisan known

only as W.G.W., and the merchant's mark, or owner's insignia, together with their initials,

I.N. (see Figure 43). The sheath was not part of Halliwell's 1852 Brixton Hill exhibition, but

did become a mainstay of the Shakespeare Museum from 1868 to at least 1910.[89] In 1871,

Llwellyn Jewitt reviewed the Shakespeare Museum and Library in *The Art Journal* and

counted the sheath among a list of objects 'especially worthy of note'.[90] Jewitt's account of

the sheath largely copied Halliwell's description of the object from 1868, and this reliance

upon Halliwell's original research as distilled in the printed catalogues has persisted among

curators ever since. Halliwell's entry reads:

> A sheath for a pair of knives, formerly carried by ladies, and by Juliet. See the
> notes to Romeo and Juliet, var. ed. This specimen is of box-wood; richly and
> curiously carved in every part. The subjects represented are the six Works of
> Mercy (Matthew XXV. 35, 36). … These initials [W.G.W.], which occur upon
> two similar wooden sheaths in the Debruge Dumesnil collection at Paris, dated
> in 1593 and 1615, appear to have been the mark of a sculptor in wood, probably
> Flemish, noted for his skill in works of this character.[91]

What is most striking is the bold reference to the Shakespearean dramatic tradition. By

stating that the knife-sheath was an item conveyed by ladies like Juliet, we see a return to a

Hornbyesque dramatic exegesis. However, the potent result is no longer a mere glossing of

Shakespeariana over a fabricated or faked object, but rather an intellectual engagement with

an item of undisputable early modern provenance. Halliwell urged visitors to consult

'various editions' of authoritative sources on the subject to validate his interpretation.[92]

Typical of the editions referred to was Horace Howard Furness's edited volume of 1871 that

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[89] An analysis of the guidebooks and catalogues demonstrates that the item was on continuous display during this time.
[90] Llwellyn Jewitt, 'The Museums of England, with Special Reference to Objects of Art and Antiquity: The Shakespeare Museum, Stratford-on-Avon' *The Art Journal*, 33 (1871) 57-59, p. 58
[91] The description continues: 'Below is a scutcheon supported by an angel, and charged with a merchant's mark, with the initials I.N. On the inner side are six subjects exhibiting the history of the Prodigal Son; on each of the sides appear six of the Apostles with their symbols. Below are the letters W.G.W. and the date, 1602.' See Hopper and Halliwell (ed.), *Catalogue*, p. 133
[92] Anon, *Catalogue of the Books, Manuscripts, Works of Art, Antiquities and Antiquities at present exhibited in Shakespeare's Birthplace*, (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1910), p. 121

distilled critical debates from a variety of scholarly sources into accessible footnotes and commentaries beneath the play-texts themselves. Furness argues that Juliet received her 'wedding knives' as a betrothal gift from Paris, and proceeded to use one of them in her suicide.[93] With this broad-brush interpretation Halliwell placed his knife-sheath into a narrative of matrimony and Shakespearean drama that has coloured its interpretation ever since – the current MODES catalogue entry echoes Halliwell's original 1868 interpretation labelling the item 'A sheath for a pair of wedding knives, dated 1602', but excludes the *Romeo & Juliet* reference.[94]

Close analysis of the object together with comparative research of three sheaths in the British Museum also carved by W.G.W. suggest that these items are in fact cutlery cases, which were used to store a knife, fork and toothpick and are therefore not solely (if at all) early modern matrimonial gifts.[95] In addition, in line with the curatorial conventions and presuppositions of the Trust, Halliwell and subsequent curators have felt compelled to apply a Shakespearean 'commentary' onto these objects, and by doing so suppress the potential historical richness and interpretive value of this item.

It is important to note that this reliance on antiquarian sources and nineteenth century provenance is widespread. Rather than engaging with the object directly, collectors, scholars and museum professionals have consistently echoed what is written about W.G.W. in secondary sources. From John Brand's monumental *Observations on the Popular Antiquities*, to Robert Nares' *Glossary*, Henry Syer-Cuming's article of 1861 to Halliwell's

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[93] In Furness's edition of the play, the critic Edward Malone suggested that as Juliet had already mentioned her knife before the engagement was suggested, and that such a gift would not be given until the marriage itself, she could not have killed herself with a 'wedding knife'. But this did not, in Furness's view, mitigate the interest and relevance of wedding knives for the reader. See Horace Howard Furness, (ed.) *Romeo and Juliet*, (Philadelphia: 1871), p. 229, n. 23.

[94] See SBT 1868-3/903, 'A sheath for a pair of wedding knives, dated 1602', Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/

[95] Three W.G.W. sheaths in the British Museum - 1878,1101.67; 1878,1101.69 and 1878,1101.71, http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/ [Accessed 26.7.14]. The significance of this sheath and further possible interpretation of it will be offered in Chapter 6

own 1868 catalogue, analysis of the sheaths tended to focus on the missing matrimonial 'knives' that were the presumed contents, rather than the actual sheaths themselves.[96] It was not until the 1960s that these items were seen as anything other than 'knife' or 'wedding sheaths', although Edward H. Pinto's work continued to interpret W.G.W's output in terms of the Tudor custom of wedding knives.[97] The British Museum received a large bequest of knife-sheaths from Augustus Meyrick – including three sheaths by W.G.W – in 1878, and still follows Meyrick's scholarship by cataloguing them as 'knife-sheaths', ignoring the material evidence of a ferrule surviving within one of them, with a trio compartments for cutlery and a toothpick.[98]

Conclusion

The example of the knife-sheath reinforces the importance of first-hand examination of objects, and highlights the dangers of letting wider institutional narratives or influential collectors dictate interpretation. Whilst it is apparent that the dispersal of Halliwell's manuscript collections after 1883 contributed to an overreliance upon his printed catalogues, the influence of nineteenth century scholar-curators and scholar-patrons, as illustrated by the British Museum Meyrick bequest, is by no means restricted to the Trust alone. The sheath appears to have been stranded by a lack of provenance that perpetuated the Trust's dependence on earlier accounts, and whilst this is understandable, museums will only discourage serious scholarly use of their collections and perpetuate anachronisms regarding their own collection if this default status of objects directs cataloguing practice.

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[96] For these discussions of sheaths and their missing knives, see John Brand & Henry Ellis, *Observations on the popular antiquities of Great Britain: Including the Whole of Mr. Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares* (1777, 1849) p. 131-2; Robert Nares, James Orchard Halliwell and Thomas Wright eds. *A Glossary; or, Collection of Words, Phrases, Names, and Allusions to Customs, Proverbs, etc., which have been thought to require illustration in The Works of English Authors, particularly Shakespeare and his Contemporaries,* 2 volumes, (London, 1867), pp. 487-488; H. Syer Cuming, 'On the Sheaths of Girdle Knives', *The Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, Vol. 133, (1861) 113-118
[97] Edward H. Pinto, *Treen, and other wooden bygones*, (London, 1970), p. 73
[98] For an early inventory of Meyrick's collection see Samuel Rush Meyrick, 'Inventory of the Doucean Museum', in *Gentleman's Magazine*, February (1835), p. 198

In Chapter One, I examined how the nuanced historical meanings of the Trust's 'medicine chest' were lost as a result of assumptions made at the cataloguing phase in 2001 and how this was influenced in part by the Trust's desire to expand its medical display in the home of the seventeenth century physician John Hall. My methodology of object-based analysis and comparative research enabled the chest to be ascribed to a different social purpose and milieu, a change which has led visitors to see it anew and for future scholars to engage with this piece of evidence via re-categorization and re-cataloguing (see Appendix, SBT 2001-5). Halliwell's 'sheath for a pair of wedding knives' was similarly stranded in a hermeneutic limbo as a result of imprecise categorisation, this time by Halliwell in 1868. This was sustained firstly by a dependence upon secondary sources, and then later by neglect of the working knowledge embedded in the object itself. My comparative, performative analysis of the British Museum objects has not only contributed new knowledge about an important set of extant early modern objects (see the extended discussion of this object in Chapter 5), it has also enabled the Trust to open up new debates and interpretation of this object within their existing exhibition programme.[99] These two case studies, buttressed by my methodological explorations in Chapter One, and my critical analysis of Halliwell's curatorial practice above, constitute my response to a central research question outlined in the Introduction, that of the assumed objectivity of museum catalogues, and the institutional and personal collecting policies, emotions and psychologies upon which such knowledge is based.

We have seen, for example, how Halliwell's research and curatorial interests stemmed from his self-confessed 'madness'. His impulse to collect and collate may be seen as an attempt to fuse knowledge and an emotional experience of Shakespeare; the (widely accepted)

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[99] Catherine Simpson, Museums Collections Assistant at the Trust, presented Halliwell's interpretation alongside my own research in a blog to celebrate the display of the item – the first time it has been displayed for nearly 100 years – at Nash's House in July 2013 as part of a new exhibition, *Shakespeare's Top Ten*, see http://findingshakespeare.co.uk/shakespeare-on-show-top-ten-exhibition-a-wedding-knife-sheath-or-a-knife-sheath/ [Accessed 1.8.2014].

formalism to which he subscribed and out of which heritage ventures like the Shakespeare Library and Museum grew envisaged early modern objects, although unrelated to Shakespeare's person, and the places associated with 'memories' of Shakespeare's life, to be somehow be fused together in the mind's eye of visitors. These issues of experience and knowledge of objects are still important today, as we shall see in the following discussion of trends within museum and heritage interpretation (Chapter Three).

We have also seen how Halliwell's glossed interpretations of early modern objects elided the evidence of the items in favour of associative links with the poet, and how this creates persuasive layers of interpretation that historians of material culture must analyse, accept or reject, and how 'performative' analysis of objects can assist in this process.

In the next chapter, we shall turn our attention to the fundamental assumptions that informed Halliwell's research and practice: the cultural value that he placed upon William Shakespeare. Here, I have firmly emphasised Halliwell's continuing and unacknowledged influence within the Collections Department at the Trust, which revolves around an over-reliance upon his catalogues from the 1860s. We have seen how Halliwell lucidly and brilliantly invoked Shakespeare's presumed greatness even in his scholarly examinations of archaeological evidence, and it is this attitude in relation to the Trust's buildings, particularly the Birthplace, that form a central theme in Chapter Three. I will also analyse the architectural contexts of some of the Trust's major Shakespearean properties and how these effect the interpretation of the Trust's museum collections.

Chapter Three

The Cultural Heritage of Shakespeare's England: The Trust's Shakespeare Properties

Building upon the exploration of Halliwell's approach to research, interpretation and cataloguing in Chapter Two, this chapter investigates the relationship between the Trust's historic buildings and the means by which early modern objects are displayed and interpreted within them. Drawing upon analytical tools employed by museum studies, including observation of visitor behaviour, the discussion will consider the meanings implicit in the Trust's current presentation of their properties, and identifies the extent to which the material collections conform to, or confound, such narratives, and how certain objects may be creatively reinterpreted in their current locations.[1] Before we turn to the properties and their objects however, it is first essential to understand why eighteenth and nineteenth century collectors like Halliwell and his predecessors were inspired to collate, create and – as we have seen, even fake – material collections in honour of him.

3.1 Why Shakespeare?

As noted in the Introduction, the predisposition of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust is to assume that everyone knows exactly why Shakespeare is considered to be the greatest writer and dramatist, who ever lived. In section 3.4.2 I will explore the effects of these assumptions within the sphere of the Trust's exhibition programme, but here I shall give a brief account of the development of Shakespeare's reputation, combining this with a necessarily personal account of his influence in the present. Scholarly studies of Shakespeare's influence and value usually incorporate both historical evidence and personal reflection. The nature of the historical evidence usually begins with the personal and professional achievements of the

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[1] For an authoritative compendium of qualitative research methods into visitor behaviour see Eileen Hooper-Greenhill ed, *Museum, Media, Message* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995).

poet as documented by those who knew him, including the favourable impressions he made upon his close contemporaries (for example Ben Jonson, George Chapman, Thomas Middleton and as a later admirer of his work, John Milton). Scholars also examine in detail the texts and published works, including the 'reading editions' of his plays (the First and Second Folios), which are seen as evidence for a small audience of well-off literary consumers who wished to engage first-hand with Shakespeare's texts in the seventeenth century. We learn from theatre historians that Shakespeare's works were performed to popular acclaim throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and that their inherently dramatic and comedic elements were augmented by bass, soprano and airs, as well as audacious scenery and special effects. Whilst such performances firmly planted Shakespeare as an audience favourite, eighteenth century critics were inclined to view such performances as profuse and energetic but largely flawed, and argued that the texts were inherently unstable, the result of rushed writing, lack of taste, or as in the case of Shakespeare's inclination to bawdy humour, moral error.[2]

It is generally accepted that this view changed after the Stratford Jubilee of 1769. During these events, David Garrick staged a grand recitation of his *Ode upon dedicating a building, and erecting a statue, to Shakespeare, at Stratford upon Avon*. A planted actor emerged from the crowd in the character of 'a languid aristocratic fop corrupted by the Grand Tour', and complained aloud that Shakespeare was a mere low and over-rated English provincial 'whose plays demanded levels of emotional and intellectual engagement incompatible with good breeding'. Garrick's response was to sing to the crowd (with orchestral and choral accompaniment) of Shakespeare as the 'blest genius of [this] isle', and to encourage matrons, virgins and mothers to 'pluck the freshest bays' and 'deck his honour'd bier'. According to Michael Dobson, this signalled a 'completely new and unprecedented strain in Shakespearean

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[2] This view continued to appeal to those writing in the Enlightenment tradition in the late nineteenth century, or those who eschewed Romanticism, most notably Leo Tolstoy.

panegyric, and one which has conditioned all subsequent responses to Shakespeare's work and mythos'. In it was a sense that Shakespeare was of 'nature', unlearned and raw, in opposition to a refined, learned, predominantly French aesthetic and literary tradition. It also framed popular and scholarly views of Shakespeare as the 'timeless national forefather', and the acceptable face of the national past.[3]

In the nineteenth century, the scholarly study of Shakespeare enthusiastically embraced this patriarchal figure. In an age of improvement, optimism and national pride, Shakespeare's genius was the precursor of a fully flowering imperial English race; the 'errors' attributed to Shakespeare's moral and aesthetic ignorance were now attributed to what the proudly industrious English now saw as easily remedied, even technical problems – some critics even suggested that Shakespeare was misunderstood in is time as a result of a faulty printing presses, for example.[4] Indeed, the systematic textual analysis of eighteenth and nineteenth century Shakespeareans such as Edmond Malone was largely brought to fruition by the Trust's James Halliwell, who sought to redress the errors of the 1623 First Folio by publishing a sixteen volume edition of the plays together with facsimiles of original documents in his collection – the presentation of original evidence and close philological analysis would help 'solve' questions of interpretation, emphasis and meaning. Halliwell's copies of *The Works of William Shakespeare* ranged in price from eighty to one-hundred and fifty guineas each, thereby effectively recreating Shakespeare's seventeenth century critical reading public, who now approached the texts armed with all the tools of modern exegesis.

Given the nationalistic tone of much early Shakespeare criticism then, some historians of the poet's reputation have alluded to the life and experiences of Shakespeare as framed by a

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[3] Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship 1660-1769*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 2001), pp. 215-216, 226
[4] Nineteenth century accounts of printing are recounted in Roland Mushat Frye, *Shakespeare: The Art of the Dramatist*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970, 1982), pp. 3-33

distinctly northern European national and cultural identity defined in part by a patriarchal family structure and economic individualism.[5] Again, these themes have tended to centre on the early modern home and household as the unit of such cultural and economic production, which in turn perhaps explains why the Birthplace in Henley Street became the preeminent mid-nineteenth century house-museum and part of heritage movement of 'great men's homes'.[6] Recent scholarship points to Thomas Carlyle's series of lectures, published as *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* in 1840 as the ground-breaking text that encouraged this culture of secular pilgrimage to site of national cultural importance. Drawing on a prevailing formalism, Carlyle argued that the contemplation of the domestic arrangements and 'relics' of great men – including their graves, local haunts, and studies – could in themselves be edifying and educational, and impart the personality of the iconic individual to the viewer.[7] As we shall see in Section 3.6, such ideological readings of the Trust's Shakespearean properties continue to be made by scholars in the late twentieth century.

Shakespeare's work is perceived to be both great and ambiguous, immediately powerful and yet ambivalent. The intellectual challenge, emotional intensity, imaginative power, and breadth of experience attributed to Shakespeare as presented in the play-texts themselves certainly contributes to a perennial interest in the *authentic* Shakespeare, both in terms of what in fact Shakespeare was *trying* to say, and who indeed he was. Shakespeare, according to Jonathan Bate, elicits two main responses. The poet is on the one hand endowed with the

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[5] Michael Dobson, *The Making of the National Poet: Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship 1660-1769*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 2001), p. 230

[6] See Barbara Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriation*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998)The house owned by Albrecht Durer in Nuremberg was formally acquired by the Town Council and converted into a museum in 1829; in 1859 the Freies Deutsches Hochstift was set up to restore Goethe's birthplace in Frankfurt. In the US, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello was preserved from c. 1826 until the 1920s; whilst George Washington's Mount Vernon was cared for by the Mount Vernon Ladies Association of the Union from 1802, see Glendinning, *The Conservation Movement*, pp. 110-115

[7] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and the Heroic in History* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1840). See also Melanie Hall ed. *Towards World Heritage: International Origins of the Preservation Movement 1870-1930*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011).

'self-sufficing power of absolute Genius', an artist who transcends relationships and who

endorses a (Romantic) 'unduplicatibility', a 'guarantee of individuality'. On the other hand,

Shakespeare is the genius of community, not individuality – 'he lived and lives in a

community of artists'; he is poet in the sense that he allows his reading community to be fully

human, he is a 'man speaking to men'.[8] Bate summarizes:

> It has been argued that nationalism developed in the eighteenth century because
> religion and monarchy ceased to exercise the spiritual and temporal power they
> had held until then. By this account, Shakespeare took over from God and King
> and became the deity of the secular Enlightenment and the guarantor of the new
> "imagined community" of the nation-state.[9]

Regardless of Shakespeare's assumed cultural value, it is surely proper – as a museum and

heritage site organised and directed by Shakespeare scholars of the highest rank – that the

Shakespeare Birthplace Trust should continually engage with these claims of Shakespeare's

greatness, charting the development of these ideas against historical realities. As the

following exploration of the Birthplace reveals however, the Trust does not actually engage

in such a debate at all, rather it cements its status by aiming to offer the visitor something

tangible in the highly subjective (post-modern) world or Shakespeare criticism and

performance: whilst the texts and performances of Shakespeare's plays appear to offer yet

another wonderful but ambivalent layer of hermeneutic complexity, it is the place,

possessions, and buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford that offer the preeminent starting point

to an understanding Shakespeare's authentic identity. How this is achieved is the subject of

this chapter.

3.2 An overview of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

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[8] Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare* (London: Pan Macmillan, 1997), p. 184
[9] Jonathan Bate, *The Genius of Shakespeare*, p. 185

Halliwell presented the relics of Shakespeare and items associated with 'memories of his life' via systematic arrangements of material that were interpreted by dramatic allusions and animated by the glamour of association with Shakespeare. Today, the Trust's methods of display have widened to adopt developments within museology and the heritage industry, and to accommodate newly acquired properties associated with Shakespeare. The Trust bought Nash's House, the building adjoining New Place in 1910 – the home of Thomas Nash, husband of Elizabeth Hall (Shakespeare's granddaughter) – over the next two years its Georgian façade was removed to display the original Tudor building. Palmer's Farm, originally thought to be the house of Shakespeare's mother Mary Arden, was acquired in 1930, with the purchase of Hall's Croft following in 1949. Anne Hathaway's Cottage, acquired in 1892, together with Palmer's Farm and Mary Arden's, are closer in character to heritage experiences rather than museums with object-based displays. Whilst all these properties do contain early modern objects, they do not display a significant amount, nor are they interpreted; indeed, the lack of interpretation and the use of historic artefacts in generalised schemes of period 'dressing' resonates with the following discussion of the Trust's Stratford based properties, and do not need further elaboration here.

Aside from restoration work, few museological changes were made by the Trust until the directorship of Levi Fox (1945-1984) when a new interpretation centre was built on Henley Street in 1962. Prior to this, the foundation of the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) in 1960-61 had opened up the potential for interaction between the two organisations, and this was eventually pursued in earnest under the directorship of Roger Pringle from 1991. Since that time, the Trust has worked closely with the RSC, the University of Birmingham and Shakespeare Institute; these organisations have shared resources, staff and have collaborated on education programmes, collections management, interpretation, cataloguing resources,

access platforms and even leisure experiences.[10] The library, established by Halliwell in the 1860s, has since relocated to the Shakespeare Centre and now houses the local archive and record office. Within this building, the Museum department cares for over 11,000 items, approximately 300 of which are roughly contemporaneous with the life of William Shakespeare.[11] As we have seen, the items acquired during Halliwell's tenure were mostly local antiquities and emerged from learned collecting networks together with his own research into Stratford records, including those of the corporation to which John Shakespeare belonged in the mid sixteenth century, and served as Bailiff for one year from Michaelmas 1568. A hiatus in early modern collecting ensued between 1910 and the 1990s, when, under Roger Pringle, a collecting programme was driven by a need to fill the Shakespeare properties with pieces of early modern furniture. This approach drew heavily upon the expertise of Victor Chinnery, the Tudor furniture specialist, who consulted for the Trust during this time.[12] This manner of collecting has slowed considerably under the directorship of Diana Owen (2007-present), partly due to changes of personnel and the lack of space available to display all of the acquisitions from Pringle's time – some of which are now in storage in the Shakespeare Centre and the Hill Street store. Another important category of objects not associated directly with Shakespeare's early modern Stratford comprises the miscellaneous objects made for or derived from the Stratford Jubilee of 1769.[13] The Trust also holds an as yet unknown amount of objects from archaeological excavations carried out

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[10] Examples of this collaborative relationship including the merge of RSC and SBT archives, i.e., the RSC Performance Database, and SBT Printed Book Catalogue (hosted by the University of Birmingham) see http://calm.shakespeare.org.uk/dserve/ [accessed 1.7.14]. Holiday packages such as 'Living Shakespeare' were put together by the RSC, Trust and Moat House International. The Shakespeare Institute recently employed a Research Fellow to undertake research on digital projects within the SBT, see David Hopes, *Digital Shakespeare: Access Audit* (unpublished report, 2011); Dr Tara Hamling of the Shakespeare Institute recently worked on the *Eye Shakespeare* digital app with computer engineers from Coventry University, which recreated the Trust's New Place site in virtual form. My own research is another example of close collaborative links between these institutions.

[11] The Neish Collection of Pewter, which comprised almost 500 early modern objects was relocated to Stirling in 2012 – these items have yet to be removed from the Trust's online catalogue.

[12] See SBT 1992-86 'A sweet bag' and SBT 2001-5 'A medicine chest'

[13] Some of these items were present in Halliwell's Shakespeare Museum, but many have since been acquired, or officially accessioned, in the 1990s.

in the region during the twentieth century – these include Roman and Anglo-Saxon objects deposited in the stores as long-term loans or permanent donations. This important but undervalued collection reflects the 'generalist' approach adopted in the late nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth century when, as the only museum in Stratford, the Trust was seen as and proclaimed itself to be a local museum that was committed to preserving the heritage of the area, as well as the properties associated with Shakespeare.[14]

Today, the Trust's methods of display have been heavily influenced by a variety of museological and heritage-based innovations: visitors are presented with re-imagined interiors which are displayed with real and replica late-medieval and early modern objects. Elsewhere, interpretation is offered in more traditional museum formats such as the newly installed 'Famous Beyond Words' exhibition, or the 'Treasures' exhibition at the Shakespeare Centre.[15] The Trust also employs other established heritage methods, such as costumed guides who interpret and explain the architecture, objects and significance of the Trust's properties; at Mary Arden's Farm, a working household with farm animals, orchards and 'experimental archaeology' in the form of archery and cooking displays are also used. In other areas Shakespeare's poetry can be heard with scenes from the plays performed as part of an interpretive programme as, for example, in the garden at the Birthplace.

3.3 Assessing the Trust's museology: museums and heritage sites in their late twentieth century contexts

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[14] This was very much the inclination of Levi Fox whose books on Shakespeare's Stratford encompassed pre-historic and pre-modern eras, see Levi Fox, *In Honour of Shakespeare: the history and collections of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust*, (Straford: Jarrold, 1983) pp. 108-109, p. 156. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Act of 1961 maintains this generalist position, noting that the Trust should be able to collect anything 'relating particularly but not exclusively to William Shakespeare, his life, works, and times', Anon, *Shakespeare Birthplace, &c., Trust Act*, 1961, 9 & 10 Eliz. 2 Ch. Xxxviii, p. 5

[15] See http://shakespeare.org.uk/visit-the-houses/shakespeares-birthplace/famous-beyond-words.html [Accessed 10.7.14].

The critical assessment of interpretive methods deployed by museums has developed

significantly with the onset of the 'new museology', a movement which has been defined by

a desire to explore the conceptual foundations and assumptions of museum work and to chart

histories of collecting and the intellectual and historical development of the institution

itself.[16] This 'new' museology contrasted with its older form, which was generally accepted

to be the study of methods utilized by museum professionals in their day-to-day work. The

'old museology' concerned best practice, for example, how to administrate the museum

effectively, or run an education day, or conserve an object. Economic and cultural factors

were at the heart of this 'new museology'. A culture of privatization in the United States and

the UK in the 1980s meant that museums had to prove their worth in the market place as

commercial enterprises which created tension with their traditional role as centres of

preservation and research. In a similar vein, the impact of 'deconstructionist' discourse

absorbed from cultural studies and post-modern philosophy emphasised the 'democratizing'

potential of museums, which were increasingly seen as instruments for 'social progress' that

enabled their visitors to construct meaning and knowledge for themselves, rather than absorb

the 'authoritative' views of curators and specialists.[17] The 'new museology' politicised the

museum and implied that they actively excluded objects and histories that did not conform to

normalized 'ideological schemes'; the absence of the 'Other' from museum displays thereby

reinforced inequalities of ethnicity, class, gender and sexuality.[18] 'Objective' and with it

'object-focused' knowledge shifted to a new paradigm in which, as Christina Kreps has

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[16] Peter Vergo ed, *The New Museology*, (London: Reaktion, 1989, 2006), p. 3

[17] Michel Foucault, 'Truth and power' in P. Rabinow ed, *The Foucault Reader* (London: Penguin, 1984), 51-75. Another important work in cultural studies, and one which has influenced some in material culture studies, is Paul du Gay, Stuart Hall, Linda Janes, Hugh Mackay & Keith Negus eds, *Doing Cultural Studies: The Story of the Sony Walkman*, (London: Sage, 1997)

[18] These 'ideological schemes' were usually nationalist, imperialist and capitalist normalizations of Western culture that excluded racial, cultural and class-orientated 'otherness'; see for example, Hans Haacke, 'Museums: Managers of Consciousness' in *Parachute*, 46 (1987) 84-88; C. Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside public art museums*, (London: New York, 1995); Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, theory, politics*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995)

written, 'the new museum [became] people-centred and action-oriented'.[19] Museums were

seen to carry the responsibility to shape public opinion on important issues through inclusive,

impartial and socially cohesive programmes of display and research. In this sense museums

were being seen as 'educators of the gaze' and 'reformatories of manners' by the early

1990s.[20]

Whilst museums were often characterised as incubators of civic values, 'heritage' sites, by

contrast, have been widely disparaged.[21] Although the notion of 'heritage' in its tangible and

intangible forms is a complex subject, it is clear that societies for the preservation and

conservation of national or local heritage – from the distinctly English 'cult' of the country

house embodied by the work of the National Trust (instituted 1894-95), to independent local

ventures that preserve dovecotes or fountains – have their intellectual and emotional origins

in the nineteenth century when rapid urban and industrial development threatened to destroy

'old England'.[22] Heritage has therefore always been allied to narratives of national identity

and memory, and typical heritage sites tend to combine the preservation of historic built

environments with social and educational activities that enable the visitor to 'experience' a

historical period or moment. This is achieved through various techniques including historical

recreations or re-enactments, the use of actors in contemporary dress, or the demonstration of

traditional arts, agriculture or associated folk practices. Many commentators have identified

'heritage' with a burgeoning 'service culture' or 'leisure industry' nurtured during

Conservative governments in the 1980s, and it is certainly true that under Margaret

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[19] Christina Kreps, *Liberating Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation and Heritage Preservation*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2003), pp. 9-10
[20] Tony Bennet, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, p. 46
[21] Museums, wrote Hewison, 'provide the symbols through which a nation and a culture understands itself', see Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 84
[22] Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, (London: Routledge, 1992, 2002), pp. 75-7

Thatcher's government independent heritage sites proliferated.[23] Even recent definitions of 'heritage' are heavily influenced by its political character: heritage is, according to one textbook on the subject from 2005, 'that part of the past which we select in the present for contemporary purposes, be they economic, cultural, political or social'.[24]

The selected, contingent nature of knowledge embraced by the 'new museology' had an impact upon the object-centred knowledge of museums and heritage sites. Rather than viewing objects as sources of knowledge, museology embraced approaches and theoretical models that located the real 'meaning' of museum objects in contextual and situated *praxis* rather than inherent, objective terms. According to Kevin Walsh, this led to historic structures and objects being sterilized and marketed as 'historical surfaces' or 'images' *mediated* by the heritage site or museum, rather than as extant historical things that 'possess a history'.[25] The comparatively weak tradition of material culture studies in the UK during this period perhaps also contributed to this problem. For many theorists, the museum and heritage debate were dictated by political allegiance, leading to a prevailing view that institutions touted as facilitators of civic values were in fact preoccupied by their forced participation in a highly competitive leisure industry, and as a result eschewed complex historical narrative in favour of nostalgic, neutered and 'ephemeral images of the past'.[26]

Having set out this context, the next section will consider what aspects of the past are being emphasised by the Trust's displays of early modern architecture and material culture. I will attempt to decipher the museological statements made through the juxtaposition of historic

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[23] At the beginning of the twentieth century there were 580 such sites in Britain; in the mid-1960s the figure had risen to 900, and by 1988, 2,500. Museums and Galleries Commission, Report 1987-88: Specially featuring independent museums, (London: 1988), p. 10
[24] Brian Graham, Gregory John Ashworth and John E. Tunbridge, 'The uses and abuses of heritage', in Gerard Corsane (ed.), *Heritage, Museums and Galleries: An Introductory Reader*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005), p. 29
[25] Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p. 80
[26] Key works here include Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline*; Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, and Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory: Past and present in contemporary culture*, Volume 1, (London: Verso, 1994, 1996); for quote see Kevin Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, p.4

contexts and artefacts, and place significant emphasis upon what objects and buildings themselves say about the early modern period when stripped of the Trust's narratives. What follows is a series of case studies that examine the architectural fabric of the Trust's core Stratford properties and the objects they contain.

3.4 The Birthplace

Fig 7 The Shakespeare Birthplace, Henley Street, Stratford-upon-Avon. A fifteenth century structure with sixteenth century modifications; current exterior dates to Gibbs renovation c. 1859 – 1864.

At the time of writing, the ground floor and upper 'birth-room' of Shakespeare's Birthplace are presented as synchronic moments that offer 'tantalising glimpse[s] into Shakespeare's early world'.[27] The first room after the initial bare anteroom (which comprised Joan Hart's tenement) is displayed as a sixteenth century parlour with replica tester bed representing the sort of 'second best-bed' bequeathed to Shakespeare's wife Anne.[28] Costumed guides stationed in the anteroom encourage visitors to note the 'original' flag-stone floor, which is

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[27] Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Interpretation, 'Shakespeare's Birthplace: Become part of the Shakespeare Story', http://www.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 21.7.14]

[28] The 'second best bed' debate is well rehearsed in David Bevington, *Shakespeare and Biography*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

thought to date to the time of the Shakespeare's occupation. The late seventeenth century or early eighteenth century fireplace with wooden lintel carries a variety of objects, including a box covered in sixteenth century graffiti that was used to store records belonging to the Stratford Corporation.[29] Whilst a connection can be made here between John Shakespeare's civic service, his rising status as Bailiff, and his prosperous parlour, the significance of the object is lost due to the fact that its graffiti cannot be read in its current position: in reality it has been used merely to dress the room rather than to add any further layer of interpretation.

The central kitchen and dining area bisects the house, with the parlour to the left and a glover's workshop demonstrating John Shakespeare's trade to the right. Upstairs the birth-room is dressed with numerous replica and original objects, including a tester, truckle bed and early modern cradle, which are sometimes demonstrated to help visitors visualise the daily routines, duties and folklore of the early modern bedroom.[30] Topics include dressing, sleeping rituals (including the tightening of bed-ropes), and the apotropaic beliefs of sixteenth and seventeenth century people associated with childrearing and witchcraft.[31] The visitor then passes into an extension which was almost certainly added during the building's subsequent use as a public house after 1601, and may date to as late as the eighteenth century.[32] This back range with domestic pantry and buttery area is displayed as continuous with the rest of the house, resulting in a dramatic amplification of the sixteenth century space, which is further augmented by the large gentrified planned garden to the rear which dates to the Trust's remodelling of the Birthplace and its environs between 1859 and 1868.

The structure of Shakespeare's Birthplace today derives from a meticulous nineteenth-century programme of renovation led by the Trust's architect, Edward Gibbs, whose work

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[29] SBT 1996-33/2
[30] The cradle is catalogued at SBT 2006-7
[31] Personal observation, The Birthplace, 22 October 2011
[32] Jeanne Jones, *Family Life in Shakespeare's England: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1570-1630*, (Stroud: Sutton, 1996), p. 10

was praised by Halliwell.[33] Gibbs used the earliest surviving sketch of the property (made by Richard Greene in c. 1762) as a guide to his renovations, emphasizing a gabled bay on the right-hand side of the property, and adding three tall gabled dormer windows.
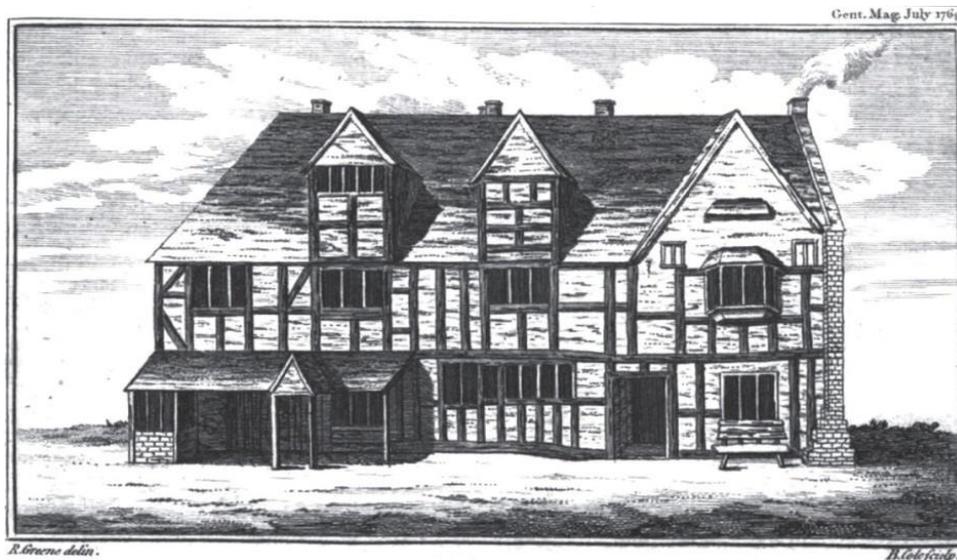
Figure 8 Benjamin Cole, Shakespeare's Birthplace, engraving after a drawing by Richard Greene, published in the Gentleman's Magazine, July 1769

A sympathetic reading of Gibbs's 'restoration' has suggested that the work was 'honestly done' and any removal of sixteenth century timbers was motivated by concerns of structural safety.[34] The work did disrupt original beams and the surrounding built environment – the cottage garden was planted on top of the razed foundations of a brew-house, an unknown number of cottages, barns, and outhouses, some of which dated from the sixteenth and seventeenth century.[35]

The earliest structure of the Birthplace conforms to the basic plan of a medieval domestic house, consisting of three bays of a hall with a large open hearth, a 'solar' range with parlour and over-chamber, and a third multi-functioning bay used for domestic production, sleeping,

[33] See the commemorative illustrated catalogue, published to mark the opening of the Birthplace, Anon, *A Shakespeare Memorial*, (London: 1864), p. 15
[34] See Robert Bearman's entry 'Birthplace' in Michael Dobson and Stanley Wells eds, *The Oxford Companion to Shakespeare*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 46-48
[35] Julia Thomas, *Shakespeare's Shrine*, p. 62

storage and so on. These 'Wealden' house types were popular with tradesmen in the late-medieval and early modern period, whose workrooms fronted onto the street and doubled as shops.[36] The fact that a cross passage dissects the house here, abutting the hall on the right-hand side, suggests that this was used as point of access to the hall, and as a means of communicating with the street and rear out-buildings. In this respect, the customary layout of a late-medieval home appears to be have correctly interpreted by the Trust. The exterior, however, is an architectural pastiche set within a fabricated spatial context.

Richard Greene's sketch has been affirmed as the earliest known drawing of the Birthplace since the nineteenth century, but the interpretive value of the image is compromised by the tradition of topographical drawing from which it emerged. The *capriccio* was a type of picture depicting landscapes, architectural scenes of ruins or buildings derived entirely from the artist's imagination.[37] These images did not represent buildings as they were, but often began with the artist's emotional reaction to a vista or site. In addition, some artists sought to accentuate the importance and aesthetic value of a building by isolating it from its surroundings, and even by inventing architectural features in order to communicate the subject's renown or reputation.[38] In Cole's engraving of Greene's sketch, the Birthplace appears within a field setting, with heightened dormer windows and a steeply pitched roof. However an unknown artists' representation of Stratford's topography made in c. 1858 places the Birthplace within the context of a terraced street, whilst John Richards' drawing (the oldest version in the Trust's collection), made 'on the spot' in 1769, depicts a dilapidated terraced house abutting the Swan and Maidenhead pub. The former watercolour captures a number of important architectural details, including a mixture of square panelling and close-

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[36] David A. Hinton, *Archaeology, Economy and Society: England from the Fifth to the Fifteenth Century*, (Ebook: Taylor & Francis, 2002), pp. 191-192
[37] See Jennifer D. Milam, *Historical Dictionary of Rococo Art*, (Plymouth: Scarecrow Press, 2011) p. 69. See also Roger Baynton-Williams, *The Art of the Printermaker: 1500-1860*, (London: A&C Black, 2009) p. 189
[38] Thomas, *Shakespeare's Shrine*, pp. 70-71

studding, elements that were largely ignored by Gibbs and almost certainly part of the original late-fifteenth or early sixteenth century structure.

These sketches in the Trust's own collection show Greene's drawing and Gibbs's restoration to be ahistorical. Whilst the presence of dormer windows is not an impossibility in the seventeenth century – indeed a late century design can be seen at the aspirational Hall's Croft in Old Town – the fashion for dormers in reality dates to the 1640s, some forty years after Shakespeare's presumed occupancy.[39] Greene's vision of a grandiose Tudor dwelling was selected partly for its antiquity and partly for its capacity to reflect the Trust's intended vision of Shakespeare or, in Samuel Schoenbaum's words, Shakespeare the middle aged 'prosperous burgher with burgher values'.[40]

Figure 9 John Richards, Shakespeare's Birthplace, 1769. Watercolour on paper. An inscription on the document reads: 'sketched on the spot by J Richards, R.A. 1769, the year of the Jubilee; when it was beautified for the occasion'.

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[39] Timothy Mowl and Brian Earnshaw, *Architecture without Kings: The Rise of Puritan Classicism under Cromwell*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press: 1995), pp. 119-124

[40] Samuel Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 379

Figure 10 Unknown artist, *The Swan and Maidenhead Inn*, c. 1858, watercolour on paper. SBT 1994-19/92

3.4.1 Re-visualising the Birthplace: 'Wealden' houses in Stratford-upon-Avon

This process of selective renovation, appraisals of Shakespeare's life as gentrified and, as we shall see, twentieth century expectations of early modern domestic space, continue to dominate the layout and interpretation of the Trust's properties, and undermine legitimate historical readings of the built environment. In addition, the Trustee's reliance upon Greene's mid-eighteenth century sketch, beginning with the building programme and continuing to recent defences of the restoration, has largely eclipsed the fact that the Birthplace emerged from a late-medieval tradition of domestic architecture, examples of which from the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth century can be still be seen today in Stratford. In nearby Rother Square stands a structure formerly known as King's House, which was built in the fifteenth century and is now known as the White Swan Hotel. The structure consisted of a large central hall with two wings projecting either side, with a jettied

first floor similar to the Guild of the Holy Cross's complex of buildings on Church Street.

Restoration in 1927 revealed a magnificent decorative painted interior with scenes from the

Apocrypha. Another late fifteenth-century dwelling that escaped Gibbs's demolition now

serves as the Trust's gift shop, but unfortunately its interior structure has been largely

removed. Another house, however, Mason's Court in Rother Street, is the best surviving

example of a late-medieval house of the middling-sort. Conforming to the 'Wealden' type,

Mason's Court was a species of house built from the mid-fifteenth to mid-sixteenth century

which took elements from the grander houses of the period but arranged them in distinctive

ways.[41]

Figure 11 Mason's Court on Rother Street, Stratford-upon-Avon. 'Wealden' house type, dating to 1450, with square framing c. 1600. Image © David Stowell

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[41] Richard K. Morriss, *The Buildings of Stratford-upon-Avon* (1994), pp. 86-87

This timber-framed structure had a central hall which was originally open to the roof and probably contained a central hearth; to either side was built a solar range (containing the owner's rooms) and a service range. Unlike the King's House, the building is compact and covered with a long single roof with continuous eaves. Less typical of the type are the curved braces or flying bressumers, stretching from the first floor jettied bays across the face of the house, creating a feature which is both functional and extravagant.[42] Square panelling and seventeenth century brick facings at the rear combine with exposed wattle and daub panelling in a rear passage, which mirror similar construction techniques found at the Birthplace.[43]

These Stratford buildings – which were probably owned by members of the successful trading, merchant or prosperous yeoman classes – are significant for being near-contemporary equivalents for the type of building lost during Gibbs's restoration, and fit John Shakespeare's status as prosperous artisan, trader and citizen.[44] In summary, the structure, plan and layout of these houses offer a more reliable point of reference than Greene's drawing and Gibbs's subsequent renovation and it could be argued that Mason's Court is the closest we can now get to the exterior façade of the original Birthplace.

3.4.2 Mediated realities

The material remains of the Henley Street property are therefore problematized by the imposition of a nineteenth century notion of an 'authentic' and 'appropriate' Shakespearean identity. The following analysis of the interpretation of the Birthplace suggests that the Trust's relationship to their actual material collections is, in any case, ambivalent.

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[42] Mason's Croft was constructed within six years of 1481 on land owned by Gild of the Holy Cross. It lies some distance from the town, and was probably owned by a wealthy yeoman farmer. See Robert Bearman, *The Buildings of Stratford-upon-Avon*, (Stroud, 1994) pp. 90-96.
[43] An exposed glazed wattle and daub panel can be seen from Henley Street.
[44] There are significant signs of rapid gentrification at Mason's Court, including a panelled room, a small gallery, and fireplace with Tudor royal arms above. See Robert Bearman, *Stratford-upon-Avon: A History of its Streets and Buildings* (Lancaster: Nelson, 1988), p. 47

The Trust's corporate plan envisaged the building as a 'cultural meeting place' and suggests that it transcends 'religious, national, geographic and other boundaries' in its role as the 'benchmark worldwide for places of literary pilgrimage embracing global diversity'.[45] Installed in 2009 the multimedia exhibition entitled 'Life, Love and Legacy' was devised by Sarner Limited and scripted by the Trust's Head of Learning and Research Paul Edmondson. It acted as the precursor to the visitor's entry to the Birthplace and occupied three large rooms in the Shakespeare Centre. It traced the earliest beginnings of Shakespeare's history, materialized via some of the surviving sixteenth-century civic material culture of the Stratford Corporation and Grammar School. These objects were displayed in glass cases against black-backgrounds that were virtually invisible until automated spot-lights illuminated them for a maximum duration of 20-30 seconds. The dramatic presentation of these items, in a turn not dissimilar to Halliwell's treatment of material culture, emphasised their passing relevance to the Shakespeare story and simultaneously discouraged prolonged viewing of the objects. This approach was most palpable in the 'powerful finale':

> the reveal of Shakespeare's actual First Folio. As the real book is illuminated, the screen above it shows a CGI animation sequence of the pages turning, and from this emerges the wonderful legacy of Shakespeare. Produced as a 30-second collage, the production uses images taken from the pages of the Folio itself and is set to the haunting music of Mendelssohn.[46]

The real object was lit only when the script allowed visitors to view it, and even then the animation sequence and music so overwhelmed the object that visitors watched the mediated explication of the book rather than studying the Folio itself. This has been described by Kate Rumbold as the moment when the Trust blurred inseparably mediation and reality, and when it became clear that the Trust was just one of many 'cultural organisations' claiming the

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[45] Unpublished Draft Corporate Plan, (Straford-upon-Avon, 2010), pp. 5-6. Thanks to Delia Garratt for sharing this document with me.
[46] 'Life, Love & Legacy' Multimedia presentation, 2009-present, production design by Sarner Limited, scripted by Dr. Paul Edmondson, Head of Learning and Research at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. See Anon, 'Sarner Brings Shakespeare To Life' http://europe.avstumpfl.com/ [accessed Feburary, 2011]

authentic Shakespeare, but who were in fact creators and mediators of Shakespearean experiences.[47]

The 'Life, Love and Legacy' exhibition argued that the cultural importance of the Trust's building stems from its metonymic relationship to William Shakespeare, a relationship which is based upon traditional local accounts of residency rather than studies of the textual evidence and material culture. As we have seen, the material evidence and particularly the exterior appearance of the sixteenth century building has been lost, whilst the documentary record remains equivocal. In 1552 John Shakespeare was fined for leaving a dung-heap on Henley Street, and from this it has been assumed that the poet's father was residing at the Birthplace.[48] We do not know the exact location of the house itself, and this reliance upon tradition was evident at the 1847 auction when doubters of local Shakespearean folklore were not refuted, but rather fatalistically told to 'stay away'.[49]

Current interpretation of the property is still dependent upon this local tradition, and the Trust does not attempt to engage with visitors who may doubt the authenticity of what they have paid to see. Rather than exploring the nuances of the documentary and existing material evidence, the purpose of the 'Legacy' exhibition was to prepare visitors for their first 'encounter' with the built-environment of Shakespeare's birth-home and to create a kindly juxtaposition between the genius of Shakespeare and the meanness of the architectural remains: in essence, to protect Shakespeare's cultural value from the absence and/or prosaic nature of the extant material environment. In this sense, the 'Legacy' exhibition is on a continuum with Gibbs's renovation as it attempts to persuade the visitor to envisage Shakespeare in certain ways. Visitors are challenged to accept that Shakespeare was born

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[47] Kate Rumbold, 'From "Access" to "Creativity": Shakespeare Institutions, New Media, and the Language of Cultural Value' in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 61, 3, Fall (2010), p. 335
[48] Ernst Honigmann, 'Shakespeare's Life' in Margreta De Grazia and Stanley Wells eds, *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, 2003), p. 1
[49] Julia Thomas, *Shakespeare's Shrine*, p. 92

here; the stout burgher of Victorian creation is gone and instead we are asked to look past the tourist constructions and lack of tangible evidence to something bigger and more important. The Trust's current approach, it could be argued, is closer to Alan Sinfield's scepticism regarding the relevance of material culture to literary studies: Shakespeare may have been shaped by time, place, genes, learning and experiences, but his genius is unique, intangible, even transcendental – Sinfield is perhaps right to query the use of a 'pots and pans history' of Shakespeare in light of these facts.

One result of the Trust's pursuit of the intangible Shakespeare is that the buildings and objects of the everyday are made to seem increasingly irrelevant. This is demonstrated by the lack of information provided for objects throughout the Trust's properties but especially at the Birthplace where none of the objects are labelled and no information is provided to place the items in context. Objects in the Birthplace are occasionally referred to (as in the Birth-room) by guides, but usually they are mute background presences or room-dressings used to create 'historical surfaces'.

The distance erected between visitor and object through a lack of information and mediated access to objects could be understood in functional terms as a means of reducing the amount of time spent in the Birthplace by visitors during the peak seasons. The Birthplace attracts on average 360,000 visitors a year (the four other sites have a combined annual average total of 400,000 visits).[50] The most popular attraction therefore is also the smallest; timed-tickets ensure a regular flow of visitors, and guides responsible for individual rooms must work to a schedule to ensure groups move smoothly between spaces. Congestion, and a feeling of being 'managed' or subject to 'crowd control' are acknowledged concerns recognized by the House Manager and visitor services teams, and are, to an extent, unavoidable issues when

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[50] Figures taken from the Attract Marketing Ltd / Phoenix Market Research & Consultancy, *Audience Development Plan*, January (2010), p. 12

working in historic buildings.[51] At peak season, large groups of twenty-five or more people are regularly crammed into the small rooms of the Birthplace (on average little more than 12 ft x 14 ft). In these instances, guides could not be expected to deliver a high standard of formal or informal learning, and it could be argued that written interpretation if it were introduced would not be read at the busiest times.

The lack of interpretation could also be read as an attempt by the Trust to subvert the bardolatry and relic hunting of yesteryear, but the denial of 'irrelevant' object information may in fact be having the opposite effect. On a visit in February 2012, I witnessed an encounter between a guide and visitor in the first anteroom of the Birthplace. The guide was being questioned by a man with an Australian accent in his late forties who had just come from the 'Legacy' exhibition. He asked the guide if Shakespeare had 'walked on this floor', and if he had 'touched this here', and he pointed to the overmantle of the fireplace. The guide was clearly surprised and perhaps uncertain of the man's tone, but responded in the affirmative. The man then bent down and touched the floor with his hands, and then rubbed the overmantle and said with wonder in his voice to everyone nearby 'Shakespeare could have touched this here, like *this*'.[52] Whilst this is one individual experience, it is possible to argue that the Trust's ambivalence to its material collections in favour of an elevated Shakespearean experience does in fact create an environment where 'ritual' responses are normalised. More importantly for the historian of material culture, the interpretive value of the Trust's collections is constantly undervalued by this approach – intrinsic meanings are marginalised in favour of associative ones which are considered to be more relevant and noble.

3.5 Nash's House: an index of Shakespearean material culture

[51] Personal communication, Chloe Malendewicz, House Manager at the Birthplace, May 2013.
[52] Observation on visit to the Birthplace 5 February, 2012

Next to the New Place site is a three storeyed jettied town house which was almost certainly built after a series of fires that devastated Stratford in 1594.[53] It is currently a mixture of heritage site, 'furnished as it would have been in Nash's day' (c. 1640) on the ground floor, with a more orthodox museum environment on the first floor displaying furniture and decorative arts dating from the sixteenth to twentieth centuries.[54] Here also are items from the New Place archaeological dig (undertaken by University of Birmingham Archaeology, 2012-2013) together with the majority of the Trust's Garrick Jubilee artefacts. These objects are used to consider the wider social and economic changes affecting Stratford in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries such as the coming of the railways and the burgeoning tourist industry centred around the Birthplace and theatres. Next to this is a large temporary exhibition space with displays such as the 'Web of Life' exhibition (2010-2013), 'Shakespeare on Show' (occasional objects in focus displays), and the current 'Shakespeare's Top Ten Characters', which integrate explication of Shakespeare's plays with sixteenth and seventeenth century material culture. These exhibitions elaborate on dramatic themes established by the Hornbys and Halliwell, and juxtapose characters from Shakespeare's plays with the items they may have once used. Objects for the 'Web of Life' display were selected for their relevance to broad themes such as 'Eating and Drinking' and 'Religion'. Characters from the plays were used to interpret the objects with lines spoken by Falstaff used to communicate qualities concerning early modern latten spoons, a brass serving dish, a panel painting of *A Maid plucking a Goose*, poesy roundels and Raeren stoneware. 'Nature and the Seasons' displayed a ceramic watering pot and a twentieth-century inscribed crystal vase with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* motif; whilst 'Religion', narrated by Isabella from *Measure for Measure*, was explored using objects such as wooden carved figures from the nearby Guild Chapel, a rosary, books of prayers and conduct manuals from the library collections.

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[53] Richard K. Morriss, *The Buildings of Stratford-upon-Avon* (Stratford, 1994), pp. 86-87
[54] See http://shakespeare.org.uk/visit-the-houses/ nashs-house-amp-new-place.html [Accessed 10.7.14]

On the ground level Nash's House is comprised of a front reception and shop area, a small stairway and passage to the New Place site, a large hall and a brick paved scullery at the rear. The house was subject to intense restructuring from the eighteenth century onwards; the early nineteenth century façade in the neo-classical style was removed by the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in 1912 and reverted to a sixteenth century town-house loosely based upon the neighbouring Shakespeare Hotel.[55] Each room is displayed using sixteenth and seventeenth century objects from the collection. The reception is dominated by a fireplace together with an array of domestic fixtures and fittings including a tapestry, fireback, andirons and stools, whilst the stairwell is glazed with medieval roundels (whose provenance is not known) and hung with a portrait of the seventeenth century antiquarian John Evelyn. Inbuilt glazed cupboards installed in the nineteenth century display busts of Shakespeare, seventeenth century Italian majolica, and a variety of drinking vessels. The hall itself is dominated by furniture – the Corporation's 'newe Cubborde of Boxes' (see Chapter 4), an object at the heart of local-government and the coordination of taxation and religious reform in Warwickshire and Worcestershire in the late sixteenth and seventeenth-centuries is here displayed within a domestic interior with only a brief line of interpretation. With the exception of this item, no interpretation of the objects on the ground floor has as yet been attempted, and even the small interpretive panel for this significant object is apparently ineffective – in a interpretive activity the public overwhelmingly thought that the cupboard was for linen or some sort of pantry.[56]

The domestic theme continues with an array of large tables, cupboards, dressers and 'glass-keeps' – an approach which may have been designed with a view of recreating an original interior, but the room is overwhelmed by so many similar pieces that it is difficult to imagine

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[55] Richard K. Morriss, *The Buildings of Stratford-upon-Avon*, p. 86
[56] See 'Mystery Object' series, May 2011, http://findingshakespeare.co.uk/category/mystery-objects [accessed June 2012]

it as a working space. The majority of these pieces were in fact acquired in 1993 when the Trust sought to fill some of the sparse early modern interiors of its various properties with contemporary domestic furnishings. In that year, 15 cupboards were bought, including two wall mounted food cupboards, three drinking glass cupboards, and ten large cupboards of assorted types, including courts and presses.[57] In the same year, 12 seventeenth century tables were also acquired.[58] These have clearly been 'stored' rather than 'displayed' in Nash's House, being too fine for the currently empty house at Wilmcote that once belonged to Shakespeare's mother.[59]

At Nash's House, the divide between museum display and heritage experience is blurred. Whilst attempts have been made to explore social history using objects, the items have again become ineffectively affiliated with literary characters. Shakespeare's plays are used as a resource for explicating the practical use and meaning of the material culture of everyday life, but this methodology, even when applied with the most acute sensitivity, will soon run out of meaningful parallels and examples. As we have seen, Juliet may have used 'wedding knives' to stab herself, and Falstaff's belly may help our understanding of a sixteenth century butter-churn, but these parallels quickly become fatuous and unhelpful to understanding both the object and Shakespeare's works. Despite the variety and richness of the stories that could be told about the objects, and on the first floor, the overarching museological presentation, items are stranded if they do not fit neatly into a Shakespearean index of material culture.

3.6 Hall's Croft

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[57] See SBT 1993-31/275, 1993-31/270, 1993-31/265, 1993-31/255, 1993-31/154, 1993-31/91, 1993-31/143, 1993-31/526, 1993-31/668, 1993-31/932, 1993-31/487, 1993-31/894, 1993-31/274. SBT 1993-31/29 and 1993-31/613 have been dated to the late seventeenth to mid-eighteenth century.
[58] See SBT 1993-31/559, 1993-31/482, 1993-31/330, 1993-31/240, 1993-31/152, 1993-31/41, 1993-31/342, 1993-31/258, 1993-31/164, 1993-31/160, 1993-31/311, and 1993-31/308.
[59] Mary Arden's comprises a series of bare rooms, based on last visit in December 2013.

Hall's Croft, begun around 1612, is mostly furnished with seventeenth century objects and is staged as the working home of John Hall and his wife Susannah Shakespeare. Apart from the Birthplace, it is perhaps the Trust's most coherent example of a 'spatialized biography' mapped onto an early modern building.[60] The presence of Hall, a physician, Stratford Council member and parish clerk of the Puritan persuasion, and to a lesser extent Susannah, are invoked in every room. Unlike the Birthplace, its exterior is largely seventeenth century, with later additions extending away from the main body of the house and put to use in distinctly modern ways, i.e., for offices, café and shop area. These partitioned spaces allow for the early modern sections of the house to flow more or less seamlessly, recreating what is apparently an authentic early modern space.

Like the Birthplace, the Halls occupancy derives not from any documentary evidence but from a late nineteenth century tradition upheld and perhaps started in *Spenell's Family Almanack*.[61] It was earlier called Cambridge House during its time as a girl's school, but the Spenell tradition is upheld by the Trust through its docents, site interpretation and displays, which include a physician's consulting room in the rear parallel range, populated with (Dutch) drug jars, mortar and pestles, and a large livery cupboard which is conveniently if deceptively imprinted with the initials 'I. H.'

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[60] Julia Thomas, 'Shakespeare and Commercialism' in Gail Marshall ed, *Shakespeare in the Nineteenth Century*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 251-268, p. 251

[61] Samuel Schoenbaum, *William Shakespeare: A Compact Documentary Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977, 1987), p. 291

Fig 12 The 'consulting room' of John Hall, Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon

Bought by the Trust in 1949, the building is constructed of roughly eight individual and interconnected structural units, dating from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. Fragments of an earlier building persist within the seventeenth century sections, with traces of mid-sixteenth century ceiling joists and purlins reused within the current structure.[62] The extant building of 1612/13 is of two bays jettied at the first floor, with close-studding below and square-framing above – these two bays correspond with the standard ground-floor spaces utilized in buildings of this type: a parlour and hall. To the rear of this building is the 'parallel range', jettied, close-studded and square-framed in keeping with the front, but elevated a foot above ground level. This rise accommodates a small cellar running the length

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[62] Timbers dating to 1550, 1556, 1602 and 1604, found embedded into the current structure, suggest that a building existed on or close to the present building, see R. Meeson and N. Alcock, *Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon: an architectural survey and history*, report for Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (Stratford, 1998). See also Miles and Worthington, *Vernacular Architecture* 30 (1999), Appendix No. 100.

of the parlour and hall, and the original stairwell (no longer in use) that once communicated with the first floor. This survival is rare and wonderfully illustrates the direct passage from 'public' parlour to the over-chamber that characterized many early seventeenth century middling-sort buildings. The parallel range was probably planned, but not built, at the same time as the two-bay range due to the twisting of some posts in the parlour; the majority of the timbers in the parallel range were felled in 1613/14.[63]

The later construction of an elaborate staircase, modelled on the geometric stone stairwells of the wealthiest gentry and nobility, highlights the aspirational tastes of the mid- to late seventeenth century owners of the building. As a unit, the structure that houses the staircase was added c. 1653-1678, and connected the main body of the house with the separate kitchen range at the rear which had been built c. 1630/1. The third, large projecting bay to the right of the entrance was added around the same time to accommodate an upper-chamber and another lesser or low parlour below it. Today this upper chamber has an impressive vaulted ceiling and large fireplace (which communicates with the ground floor hall fireplace and chimneystack) – and is currently displayed as a bedroom with a large oak press, a livery cupboard, a late-seventeenth century commode, an early seventeenth century portrait of a woman in black and lace holding a prayer-book, and two upholstered chairs. Above the earlier hall and parlour on the ground floor, the two (at least) rooms that originally made up the space are now one large room operating as the principal exhibition space.[64]

Whilst the fabricated exterior of the Birthplace impedes an accurate understanding of the interior, the relative completeness of Hall's Croft – albeit with additions over time – is submerged by a heritage-narrative of domestic order that is distinctively twentieth century in

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[63] The similarity between the two ranges, i.e., framing patterns, suggest a coherent and planned structure, however the shift from oak to elm as the primary building material (perhaps as a result of distortion) may indicate a hiatus in building between the two structures.

[64] Various exhibitions are rotated here, including the 'RSC in 50 Objects'; see http://www.rsc.org.uk/whats-on/exhibitions/history-of-the-rsc-in-50-objects-online [accessed June 2012]

character. Upon entering the house from Old Town, the visitor enters a 'reception area', with a large late seventeenth century fireplace to the right, and a dining room to the left. A mixture of presentation styles ranging from period rooms dressed to look as if the owner's had just left contrast in the upper rooms with glass-case exhibition space. In addition, some of the upper rooms are completely empty, or else partitioned play-areas with stuffed toys and dressing up kits. Each room appears to have its own complete and hermetic identity mimicking the modern household: bedroom, kitchen, dining room, child's play room, and with Hall's consulting space, a type of study or workroom. Seventeenth-century domestic space is presented as privatized, ordered and fixed, in complete contrast to current scholarship that stresses the fragmentary and fluid nature of rooms in the early modern period.[65]

At Hall's Croft, conservation and security issues have become increasingly problematic, and exert an influence over how objects are displayed. Since 2010, small-scale infestations of insects have damaged some wooden artefacts and the fabric of the house itself.[66] In addition, a series of thefts in 2011 and 2012 revealed major security problems, made worse by the limited availability of staff to invigilate areas where objects were on open display.[67] Light damage effects the location of some objects: the *mementori mori* image painted by an unknown member of the English school c. 1575 hangs in a dark recess at the top of the stairs, where it is easily missed and difficult to see it in detail.

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[65] See Matthew Johnson, 'Rethinking houses, rethinking transitions: of vernacular architecture, ordinary people and everyday culture' in David Gaimster and Paul Stamper eds, *The Age of Transition: The Archaeology of English Culture 1400-1600*, Society of Medieval Archaeology Monographs, 15 (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1997), 145-155, p. 146; Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England*, pp. 83-84; and for an excellent Italian perspective see Erin J. Campbell, Stephanie R. Miller and Elizabeth Carroll Consavari eds, *The Early Modern Italian Domestic Interior, 1400-1700* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014).

[66] Carpet and Death-watch beetles have both been found; it is thought that open chimneys attract nesting birds which in turn carried the insects, distributing them through their droppings. In 2013, a turned-ash child's chair has been removed from Hall's Croft for conservation. Sheila McVeigh, personal communication, June 2013.

[67] Roz Sklar, Museum Officer, personal communication, May 2012. See also theft of iron-work dating to the seventeenth century, http://www.stratford-herald.com/local-news/5372-metal-thieves-steal-300-year-old-pipes-from-hall%E2%80%99s-croft.html

Barbara Hodgdon has suggested that the Trust's obsession with authenticity, authorship and legitimisation has led to insidious narratives of the early modern period becoming normalised in the Trust's displays.[68] In keeping with some of the ideological language of the 'new museology', Hodgdon is keen to highlight connections between the Trust's vision of Shakespeare as the 'universal colonizing bard' and a brand of Western 'cultural expansionism'.[69] Perhaps more plausible is her discussion of the Trust's 'history of Western possessive individualism' evinced through the 'show-home' feel of Hall's Croft.[70] Piled high with exquisite objects, and arranged in an ahistorical, and for Hodgdon, 'bourgeois' fashion, the layout of Hall's Croft seems to reflect modern sensibilities of ordered and use-specific interior spaces, and fails to acknowledge the complex layering of architectural styles and changes that have overtime created a composite reality of domestic architecture, rather than the distilled Jacobean image of domesticity intended by the Trust.[71]

Whilst the building does overemphasise the Hall's status and income by surrounding them with objects they perhaps could never have owned, the Trust nevertheless attempts to interpret interior spaces and objects by weaving them together. Hostile critics of the Trust's approach, including Hodgdon, appear to view the objects in the Trust's displays as virtually meaningless in themselves: any meaning they have is contextual and situated, and as such, they are mere *tabula rasa* upon which any message may be written. Objects are thus presented as victims of an interpretive framework that is too strong for them and which forces them to mouth a hostile or seemingly preposterous museum ideology.

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[68] Barbara Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade: Performances and Appropriation*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), p. 194
[69] Barbara Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade*, p. 202
[70] Hodgdon, *The Shakespeare Trade*, pp. 203-206. For Hodgdon, Shakespeare's 'most authentic identity' is to be found within the Trust's 'star artefact', or artefacts, one of three copies of Shakespeare's First Folio. It is the library, not the objects and buildings, which 'affords the only proof of [Shakespeare's] material existence' and assures for Stratford a stamp of authenticity, p. 202.
[71] For an evidence based if ambiguous reading of room use in late-medieval and early modern homes, see Ursula Priestley, Patrick Corfield and Helen Sutermeister, 'Rooms and Room Use in Norwich Housing, 1580-1730' *Journal of Post-Medieval Archaeology*, 16 (1982), 93-123

It is clear that the Trust's use of biography to animate their early modern buildings and collections is confused by a lack of tangible evidence relating to these structures, and a disinclination to engage in creative interpretive projects that draw upon the distinctive 'working knowledge' embedded in objects themselves. The dark corner in which the visitor encounters *Death and the Maiden* (Fig. 14) does not encourage a profitable reading of the image, but relocated within the over-chamber or parlour of Hall's Croft, the image may be creatively read as a domestic panel painting within a *memento mori* tradition. This tradition juxtaposed the fineries and pleasures of life, in this case wealth, learning and sociability, as represented by the woman's dress, books and lute, with symbols of death here seen in the skull and hourglass. These images reminded early modern viewers that death awaits all and emerged from medieval Catholic tradition; this image has clearly been shorn of any explicit Catholic imagery whilst the dress is contemporaneous with the fashions of the 1570s. Its size suggests that it could have been hung in a large chamber, and something of the class tension regarding the display and ownership of such images is related in Ben Johnson's *Poetaster*, where Albius tells his wife to 'hang no pictures in the hall, nor in the dining-chamber … but in the gallery only, for 'tis not courtly else'.[72] The lack of gallery at Hall's Croft could be alluded to as a reminder of the Hall's supposed middling status, and the image's function within a parlour or over-chamber. The unusual 'treble' lute of the image was an instrument that was specifically used for playing a higher range of notes within a 'whole' consort or collective of musicians and singers, or for playing improvised segments within a 'mixed' or 'broken' consort.[73] Her expression displays a look of concentration, the eyebrows are raised and the lips slightly pursed as if following a strain of notes. She looks directly at the viewer, ignoring both the musical books open before her (the staffs are blank in any case), in a pose

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[72] Ben Johnson, *Poetaster*, ed by Tom Cain (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1602, 1995), p. 110
[73] Peter Forrester, 'An Elizabethan Allegory and some hypotheses', *The Lute*, 34 (1994), 11-14

that could be heightened using lute music played in the room as a means of connecting the painting with a working contemplative early modern space.

Figure 13 Unknown artist of the English school, *Death and the Maiden*, c. 1570-75, oil on panel, 65cm x 49 cm. SBT 1993-30

The blank pages of the songbook suggest that the woman is indeed improvising, and looking out towards us – we may imagine the viewer of this painting imagining, or actually playing, a duet with the painted companion. In this way the painting could be actively interpreted within the domestic space of Hall's Croft in a way that harmonizes the object and context, whilst creatively exploring the potential of paraliturgical images in the domestic sphere in post-Reformation England.

Conclusion

This chapter as interrogated the assumptions about Shakespeare's inherent cultural value and traced their presence within the exhibition practice of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. It has been shown that the iconic, even hagiographical perception of Shakespeare as a 'self-

sufficient' independent genius has fuelled overarching 'narratives' of authenticity which have in turn elided, confused and discouraged scholarly use of the Trust's material collections. This view has been expounded by a consideration of practical exhibition and conservation concerns, and the lack of creative engagement with objects predicated upon a belief in their apparent meaninglessness outside of context. Importantly, the Trust's inclination to ignore the surviving evidence of the material culture in their possession in favour of simplistic Shakespearean biography has been shown to be a major factor in the devaluing of the collection, stemming back to Halliwell's curatorship and beyond to the fabrication of Shakespeare as the triumphant face of the national past. With studies of the Birthplace and the architecture of extant late medieval and early modern buildings in Stratford, as well as proposed narratives for paraliturgical imagery in Hall's Croft, I have also demonstrated new ways in which an active engagement with material culture could overcome these narratives of authenticity.

Chapters Two and Three have measured the influence of the Shakespearean mythos with regard to the interpretation and display of material culture at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust. The following chapters now consider aspects of the collection that have been stranded as a result of their disconnection from the standardized Shakespeare narratives. In the next chapter, I will highlight the museological disconnections between archival, architectural and object based sources at the Trust, and attempt to establish provenance for objects that form an integral part of the Trust's collection of objects from fifteenth and sixteenth century Stratford.

Chapter Four

The Material Culture of Stratford's late-medieval Guild and early modern Corporation

In the following study of buildings, objects and records pertaining to the Guild of the Holy Cross and Stratford Corporation, I address a key problem in collections research today: the problem of provenance. We have seen how ideological presuppositions and Shakespearean narratives have influenced the interpretation of museum objects and spaces; in this chapter I demonstrate how object, textual record and spatial context can recover lost and forgotten information about objects in the Trust's collection. The considerable documentary evidence housed in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's archives is used to interpret the archaeological spaces of the late-medieval Guildhall in Stratford-upon-Avon and for the first time, the objects owned by the guild and the subsequent early modern Corporation are placed back into their original working contexts. Particular focus will be placed on a fifteenth century elm chest which survived the suppression of the Guild in 1547 and continued to be used by the Corporation well into the seventeenth century. I will also consider the 'Newe Cubborde of Boxes', a large press or chest of drawers built for the Corporation in 1595. These items have stood in the Guildhall, and later in the collections of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, undervalued, and largely unknown, for over five-hundred years.[1]

It is extremely rare for sets of late medieval and early modern working objects, buildings and documents to survive together and *in situ*. There are many reasons for this. Most obviously, buildings simply change hands or are pulled down, and their contents sold or lost. Over time, objects and spaces may lose their meanings or gain new ones. In addition, the connections between objects, built contexts and documentary evidence often break down because of methods of study, collection and preservation. These very processes – guided by a desire to

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[1] The objects in question were only moved into the properties governed by the Trust in the late twentieth century.

analyse, coordinate and safeguard heritage for future generations – may in fact have negative consequences. When James Orchard Halliwell inventoried the Stratford Guildhall in search of 'relics' of Shakespeare in the 1860s, he put in motion a process of separation of the Guild and Corporation documents and objects from their spatial contexts. In this chapter, I will attempt to reverse some of these disconnections and to interpret the archaeological and architectural evidence – principally the Guildhall with its Upper and Lower Hall, South Wing, 'counting-house', and Council Chamber – and chart how these spaces and the objects within them changed against a backdrop of Reformation, incorporation and economic growth. My emphasis is upon the use and movement of objects within architectural spaces, and by following these changes we catch vivid glimpses into the everyday life of Stratford's pre-Reformation Guild and post-Reformation civic commonwealth.

4.1 Stratford-upon-Avon, the Guild and the Corporation

At the intersection of Church Street, Chapel Street and Chapel Lane, a visitor to Stratford-upon-Avon in the early to mid-sixteenth century encountered a complex of buildings owned by the Guild of the Holy Cross, the Blessed Virgin and St. John the Baptist. A stone-built Chapel, a two-storeyed close-studded Hall and schoolhouse, and an imposing row of almshouses with its hall and parlour to the rear were built, according to Robert Bearman, by independent minded civic leaders, who owed both their wealth and autonomy to John de Coutances, Bishop of Worcester, who laid out the new town of Stratford and granted burghal rights to settlers there in the early thirteenth century. These new burgesses held their land freely, selling, bequeathing and dividing it as they saw fit – and soon this coterie of

enfranchised inhabitants had laid the social and economic structures that would later support Stratford's late-fifteenth and early sixteenth century urban merchant elites and traders.[2]

Our sixteenth century visitor would encounter prominent townspeople attending feasts and services at the guildhall and guild chapel as well as their parish church. Within the latter, the Collegiate Church of the Holy Trinity, which stood at some distance from the medieval market centre, stood the Great Rood with its wooden screen, altars, painted and embroidered images and sacred lights. Since the late fourteenth century, 'singing boys' assisted the chantry priests in their offices, rehearsing within a structure on the north side of the church, later known as the charnel or 'Bonehouse', before processing into the Lady Chapel and from thence to the various chantries.[3] Standing within large grounds adjacent to the church was the impressive stone-built College with its many chimneys and windows. The College housed the priests and their servants in what must have been considerable comfort; it was one of the largest and most elaborate buildings in Stratford, eclipsing the Clopton's residence (later Shakespeare's New Place) in both richness and size. In Stratford, allegiance was therefore shared and sometimes uneasily divided between two important pillars of late-medieval religion, the lay-religious guild and an ecclesiastical centre which also boasted scholastic and manorial functions.[4]

Inside the Guild's own consecrated building on Chapel Lane, every inch of the interior was carved or painted, from the angelic choirs high up upon the roof beams and bosses, to the riot

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[2] Robert Bearman, 'The Guildhall, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Focus of Civic Governance in the Sixteenth Century' in J. R. Mulryne ed, *The Guild and Guild Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford*, (Farnham: Ashgate 2012), p. 97.

[3] J. Harvey Bloom, *Shakespeare's church, otherwise the collegiate church of the Holy Trinity of Stratford-upon-Avon; an architectural and ecclesiastical history of the fabric and its ornaments*, (London: T.Fisher Unwin, 1902), p. 10.

[4] Robert Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530-1580' *Midland History*, 32 (2007) 68-109, pp. 85-86.

of colour in the Doom painting above the chancel, and the Dance of Death on the north wall.[5]

The adjoining Guildhall mimicked the high domestic grandeur of the late-medieval aristocracy, as visitors negotiated a hierarchy of spaces, richly hung with banners demonstrating the collective identity of its members. These guild buildings were 'symbolic of the power and influence of the leading townsmen of the late medieval period', and 'a visual representation of the ideal of independent governance'.[6] The surviving documentary evidence – guild registers, building accounts, wills, inventories, and parish records – amply demonstrate this reading of the buildings, but it is only relatively recently that the spaces themselves have undergone scholarly analysis.[7]

4.2 Methodology: objects, archives and spaces

This chapter uses the material culture of the Guild and the later Stratford Corporation to interpret the social and civic meanings of these spaces. The elm muniment chest built by the guild in the fifteenth century was a receptacle for its most prized possessions including ritual plate, dining-ware, textiles, monies and written records. These textual records of guild activity, priceless sources in themselves, may be augmented by an understanding of how they themselves were stored, used, and thought about. As we have seen, these records survive in the form of a register of membership, known as the Gild Register – a book bound in beautiful

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[5] The Gild Chapel is the subject of both wide-ranging surveys and specific studies; histories of its building and development can be found in L.F. Salzman and Philip Styles eds, *Victoria History of the Counties of England: Warwick*, vol. 3 (London: Oxford University Press for the University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1945) and in Keith T. Parker, *The Guild Chapel and other Guild Buildings of Stratford-Upon-Avon: Based on the research of Wilfrid Puddephat*, (Stratford-upon-Avon: 1987); for studies of the interior, specifically the wall paintings, see John Gough Nichols, *Ancient allegorical, historical, and legendary paintings : in fresco, discovered in ... 1804, on the walls of the chapel of the Trinity, belonging to the Gilde of the Holy Cross, at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickshire, from drawings, made the time of their discovery, by Thomas Fisher* (London: H.G. Bohn, 1838); Wilfrid Puddephat, 'The mural paintings of the Dance of Death in the Guild Chapel of Stratford-upon-Avon', *Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society,* 76 (1958), 29-35; K. Giles, A. Masinton and G. Arnott, 'Visualising the Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon: Digital models as research tools in historical archaeology', *Internet Archaeology Journal* 32 (2012); also see note 7

[6] Bearman, 'The Guildhall, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Focus of Civic Governance in the Sixteenth Century', p. 97

[7] Kate Giles and Jonathan Clark, 'The Archaeology of the Guild Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon' in J. R. Mulryne ed *The Guild and Guild Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford*, 136-169, pp. 160-167

stamped leather-work, containing ordinances, lists of guild members, their designations, and the amount or fines paid by each – together with one hundred and twenty three account rolls which were discovered by Halliwell (in his capacity as 'curator' and collector for the Trust) in the 1860s.[8] Halliwell also found 645 deeds, thirty-six rentals, sixty-five miscellaneous items (including Bishop Giffard's indulgence of 1270 and a contemporary extract from the 'Valor Ecclesiasticus' of 1548).[9] Importantly for this study, Halliwell also found an inventory of guild property made in 1475.

Recent studies of the Guild and Corporation buildings do not consult the 1475 inventory – this is undoubtedly an oversight as the document is significant for a number of reasons.[10] Firstly, it is the last inventory of the Guild's possessions before the incomplete and prejudiced valuations of the 1540s. Secondly, the 1475 inventory allows us a glimpse of the guild at the height of its wealth and civic influence which did not dip significantly until the Reformation, and it is therefore the best evaluation of its material culture extant. Thirdly, it is not written by government commissioners but guildsmen, who understood the emotional, personal and spiritual significance of the objects being recorded as well as the spatial layout of the building. The interpretive value of the inventory may have been overlooked due to the completeness and vigour of the documentary record – the guild's accounts chart a wide range of social, religious and economic activities such as building work, guild customs, political intrigues and relationships, even the names and contents of some of the rooms and the personalities associated with them. In addition, for scholars with an early modern and/or

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[8] The Gild Register was bound in leather in 1488 and stamped with 10 roses, an Agnus Dei, and dragons. See Paul Morgan, 'An Oxford Binding of 1488-9', *The Book* Collector, li (2002), p. 77-82.; Mairi Macdonald (ed.), *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society, 42 (2007), pp. 13-16.

[9] The accounts are noted in full in W.J. Hardy's introduction to his edited volume, *Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation Records: The Guild Accounts* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1886). The deeds are catalogued at Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Record Office BRT 1/2; the other items at BRT 1/3.

[10] The inventory can be found at SBTRO BRU15/3/9; it is listed by Mairi Macdonald in her various publications, but it is not directly discussed, nor has it been transcribed or printed in full in the (ongoing) Dugdale series. It was printed, but not analysed in an appendix to Edmond Malone, *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* (London: 1821), pp. 549-554

Shakespearian interest, the inventory sits just outside the scope of traditional periodization, 1500-1750. The historical scope of my approach mirrors other writers in the sense that the late-medieval guild is seen as integral to a clear understanding of the Corporation in which Shakespeare's father served as bailiff, but my approach lays emphasis upon the objects that were used by and helped shape these organisations. Similarly, whilst guild accounts and registers are commonly used by historians to determine the relative ascent or decline of a guild prior to the reforms of the mid-sixteenth century[11], I will use the documentary evidence available to identify the nomenclature used by scribes to define material objects and architectural spaces, and in conjunction with the inventory identify and establish provenance for objects in the Trust's collection that were built and used, according to my research, by the guild. On this point alone, it is clear that a research-perspective informed by a museum collection can indeed shed new light onto old objects.

It has been noted that the guild accounts routinely conflate objects, people and spaces, using brief and expressive terminology that made sense to the accountant but requires unpacking for modern ears. A typical example is the use of the word 'boteria' which could mean a specific room containing barrels of ale and bottles of wine (sometimes the word 'botteleria' is used) – a space large enough to be a working area for two or more people (particularly on busy feast days) – and a space that could operate as a sizeable storage room. Elsewhere in the records, the scribe uses 'boteria' to describe an object within the counting-house, probably a timber-dresser or set of shelves built into the wall.[12] Similarly, ordinances in the Gild Register refer to a 'tresorye', in which documents, light silver and fines should be kept – the tone of the accountant suggests that the tresorye could be a room, a piece of furniture, or

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[11] Ken Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community in Late Medieval East Anglia c. 1470-1550*, (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2001), pp. 154-165. A feminist reading of guild accounts and registers made by other English lay-religious organisations can be found in Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2008).

[12] Hardy, *Corporation Records,* p. 35; SBTRO BRU15/3/9. In additions, the 'boteria' may refer to a 'storeroom for wines or other liquors' or 'the body of servants who keep and serve the liquor', Robert E. Lewis & Hans Kurath (eds.) *Middle English Dictionary*, (Michigan: 1971).

both.[13] It is therefore appropriate to now discuss the layout of the Guildhall and the interrelationship between its spaces, people and objects, and offer some interpretation of the language used by the guild's accountants.

4.3 Exploring the interior spaces of the Guild Complex

A number of satellite rooms surround the main core of the guildhall, including the 'almsrow' or almshouses, the so-called 'Pedagogues House', and the schoolhouse. Taken together, these buildings reaffirm the clear connection between acts of charity and sociability in late-medieval Catholicism. Each guild member contributed 2d. towards an Easter feast 'for the purpose of cherishing brotherly love and peace', at which prayers were offered up to God, the Blessed Virgin and the Holy Cross. Each member was instructed to bring a great tankard to this gathering which was filled with ale and given to the poor.[14] Provision was also made for guild members in their old age, and for the ill and indigent. In 1425/26, Thomas Elmys and his wife Alice pledged a 'fine' and all their belongings to the Guild in order to secure a property should they become sick and infirm. In 1456, an entry in the Gild Register tells us that Robert Forster, a herdsman, paid 6s. 8d. to have 'an almshouse in our almsrow if it become vacant within this year'.[15] From 1427, the elderly were housed in a building on Church Street before the current row of almshouses was erected in the early sixteenth century.[16]

The 'Pedagogue's House', so named because of its traditional association with the school and private lodging of the schoolmaster, has been tentatively but convincingly identified by Mairi Macdonald, Kate Giles and Jonathan Clark as the hall and parlour of the almsrow, built

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[13] SBTRO BRT1/1 f.ii

[14] L. Toulmin Smith, *English Gilds: the Original Ordinances of More Than One Hundred Early English Gilds*, Early English Text Society, xl (1870), pp. 212-219

[15] J. H. Bloom (ed.), *The Register of the Gild of the Holy Cross, the Blessed Mary and St. John the Baptist… of Stratford-upon-Avon*, (London: 1907), p. 43, 124

[16] Giles and Clark, 'The Archaeology of the Guild Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon', pp. 154-156.

according to the will (proved in 1503) of the Stratford merchant, Thomas Hannys.[17]
Although the Pedagogue's House is now two storeyed, Giles and Clark note that the presence
of two surviving Queen Posts in the upper chamber indicates that this was once an open
hall.[18] Here the residents of the almshouses, the bedesmen and women of Stratford met, ate,
and drank under the Guild's protection.

The location of the schoolhouse and the lodgings of the guild's schoolmaster, present a
problem. Throughout the early fifteenth century, the latter appears to have had no fixed
abode or place of business. The incumbent in 1402/3, John Harpour, was lodged in an
unnamed guild tenement for which he paid 6s. 8d. per year, and during this time he held
lessons in 'the new chamber in the hall'. In 1412/13, John was living and working in the
house of St. Mary in Oldetown, and three years later, the schoolmaster rented a house in
Churchstreet.[19] A new 'Scolehowus' was built by John Hassill, master carpenter, in 1427.
This was clearly a large undertaking: three carpenters, two labourers, together with three
other workmen were employed to process 500 sawn wooden boards, 38 spars, 6 cartloads of
Drayton stone, and 2 cartloads of plaster from nearby Welcombe.[20] Whilst the Upper Hall
was certainly used as the grammar school by the eighteenth century, it is uncertain when the
fifteenth century 'Scolehowus' abandoned its original function. A possible answer has
recently been suggested by Robert Bearman, who traced the 'infill house' – the structure
abutting the southern end of the Hall, and filling in the gap between the Hall and the almsrow

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[17] The current building is fabricated from timber felled in 1502, strongly connecting it with Hannys's will. The
will stipulated 'a littell oratory for a chapel having other chambres both byneth and above for logynd the seid
poore people convenyently and made to there ease with chymneys and draughtes'; quoted in Mairi Macdonald
ed, *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross, Stratford-upon-Avon*, Dugdale Society, 42 (2007), Appendix 2,
pp. 474-483; see also Mairi Macdonald, 'The Guild of the Holy Cross and its Buildings', in J. R. Mulryne (ed).
The Guild and Guild Buildings of Shakespeare's Stratford, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), pp. 25-6
[18] Giles and Clark, 'The Archaeology of the Guild Buildings', pp. 152-154
[19] Hardy, *Corporation Records*, p. 5, 12; '6d the rent of John Harpour, because it was pardoned to him out of
charity by the Master and Aldermen ; 4a the rent of the house of St. Mary in "le Oldtown" which the Master and
Aldermen have pardoned to him yearly, as long as he wishes to keep the school in it.' It is probable that the
house of St. Mary in Oldtown refers to the same property used by the Gild of the Blessed Virgin prior to 1403.
[20] Hardy, *Corporation Records*, p. 18

– back to the schoolmaster William Dalam, in 1555. At this time Dalam lived in 'the chamber next the house or hall lately called the guild hall', and in January 1567/68, he was proceeded by Robert Hall who rented the tenement 'some time imployed to a schole house'. For 21 years Robert rented this property, 'a house in Church Street, commonly called the old school with chamber over'. From these mid-sixteenth century locations, Giles and Clark propose that the infill house could have been the 'Scolehowus' alluded to in the 1427/28 accounts. [21]

4.3.1 The Guildhall

From 1296 the guild used a 'Rodehalle' in Church Street, sub-letting it from the then tenants, Geoffrey and Margery de Bagindon. They allowed the Gild to use the hall for one week each year for 'drinking' (perhaps the Eastertide celebrations), and in addition, to use part of the building for their *mornspeche* – a meeting on the morning of the Gild's festival day.[22] By 1389, the growing influence of the gilds in local affairs concerned the monarch to such an extent that a national survey was instituted, and those organisations without proper constitution were threatened with suppression. At the time of this survey, the guild was keeping detailed accounts of their affairs, which noted 'repairs to the Hall of the Guild' in 1388/89.[23] Building activity on a new hall is recorded in 1417/18 which is consistent with the felling range for timbers dating (c. 1410-1435) used to construct the present hall.[24] Another structure built immediately after the completion of the hall (now known as the South Wing) projects from the southern end into a courtyard beyond and was probably part of the original plan of construction.

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[21] Giles and Clark, 'Guild Buildings', p. 155
[22] Macdonald, 'The Guild of the Holy Cross and its Buildings', p. 14
[23] Hardy, *Stratford-upon-Avon Corporation Records,* p. 2
[24] Alison Arnold and Robert Howard, 'Tree-ring analysis of timbers from the Guildhall complex and Pedagogue's House, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire' 68 (English Heritage Research Report Series, 2006), p. 26

The Guildhall was a large and operationally complex building, which has been discussed in terms of private, public, secular and sacred spaces.[25] Wilfrid Puddephat, whose copious unpublished notes on the Guildhall survive in the Trust's archives, envisaged the building as a two storey Hall, with a projecting South Wing comprising a ground floor counting-house and first floor chamber.[26] In the Lower Hall, Puddephat discovered a faded painted scheme of Christ on the Cross flanked by two unknown figures on the south wall in the 1950s, and suggested that this was the Guild's chapel or 'altar-room'[27] served by a chaplain who also lived in a chamber within the building.[28] Giles and Clark reaffirm this, adding that the Crucifixion probably formed the reredos to an altar set upon a raised platform.[29] Whilst this is feasible, it must be noted that references to a 'chapel in the hall of the said Guild newly-built' in the accounts actually date to 1424/25, a year or so before the consecration of the Guild Chapel proper. The inventory of 1475, which lists the vestments, altar cloths and banners in the Guild's possession, does not mention any altar or chapel within the Guildhall itself, and it may be asserted that the 'altar-room' was disassembled soon after the Bishop's visit in 1426.

The most intriguing structure for our purposes is the South Wing, constructed immediately after the hall. Using the guild accounts and register, together with Clark and Giles' architectural analysis and my own research, I suggest the following layout. The South Wing had a ground floor counting house – probably used to inventory goods and materials as they

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[25] Parker, *The Guild Chapel and other Guild Buildings of Stratford-Upon-Avon: Based on the research of Wilfrid Puddephat*; C. M. Woolgar, *The Great Household in Late Medieval England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 49, pp. 111-136; Jane Grenville, *Medieval Housing*, (London, 1997); Anthony Emery, *Greater Medieval Houses of England and Wales, 1300-1500,* III Volumes, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)

[26] Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive DR624/1-33, DR399/1-8

[27] I have used the term 'altar-room' to avoid confusion with the Guild Chapel, on Chapel Street.

[28] Whilst a figure of John the Baptist would be more appropriate considering the patron saints of Stratford's gild, the typical iconography of the Crucifixion included John the Evangelist; in addition a fresco of the Evangelist and Virgin flanking the Cross appears in the Gild Chapel on the dividing western wall between the nave and chancel, see SBT 1994-19/17, 'A print showing a medieval fresco in the Guild Chapel, Stratford-upon-Avon, from a drawing dated about 1804', Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Catalogue, http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed 21.8.14]

[29] Giles and Clark, 'Guild Buildings', p. 144

arrived, but which also offered a large fireplace (built in 1427/8) and oven for preparing food for the feasts and baking the bedesmen's bread.[30] Upstairs from this dual function kitchen and counting house was another space of similar size but partitioned into two areas. One of these was an upper 'chamber'; here Master John Harrys rested in 1427/28, and John Marchall and William Parchementmaker wrote up the years accounts and ate their breakfast in front of the fire of 'charecole'.[31] This chamber was a more private space with table, bed, and coffer for the Master's books.[32] It sat alongside a communal area, which also appears to have been used for food preparation, as andirons and butcher's 'clevers' are recorded here in 1475. This area was probably the 'overbotery' – i.e., a boteria on the floor overhead – containing 'mensales' [tables], 'basyngbord', 'dressers' and 'shelfes' – we also know a door from the 'overbotery' communicated with the first floor of the Guildhall.[33] The South Wing therefore had various functions: a kitchen, a store room, a counting room or rooms, and areas of sociability, respite and recreation. Thus, the cluster of rooms as revealed by the 1475 inventory resists 'elite' or purely 'functional' categorization, and instead we see a surprisingly open and fluid space with a degree of common access.

Passing through the ogival-headed door of the 'overbotrey' into the Hall, the visitor entered a corridor screened from the main body of the Hall to the left by a lathe and plaster partition.[34] To the right were two rooms, described as the 'Pantery' and 'Botery' in 1475. These may have begun as open spaces, but by 1455/6 a door 'de la botrie' was strengthened with a lock,

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[30] The Kitchen is mentioned throughout the accounts in relation to ingredients bought to furnish the Master's table and communal feasts, and in relation to the requisitioning of cooks and cooking equipment. For example in 1440-41, 1½d was paid for a 'schovil' for the cooks to put charcoal on the fire, Hardy, p. 26. Cooks were heavily identified with the Guild's business and social identity, as can be attested by their gift of hoods of coloured cloth in 1427/8; Hardy, *Corporation Records*, p. 19
[31] Hardy, *Corporation Records*, p. 18, 30, 37
[32] Ibid, p. 18
[33] The door separating the South Wing and first floor Hall was mended 1430, see SCLA BRT 1/3/40
[34] Giles and Clarke found evidence of a series of grooves and empty peg-holes at the southern end of the Upper Hall, 'Guild Buildings' pp. 143-147; see also Hardy, *Corporation Records*, p. 53.

and by 1475 they are recorded as two spaces, with the locked 'Botery' containing plate, linen and 'II Cofurs with Evydences'.[35]

In summary, the South Wing contained a kitchen, accounting house and chamber, but in practice spilled out into the Upper and Lower Halls to encompass a 'Pantery' and 'Botery' area to the south of a partitioning screen. Below these rooms in the Lower Hall, was a flexible space which once served as a chapel and retained religious painted decoration. This was also accessed by a door from the South Wing. In the South Wing, we see a mixture of activities such as food preparation, devotion, recreation and relaxation, and these were also rooms of business, accounting and storage where the Guild's 'treasures' and 'evydences' were kept. Whilst the historical, architectural, and archaeological studies utilized in this section deepen an understanding of the guild's structure, organisation, and development, they fall short of utilizing the actual objects that were used and stored within the Guildhall itself. Only a handful of pioneering studies have attempted to reconnect objects and furnishings with their original built environments.[36] Using these as a starting point, we now turn to the Trust's collection of Guild and Corporation objects.

4.4 The material culture of the Guild in the collection of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust

As established in Chapter 1 and 2, the Trust collected numerous items associated with the Guild since its inception in the 1840s, many of which can be traced back to Anne Wheler, sister of the Stratford antiquarian Robert Bell Wheler, in the nineteenth-century. Among

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[35] Hardy, p. 35; SBTRO BRU15/3/9

[36] For religious objects and buildings see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, (Yale, 1992, 2005); Richard Marks, *Images and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud: Sutton, 2004); David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist eds, *The Archaeology of the Reformation* (Leeds: 2003); for domestic buildings and material culture, see Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household*, (London and New Haven, CT: Yale, 2010), Tara Hamling & Catherine Richardson eds, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings,* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 258. See also Catherine Richardson and Tara Hamling's AHRC project, 'Ways of Seeing the Early Modern Domestic Interior', http://www.kent.ac.uk/mems/domestic%20interior.html [accessed 1.8.14]

these is a brass seal matrix unearthed in the grounds of the College[37] and the silver-gilt mace used by the Guild from the 1460s onwards.[38] Wheler also preserved a series of carved oak angel figurines from the Gild Chapel when alterations were made there in 1804.[39]

Figure 14 SBT 1865-2/ 1 to 4. Carved oak angel figures from the Guild Chapel, c. 1420-1499

4.4.1 The elm muniment chest

But despite the inherent interest of these items, the focus of this section is a large elm chest with strapped iron fittings.[40] In 1862, James Orchard Halliwell found this chest in the Guildhall, within the 'Council-chamber near the door'. It contained a small 'recess at the right hand [side]', stuffed with nineteenth century legal papers referring to a dispute over tithes.[41]

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[37] Only the wax impression is retained by the Trust, the matrix itself is now in the British Museum. SBT 1868-3/1050

[38] SBT 1868-3/1043.1

[39] The Guild Chapel carved angels are catalogued at SBT 1865-2/1 - 5

[40] SBT Lt2

[41] J. O. Halliwell, *A Brief Hand-list of the Records Belonging to the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon, Showing their General Character; With Notes of a Few of the Shakespearian Documents in the Same Collection* (1862), pp. 10-11

Figure 15 SBT Lt2 Elm muniment chest, c. 1400 -1458.

His brief inventory of the chest provides a snapshot of the chest *in situ*, and in still in use,

although we cannot be sure that the guild's accounts and register were always stored in such a

way. Nevertheless, such continuity of location, object and document, kept together in excess

of five hundred years, is startling. The chest then disappears out of record for nearly a

century, until it and various other items pertaining to the Guild and Corporation and known as

the 'Borough Collection', were received and accessioned in a piece-meal fashion during the

1980s.[42] In 1990, the object was displayed in the New Place Museum (Nash's House), and

until March 2014 it formed part of the 'Life, Love and Legacy' exhibition in the Shakespeare

Centre on Henley Street.[43]

4.4.2 Physical description

The furniture historian Victor Chinnery, who acted as collections consultant to the Trust until

his death in 2012, dated the object to the mid-fifteenth century.[44] It is made of large boards

of elm reinforced at the sides by four massive iron brackets, with three large hinges extending

from the back across the lid and terminating in hanging latches, with three corresponding

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[42] Some of these items were not properly accessioned until 1993.

[43] Levi Fox ed, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, vol 5, (Hertford, 1990), p. xvi. The chest is photographed in the exhibition where it stood, 20/11/2013. It was removed from display to make way for a new multimedia exhibition 'Famous Beyond Words' in March 2014.

[44] Chinnery's research notes were condensed by Ann Donnelly, the Trust's former museum curator, into a catalogue entry, which I have drawn upon and augmented with my own analysis of the object. See SBT Lt2.

lock-plates in the front face. The sides, now truncated, originally extended to the floor to form feet. Inside, the chest is divided into two sections. A wooden partition on the right hand side creates a small coffer within the chest, approximately 45 cm square, this also has a lid and lock.   In some respects the chest parallels the medieval 'standard' or armourers chest, which developed distinct compartments for plate armour and helm in the fourteenth century. These 'standard' chests were often boarded, strapped with iron brackets, and brightly painted with heraldic motifs.[45] The elm chest in the Trust's collection bears traces of the original fifteenth century vermillion paint on the lid, sides and front, although no other painted decorative scheme is visible. The presence of paint gives us an indication of the chests contents. Vermillion pigment was derived from the expensive imported mineral cinnabar or from mercury sulphide, and in addition to its brilliant colour it reduced the porosity of the wood and effectively sealed it against moisture.[46] Such treatment would make the chest suitable for the storage of any precious items, be they metal or parchment.

The fleur-de-lis terminations on the ironwork are typical of the mid-fifteenth century, but these custom-made and fitted brackets[47] may have been specifically chosen in honour of the Blessed Virgin, one of the guild's patron saints.[48] The item shows no sign of the remodelling

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[45] An outstanding fourteenth century example belonged to Richard de Bury, Bishop of Durham, c. 1334-1345. His long chest or standard is bound with iron-strapwork with fleur-de-lis finials, and painted with armorial devices in rich colours. See http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/starobject.html?oid=34448 [Accessed May 2012]

[46] R. Bruce Hoadley, 'Wood as a Physical Surface for Paint Application' in Valerie Dorge and F. Carey Howlett (eds.), *Painted Wood: History and Conservation*, (Los Angeles, 1994), 2-16

[47] Many late medieval and early modern chests utilized 'ready-made' hardware, such as nails, hinges and locks; these 'shop bought' fittings ranged from the simple and practical to items of greater complexity, strength, and florid decoration. Ironmongers' inventories include many items that are largely undifferentiated: *heyngges* and *latches* appear in large batches for example; whilst decorative hinges and straps are distinguished as *garnets*, *uttgarnettes* and *almarigarnettes*, and are more expensive. The straps on this piece, however, bent to suit the dimensions of the chest, are clearly custom made. This is evident from the lid straps which span the depth of the chest, and could not be sold unseen unlike the corner brackets which are strips of iron bent at right angles. The finials are continuous with the iron-work and therefore it is probable that this decorative feature was requested by the client.See Henry Thomas Riley ed, *Memorials of London and London Life, in the XIIIth, XIVth and XVth Centuries…*, (London, 1868), pp. 282-285; John Blair & Nigel Ramsay, *English Medieval Industries: craftsmen, techniques, products*, (London, 2001), p. 178.

[48] The fleur-de-lis, although common, is also a specific symbol of Jesus' Mother, an amalgamation of the rose and the lily, which together reminded late medieval people of the rose without thorns and the lily among the brambles – all evocations of Marian purity. It is been argued that the rose and lily merged theologically and

that often befell late-medieval chests after the Edwardine Acts of 1551 and the Jacobean Canons of 1603, and therefore we may assume that this object remained in 'secular' use or out of sight.[49] There are however signs of substantial damage to the left-hand lock plate, suggesting that the lock beneath has been replaced – indeed the lock-rivets have been hammered through the plate. This work may have been the result of a lost key, or a faulty lock which could not be disengaged from the hasp.[50] (An entry from the guild accounts notes a payment for a repaired lock, to be discussed later.) Three locks and keys point to the standard practice of three key-holders – a theme clearly visible in the ecclesiastical chest furniture of the medieval period, and in later civic presses and boxes after the Reformation.

4.4.3 Locating the chest in the Guild records

For the purposes of collecting and storing alms securely, Pope Innocent III (d. 1216) declared that every church should have a 'hollow trunk, fastened with three keys, the latter to be kept severally by the bishop, the priest, and a religious layman', and this practice was taken up by fifteenth century domestic accountants, craft and socio-religious guilds.[51] At Worcester, six keys were made and distributed, one each, to the high bailiff, an alderman, and a chamberlain chosen by the 'grete clothynge' or assembled guild; the remaining three keys went to a chamberlain chosen by the commoners, and the remaining keys to two 'thrifty comyners, trewe, sufficiant, and feithfulle men'.[52] Clearly this custom meant that a representative of

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iconographically in late medieval English culture, see Douglas Biggs, Sharon D. Michalove and A. Compton Reeves eds, *Traditions and Transformations in Late Medieval England*, (Leiden, 2002), pp. 240-259.

[49] According to such articles, each parish church should possess a suitable chest that fastened down, rendering it static, and in some cases, a hole was cut in the lid for alms to the poor; see Edmund Gibson ed, *Codex juris ecclesiastici anglicani: or, The statutes, constitutions, canons, rubricks and articles, of the Church of England ...*, (London, 1761), p. 203-4; J. C. Cox & A. Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, (1907), pp. 291-307; W. E. Tate, *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England*, (Chicester, 1946, 1983), pp. 37-42.

[50] See Fred Roe, *Ancient Church Chests and Chairs in Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Essex, Kent and Surrey*, (London: 2007 digital edition), p. 108

[51] Tate, *The Parish Chest*, pp. 36-7.

[52] Toulmin Smith, *English Gilds*, p. 377

each level of the guild hierarchy and the wider community was present at the opening of the chest ensuring, in theory at least, fairness and transparency in their business affairs.[53]

In Stratford, as in Worcester, it is possible that a similar system was in place. Certainly the Guild did make note of its material goods – the Guild's ordinances of 1443 indicate that the members made inventories, and that one copy should be 'leyde in the tresorye for record' so that 'from yere in to yere and from prokator to prokator [proctor to proctor]' the guild could monitor its moveable goods.[54] The surviving document tells us that the guild owned three chests or 'cofurs' stored in the Guildhall – 'a longe cofur in the Countynghouse' – and 'II Cofurs with Evydences in the Botery'.[55]

The 'longue cofur in the Countynghouse' may be traced back in the Master's accounts to 1427/28, where various payments are recorded to make a coffer 'to stand upon the table in the counting house to keep the books, &c., of the Master in'.[56] This item was constructed of 'rendebord' or split planks of wood, a material that was used by the guild for a variety of smaller jobs such as windows, garden gates, and guttering. The term also loosely described a wooden base that could carry further forms of decoration such as tiling, carving or painting, and given this context 'rendbord' may allude to a simple boarded chest with a carved frontal.[57] The account continues with payments for nails, a 'pair gemowes', and a lock and key.[58] These details refer to the construction of a boarded coffer, perhaps with additional facings or a painted scheme, with a hinged lid, two pin-brackets (gemowes) and a single lock. It was evidently 'longue' relative to its weight and bulk, but light enough to rest upon the

[53] Ibid, p. clv, 271
[54] SBTRO BRT1/1 f.ii
[55] SBTRO BRU15/3/9
[56] Hardy, *Corporation Records*, p. 18
[57] Sidney Graves Hamilton ed, *Compotus Rolls of the Priory of Worcester of the XIVth and XVth Centuries*, (Oxford, 1910), p. 92; for similar panels see Herbert Cescinsky and Ernest R. Gribble, *Early English Furniture and Woodwork*, 2 vols, (London: Routledge, 1922) fig. 13, 14, p. 14
[58] Hardy, *Corporation Records*, p. 18

collapsible trestles and boards used by the guild at this time.[59] As it was made to stand upon a table, we cannot reasonably assume that the object described was as large and heavy as the elm chest, and the latters' three original locks and three *gemowes* are conclusive.[60]

In 1430, 7d. was paid to repair 'the locks and keys of a chest in which the treasure and muniments of the Guild are kept', although the accounts do not specify an exact location.[61] As we have seen two chests with 'evydences' were being stored in the 'Botery' which, according to the layout of the South Wing established above, was at the southern end of the guildhall and accessed via the 'overbotrey'. Evidence of repair to the elm chest in the Trust's collection, perhaps made in 1430, can be seen, and in addition the separate compartments within the elm chest correspond to both treasure and muniments – the latter may be reasonably assumed to be the 'evydences' of the 1475 inventory. Whilst some of these 'evydences' may have been stored in the Master's 'longue cofur' in the chamber off the 'overbotery' in the South Wing, the lockable 'Botery' door and more private location would have made it a perfect location to keep the Guild's most valuable ordinances, letters patent legitimizing the fraternity, and deeds which assured its financial survival. It is remarkable that many of these same documents were later found in the elm chest by Halliwell. In summary, the evidence of the material culture, the accounts of the Guild regarding repairs and the use of objects, and the physical continuity of the object within the Guildhall itself, strongly suggest that the elm chest is the same treasure and muniment chest used in the Guildhall, and specifically within the cluster of interrelated spaces on the first floor: the counting-house, boteria, and overbotery.

4.4.4 Use and meanings

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[59] SBTRO BRU15/3/9
[60] SBTRO BRT1/3/38 1427-1428; see also Hardy, *Corporation Records*, p. 18; for *gemowes* see D. Yaxley, *A Researcher's Glossary of Words Found in Historical Documents of East Anglia*, (Dereham, 2003), p. 89
[61] SBTRO BRT1/3/40

In 1475 therefore, the elm chest stored the 'evydences' of the guild together with its 'treasures', including numerous items given by the membership to procure prayers for the departed. A 'Stondynge Cuppe of Selver … gylded by the Bordurs' listed in the 'Botery', was perhaps the same cup given by Thomas Chastleyn and his wife in 1422; and the six spoons 'one of silver gilt & 5 of silver' presented by John Stanley for the souls of his parents in 1458/59, may also have been listed in the chest among the two dozen silver spoons 'with flatte gyldyn Knottes at the Ende'.[62] Two more silver spoons were given by the Master John Hannys in 1460 'in full payment of the fine for the souls of Richard Hannys of Hudcote [Hidcote, Glos.] & Agnes his wife, parents of John'.[63] It was also filled with a variety of mazers, or turned wooden dishes with silver mounts, including one adorned with a rose and a 'Beeste therein of Selver'. We also find more utilitarian items among the treasures: three humble latten basins, a brass pestle and mortar, and two 'Salte Salers'.[64] But these gifts were also accepted as payments for membership fees or light-silver, such as the two 'brasen' pots given by 'Al[i]son Thorne' and Mawde Furbour; whereas a 'brass measure worth 6s. 8d.', was presented for the soul of Alison Colyer in 1471/72.[65]

As Robert Tittler has argued, the desire for prayers to aid the deceased through purgatory elicited a highly social and material response, to the extent that the identity of the departed was not only known, but constantly remembered in a public manner.'[66] In addition to the names directly associated with these objects in the records, items were personalized and animated by the Guild of the Holy Cross through their collective use. A mazer kept within the chest 'w^t a bonde of selver & overgylte w^t a nowche [an ornament, or jewel] in the bottom

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[62] The Chastleyn and Stanley gifts are recorded in the Gild Register, see Bloom, *The Register of the Gild of the Holy Cross*, p. 34, 129; and Macdonald, *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross,* p. 54, 248, 465
[63] Macdonald, *The Register of the Guild of the Holy Cross*, p. 248
[64] SBTRO BRU15/3/9
[65] SBTRO BRU15/3/9; Macdonald, *Register*, p. 195; the Furbours were a Warwick family recorded in the 1440s, Mawde, mentioned only in the inventory, may have been related to them. Colyer's gift can be found in Macdonald, *Register*, p. 294
[66] Robert Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England: Politics and Political Culture, c. 1540-1640* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 27-8

of our ladye', was used and somehow broken at the wedding of John Oxton, who was elected

alderman in 1457, and later served as proctor and master. This marriage probably took place

before his election to the officiate of the guild, although no records outside the accounts and

register exist for him.[67] Sheila Sweetinburgh has provided a vivid picture of how objects

formed links in the collective memory of religious organisations in her study of 180 mazers

listed in two inventories of Christ Church Priory, Canterbury. Here, each bowl was

'impressed' with the identity of the owner, both living and deceased, the latter being

explicitly evoked via meal-time presentations of the objects combined with after-dinner

processions to the cemetery where the bowls' previous owners were buried. These objects

were therefore embedded with 'sensory memory' which was unlocked by handling and use in

specific contexts.[68] How the guild's mazer was broken we do not know, but the event itself

was clearly familiar to the auditors, and the object was kept despite its state of disrepair. It is

clear that objects like this acted as repositories of communal memory, and the items offered

up in return for prayers anchored the living to a sense of identity and history through the

continued acknowledgement of the material contributions of the deceased.[69]

The 'Stondynge Cuppe of Selver', the mazers, the guild's banners, coloured cloth hoods, and

the fabric furnishings of the altars in both church and chapel, have not survived. The copes

and vestments of the Guild were sold in October 1576 and the proceeds kept by the newly

incorporated Stratford municipal government for the 'use of the Chamber'.[70] The objects

have passed out of the historical record, and were perhaps sold among the local population, or

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[67] Macdonald, *Register*, p. 234, 238, 242, 246, 251. 295, 306, 310, 313, 320, 322, 331-2, 340, 342, 344
[68] Shelia Sweetinburgh, 'Remembering the Dead at Dinner Time' in Hamling & Richardson eds, *Everyday Objects*, 257-266, p. 258.
[69] See Tittler, *The Reformation and the Towns in England*, pp. 39-40
[70] *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, 5 vols, 1-4 transcribed by Richard Savage, with introduction and notes by Edgar I. Fripp (London, 1921-29), vol. 5 edited by Levi Fox (Stratford-upon-Avon: Dugdale Society 1990; see Vol. 2, p. 54

despatched to London, to be reattributed, broken up, or melted down.[71] The treasure and

muniment chest did survive however, and can be glimpsed in the minutes of the

Corporation's meetings and the chamberlain's accounts, standing in various locations within

the Guildhall. A 'key for ye chest' was purchased in 1563/64 and in 1585 the same object

was removed to a rented 'chamber next to the scole'.[72] By 1613, the 'great cheste' as it was

now called was placed in 'the chamber over the counsel house'.[73] The object which had

formerly housed the guild's treasures and most important documents was reused to furnish a

private chamber leased out by the corporation, and later, may have also have intermittently

served as a chest in the Corporation armoury from 1570. We shall now consider the layout

and contents of the Guildhall following the suppression of the guild in 1547.

4.5 The Stratford Corporation

Henry VIII's Chantries Act had been granted by Parliament as early as 1545, but the

surveying and subsequent suppression of these 'colleges and chantries' – which had not been

the express purpose of Henry's Act – received new impetus and the Royal Assent from his

son Edward on the 24 December 1547.[74] The properties, fixtures and fittings of the Guild of

the Holy Cross were officially made over to the Crown on Easter Sunday, 1 April 1548; from

this point Stratford lost its religious guild and, for a time, the workings of the manorial Court

Leet and its administrative structure was thrown into confusion. It took five years for the

townsmen to officially petition the Crown for a charter of incorporation, a process hampered

by the manoeuvrings of John Dudley Earl of Warwick, who had assumed manorial control of

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[71] Eamonn Duffy, *Saints, Sacrilege and Sedition: Religion and Conflict in the Tudor Reformations* (London: Bloomfield, 2012), see especially 'The end of it all: the material culture of the late medieval English parish and the 1552 Inventories of Church Goods', 109-130

[72] Robert Savage and Edgar I. Fripp eds, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation*, vol. 1, p. 127, vol. 3, p. 164

[73] SCLA BRU4/1 f.142; BRU 4/1 f.248

[74] See P. Cunich, 'The Dissolution of the Chantries', in Patrick Collinson and J. Craig eds, *The Reformation in English Towns, 1500-1640* (Basingstoke, 1998) pp. 159-74. For the Act itself see G. R. Elton ed, *The Tudor Constitution: Documents and Commentary*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 391-4.

the town in 1549.[75] An early draft of the terms of incorporation had been received by former

guild members William Smith, John Jeffreys and William Whateley in April 1553, and the

Charter was later formalized and granted on the 28 June.[76] The Guildhall, Chapel and

almshouses were given back largely unchanged. They retained most of the guild's

muniments and furnishings, a fact explained by the relative absence of any religious

factionalism in Stratford, and the continuity of ownership of guild property among the town's

business and social elite.[77] The Charter ordered that a Common Council should be elected

annually consisting of a Bailiff and a Head Alderman who also served as Justices of the

Peace. The Bailiff had considerable powers, acting as his own escheator, coroner, almoner,

and clerk of the weekly market; the Bailiff also had jurisdiction over the Court of Piepowder

which settled the disputes of customers and traders.[78] In addition the Corporation selected

the schoolmaster and vicar with the approval of the manorial lord. In essence, the new

Corporation was legally constituted to reanimate and fund those public services once ascribed

to the guild, and to shape the spiritual needs of the borough in the absence of the guild and

the College.[79]

4.5.1 The Corporation and the Borough

According to Mairi Macdonald, the guild had maximized its profits by letting rooms in the

upper almsrow on Church Street to paying tenants, whilst the ground floor and adjoining hall

(the Pedagogue's House) were used by bedesmen and women.[80] A new development after

the suppression was that this practice of subletting was extended to the Guild Chapel. In

1562/63, the Corporation received rents for five 'chamburs in [the] chappell'; ranging from

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[75] Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530-1580', pp. 85-86.

[76] The earlier draft of the Charter can be found at SBTRO BRU 15/6/163.

[77] Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town', pp. 87-88

[78] Savage and Fripp, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation*, vol. 1, p. 62-3

[79] Bearman 'The Guildhall, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Focus of Civic Governance in the Sixteenth Century', pp. 99-101; See also Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town, pp. 68-109

[80] Mairi Macdonald, *Register*, pp. 11-12.

heavily subsidised rooms – for which Robert Hall paid 4d. – to grander furnished lodgings, that were rented for 10s, 6s 8d, and 5s per quarter respectively.[81] Against the backdrop of continuity of long-term leases and use of guild property among Stratford's governing class, the removal of the mural paintings and trappings of traditional religion in the Chapel seem to be motivated less by Protestant iconophobic zeal, than a desire to improve the living conditions within the Chapel for the Corporation's high-paying tenants. The Corporation undertook the 'defacing' of images there in 1563/64 and a year later, the rood loft was dismantled.

The Corporation also maintained the bells, belfry and clock in the Chapel. Bishop Giffard's thirteenth century charter stipulated that the Chapel should be hung with bells, which referred not only to a great bell in the belfry but a series of smaller 'sacring bells' upon the altars within. Prior to the Reformation, the smaller 'Sanctus Belle' or 'rode belle' was rung to mark the elevation of the host, an event which the faithful could witness through the rood screen or through squints purposefully built into the masonry; and the great bell was also rung at this juncture for the benefit of those who could not attend Mass in person. During the Guild's tenure, a bedesman was paid 4d. a year to ring the bell to call the membership to their meetings, and to mark the death of a guild member. The Corporation continued to pay bellringers for 'Burialles', and they also inherited 'le clokke', first mentioned in the Guild accounts in 1407/08 – this consisted of a clock mechanism with an iron driving wheel that rang a small bell in the Chapel interior via a small hammer. When the hammer struck, the hours were rung manually in the belfry. Citizens who 'rang the hours' in mid-sixteenth century Stratford served an important function. Aside from its obvious virtues, the chiming clock bell reminded certain repeat-offenders within the borough to adhere to the

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[81] These fluctuated in price from year to year. In 1572/73, another tenant paid 5s. 8d. per quarter for the room that had cost 10s. in 1569/70. Robert Savage and Edgar I. Fripp eds, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation*, vol. 1

Corporation's bye-laws. In 1556, for example, all butchers were ordered to 'carre furthe ther garbages furthe of ye burro after ix of the clok in the evenynge' of else pay a 20s. fine.[82] The bell also summoned the borough officers to their meetings, which were held at nine o'clock in the morning, once a month, and attended by the high bailiff, common burgesses and aldermen.

Aside from the complex of guild buildings, the material culture of the Corporation was highly visible in the streets of the town. During the reign of Mary and Phillip, the Corporation allowed the St. George and the Dragon pageant to continue after its hiatus during Edward's reign. Although officially staged by the Warden's of the Bridge Chapel, the event roamed over the entire town on Holy Thursday, from the Clopton Bridge, through the market centre, and up to Holy Trinity with its altar of Saint George.[83] There was clearly some degree of co-operation between the guild and the Bridge Chapel, a mural of Saint George was painted in the Guild Chapel, and the guild may have even supplied the armour for the pageant.[84] In the sixteenth century, the role of the saint was acted by a townsman dressed in the 'George armour' and seated upon another man as horse. This was aided by a special 'harnes' set with a 'dosyn poyntes' with bells, which together with the armour had been scoured and burnished specially for the occasion.[85] Gun powder was also bought – 4d. worth suffced in Mary's ascension year, but by 1557 the Warden's paid 2s. for the smoke and fireworks that augmented the dragon's rampages and final demise.

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[82] Savage and Fripp, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation*, vol. 1, p. 29
[83] Robert Bell Wheler, *A Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon*, (London, 1814), p. 57.
[84] The Register records a two 'getons' [banners], a silver chalice, and a coat of armour given by Robert Chastelyn in 1421; Macdonald, *Register*, p. 76. According to William Kelly, the Saint George armour hung next to the altar of Saint George in Holy Trinity. See W. Kelly, *Notices illustrative of the drama, and other popular amusements, chiefly in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, incidentally illustrating Shakespeare and his contemporaries; extracted from the Chamberlains' Accounts and other Manuscripts of the Borough of Leicester* (London, 1865), pp. 40-44
[85] Savage and Fripp, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation*, vol. 1, pp. xix-xx

A number of 'pyks' or pikes were also used during the St. George celebrations, and when the last pageant was recorded in 1562, these weapons, together with the armour and harness all entered the Corporation's armoury within the guildhall. It is uncertain whether the armour retained any ceremonial value, but pikes continued to be mended, and presumably used, into the seventeenth century.[86] The corporation added three swords and daggers, twelve 'head peeces', five 'corsletts' of mail and 'sworde gerdells' to this collection, besides a growing supply of gunpowder and 'calevers' or light-firearms.[87]

Civic symbolism, laden with notions of communal identity and the individual 'citizen', manifested in highly visible and tangible ways in Stratford, and unsurprisingly the Borough officers were at the forefront of such displays.[88] Officers were enjoined to light 'lanthorns' outside of their houses in the winter months, partly as a general public service, and partly to assist the watch and constables should they require the assistance of the JP. According to the ordinances of the Banbury Corporation, these lamps may have held deeper significance, as the bailiwick was envisaged to be 'a lanthorn in good usage and order as well to all the rest of his Brethren as to the whole commonalty of the Borough'.[89] The leader of the Borough, 'shall well and decently behave himself in all degrees', and was to be above his fellow officers and citizenry in both virtue and example.[90] In Stratford, the bailiff's authority was

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[86] Pikes were still being mended in 1596, see reference at note 85. Stratford appears to have a relatively well stocked armoury compared to other towns, see Lindsay Boynton, *The Elizabethan Militia*, 1558-1658 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967) p. 145

[87] J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, *Extracts from the Accounts of the Chamberlains of the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon… selected and edited from the original manuscripts by J.O. Halliwell, Esq. F.R.S*. 2 vols, (London, 1896-97), vol 1, p. 7, 14, 44.

[88] Philip Withington, 'Public Discourse, Corporate Citizenship, and State Formation in Early Modern England', *The American Historical Review*, 112, (2007), pp. 1017-1018

[89] See Alan Crossley et al eds, *Victoria History of the Counties of England: Oxford*, vol. 10 'Banbury: Local Government', (London: Oxford University Press for the University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1972), 71-89

[90] Savage and Fripp, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation*, vol. 2, p. xvii

perhaps manifested within the Council Chamber itself by a 'foote stoole' which was purchased for him in 1581/82.[91]

4.5.2 The Council Chamber

Figure 16 The Corporation Council Chamber, facing north-west. With Grammar School furnishings c. 1880-1900 © National Monuments Record, English Heritage

Within the Guildhall, two spaces had particularly significance: the Council Chamber, and the Hall. The term 'Halls' is often used in the minutes and refers to private and closed meetings of the council held in the Chamber. The Hall, or 'towne Hall', meant the Lower Hall formerly used for feasting by the Guild; a large room where members of the council performed their various public offices as JPs in the Court Leet, or as Clerk of the Market at the Court of Piepowder.[92] Thomas Salisbury and Thomas Lasell were paid 3s 7d in 1590 for making and waxing 'the bord in the towne hall', i.e., a table that served the Court officers.[93] Due to the location of the schoolroom in the Upper Hall from 1568, together with a series of chambers used by schoolteachers and curates on the same floor, we may deduce that the

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[91] Savage and Fripp, *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation*, vol. 3, p. 98
[92] Robert Tittler, *Architecture and Power: The Town Hall and the English Urban Community, c. 1500-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), p. 97
[93] J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, *Extracts from the Accounts*, vol 1, p. 9

Chamber was not above the Lower Hall but on the ground floor.[94] Giles and Clark have stated that 'Stratford's early modern Corporation simply appropriated the former counting house as a "councell chambur"' – thus placing the Chamber on the ground floor of the South Wing.[95] These statements may also be affirmed and clarified by the material evidence. The walls of the corporation Chamber were panelled and its ceiling whitewashed in 1613/14 – no contemporary evidence of this survives in the Upper South Wing whilst. In addition, the accounts of 1589/90 note the purchase of a 'paire of belowes for the Chamber' which clearly imply the use of the fireplace built in South Wing in 1427.[96] Finally, in 1613, the Upper South Wing is referred to as 'the chamber over the counsel house' – it was here that the guild's elm muniment chest or 'great cheste' was relocated.[97] The location of the 'councell chamber' on the ground floor of the South Wing is therefore beyond doubt.

According to the Corporation account books, the Council Chamber had a flag-stone floor or 'pavement' which from 1619 was partially covered with a plaited straw 'matt'.[98] The walls were wainscoted, and given the sixteenth century fashion for direct interplay between ceiled walls and panelled furniture, we may speculate that the walls were plainly decorated with square oak panels reminiscent of the joined work visible on the important 'Cubborde of Boxes' built in 1595.[99] Indeed, this evidence combined with the material culture of a series of boxes which I have analysed from the Trust's collection suggest that this 'Cubborde' was purpose built for the 'councell chambur'.[100] Another important piece of furniture once stored in the Chamber was the Guild's squat and bulky fifteenth century muniment chest discussed

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[94] Bearman 'The Guildhall, Stratford-upon-Avon: The Focus of Civic Governance in the Sixteenth Century', pp. 99-101; this latter view is complicated by Bearman's own recent suggestion that the 'infill house' was the school room from 1555, see Giles and Clark, 'Guild Buildings', pp. 155-156.
[95] Giles and Clark, 'Guild Buildings', p. 150
[96] J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, *Extracts from the Accounts*, vol 1, p. 9
[97] SCLA BRU4/1 f.142; BRU 4/1 f.248; and note below
[98] J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, *Extracts from the Accounts*, vol 2, p. 53
[99] SCLA BRU4/1 f.281; for panelled furniture and wainscot in early modern rooms see Margaret Jourdain, *English Interior Decoration 1500-1830: A Study in the Development of Design*, (London: Batsford, 1950) pp. 1-33
[100] See next section.

above – this would have seemed out of place in the new fashionable interior, which may explain its removal in 1613. Benches were also erected here, and the Bailiff's foot stool probably stood at the east end of the room in front of the window. The Chamber was lit with candles when needed, as on the 29 of November 1595, when the chamberlains ate a supper of bread, cheese and beer whilst perusing 'the evidences at the chamber'. The sole-plate preserves a hollow moulding with two circular depressions which may have been lamp-brackets and were probably erected when a window in the north wall was panelled over in 1613.[101] Light also came from the east window which was probably thickly glazed with glass of a green-brown hue and created a dim atmosphere, but the window itself was so placed to allow the maximum amount of morning light into the chamber – it is surely no coincidence that the bell for 'Halls' always rang at quarter to nine in the morning.[102]

4.5.3 The 'newe Cubborde of Boxes'
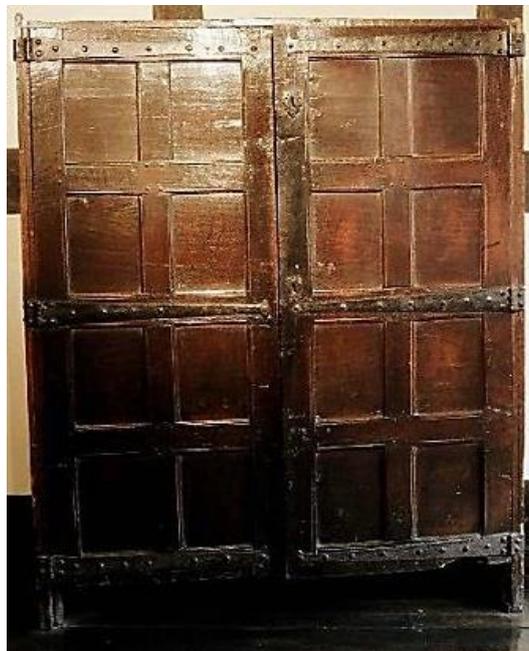
Figure 17 SBT L513. Oak 'cubborde of Boxes', 1595.

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[101] Giles and Clark, 'Guild Buildings' p. 149
[102] Levi Fox, *Minutes and Accounts*, vol. 5, p. 85. J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, *Extracts from the Accounts*, vol 1, p. 47

The 'newe Cubborde of Boxes' has never been properly analysed and as a result its interpretive value in assessing the day-to-day civic business and spatial layout of the Corporation's Chamber has been overlooked. Ordered by the chamberlains Abraham Sturley and Richard Ange, the account records the making of the 'Cubborde', the cost of labour, the quantities and cost of materials and component parts, and even the names of the craftsmen.[103] In mid-1595, the Corporation paid for their 'newe Cubborde of Boxes', a large two-door panelled cupboard, fitted with drawers and removable boxes that could ferry documents to and from the Council Chamber, and store the organization's ever increasing amount of civic paraphernalia.[104] It was made by two local men, Lawrence Abell, a joiner who lived in Church Street, and Oliver Hickox (Hiccox), an ironmonger and locksmith. Hiccox hailed from nearby Alveston, where he owned property, but he also held lodgings in Bridge Street in Stratford.[105] Hiccox was employed again in 1597 to dress and breach the Corporation's arsenal of 'calevers', and for further work in the armoury 'mendinge the Calleuers, fflaskes and Twichboxes'. Abell had already been employed by the officers in 1593 when he was paid 8d 'for mending ye wheele of ye little bell at they chappell' and in 1596 Abell was instructed to refurbish a pole for a pike in the armoury.[106] The 'cubborde' however, was a much larger and more important commission, taking sixteen and half days to make, for which Abell was paid 16s; Hickox fabricated 'five score nayles', rings, staples, hinges, locks, keys and 'skrwes' from 45lbs of iron and received 17s 2d.[107]

It is surprising that the cupboard of boxes has not received more attention from scholars given its provenance and rich documentation. Gerald E. Moira's illustration of the cupboard in James Walter's imaginative *Shakespeare's True Life* (1896) bizarrely places the object on

[103] SCLA BRU4/1, f. 28
[104] Levi Fox, *Minutes and Accounts*, vol. 5, p. xvi. pp. 80-81
[105] Lawrence Abell is listed as a resident of Church Street in the Chamberlain's accounts, 9 January 1596; see Levi Fox, *Minutes and Accounts*, vol. 5, p. 75; For Hiccox's residency see SBTRO ER 3/1962.
[106] SCLA BRU2/2, f. 23; BRU4/12 f. 30-34; SCLA BRU4/1, f. 10-13.
[107] SCLA BRU4/1, f. 28

its side (presumably a setting error) and does not discuss the item at all, other than to suggest that it was formerly kept within the 'Holy Guild School'.[108] In 1980, the 'Cubborde' was included in Victor Chinnery's *Oak Furniture* as a preeminent example of a fully documented piece of early modern furniture, but not discussed in any detail. Ten years later Levi Fox illustrated the 'Cubborde' in his transcription of the Corporation's minutes and account books, devoting a sentence to the fact that it was used to store Corporation documents.[109] These oversights may be explained by a species of Shakespeare biographical scholarship, identified in the previous chapter, that tries to establish William Shakespeare's personal knowledge or awareness of a particular object, building or vista, and thereby create a legitimizing glamour of association. In addition, the relatively thin historiography of the cupboard is due to the prevailing influence of art historical method in studies of early modern furniture, which tend to prioritize questions of regional style, craft tradition and iconography above social use.[110] That being said, brilliantly carved and amply documented items, such as the two chests used by the Ipswich Corporation in the sixteenth century, and the near-contemporary 'cupborde of boxes' at Little Moreton Hall in Cheshire, are similarly overlooked despite their beauty and art-historical importance.[111]

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[108] James Walter, *Shakespeare's True Life* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1896), p. 218.

[109] See Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition, A History of Early Furniture in the British Isles and New England*, (Woodbridge: Antique Collectors Club, 1979) p. 49; Levi Fox, *Minutes and Accounts*, vol. 5, pp. 80-81.

[110] This connoisseurial approach is particularly evident in Chinnery's *Oak Furniture* op. cit, and in the work of Herbert Cescinsky and Ernest R. Gribble, *Early English Furniture and Woodwork* (2 vols) London: Routledge, 1922. Only recently, with the development of material culture as a sub-field of historical enquiry, has early modern furniture been treated as means of interpreting interior space and social interaction, see for example, Catherine Richardson, *Domestic Life and Domestic Tragedy in Early Modern England: The Material Life of the Household* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006). A blend of the connoisseurial method and insights from art history and literary studies may be seen in the Nicholas Riall, Daniel Miles, Bethan Miles, Catherine Richardson and Eleanor Lowe's 'A Tudor Cupboard at Cotehele and Associated Carpentry Work from the Welsh Marches' *Regional Furniture*, (2012), 23-72. Tara Hamling's work is the pre-eminent exception to this connoiseurial trend; decorative plasterwork, applied sculpture, furniture, glass, and domestic space, are all considered as objects intrinsic to the new forms Protestant devotion within the post-Reformation domestic interior; see note 36.

[111] The two Ipswich Corporation chests are illustrated in Herbert Cescinsky and Ernest R. Gribble, *Early English Furniture and Woodwork*, 2 vols, (London: Routledge, 1922), fig. 20, 23, pp. 19-22. See also R. L. Cross, *Ipswich Corporation Civic Reglia*, (Ipswich, 1964). The 'cupborde of boxes' was first listed in the Moreton's 1599 inventory, and contains 25 drawers of varying sizes 'possibly for the storage of documents'. It

The appearance of the cupboard therefore, together with the manner of its display, belies its

importance.[112] It currently stands in the ground floor 'parlour' area of Nash's House,

surrounded by court cupboards and tables decked with candlesticks and dinnerware;

unsurprisingly visitors have often assumed that the cupboard was merely some sort of linen

cupboard for domestic use.[113] In addition, the work of antiquarian researchers, particularly

the Shakespeare-hunters of the late nineteenth century, paid little attention to the cupboards'

architectural context, and the internal arrangement of the drawers, and have left only

disjointed, sketchy accounts of its use. As we have seen, the 'cubborde' was found alongside

the elm muniment chest in the Guildhall by Halliwell in 1862. His inventory of the Chamber

and attendant rooms (he does not stipulate exact locations) listed an iron safe containing the

first five volumes of the corporation minute books, begun in 1563, as well as a series of

Chamberlain's accounts from 1585. He noted that the cupboard stood near the door of the

Chamber, and that six of its twelve drawers held documents relating to the wards of the

borough. Here too were papers ranging from expired leases to the original constitutions of

Stratford's sixteenth century craft companies.[114] The Books of Orders, dating from 1557, the

records and signatures of oaths sworn by the borough officers (up until 1791), and copies of

the Corporation's bye-laws (dated 1665) were also found, together with a Chamber Bible and

Prayer Book of 1682. We do not know exactly when these items were removed from this

location. According to Halliwell, the 'vast quantities of manuscript papers' in the 'Council

Chamber of Stratford-on-Avon' consisting of 'attractive bundles, filling large boxes, chests,

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is made of elaborately joined panels which carry strap-work carved bosses on the exterior, and has baluster and jewel decoration. National Trust Inventory Number 282336. see also: http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/ [accessed December 2013]

[112] It has no extant decorative carving, although Chinnery did speculate that a carved cornice may have augmented the upper front edge. See his notes in the Object History File, SBT L513, and at the online catalogue entry: http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [accessed December 2013]

[113] In a survey of visitors taken in 2011, it was assumed, based on appearance, that the cupboard looked fairly commonplace, and was perhaps used for storing linen. See http://findingshakespeare.co.uk/mystery-object-2 [Accessed May 2011].

[114] J. O. Halliwell, *A Brief Hand-list of the Records Belonging to the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon, Showing their General Character; With Notes of a Few of the Shakespearian Documents in the Same Collection* (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1862), pp. 10-11.

drawers, and cupboards' were in the possession of W. O. Hunt, a member of the Stratford

Committee, from 1848.[115] Twenty years later, a series of objects and documents from the

Guildhall were displayed in the Halliwell-curated Shakespeare Museum on Henley Street,

including the desk from the Grammar School (or Upper Hall), a guild charter, and documents

relating to seventeenth century actions in the Court Leet.[116] The job of cataloguing the

cupboards' contents was probably undertaken by W.O. Hunt, and fell to Thomas Hunt, Town

Clerk in the 1880s, who almost certainly completed the job by 1887, when a new cache of

documents were found in the small room off the stairs in the South Wing of the Guildhall –

probably the former Guild master's chamber. These were catalogued by Richard Savage,

secretary and librarian to the Shakespeare Trustees, although he reported in 1902 that 'none

[of the recent finds] have proved to be of any special interest'.[117] Guild and Corporation

muniments were deposited in the elm muniment chest and the cupboard of boxes and

removed between 1848 and 1887; the cupboard was on long-term loan to the Shakespeare

Museum and on display in Henley Street by 1896.[118] Of course, Halliwell's 1862 inventory

tells us very little about Corporation practice in the sixteenth century. The contemporary

documents and the nineteenth century catalogues and inventories have therefore, on their

own, little interpretive value with regard to how and where this object was used. To unlock

these questions we must engage seriously with the material culture.

An imposing object of nearly two metres high, the cupboard has a deep brown polished

surface, with two doors set with eight panels each, and six huge iron hinges that extend across

the front of each door along the edges. This exterior shell houses an inner substructure of

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[115] J. O. Halliwell, *The Life of William Shakespeare: Including Many Particulars Respecting the Poet and His Family Never Before Published*, (Warwick: H.T. Cooke, 1848) p. vii

[116] Clarence Hopper and James Orchard Halliwell eds, *Catalogue of the Books, Manuscripts, Works of Art, Antiquities and Relics Illustrative of the Life and Works of Shakespeare and of the History of Stratford upon Avon; which are preserved in the Shakespeare Library and Museum in Henley Street*, (London: 1868)

[117] See Hugh Baker, *The Collegiate Church of Stratford-upon-Avon & Other Buildings of Interest in the Town and Neighbourhood*, (London: 1902), p. 66

[118] James Walter, *Shakespeare's True Life*, p. 218

thinly sawn open boxes or drawers, set upon rails, which can be pulled outwards via iron

rings. The patina of the outer shell is a result of photo-oxidization, grime and dust, and signs

of staining and general wear-and-tear are evident. The front panels have been expertly sawn

and retain vivid medullaries, or spirals and swirls within the grain, a desirable factor in the

aesthetic appreciation of panelled work in the sixteenth century.[119] The interior structure by

contrast retains something of the hue of the original wood and here too medullary lines are

visible, but the effect is disrupted by saw marks that have not been smoothed away. These

marks are vitally important as they enable a connection to be made to four small square boxes

which were acquired or accessioned into the Trust's collection in 1996. I will argue that

these boxes were removed from the larger cupboard as part of a separation of archives and

museum collections, treated as unconnected objects, and as a result mistakenly catalogued

and interpreted.

Figure 18 SBT L513. Oak 'cubborde of Boxes', right hand door open, showing drawers.

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[119] See Kathleen Dardes and Andrea Rothe eds, *The Structural Conservation of Panel Paintings*, (New York: 1999), pp. 219-240.

My own haptic engagement with these objects, together with methods of wood analysis proposed by Harold Desch and J. M. Dinwoodie, has revealed that these four boxes were made from the same batch of timber ordered by the Corporation in 1594/95.[120] The thinly sawn planks used to construct the lidded boxes bear the same saw marks as the cupboard's substructure, and can therefore be associated with the commissioned work from Lawrence Abell in 1595.[121] In addition, these boxes fit the draws perfectly and could be stacked face down or on their sides, much like modern box-files. Indeed, all of the boxes carry late sixteenth century secretary-hand inscriptions, detailing their contents, on their spines and lids.[122] Recent accounts have assumed that the draws within the cupboard refer to the 'boxes' in the accounts, but based upon the material evidence, the term 'cubborde of boxes' actually alludes to these small receptacles which were designed and made by Lawrence Abell to sit within the substructure.

4.5.4 The Corporation at work

My analysis of the Corporation's 'cubborde of boxes' and 'councell chambur' does not claim to be a revisionist reading of the role of local government and centralization during the early modern period, but it is clear that the construction of the cupboard of boxes was part of a wider national impulse to coordinate and standardize administrative practice.[123] The sheer amount of documentation generated at a local level grew exponentially during the Tudor regimes, and this often created tension when earlier systems of bureaucracy overlapped with

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[120] Whilst not an exact science, visually identifying timber from saw-marks, texture, angle of grain is a recognized methodology documented in Harold Ernest Desch and J. M. Dinwoodie *Timber: structure, properties, conversion, and use*, 7th edn, Palgrave Macmillan 1996, pp. 69-70, 44, 119.

[121] Whilst I emphasise the wooden construction of the boxes, it must also be noted that the iron hook fastenings and hinges are simply miniature forms of the fittings made by Oliver Hiccox for the cupboard, and strongly suggest that he was involved in the making of these smaller boxes.

[122] SBT 1996-33/2, 'A 16th-century wooden deed box that belonged to Stratford Corporation'. This box has an ink inscription: 'Deedes of lande and anuities in the 6 wardes' [and] 'Keys belonging to the Long Box'. We have seen that Halliwell found six of the draws with documents pertaining to the six wards of the borough, and it is logical that this system was also used by the early modern corporation.

[123] Early shifts in practice are documented by Roger Schofield, *Taxation Under the Early Tudors: 1485 – 1547*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

new initiatives. In the early sixteenth century, important documents were commonly

borrowed from churches, manorial courts or guild premises, or held in private hands as a

matter of custom, and this led later to frustration for borough officers when trying to find the

relevant deed, roll or indenture.[124] My study of the material culture of the corporations'

record keeping, informed by a close reading of the Corporation minutes and accounts, reveals

how the civic commonwealth of Stratford worked on a daily basis, and the extent to which

the Corporation actively conducted the business of the Crown.
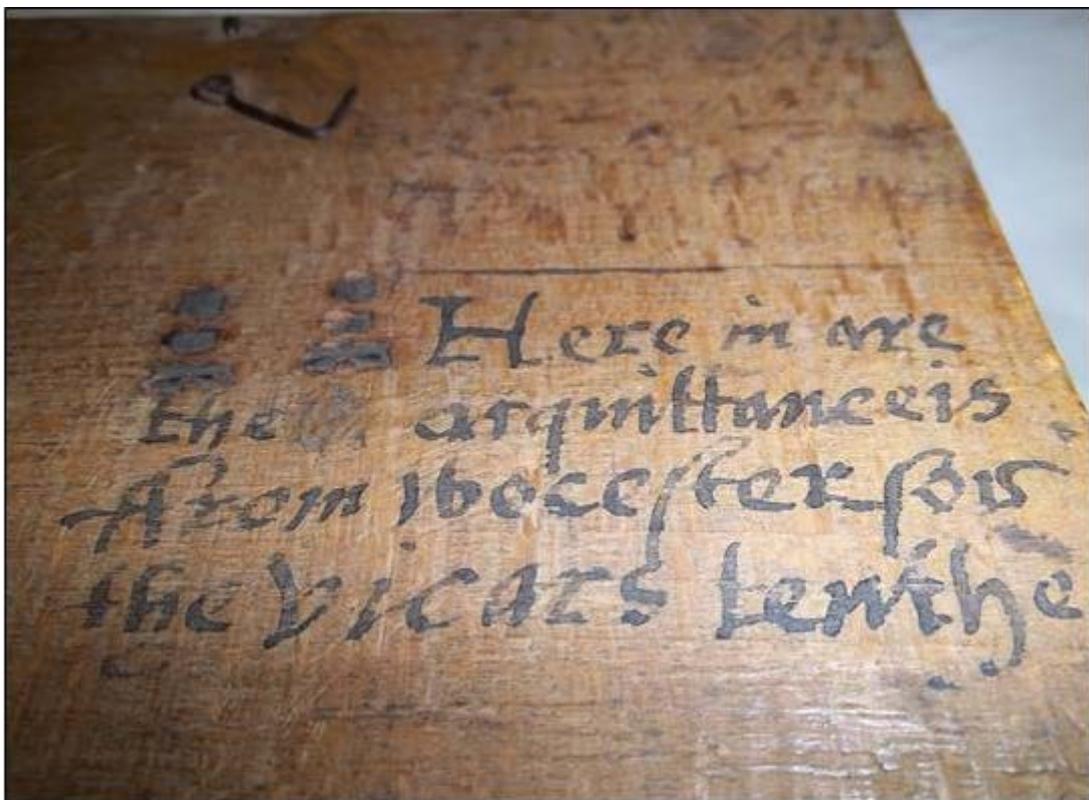
Figure 19 SBT 1996-33/2. Box for the 'Cubborde of Boxes', c. 1595.

The smaller boxes are themselves records of storage practice, and the way townsmen

conducted their business within the Guildhall itself. One of these boxes is inscribed in heavy

black lettering: 'Here in are the acquittanceis from Wocester for the Vicars tenthes'.[125] This

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[124] Daniel R. Woolf, *The Social Circulation of the Past: English Historical Culture, 1500-1730*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) pp. 283-284.
[125] SBT 1996-33/2;   SBT 1996-33/1

box effectively demonstrates that the officers of the Stratford Corporation enforced Henry's

Act for First Fruits and Tenths, passed by the Reformation Parliament in November 1534.

This Act required every new appointee to an ecclesiastical benefice to pay the Crown an

initial fee equal to one year's revenue (first fruits) and every continuing holder of a benefice

to pay a fixed annual percentage of his income (tenths). Prior to this in April 1534, the

Crown had passed the Act in Restraints of Annates, which abolished any payment of fees to

the papacy by the English clergy.[126] The 'Vicars tenthes' therefore referred to the monies

gathered by the Bishop of Worcester from his clergy which he then submitted, probably as

accounts, to the Exchequer for audit: it is reasonable to assume therefore that the Stratford

Corporation acted as the Crown's agent in this transaction. Whilst Felicity Heal has rightly

argued that the Henrician revolution in government extended clerical liability, effectively

making bishops responsible for tax collection with regard to tenths and first fruits, a

parliamentary statute passed under Edward VI also made sub-collectors, i.e, corporations and

their officers, responsible for their own arrears.[127] Such statutes bound the bishop and

corporation together under the power of the Crown, and it is unsurprising that the Stratford

corporation, and others like it, sought to organize, regulate and safeguard its administrative

functions by building a new secure filing system like the 'newe cubborde of boxes'.

A lid was also found within one of the boxes, cut to the same dimensions as the others, and

on it is written 'for the chamber' in a sixteenth century hand.[128] This suggests that at least

one other similar box was made, and was probably used to collect fines and monies brought

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[126] John A. Wagner & Susan Valters Schmid, *Encyclopedia of Tudor England*, 2 vols, (Santa Barbara, 2012), vol. 2, p. 447.
[127] Felicity Heal, 'Clerical tax collection under the Tudors' in Rosemary O'Day and Felicity Heal eds. *Continuity and Change: Personnel and Administration of the Church of England 1500-1642* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1976), pp. 99-103. For the parliamentary statute, see Alexander Luders, T. E. Tomlins, J. Raithby eds, *Statutes of the Realm, 1101-1713*, (11 vols., London, Record Commission 1810-1828), volume 4, part I, pp. 167-8
[128] SBT 1996-33/5

to 'Halls' by the borough officers.[129] Scrawled across these items are various incomplete

sums and rough numerical scribbles: evidently the clerk and chamberlains used the surfaces

of the boxes for their arithmetic.

One of the most significant functions of these boxes was to preserve the Oken bequest, a sum

of £40 left by Thomas Oken on his death in 1573. Oken was a mercer by trade and former

Master of the Guild of the Holy Trinity and St. George in Warwick, and his bequest was the

largest single amount under the direct keeping of the borough officers, and was an

opportunity for the corporation to bestow social and religious patronage within the terms and

conditions signalled by the giver.[130] This was stipulated in an indenture drawn up by the

Warwick Corporation and stored in the box labelled 'The deeds with the Bayliffe and

Burgisses [of] War[wick] about Mr. Ockens mony 40 li.'[131] The money itself – which was to

paid incrementally to eight 'honest' Stratford citizens, and to secure the services of a 'learned

man to declare God's Word' – was kept in another box within the cupboard marked 'Bonds

of Consequence' and subtitled 'the Bondes for Mr. Oken & Hugh Baker/there monie'.[132] Part

of this money was invested in a series 'tenements' within the borough for which the

corporation collected rents.[133] Oken's gift also features prominently in the corporation's

increasing support for radical Protestant preachers, a trend that received new impetus with the

restoration of the manor to Ambrose Dudley in 1562, despite the variety of religious views

that formed the local ruling council.[134]

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[129] A cash box used by the chamberlains is mentioned in the accounts as early as 1563/64, and this box
constructed in 1595 was its replacement, see Robert Savage and Edgar I. Fripp eds, *Minutes and Accounts of the
Corporation*, vol. 1, p. 138

[130] Oken also left similar sums to the poor of Banbury and Warwick. See Alan Crossley, 'Banbury: Charities',
pp. 124-127.

[131] SBT 1996-33/3

[132] SBT 1996-33/5

[133] J. O. Halliwell, *Extracts from the Accounts*, vol 1, p. 36

[134] The religious positions of council members ranged from conservative Catholic loyalists to staunch reformers,
but according to Bearman, 'such affiliations were of less importance than the creation of a body politic
composed of men of sufficient substance, who clearly showed a willingness to be involved in one another's
affairs', Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience' p. 90

Figure 20 SBT 1996-33. Leather bound wooden box for the 'Cubborde of Boxes', c. 1550.

Another box from the Borough Collection, bound in leather and lined with sixteenth century pages from a Puritan tract and a maritime adventure, mixes the enigmatic with the strictly functional. One possible explanation is that it belonged to one of the four constables elected to keep 'a privey watche' by the council from 1557. Joan Kent has suggested that constables were a kind of village headman who dealt with a variety of social issues ranging from crime, the regulation of alehouses, highways, and market-day customs, to presentments, musters and in some localities, acted as the town armourer.[135] Constables enforced the borough bye-laws, and for 'the good Rewell of the toune' collected outstanding fines, rents and Crown subsidies from borough residents. Michael Braddick has written that without 'the cooperation of the constables none of the most important government policies could have been achieved'; this included 'all taxation', 'the subsidy, the fifteenth and tenth, county rates, ship money, [and]

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[135] Joan Kent, *The English Village Constable 1580-1642: A Social and Administrative Study* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) 1986, p. 15

purveyance'.[136] This particular box, which at some point in the sixteenth century contained

the 'Aquittances for the Subsidye et al. Acquitts' – according to its handwritten label – was

probably used by an unpaid borough official to assess and collect parliamentary taxes.

Judging by the secretary hand on its lid, we may tentatively date it to the mid-sixteenth

century, however the printed pages used to line the box come from George Best's *True*

Discourse of 1578, and Thomas Bentley's hugely popular Protestant work, *The Monument of*

Matrons, published in 1582.[137] Dating the item is therefore problematic, but it was probably

constructed before the publication of these printed works. The leather cover, which

preserved the contents from moisture, was augmented by loops or straps that would enable

the owner to string it upon their belt or else bind it closed using a strap or thong. Similarly,

paper lining was first and foremost a protective feature, and this suggests that the item was

used to temporarily store and transport items of value, perhaps whilst the owner was out in all

weathers. Whilst speculative, this reading of the material evidence could further argue that

this box was the personal property of a constable, or maybe even a bailiff, and that some

synergy is evidenced here between the austere Protestantism of the Corporation in the late

sixteenth century and the individual owner of this item. The item was also certainly part of

the wider administrative apparatus of the corporation, and probably used to store written

'aquittances' for the payment of taxes, which were then brought back to the Guildhall and

cupboard for record.

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[136] Michael Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England, c. 1550-1700*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 33-4

[137] George Best, *A True Discourse of the late Voyages of Discourie* (London, 1578); Thomas Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones: conteining seuen seuerall lamps of virginitie, or distinct treatises; whereof the first fiue concerne praier and meditation: the two last, precepts and examples* (London, 1582)

Figure 21 SBT 1996-33. Leather bound wooden box for the 'Cubborde of Boxes', c. 1550.

4.5.5 Conclusion

This chapter has mined the documentary sources for Stratford's complex of guild and Corporation buildings for references to objects and their use in social, religious and business affairs. This has identified, using both object analysis and surviving documentary evidence the existence of hitherto unknown objects within the Trust's collection and their connection with the Guild and Corporation. Using various forms of evidence I have suggested the original locations of these objects within a complex of buildings, and identified the contents of the objects, their significance, manner of use, and the 'social life' of the objects overtime. An awareness of construction methods and the use of comparative haptic analysis meant that formerly stranded items are now considered as a working systems of objects, and this has subsequently revealed a new perspective on the written evidence regarding the business and material culture of the Corporation in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.

Chapter Five

Making and using magical objects in early modern England: apotropaia and objects of folk-belief in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust collection

In this chapter I will present new finds and unaccessioned objects that have never been analysed by Trust staff or historians, and reinterpret objects that have been valued by the Trust for reasons other than their possible magical or apotropaic qualities. The objects discussed may be broadly defined as apotropaia, man-made objects that occasionally carry inscriptions (or sigillations) that were perceived as efficacious in the diversion or repulsion of evil from the owner or user, particularly when associated with a specific ritual.[1] These objects do not fit easily into established historical narratives – in fact the items selected here from the Trust's collections take us away from the witchcraft trials and accusations which have engendered much of the historical study of magic in this period, and into, instead, so-called economies of magic. In this chapter, a tentative link is made between a distinct social group – cunning-folk – and their possible products or services. Most of the objects discussed here are associated for the first time with folk magic or apotropaic systems of practice, and whilst speculative they rely recent scholarly developments within this field of study.

5.1 Magic, material culture and early modern English society

Two major works dominate the study of early modern popular belief and its material culture: Keith Thomas' *Religion and the Decline of Magic* and Ralph Merrifield's *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic*. The first drew upon a myriad of formerly unknown or marginal sources such as folklore, contemporary anti-magical writing, together with museum objects and research; in addition the approaches of applied sociology and comparative anthropology were brought to bear upon a vast array of contemporary documents and printed books. Prior to this

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[1] Apotropaic derives from the Greek word *apotropaios* meaning 'averting evil', and in another form *apotrepein*, meaning to 'turn away' or 'turn from'; *OED Online* http://www.oed.com/ [accessed January 2012]

work, the ethnographer and historian George Ewart Evans wrote of the vastly variable and seemingly unsystematic beliefs of the early modern person, suggesting that they were engendered by circumstance, personal fears and desires, and were for the most part impenetrable to the modern scholar.[2] In Thomas' book, these nebulous beliefs were meticulously listed, organised and to some extent rationalised. His arguments did not lambast superstition (although some affinity with the scepticism of Reginald Scot was acknowledge by the author), nor did he rob the beliefs of their colour, but explored what were shown to be cohesive and interrelated systems, based upon body of traditional knowledge that reached back, in some instances, to the Babylonians.[3] The basic principles of astrology, developed by the Greeks, Romans and extended by Arab scholars in the Middle Ages, appeared to underpin most of the practical knowledge and assumptions of the early modern magical practitioner, whether a university lecturer or a village wise-woman. These astrological principles were concerned with the movements of the planets, and how the regular behaviour of the heavens could be used to interpret the flux and mutation of life upon earth. The universe was divided into superior bodies which ruled the terrestrial or sublunary sphere; and seven moving planets (possessing special qualities) that constantly shifted in relation to fixed signs of the zodiac. These bodies imprinted their characteristics onto the passive earth below, imbuing the natural world and human beings alike with all manner of fates, tendencies, desires, properties and abilities. A horoscope or map of the heavens was drawn and read by the astrologer who could then assess the situation and provide advice. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, 'astrological doctrines were part of the educated man's picture of the universe and its workings' and were used to produce various kinds of

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[2] 'Magic, whatever its pretensions, is ultimately addressed to the mind of the person or persons concerned, its exterior object being no more than an extrapolation of his own desires or fears; and although – like prayer or ritual – its direct effect on external reality is almost certainly nil, its influence on the mind of the participant might be considerable'. George Ewart Evans, *The Pattern under the Plough* (London: Faber & Faber, 1966, 1990) p. 55

[3] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, (London: 1971), particularly his summary chapter 'Some Interconnections', pp. 755-766.

knowledge. Firstly, astrologers could offer *general predictions* for weather, mortality, epidemics, political change and the outbreak of war; *nativities* provided the time of birth, and prospects for the coming year; whereas *elections* enabled the astrologer to predict the best moment for a particular action. So-called *horary questions*, provided answers to questions on all manner of personal problems, such as health, sex, and wealth.   It was not a pure art form however, and astrologers, such as the Londoner Simon Forman, also practiced geomancy, medicine, divination by facial moles, alchemy and conjuring. The role of astrology in intellectual life, and its correlations with so much of what may be called popular belief or 'folk' theories of existence, may be explained by the fact that its basic principles were palpable; the movement of the heavens did visibly relate to other phenomena, i.e., day and night followed the waxing and waning of the sun and moon, the moon seemed to prompt the flux of the tides, flora responded to the sun. It was also buttressed by Renaissance theories of micro- and macrocosm, and any shortcomings of astrology were often explained away by the very ambiguity of its predictions, or more often, by appeals to divine intervention. In Thomas' view magical or semi-magical beliefs rooted in astrology, together with an overarching and interpenetrating system of religion usually, despite some points of antithesis, propped each other up.[4]

Thomas' treatment of material culture, although never sustained or particularly detailed was, in the context of early modern historical studies in the 1970s, refreshingly different; 'witch-bottles' for example, hitherto unknown outside a clique of museum curators and archaeologists (including Ralph Merrifield), where integrated into a system of sympathetic magic (a folkloric magical-astral system), and helped to ground an entire historiography of

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[4] See Thomas's extended discussion of astrology, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, pp. 335-458.

witchcraft in the practical experience of ordinary people.[5] The witch-bottle was for Thomas a

cryptic and cumbersome illustration of a belief system that was better revealed by an

examination of the literature.[6] Merrifield, on the other hand, sought to clarify the meanings

of the formal properties of such finds – pins, human hair, urine, anthropomorphic 'votives'

stowed within the bottle – and compare them with other ritually significant burials of

ceramic, glass, or natural objects within domestic and liturgical contexts.[7] His methodology

blended archaeological case studies with cultural history and folklore, and broadened the

historical scope by linking early modern practices with Romano-British rituals and beliefs.

The amount of data available for this subject has expanded in recent years and is now a

legitimate field of enquiry with several independent researchers and (as yet) unpublished

theses devoted to the subject; it is also a topic that is now widely acknowledged in vernacular

buildings research. Shoes deposited in historic buildings was the focus of June Swann's

pioneering research and curatorial work with the Northampton Museum Shoe Index in the

1950s, and since Merrifield's major publication, researchers in this area have catalogued

hundreds of marks, and extracted numerous garments from early modern British buildings.

In 1998, the Deliberately Concealed Garments Project (DCGP) was set up by Dinah Eastop

of the Textile Conservation Centre, the University of Southampton. The DCGP encourages

the recording and preservation of garment and other finds and provides conservation advice.

In addition, the project raises awareness of concealment practices and contends that these

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[5] Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 648-649; for the writing of witchcraft histories see Bengt Ankarloo, Stuart Clark and William Monter eds, *The Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Period of the Witch Trials*, Vol. IV, (London: 2002), p. viii
[6] The witch-bottle provides the best documented evidence of folk responses to hostile sorcery. See C. L'estrange Ewen, *Witchcraft and Demonianism* (London: 1933), pp. 230, 363-4, 386, 390 for a calendar of primary sources; extended discussions by Zoe Crossland, 'Materiality and Embodiment' in Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry eds, *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, pp. 365-402. Their medicinal value, however, is underdeveloped, see Sir Kenelm Digby *A Late Discourse … touching the Cure of Wounds by the Power of Sympathy*, trans R. White, (London: 1658), pp. 126-8
[7] Ralph Merrifield, *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic*, (London, 1987), pp. 107-136

were not accidental losses but meaningful practices.[8] More broadly, this is a subject that is

limited by the almost complete lack of allied documentary or historical evidence which

makes the material evidence key but enigmatic. As a result my interpretation in this chapter,

with particular reference to the Hall's Croft shoe cache is necessarily speculative, but such an

exploration is crucial nonetheless in order to represent and assess the nature and potential

values of the Trust's collections for future interpretation and presentation.

In this chapter I will outline a number of items in the Trust's collection that may be read as

apotropaia or folk-magic objects, and reveal how material evidence points to new ways of

perceiving magical practice in this period. Famous elite practitioners, such as John Dee,

whose magical apparatus survive in part together with some of his manuscripts, have perhaps

overemphasised the view of early modern magic as type of learned arcane ritual and

necromancy, whilst another strand of writing has pointed out the proto-scientific thought of

various practitioners, such as Paracelsus.[9] In the following section I will consider the largely

ignored products of cunning-folk who worked below the level of elite culture.

5.1.1 Cunning-folk and their products

The majority of magical objects in the Trust's collection were items made by local

practitioners of magic who provided services and solutions to everyday problems in cities,

towns and rural villages all over England. Between 1560 and 1603, thirty four practitioners

of this type were identified in Essex alone, and it has been estimated that no villager in that

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[8] See http://www.concealedgarments.org; and also Dinah Eastop, 'The Conservation of Garments Concealed with Buildings as Material Culture in Action', in Hamling & Richardson, *Everyday Objects*, 145-156.
[9] Peter J. French, John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus, (New York: Ark, 1972; London: Routledge, 2002). Deborah E. Harkness, John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy, and the End of Nature, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Walter Pagel, *Paracelsus: An Introduction to Philosophical Medicine in the Era of the Renaissance*, (Basel and New York: Karger, 1982); Charles Webster, *From Paracelsus to Newton: Magic and the Making of Modern Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982)

county was more than ten miles from a known cunning-person.[10] Most of these practitioners (perhaps two thirds) were male, and evidence from the early modern period collected by Thomas and Owen Davies suggests that many were also employed as artisans. This class of person was well suited to a consulting magical trade, as they could receive clients throughout the day in their shops and workshops and apportion their regular work to apprentices or wives whilst employed in magical business.[11] It is thought that cunning-folk were at least semi-literate, possessing almanacs, astrological, mathematical or foreign language books; texts that could convince a potential client of a cunning-persons' occult knowledge even if they did not understand the texts completely.[12] Services offered included healing, love magic, finding buried treasure or stolen property, and the power to 'unwitche', i.e., to repel maleficent witchcraft.[13]

One of the earliest objects in the collection that may have been augmented or inscribed by a cunning-person is an inscribed ark or coffer, currently on display in the Birthplace.[14] The ark is of a type widely thought to have stored grain or flour, and has been dated to the fourteenth century (with possible sixteenth century additions). The arched sloping lid is faintly marked with six concentric circles around a central dot, probably made by a pair of compasses or dividers, and to the right of this are eight overlapping circles, 'progressing', as it were, across the surface of the lid.

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[10] Owen Davies, *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History*, (London: Hambledon & London, 2003), p. 67

[11] Thomas, *Religion*, p. 295; Davies, *Cunning-Folk*, p. 67; Owen Davies, *A People Bewitched: Witchcraft and Magic in Nineteenth-Century Somerset* (Bruton, 1997).

[12] Davies, *Cunning-folk*, p. 70

[13] Ursula Kempe claimed that she could 'unwitche' but not bewitch people, see Anon, *A True and Just Recorde, of the Information, Examination and Confession of All the Witches Taken at S. Oses in the Countie of Essex* (London, 1582)

[14] SBT 1995-21, 'A medieval oak ark or coffer', Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Catalogue, http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [Accessed June 2013]. For an optimised image of the markings see entry in Appendix.

Concentric marks have been catalogued by archaeologists alongside various other designs, notably the daisy-wheel or hexafoil marks (six petals within a circle), expanded hexafoils (a series of intersecting circles with petals), random circles overlapping each other, and spectacle marks (two circles joined by an arc).[15]
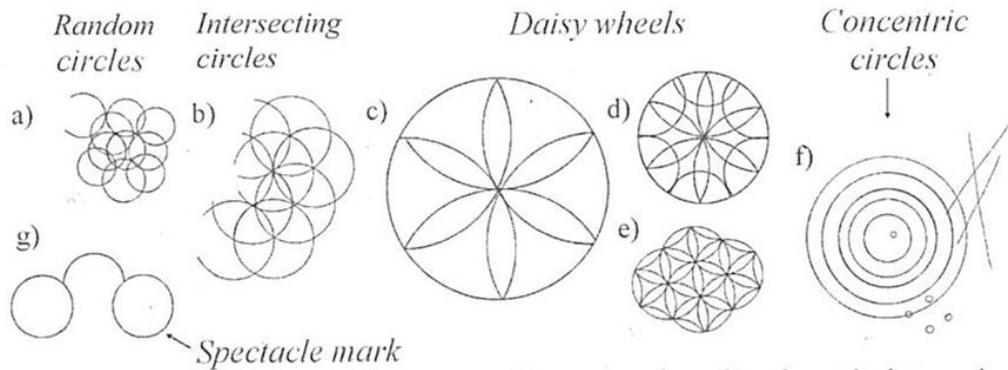
Figure 22 A selection of circular marks, found in English buildings c. 1300-1900. Adapted by an illustration by Linda Hall, *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900*, figure 5.33

Regional and national surveys of ritual marks have considerably widened our understanding of these symbols.[16] In medieval and early modern houses, exposed and concealed timbers, lintels, hearths and many other surfaces near liminal places such as thresholds or passageways of ingress were inscribed with marks. These were thought to reflect a ritual undertaken by the owner of the building or the craftspeople constructing it, to invoke good fortune or protection for the house and its contents. Marks are usually well-hidden, or if in exposed positions difficult to see without raking light – the incisions into the ark, and a daisy-wheel inscribed into a vertical timber in the cellar of the Birthplace – are a mere fraction of a

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[15] Other examples of concentric circles are illustrated in Linda Hall, *Period House Fixtures and Fittings 1300-1900*, (London: 2005), figure 5.33; the majority of work on inscribed marks has be undertaken by Timothy Easton, 'Scribed and painted symbols', in P. Oliver ed, *The Encyclopaedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 533–4; 'Ritual marks on historic timber', *Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Journal,* Spring (1999), 22–8, p. 23

[16] Among these schemes is the ever-growing Norfolk Medieval Graffiti Survey (NMGS) http://www.medieval-graffiti.co.uk/ [accessed July 2011]; this is also the umbrella project for similar surveys in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Somerset, Suffolk and Surrey; See also M. Gardiner's inscribed symbols project documented in 'Graffitti and their use in late medieval England' in J. Klapste and P. Sommer eds, *Arts and Crafts in the Medieval Rural Environment*, Ruralia 6, (Prague: 2007) pp. 265-76

millimetre deep.[17] This suggests that some symbols were not necessarily meant to be 'read' after their application, but rather the process of inscribing and the actual presence of the (unseen) mark was enough to ensure protection or the completion of the ritual.[18]

Circle magic was used in the early modern period to invoke spirits for divination or to create spaces where spirits could not enter. In the 1690s for example, Thomas Perks, a gunsmith by trade and following the texts of the German Renaissance occult writer Henry Cornelius Agrippa, practiced circle magic aided with consecrated chalk, lantern and candle. Visiting crossroads at night Perks drew a circle and performed a ritual there that included words recited from the scriptures.[19] Given a lack of alternative evidence, it seems probable that the concentric circles used on the ark where part of a similar attempt to protect its contents.

Whilst circles had meaning in learned and semi-literate occult traditions, they also appear in vernacular culture in the form of daisy wheels or hexafoils that were perhaps used by carpenters and joiners. Laurie Smith has presented evidence that the daisy-wheel was used as 'design module' that governed the building's major proportions – by inscribing circles onto the architectural fabric of a house, its frame or bressumers for example, the carpenter could then determine the angles needed for roof pitch which would in turn ensure a safe and durable structure.[20] If used in this way, the daisy-wheel would need to be placed in an appropriate position, usually on a collar beam below the pitch of the roof.[21] Whilst the value of these

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[17] See Appendix I, 'A daisy wheel mark'
[18] Bob Meeson, 'Ritual Marks and Graffiti: Curiosities or Meaningful Symbols?' in *Vernacular Architecture*, 36 (2005), pp. 41-48; Shona Robson-Glyde, a historic buildings archaeologist for Worcestershire County Council, compared ritual and carpentry marks in her talk 'Averting Evil: Evidence from Worcestershire Buildings', December 2010; http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/2010_averting_evil.pdf [accessed June 2011]; on the circumstances of finds see Dinah Eastop, 'The Conservation of Garments Concealed within Buildings as Material Culture in Action' in Tara Hamling & Catherine Richardson, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings*, (Farnham; 2010), 146-150
[19] Owen Davies, 'Angels in Elite and Popular Magic, 1650-1790' in Alexandra Walsham & Peter Marshall eds, *Angels in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 306
[20] See Melvin Humphreys, Laurie Smith & Richard Kretchmer, *Llanfyllin: Portrait of An Age*, (Llanfyllin: 2002); and Laurie Smith, *Journal of Timber Framing*, 70, (2003), 85-86
[21] The daisy-wheel requires extrapolation to the proportions of the building to make sense: the vertical vesicas (the petals that point up and downwards) of the wheel designate the height of the timber frame from floor to

marks is apparent in the construction process – the actual scribing of marks onto concealed timbers, or into plasterwork, or at access points or thresholds, is harder to explain.[22] It is impossible to date these marks accurately – as is clear from a child's 'seat of ease' also in the Trust's collection.[23] It could be argued that use of the daisy wheel in the production of buildings was a type of folk-magic that conveyed some sort of protective efficacy to a structure by virtue of its architectural properties.

Other marks occur on museum objects in the Trust's collection, but we cannot be sure if they were intended as magical or apotropaic. More concentric circles are found on a low stool, currently on display in Anne Hathaway's Cottage. The legs, made from ash, are sunk into the underside of the thick oak seat, whose surface is covered with concentric circle decoration, four circles with two rings and central dots, around a fifth circle, with three rings and a dot. These have been carved or gouged out from the surface.

Figure 23 Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, no accession number. Low stool with ash legs, oak seat and carved concentric circle patterns, c. 1650-1800

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ridge, whilst the diagonal connection of the remaining four vesica tips generates the planes of the outer walls, the base of the collar and the doorhead level.
[22] David Leviatin, *Timber Framing Journal*, 101, (2011), p. 53
[23] See SBT 2003 22 in the Appendix

Two other researchers consulted during my analysis of the stool came to different conclusions. Ian Evans, who has studied ritual marks in the Australian context c. 1788-1935, thought that these marks were almost certainly apotropaic, whilst Timothy Easton, another respected researcher for the late-medieval and early modern period suggested they were merely decorative.[24] Like the flour ark, this object is possibly associated with domestic production – its size and style are broadly similar to milking-stools of the period, and if it was used in this way, the object may be embedded into a rich historical context where cunning-folk were employed to protect cattle, tools and dairy products such as cheese and butter from fairies and witches.[25]

Figure 24 SBT 2003-21. Panelled oak chest with iron lock plates and latches cast with bead patterns and saltire crosses, c. 1615

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[24] Ian Evans, personal communications, December 2011, January 2012
[25] See Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 315-316, 588-593; Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture 1736-1951*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 190

I have identified another possible apotropaic device on a panelled chest dating to 1615.[26] The saltire cross design found on the lock latches of this chest recurs in various other contexts including witch-posts (timber structures placed in inglenooks to repel a witch from entering the house via a chimney), lead charms (to avert the bewitchment of cattle), chalk moulds (to avert the evil eye), and other forged metal door latches.[27] A recent study has suggested that saltire crosses often inscribed into 'witch posts' are actually 'priest marks', inscribed by Catholic priests in recusant houses.[28] An example of the saltire can be found in Bedfield Hall in Suffolk on a structure dating to 1600, and has been interpreted by Easton and Jeremy Hodgkinson within a wider context of twentieth-century folklore where the menfolk of the region were 'forever taking avoiding actions against possible and portending evil.'[29] We do not know why the Saltire is used in this way, but one scholar of vernacular buildings has commented upon the continuity of its use as a protective mark, particularly in the north of England.[30]

5.1.2 The Hall's Croft shoe cache

In 1949, some fragments of leather were uncovered in the roof space of Hall's Croft. These were not catalogued but were kept, and may relate to a larger find made in the same building in 1982. In a box marked 'Found in roof of Hall's Croft 1982' in the Trust's stores, are five items, including two complete leather shoes and two shoe-fragments. They are made of leather, and consist of sixteenth or seventeenth century shoes together with later items, some

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[26] SBT 2003-21, 'A James I oak chest, c. 1615, with a four panel hinged lid, twin panelled sides and three panel back, with channel and mason's mitre mouldings', Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Catalogue, http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/ [Accessed December 2013]

[27] See Timothy Easton and Jeremy Hodgkinson, 'Apotropaic Symbols on Cast-Iron Firebacks', Journal of the Antique Metalware Society, 21 (2013) 14-33, pp. 23-25

[28] See Nicholas Rhea, 'Farewell to Witchposts – Hello to Priest Marks and *stiepelteken*', *Folklore* Newsletter, June (2014); see also http://www.nicholasrhea.co.uk/ [Accessed 12.7.14].

[29] Easton and Hodgkinson, 'Apotropaic Symbols', p. 23

[30] Mary Nattrass 'Witch Posts and Early Dwellings in Cleveland', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 39 (1956), 136-146.

of which are punctured with holes and sewn with string or yarn. A closer analysis of the materials may yield, as in the case of the Abingdon doublet, useful insights into the largely obscure visual and material record of early modern everyday clothing.[31] My analysis of these forgotten objects suggests a broad date range of 1550 – 1900, with possible concealment occurring at any point during that time. It is certain however that the older sixteenth or seventeenth century shoes were re-concealed in the twentieth century when a hob-nail shoe dated c. 1837-1949 was added to the cache.[32]

This shoe may been hidden c. 1949 – 1951 during the phase of building work carried out by the Trust soon after it acquired Hall's Croft.[33]   The cache included a near complete child's shoe, probably dating to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century (dated by a seam at the heel which is uncommon before the 1500), the insole to a latchet shoe , and another undatable shoe fragment.[34]

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[31] See Maria Hayward, 'A shadow of a former self: analysis of an early 17th-century boy's doublet from Abingdon' in Hamling and Richardson eds, *Everyday Objects,* 107-118

[32] This shoe has cotton and rubber cuffs and therefore can be securely dated to after 1837 when Joseph Sparkes Hall invented the 'elasticated' gusset, see Sarah Levitt in *Victorians Unbuttoned: Registered Designs for Clothing, their Makers and Wearers, 1839-1900* (London, 1986), p. 156. See also Joseph Sparkes Hall, *The Book of the Feet*, (New York, 1846).

[33] See various catalogue entries detailing finds SBT 2000-58/1 and SBT 2002-27/1. See also, Anon, 'Notes and Comments – Hall's Croft' in *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 2 (1951), pp. 174-5. Thanks also to Marie Dufaud, House Manager at Hall's Croft, personal communication, May 2012.

[34] See Francis Grew and Margrethe de Neergaard, *Shoes and Pattens*, *Medieval Finds from Excavations in London*, No. 2, HMSO (London, 1988).

Figure 25 Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, no accession number. Hall's Croft Shoe Cache. A late sixteenth or early seventeenth century child's or baby's shoe. Leather. L 11cm W 4cm.

Sadly the exact location of the find and the manner of its construction have not been recorded. In other caches, shoes are sometimes bound together in a ball held by mud and vegetable matter, and this seems possible with the Hall's Croft cache as all the items were caked in mud and straw fragments. However, a detailed study of the earliest shoe uncovers some interesting factors. It is made entirely from leather, and is the smallest shoe in the cache. Allowing for shrinkage of approximately 10 per cent, this shoe can be equated to a modern size 2, and could therefore fit either a baby aged 6 – 18 months or perhaps even a small child.[35] It closely resembles another seventeenth century baby's shoe found in the Hursley cache in Hampshire.[36] Whilst the hemming is remarkably complete – the damage

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[35] Grew and de Neergaard, *Shoes and Pattens*, pp. 26-27. Shrinkage rate for medieval leather is roughly stated at 10 per cent, and if buried, 15 per cent. Some variation may be allowed for these shoes, which have been stored in relatively good conditions.

[36] See the Hursley Cache, http://www.concealedgarments.org; see also Dinah Eastop, 'The Conservation of Garments Concealed with Buildings as Material Culture in Action', in Hamling & Richardson, *Everyday Objects*, p. 150. Construction methods therefore suggest a rough date-range of 1500 - 1700. It has two latchets, with a small slash on the left which was used as a fastening. A collection of shoes at York suggests that a draw-string fastening was used for young childrens' shoes and boots up to the fifteenth century, but here the width of the latchet cut suggests a wooden toggle. The tongue or extended upper would have been covered by the two latchets when secured.

around the toe is puzzling. Seams tend to be the weak point in any shoe, with daily wear and tear usually manifesting in splits and ruptures in the sutures, but on this shoe the seam from the quarter to the toe is sound. Above this seam, however, is a cut into the upper, a clean horizontal laceration from the toe to the quarter seam, opening the insole to the air. The toe end of the upper is now a flap, and beneath the sole it is frayed and fragmented. The cut itself reveals the superior thickness and hardness of the leather, and no signs of loose or spongy tissue.[37] This was evidently a well-made and costly item; the customer probably paid anything between 12d to 1 shilling.[38] The cut has left no scoring or jagged markings, which would be expected if a mere domestic implement was used, and suggests instead the use of professional tools, such as the half-moon knife of the cordwainer.

Other surviving sixteenth century shoes also bear slash marks like this. Two black leather shoes in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York have been cut open in the instep and toe-region. Curators suggest that such marks are part of the original decorative design, and a variation upon the labour intensive and expensive process of embossing.[39] The slashing on a fourteenth century leather shoe, in the Museum of London, is said to have been made in order to 'make room for foot deformities', whilst the large jagged hole in another shoe in the same collection has been caused by 'wear from a bunion'.[40] The upper has been adapted for the bunion via a gouged hole caused by a blunt instrument, and has been subsequently widened with the fingers whilst being worn. Shoes are seen here as items that effectively imitate the contours of the foot to such an extent that modifications must be made for growths or

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[37] Hippolyte Dussauce, *A new and complete treatise on the arts of tanning, currying, and leather dressing*, (London, 1865), p. 237

[38] Prices of shoes, subject to various inflated prices and sharp practice, are discussed in Maria Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Dress in Henry VIII's England*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) p. 124

[39] See 29.158.893 and 29.158.896, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/29.158.892,3,6 [accessed June 2011]

[40] See accession number BC72[250]<3777/1>, and image number 000550, http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/ [accessed June 2011]

temporary ailments. It is possible that the Hall's Croft shoe was cut to accommodate a similar problem, or perhaps a growth spurt.

As we will see, the frequent bending, breaking or spoiling of objects found in the archaeological record by way of conscious ritual action rather than happenstance must be taken seriously when examining objects of this kind.[41] Denise Dixon-Smith has reported a pair of shoes found in Oxfordshire with a cross and an unidentified symbol cut into both uppers, whilst a man's waistcoat found behind a chimney stack in Nether Wallop in Hampshire, also shows signs of deliberate tearing and even cutting in places.[42] With reference to concealed garments in early modern houses, Miriam Duffield has suggested that the intentional mutilation of objects renders items less serviceable to the frugal and sparing householder, who is then able to put the object to other ritual or apotropaic uses.[43] Following this logic, the Hall's Croft shoe, nearing the conclusion of its useful life, is hastened to its end by a ritual act of cutting that calms the individual who must usually account for all aspects of their domestic expenses. This insight into the fretful domestic economy of early modern people is certainly evocative, but it could be argued that even the most battered shoe had potential value for the householder. Shoemaking relied upon the cordwainer, who made and repaired shoes, and the cobbler, who reconditioned and re-sold second-hand ones, so a thriving market for second-hand shoes was a more probable and practical relief to the mind of the conscientious householder stricken with waste-anxiety.[44]

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[41] Merrifield, *Ritual and Magic*, p. 30

[42] Denise Dixon-Smith, 'Concealed Shoes', *Archaeological Leather Group Newsletter*, no.6 (1990), p. 3; Dinah Eastop, 'Outside In: Making Sense of the Deliberate Concealment of Garments Within Buildings', *Textile*, 4/3 (2006), 238-255, p. 241, and 'The Conservation of Garments Concealed with Buildings as Material Culture in Action', in Hamling & Richardson, *Everyday Objects*, p. 150

[43] Miriam Duffield, *Interpreting Evidence of Wear and Deliberate Damage in Four Deliberately Concealed Garments*, Unpublished MA dissertation, (University of Southampton, 2004)

[44] Hayward, *Rich Apparel: Dress in Henry VIII's England*, p. 125; In London and Leicester in the medieval period, cobblers were divided into *alutarii* and the *basanarii* (the latter using *bazen* or inferior leather made from sheep-skin), see J. Blair ed, *English Medieval Industries*: *Craftsmen, Techniques, Products*, (London, 1991), p. 308

We do not know why these shoes were concealed or slashed, and given the fact that not all concealed shoes bear slash marks, the attempt to identify a coherent system or broad typology may be fruitless.[45] It is important however to restate the significance of shoe caches in more general terms. Shoes are the only garment that retain the wearers shape and 'personality' – these can be quantified in terms of smell, the way the foot shapes the leather (including its' peculiarities and deformities), and the idiosyncratic gait of the wearer.[46] Giorgio Riello and Peter McNeil have written that 'shoes have a shape that they keep even when the owner is absent', which may explain why they are often associated with the individual who wore them.[47] Ralph Merrifield has speculated that shoes left in ground-level locations within the house (i.e., ground floor voids and foundations) are part of 'foundation burials' whereby live animals and even babies were buried to protect the household.[48] According to Swann, these burials were practiced in Roman Britain, and may have formed the basis for later customs; shoes were also given as votive offerings to Roman deities.[49] In the European consciousness, shoes have been intimately connected with marriage symbolism – English folklore alludes to a practice where the father of the bride presented his daughter's shoe to the groom, to mark the transfer of male authority.[50] In Lancashire, the custom of 'smickling' involved 'young, childless, married women trying on the shoes of a friend who had just had a baby, in the belief that they would quickly become pregnant afterwards'.[51] These shoes were part of a ritual whereby fertility could be transferred by way of a potent object. The reactions to concealed shoes in the twentieth century were recorded by June Swann: her folkloric-informers are usually cautious and uncomfortable around such items. Men, in particular, are

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[45] See Hursely and Nether Wallop shoe caches documented at http://www.concealedgarments.org [accessed April 2011]
[46] See June Swann, 'Shoes Concealed in Buildings' *Costume*, 30 (1996), 56-69
[47] G. Riello and P. McNeil eds, *Shoes: A History from Sandals to Sneakers* (Oxford: 2006), p. 9.
[48] Merrifield, *Ritual and Magic*, p. 129
[49] See Swann, 'Shoes Concealed in Buildings', p. 68
[50] Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, p. 230
[51] Denise Dixon-Smith, 'Concealed Shoes', p. 2

generally in favour of putting them back, much to the bemusement of their wives.[52] In

another instance:

> A letter from a Hampshire woman was quite moving. She had innocently sent
> her finds to London for identification. While they were away, the house which
> had hitherto seemed so benign, had strange noises from the attic room where
> they were found. She even went to let the cat out, only to find nothing there.
> When there was a sensation of the floor shaking, her son refused to sleep there.
> She had heard that shoes were put in the chimney to keep out evil, which came
> in at the highest point.[53]

There are numerous interpretations and opinions regarding the significance of 'special' and

concealed deposits of shoes. Joanne Bruck's studies of Middle Bronze Age settlements

emphasises the transient relationship people had with their built and natural environments. In

a culture where many houses were only occupied for a season, greater significance was

placed on ritual 'leave-taking' or 'closing' deposits, for example, leaving smashed pottery in

abandoned houses.[54] Therefore, in this contextual system, depositing fragmented objects was

a means of establishing and materialising the 'close metaphorical relationship between the

lifecycle of the settlement and that of its inhabitants'.[55] Shoe caches may be interpreted as

representations of the owners and occupiers of the property, and deposits that left what was

hoped to be a permanent connection between individual and home.

5.2 Precious materials and the economy of magic

The products of cunning-folk in sixteenth and seventeenth century England fit into a wider

context of magic and folk belief in which everyday objects were used in rituals or

performances that are difficult to define and identify in the historical record. Euan Cameron

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[52] June Swann, 'Shoes Concealed in Buildings', p. 65
[53] Swann, 'Shoes Concealed in Buildings', p. 63; see also June Swann, *Northamptonshire History News*, 38 (1982), p.13.
[54] Joanne Bruck, 'Houses, lifecycles and deposition on Middle Bronze Age settlements in southern England' *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, No. 65, (1999), 145-166
[55] Joanne Bruck, 'Ritual and Rationality: some problems of interpretation in European archaeology' *European Journal of Archaeology*, 2/3 (1999), 313-314, p. 333

notes that until 'the middle of the eighteenth century and possibly for longer, most thinking

people in Europe believed that the physical matter of the cosmos was full of meaning' and

that 'gestures and rituals might … lead to physical effects or natural transformation'.[56] This

was true for special materials, such as gold, highlighted by that fact that was a period where

magical practitioners actively pursued the 'philosopher's stone', and where technology –

particularly forms of hydraulic experiments and machinery – was seen as secondary and

'artificial' compared to the achievements of magi steeped in the ancient arts of astral magic.[57]

Merrifield, following Thomas' notion that the natural world was imprinted with astral

properties, was sensitive to the various qualities of precious metals, as well as stones, wood

and herbs. Today, the identification and interpretation of 'evil-averting' objects often

depends on their constituent materials. The historical archaeologist Roberta Gilchrist

presented an appendix of natural materials – jet, red coral, amber and rock crystal – which

were prioritised by late-medieval and early modern people as the materials most likely to

feature in crafted objects for the alleviation of suffering or for driving away evil.[58] The

qualities of these 'occult materials' often derived from Classical traditions, or upon

cumulative meanings built up over time where certain practices imply the widespread value

of a particular material. These meanings, depending on their geographic spread and

circulation, may subsequently accrue layers of folkloric belief through years of regional or

customary use.[59] Rock crystal, for example, was widely used for decorating reliquaries and

other religious items and may have acquired apotropaic values by its link with the cult of

saints. Some materials, however, were not merely valued for their lore or traditional

association but for their physical properties; both amber and jet emit a static charge and a

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[56] Euan Cameron, *Enchanted Europe: Superstition, Reason, and Religion 1250-1750*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 2-3

[57] Anthony Grafton, *Magic and Technology of Early Modern Europe*. (Washington D.C: Smithsonian Libraries, 2005), p. 11

[58] Roberta Gilchrist, 'Appendix of apotropaic materials: Dress accessories, domestic and devotional objects' in *Medieval Life*, pp. 267-271

[59] Merrifield, *Ritual and Magic*, p. 120

curious smell when handled.[60] Gold was highly valued and widely used, and to most

sixteenth century writers its *inherent* properties were self-evident. The maverick physician,

Theophrastus Paracelsus, had the highest praise for the substance – gold in its liquid form

(*aurum potabile*) was the remedy for all diseases, whether imbibed to cure illness brought on

by hostile sorcery, or in the form of sigils – flat metal amulets inscribed with magical marks –

which harnessed astral powers against the disease.[61] Simon Forman, the London polymath

astrologer and cunning-man, also used gold in many of his crafted sigils. William Lilly was

introduced to the occult arts by his employer Margery Wright who had received a gold sigil

made by Forman before the astrologer's death in 1611. Margery had acquired it for her

previous husband, who suffered with a spirit of a murdered man who constantly demanded

him to cut his own throat.[62] When the sigil was hung about his neck, the spirit desisted, and

after her husband's (natural) death, she remarried and kept the sigil. Lilly worked as the

couples' servant from 1620, and nursed Margery in 1622 when she developed a swelling in

her left breast. During this time, he became aware of the sigil and its story:

> When my mistress died, she had under her arm-hole a small scarlet bag full of
> many things, which, one that was there delivered unto me. There was in this bag
> several sigils, some of Jupiter in Trine, others of the nature of Venus, some of
> iron, and one of gold, of pure angel gold, of the bigness of a thirty-three shilling
> piece of King James' coin. In the circumference of one side was engraven, *Vicit
> Leo de tribu Judae Tetragramaton* +, within the middle there was engraven a
> holy lamb. In the other circumference there was Amraphael and three +. In the
> middle, *Sanctus Petrus*, *Alpha* and *Omega*.[63]

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[60] For this tradition of 'natural magic' see Brian P. Copenhaver, 'A Tale of Two Fishes: Magical Objects in Natural History from Antiquity through the Scientific Revolution' in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 52 (1991), 373-398

[61] Thomas, *Religion*, p. 271; Paracelsus noted that the sorcerers' art was to introduce various foreign objects into the body – ashes, hairs, fishbones; and other writers agreed, adding that the appearance of keys, needles and bones in the body were sure signs of hostile sorcery, see Cameron, *Enchanted Europe*, p. 32

[62] Lauren Kassell, 'The Economy of Magic in Early Modern England' in Margaret Pelling and Scott Mandelbrote eds, *The Practice of Reform in Health, Medicine and Science, 1500-2000: Essays for Charles Webster*, (Aldereshot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 43-44

[63] William Lilly, *William Lilly's History of His Life and Times* (London, 1822), p. 32. Lilly repeats Kyffin's observation that the gold of 'angels' is purer than other types – a factor that appears to be important when contemporaries assessed the monetary and ritual significance of quarter angel coin, as well as another similar object in the SBT's collections, see SBT 2003-1/5.

Prompted, perhaps, by the efficacy of the sigil in its apotropaic task against the ghost, Lilly noted down the inscriptions, but, seemingly unimpressed by its thaumaturgical or healing power, he promptly sold the gold. This incident has been interpreted by Lauren Kassell as an indication that the inherent properties of metals were, by the seventeenth century, less important than the marks or inscriptions themselves.[64] These inscriptions or 'sigillations' were complex horoscopes, mapping and stamping the power of the heavens onto an object of gold. Whilst most cunning-folk practiced charms that were only partially influenced by occult literature, the sigil-making astrologer was a member of a learned coterie to whom such vulgarities subverted an official economy of magic.[65] 'This occasion' wrote Lilly of his experience with Margery Wright and Forman's sigil, 'begot in me a little desire to learn something that way, but wanting money to buy books, I laid aside these notions'.[66] Capital was needed to invest in learning before a budding astrologer could begin consultation, but when ensconced, like any other tradesman, services and products came at a price.

Something of this specialised knowledge and services on offer can be seen in the literature itself. When buying a sigil for leprosy from Paracelsus, for example, the patient was not a merely buying a one-off object, but an entire programme of treatment. A prescription of balsam and a swig of *aurum potabile* stemmed the increase of the disease; and in the meantime the sigil was wrought using methods that would have been familiar to the Royal Mint. A disc, or *planchet*, was cut from a sheet of beaten gold at an astrologically propitious hour:

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[64] Lauren Kassell, *Medicine and Magic in Elizabethan London: Simon Forman; Astrologer, Alchemist, and Physician* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005); and Lauren Kassell, 'The Economy of Magic in Early Modern England', pp. 43-57.

[65] Thomas, *Religion*, p. 224; Thomas outlines theories of signature and sympathy, and broad homeopathic cures working on the principle that like-cures-like; i.e., yellow blossoms were thought to be a likely cure for jaundice.

[66] William Lilly, *William Lilly's History of His Life and Times*, pp. 28–9.

> Let this kinde of Sigil be made of pure Gold, and wrought into a *Lamen* in the hour of Saturn, but the Characters ought to be ingraven in the hour of Sun, when Moon is in and Sun in the same sign; which usually happens in *July*.[67]

The sigillations were engraved at different times, and were therefore separate, both physically and ritually to the ground of gold. Once engraved, the sigil was activated, but it only had a limited time-span: 'It ought to be renewed every year in *July,* for this Sigil loseth its force in a year'. The movement of Saturn, moon and sun, out of a particular alignment ended the efficacy of the sigil, reminding the patient of the origin of its power. When activated however, the entire object was efficacious: it was recommended that the sigil should be steeped in wine which the patient should then drink, and like many other sigils, patients were instructed to hang them about the neck. Analysis of surviving sigils usually show signs of perforation where a chain or cord facilitated their use as necklace-amulets, but nowhere in Paracelsus's meticulous account does he recommend or condone such an action. The examples illustrated in the *Supreme Mysteries* are all unimpaired and unbroken, and it is possible that the scarlet bag used by Margery Wright was a common device to aid the wearing of the sigil without perforating its material form. In other accounts however, 'stringing [amulets] with red or green thread' is considered acceptable, but more so if the material was woven by a virgin.[68] When the sigil had run its astral course, it is probable that the item was kept for sentimental value, or as we have seen, redeemed for its material worth.

5.2.1 The folkloric use of sigils and coins

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[67] Theophrastus Paracelsus, *Of the supreme mysteries of nature. Of [brace] the spirits of the planets. Occult philosophy. The magical, sympathetical, and antipathetical cure of wounds and diseases. The mysteries of the twelve signs of the zodiack. / Englished by R. Turner, philomathes*. (London: 1655); *Lamen* probably refers to a lamina, or ring of metal. These lamens are illustrated throughout the book as the faces onto which sigillation is applied.
[68] Nikolaus van Dinkelsbuhl, quoted in Karin Bauman, *Aberglaube fur Laien: zur Programmatik und Uberlieferung spatmittelalterlicher Superstitionenkritik*, 2 vols (Wurzburg: 1989), p. 548

Figure 26 (L-R) A bronze disc found in 1930, a silver disc from 1930, and one perforated bronze amulet with letter 'B' found in 1950, all from Palmer's Farm underfloorboards in the main hall. c. 1600-1900.

The survival of sigils with accompanying documentation is rare, and in most cases the objects found must be interpreted within larger frameworks of cultural history. The construction of medicinal and astral sigils may explain a series of objects in the SBT collection that have evaded explanation for over half a century. Discovered under the floorboards in the Hall at Palmer's Farm, Wilmcote, and described as 'disks' with 'unintelligible lettering', they may have been used in magical or semi-magical healing or apotropaic practices described by Lilly and Paracelsus.[69] A bronze and a silver disc appear to be the oldest (Fig 2, a and b); they are hand-cut with heavy patinas of corrosion, dirt and scratching, as well as signs of modern cleaning which probably occurred at the point of excavation. These discs could be provisionally dated to 1600 – 1900, following the work of Dinah Eastop and Fiona Pitt; they certainly post-date the laying of the floor c. 1490.[70] Some shallow marks can also be seen on the silver disc. These could be tokens or weights for counterfeit coins; but another bronze disc, inscribed with a central letter B, and perforated with a hole, was almost certainly made to be worn around the neck. Both Eastop and Pitt have noted the presence of weights and tokens in a small percentage of concealed shoe finds in Britain, and therefore these pieces

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[69] Complex of buildings is called Mary Arden's Farm, but this is an eighteenth century association – Arden probably lived at Glebe Farm.
[70] Dinah Eastop, 'Outside in: Making Sense of the Deliberate Concealment of Garments within Buildings', pp. 238–255; Fiona Pitt, *ALG Newsletter*, (1991), p. 4. See Nat Alcock and Robert Meeson, *Mary Arden's House, Wilmcote, Warwickshire,* unpublished reports for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1999).

may be part of a system of protective folk-magic that drew upon concealment as discussed above.[71] They may have been concealed under the floor for many years, perhaps stored in a receptacle which has since perished – unfortunately the context of the find is not reported. The holed disc, as we shall see from another item in the Trust collection, could fit into other folkloric uses of items of this type: as a friendship or love token.

5.2.2 Coin bending

Figure 27 SBT 2003-4/5, a bent Elizabethan gold ¼ Angel, minted in 1582.

It is clear that everyday objects were commonly used in magical or semi-magical ways. Another unreported example of this in Trust's collection can be seen on an Elizabethan gold quarter Angel. It is stamped on the obverse with an image of St. Michael slaying the dragon and the Latin inscription: 'Elizabeth by the Grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland'.[72] A well-defined groove bisects the coin, cutting horizontally through the waist of St. Michael. Toward the edges, parallel to the groove, the coin is worn smooth, particularly at the edges, and the saint's face also shows signs of prolonged or intense handling. The groove indicates that the coin has been bent in half, with the downward pressure applied to the obverse with its image of the archangel. In 1307, the practice of coin-bending was

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[71] Dinah Eastop, 'Outside in', pp. 238–255; Fiona Pitt, ALG Newsletter, 1991, p. 4
[72] ELIZABETH D G ANG FR ET HI REGINA. – 'Ang', 'Fr' 'Hi' refer to the Queens dominions.

described as 'the English custom' by a Papal commission investigating the canonization of

Cantilupe. They were referring to the numerous bent coins deposited in the offertory boxes at

his growing but unofficial shrine, but the practice itself – bending a coin to mark a vow – was

part of a wider practice that persisted up to the Reformation and beyond. The relationship

between client and saint, as Eamon Duffy has written,

> was governed by a well-established pattern of custom and expectation. The
> saint, for his part, desired honour from his clients. This might take the form of
> the repetition of suffrages and hymns to the saint, and many of these were
> provided in *Horae* and printed primers. Clients also attended matins, Mass, and
> evensong … Above all, the saint required pilgrimage to his shrine, and a promise
> to visit the saint's relics and there offer a coin or a candle was held to be the
> most likely way to attract his interest and help.[73]

Ronald Finucane relates the story of a mother who bent a coin over her sick son, vowing to

make an annual pilgrimage to the invoked saint at Beverley if he recovered.[74] Similarly a

London Mercers' Company recorded in its expenses the pilgrimages of the crew of the ship

Carrygon, who, running into bad weather, had all bent a coin vowing pilgrimage if they were

delivered from drowning.[75] As these stories suggest, the simple bending of a coin marked

that object as the property of the saint in whose name a request had been made. The coin's

value to the saint could be increased by further actions. Pilgrimage to the shrine could be

undertaken barefoot or roughly clad; or the client could abstain from meat or wine until it was

concluded.[76] Custom implies that silver coins were commonly used; but the value of the coin

to the saint was deemed an important aspect of this process, and clients could please the saint

more if gold was used instead. A wealthy client, with a purse full of gold and silver, vowed

to bend a coin to Henry VI; being somewhat parsimonious he looked in his purse for some

silver. He was unable to find silver coins, although he knew he had some, and it is said that

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[73] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-c. 1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 183-186
[74] Ronald C. Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England*, (London: 1977), pp. 94-5
[75] Duffy, *Stripping of the Altars*, p. 184
[76] *Ibid*., p. 184

the saintly King had mischievously intervened to encourage the man to bend gold, which he duly did. In the case of Henry VI, as both saint and feudal lord, the bent coin achieved new significance. In another case Henry, 'reminded a potential client that his father had died in battle in his service, thus re-establishing a feudal bond between them, as well as the one implied in the coin-bending'.[77] As an object marked for its special ritual use, the bent coin symbolised the moment when the economy of the heavenly and earthly realms coincided. As a result, the coin had amuletic and talismanic properties becoming especially efficacious if it was bent or hung over the afflicted party, or over their wound or ailment.[78]

This relationship between client and saint underpins the act of coin-bending in most pre-Reformation instances. Merrifield rooted the idea of bending or breaking an object to pre-Roman times, where it was ritually 'killed', and despatched to the world of spirits.[79] Coins themselves could be seen as a metonym for avarice; the Franciscans were forbidden to touch them, and in medieval art, the indignity of horded wealth was evoked by images of apes defecating coins.[80]

The intrinsic power of coins over men's souls is revealed in various early modern sources; Philip Henry, for example, a late seventeenth century minister, relates the story of a man who was felled by 'an Apoplexy in his shop counting money'.[81] Similarly, John Aubrey remarks on the affront shown to coins by apple and oyster sellers in London, who spat on their money as they received it.[82] Deborah Valenze, following Merrifield, suggests that bent coins were a means of removing them from circulation entirely, but this assertion is probably unlikely. As

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[77] *Ibid*., pp. 184-185
[78] There are numerous well-documented examples throughout the Middle Ages of coins being bent for diverse calamities such as storms at sea, the curing of a blind horse, and the turning back of a fire, as well as the more usual human ailments; see Finucane, *Miracles and Pilgrims: Popular Beliefs in Medieval England*, pp. 94-5
[79] Merrifield, *Ritual and Magic*, p. 30
[80] Deborah Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006) p. 92
[81] Quoted in Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past*, pp. 92-3
[82] Confusingly, later traditions (eighteenth century) hold that this is a charm to *attract* more money, see Steve Roud, *An Encyclopaedia of English Folklore*, (London: 1997), pp. 345-6

we see with the Trust's coin, bent coins could easily be unbent and used as currency.

Valenze's point may explain the stories that seem to regard these coins as special 'telecommunications' with the monarch whose image or emblem has been bowed. In the case of Henry VI, whose saintly reputation was widely regarded, a coin with his portrait may have been seen as doubly efficacious in a vow or prayer made over a corpse after sudden death, or hung around the neck of a victim of accidental strangling, in order to obtain the saintly monarch's aid in salvation.[83] Whilst their economic value remained, the act of bending was part of this wider attitude to money, it marked and destined the coin as an offering at a particular saint's shrine. The coin so used was altered into a Church-sponsored remedy for misfortune and, as part of the offertory, became part of the wider sacred map of the parish church.[84]

Towards the mid-sixteenth century however, the practice was acquiring new political and secular connotations. Merrifield suggests that the bent coin was always seen 'as a symbol of devotion and of a vow', but after the Reformation, 'when the worship of saints was condemned as idolatrous, it was redirected to a secular purpose … and bent coins came to be used as love-tokens'.[85] There was however, a period of transition. At the height of the struggle for the Royal Supremacy in December 1536, the monks of Sawley sent a letter to Sir Thomas Percy encouraging him to renew the rebellion against the King's forces; alongside this missive was sent a 'bent royal', a large silver coin worth 15 shillings.[86] Whilst Ethan Shagan has interpreted this as an 'anti-government' symbol, it was in fact a prosaic and customary gesture of greeting (as we shall see), and most importantly, a pledge to be brought back to the monastery and deposited in the offertory once victory had been won. Whilst the

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[83] Valenze, *The Social Life of Money in the English Past*, pp. 92-3
[84] Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, p. 181. Keith Thomas writes, 'A scapular, or friar's coat, for example, was a coveted object to be worn as a preservative against pestilence or the ague, and even to be buried in as a short cut to salvation … Even the coins in the offertory were accredited with magical value', Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 35-6
[85] Merrifield, *Ritual and Magic*, p. 115-6
[86] Ethan H. Shagan, *Popular Politics and the English Reformation*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p. 119

letter was certainly written with express purpose against the King's government, the bending of the coin, even though it seemingly ruptured or even defaced the King's portrait, was probably carried out alongside the saying of a prayer and as an appeal to the King's good graces, who had been led astray by his ministers. In a period where images where systematically targeted for reform, any modification of an image or defacement is too readily seen as a conscious act of 'iconophobia'; the reality is much more complex. Bending a coin could be seen as a direct 'telecommunication' with the King, embedded in customs going back to at least the fifteenth-century. This instance also highlights the coin's other possible uses as a mode of greeting and contract.

The variety of potential uses recedes as the sixteenth century progresses. Alice Benden, martyred in Canterbury in 1557, was recorded by John Foxe as possessing 'A shilling also of Philip and Mary … which her father had bowed and sent her when she was first sent to prison'.[87] Foxe's brief treatment of this suggests to his readers that the coin should be seen as a remembrance, included to heighten the filial bond between prisoner and family. But it is certainly possible that Alice's father had petitioned the monarchs responsible for his daughter's incarceration through prayer and by the ritual bending of the coin which he then sent to his daughter as token of his efforts.

The coin as greeting , however, appears to dominate later sources. Robert Greene's *The Third and last part of Conny-catching* (1592), like its prequels, revealed to its readers the cunning and treachery of 'conny-catchers' (conmen). The third instalment tells the tale of a young rogue who insinuates himself into the household of a substantial citizen of London, only to rob him in the middle of the night. The thief, or conny-catcher, working with several accomplices, learns the family history of the master's maid-servant, and assuming the identity of a cousin, hails the girl and her mistress in the street:

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[87] John Foxe, *The Acts and Monuments of John Foxe*, ed. S. R. Cattley, (London, 1841), p. 453

> The Maide hearing herselfe named, and not knowing the man, modestly blushed, which he perceiuing, held way on with her amongst her fellow apprentices, and thus began againe. "I see Cousen you knowe mee not, and I doe not greatlie blame you, it is so long since you came forth of the Countrey, but I am" such a ones sonne, naming her Uncle right, and his sonnes name, which she very well remembred, but had not seene him in eleven yeares.[88]

At this point, the man presented the maid-servant with a 'bowed groat, and an olde pennie bowed' saying that they were gifts from her uncle and aunt respectively. Greene's source for this tale is undisclosed, but reflects the broad change that had occurred since the mid-sixteenth century. Bent coins are now gifts of money, personalised by the curvature which distinguishes one 'olde pennie' from another. The coin evinced the presence of the relative or loved one who was absent in person whilst shown to be near by the sign of bending.

In her discussion of personal objects in sixteenth century Canterbury, Catherine Richardson reveals how an affair was conducted between Godlene Allen and Richard Tusten via a series of coins handed out by go-betweens. These men, Richard Bassock and William Collyns, were co-opted by Tusten to reinforce his relationship with Godlene during periods of enforced absence. Bassock brought Godlene a quarter angel for remembrance, as did Collyns, who brought a piece of gold for remembrance 'tyll [Tusten] come him selfe'. This coin was left 'behynde him in [her] … house upon the board or window' after Godlene had refused it.[89] As such these coins operated both as gifts of value, possibly to coerce Godlene, but also as part of a wider system of coins as love tokens, or objects of friendship and memorialisation.

5.2.3 Coins as touch-pieces

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[88] Robert Greene, *The Third and last part of Conny-catching: with the new devised knavish arte of Foole-taking. The like coosanages and villanies never before discovered*. (London, 1592)

[89] Catherine Richardson, 'A very fit hat': Personal Objects and Early Modern Affection' in Catherine Richardson and Tara Hamling eds, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 289-298, pp. 290-291

Coins also featured in varieties of magic that were distinct from the charms of cunning-folk and from the meanings bestowed upon bent coins of the realm. The debasement of coin in sixteenth century England led to renewed attempts to control the integrity of the currency during Elizabeth's reign, when in 1560/61, Sir Thomas Gresham recalled all debased coinage. A shortage then followed which moved merchants to paper exchange at the upper end of the market, and to the use of lead tokens among those who profited less from revaluation. As professional traders could distinguish between a debased coin and one of higher standard, but others could not, it was vital for the government to revalue coins by their actual silver content and so stamp them accordingly. The constituent materials (substance), finesse and weight (shape), and royal portrait or emblems (signs) validated the new coinage, as William Heth outlined in his description of the making of gold and silver ingots: 'by the stroke of the stame [stamp] which imprinteth vpon it the figure by the prince commanded by which is it easely knowen and wtout it cannot be *properly called money till by the printe it be brought to the trewe forme*.'[90] This form, brought to its fulfilment by the stamp and official emblems of the monarch, was therefore just as important as the coin's exchange value.[91]

Figure 28 SBT 2003 4/4. A full Elizabethan gold Angel, minted 1578-81, Cross mint mark

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[90] William Heth, *The goulden arte or The jewell house of gemes*, (London, 1603)
[91] Mary E. Hazard, *Elizabethan Silent Language*, (Lincoln NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), pp. 124-125

This stamped gold angel could however, in the context of an official sacerdotal ceremony, claim further value beyond that of the market. According to Keith Thomas, these ceremonies were held for sufferers of the malady known as the 'King's Evil', or scrofula, who queuing patiently, waited to be touched by their sovereign. They approached, one at a time, knelt before the king or queen and were touched on the face, whilst a clergyman read aloud from the Gospel of Mark, 'They shall lay hands on the sick and they recover'. The patients then retired, later returning to receive a gold Angel strung from a white ribbon; many surviving examples attest to this use by the small hole drilled into their upper edge.[92] Whilst important for its political implications as a display of legitimate and divinely appointed power, for Elizabeth (much like her later Stuart successors), this ceremony was something more than a medieval display of authority or a public act of charity – the evidence suggests that she performed this particular duty with the utmost piety and dignity. At Kenilworth in 1575, she was observed preparing for the ceremony 'prostrate on her knees, body and soul rapt in prayer'; and during the ritual she not only laid hands upon the sores of her patients (an action from which James I would usually refrain), but taking the gold angel made the sign of the cross over the actual sore itself.[93] There was intense debate as to the origin of such cures. Mary I instructed recipients of the angel to never part with it, and to expect a relapse of the disease if they did.[94] The writer on demonology and witchcraft, Reginald Scot, gauged contemporary reactions: 'Some refer [the success of the cure] to the property of their persons, some to the peculiar gift of God, some to efficacy of words.' He also suggested that 'Her Majesty [Elizabeth], only useth godly and divine prayer, with some alms, and referreth

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[92] Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 227-236; Herbert Appold Grueber, *Handbook of the Coins of Great Britain and Ireland in the British Museum*, (London, 1899). The ceremony itself was included in the Book of Common Prayer from 1634; and only removed in 1744 (Latin version), and in 1728 (in English).

[93] Carole Levin, '"Would I Could Give You Help and Succour": Elizabeth I and the Politics of Touch', *Albion*, 21/2 (1989), p. 204, fn. 47

[94] Thomas, *Religion*, p. 232

the cure to God and the physicians.'[95] Later, John Aubrey was sceptical as to the religious

dimension of the ceremony, remarking that whilst there 'are prayers read at the touching, …

neither the King minds them nor the chaplains.'[96] When Charles I performed the ceremony

the invocation of the name of God was sometimes omitted.[97] He also began to mint special

touch-pieces for the occasion, where formerly common currency was used. We may

speculate that the moment of touch, overseen by the priest, defined the ritual of healing, and

that the distribution of coins implied a kind of secondary preservative against the disease –

rendering the coin a talisman, as opposed to an amulet.[98] Given the overlap of mutable

popular and learned traditions, but the consistent theme of the inherent value of and in

precious metals, the gold angel could be seen simply as a souvenir of an efficacious

ceremony and a valuable gift – as Scot would have it, a moment of prayer reinforced by

alms.[99] But Elizabeth's Kenilworth ritual dislocates the value of the object, redirecting it to

her own personhood as monarch and, it could be argued, to the religious symbolism of her

gestures. In this context, the coin's own religious imagery may also be more significant than

has been previously thought.[100] Whilst Thomas emphasises the political value of the *ritual*,

and Carole Levin dwells upon the meaning of touch between monarch and subject, few

scholars have deemed the image of the archangel worthy of comment. Representations of St.

Michael and the realm of angelic spirits generally, were neither officially proscribed nor

problematic in early modern England. Attested by Scripture, angels were an essential part of

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[95] Reginald Scot, *The Discoverie of Witchcraft: wherein the lewde dealing of witches and witchmongers is notablie detected* (London, 1584), XIII, p. xi

[96] Aubrey quoted in Thomas, *Religion*, p. 232

[97] Raymond Henry Payne Crawfurd, *The King's Evil*, (London, 1955), p. 165, 175, 176

[98] The roots of the word talisman, derived from the Arabic *telasim*, and the Greek *teleith*, evoke notions of payment, or completion; which have been associated with an altogether different practical use and attendant ritual. Talismans could be deposited, or hung up in particular places, as well as carried about the body, and this variation in use and the root meanings of the word suggests that an initial payment or form of exchange was central to its value. Amulet, from Arabic *ammalah*, means to carry.

[99] Dora Thornton has speculated that the purity of the gold in the angel prompted its use in such rituals, reinforcing the importance of the material in thaumaturgical objects like this. See Dora Thornton & Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare: Staging the World*, (London, 2012), p. 206

[100] Thomas emphasises the political value of the *ritual*, while Levin dwells upon the meaning of touch between monarch and subject.

Protestant cosmology as carriers of heavenly messages, and the existence of evil angels, offered, in contrast, explanations of human suffering and divine judgement.[101] In addition the presence of a Biblical inscription on the reverse of the coin – 'This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous' – intimating an act of divine intervention, strengthens the notion that Elizabeth's 'own' coin would have been especially powerful when handled by her in this ritual. But like William Lilly's sale of Wright's amulet, even the most elite of all magical objects was not always thought to be efficacious, and despite Mary's earlier injunctions for the touch-piece to be worn in perpetuity, some patients could not resist selling them as Sir Thomas Browne discovered when he recorded seeing a number of these gold pieces in a London shop.[102]

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has identified a number of items that are now widely recognized among scholars to be indicators of a thriving magical practice in the early modern period. I have highlighted the importance of materials and manufacturing processes in the production and use of items of folk-magic, making a distinct connection between the artisanal classes of early modern England and some of the protective symbols imposed upon objects. Evidence of coin bending and touch pieces in the collection also point to the ways in which religious magic carried over into paraliturgical practices, and how these customs themselves changed over time.

Importantly for this study of museum practice and approaches to early modern material culture, a number of items have been catalogued that were formerly unknown to the Trust, which in turn ask pertinent questions about the beliefs of the early modern occupants of

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[101] Thomas Hobbes, probably one of the most materialist Protestants of his age, declared that angels were corporeal, that is embodied and perceptible to the senses, but divinely endowed with a corporeality that was rarefied and unique to them; see Peter Marshall & Alexandra Walsham eds, *Angels in the Early Modern World*.
[102] Thomas, *Religion*, pp. 232-236

Palmer's Farm and Hall's Croft. Whilst we cannot be sure of the exact meanings of the

processes and objects, it is clear that people were actively using objects in ways that cannot

be explained in functional terms, and that often such traces of use are embedded in the

material evidence of the object.

Chapter Six

Clothing, accessories and identity in early modern England

This chapter examines a group of items in the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's collection that represent aspects of early modern women's clothing and accessories. Many of the items discussed in this chapter have been part of the Trust's collection for many years, but have evaded serious analysis, whilst others were recently purchased from trusted vendors in order to expand the collection. These items shall be analysed in light of recent research into national, religious and gender identity, combined with original research into the actual and perceived impact of foreign customs and goods on the seventeenth-century English market and mind-set. In addition to these issues, this chapter explores the extent to which material objects reveal the identities of their owners.

This chapter argues that misconceptions about early modern fashion – and therefore early modern identities – are rooted in anachronisms regarding material culture. Early modern outfits consisted of component parts tied, strapped, propped, layered and pinned together, creating cumulative effects with many variations of style and layers of meaning. These subtle and physically fragile 'toolkits' of identity, where they have survived, have not been studied as a whole but prised out of their natural contexts by antiquarians and collectors, whilst their inherent delicacy often impedes their display and/or creative engagement in a research or museum setting. This can even lead to a somewhat functionalist and uninspired object record, marked by rigid categorizations that blur nuance and neglect diversity of function. Fortunately, some outstanding object-sets do survive. The following discussion of 'girdle-furniture' draws upon an important example of an embroidered satin mid-seventeenth

century English girdle, purse, pin-cushion, and knife-sheath.[1] This complete object-set or ensemble provides a template for an analysis of objects in the Trust's collection and attendant themes of English feminine identity – marital status, domesticity, housekeeping, hygiene, piety, wealth, status and fashion.

This discussion is preceded by an analysis of an embroidered jacket from the first decade of the seventeenth century, thought to have belonged to Eleanor Roe, the wife of an eminent diplomat and envoy.[2] This section explores the connections between issues of style, economic policy, moral acceptability and questions of Englishness, which may have informed female choice of clothing.

6.1 The self, fashion and identity

A brief historiography of fashion as a subject within early modern studies reveals the steady separation, at a theoretical and practical level, between the material culture and historians appraisals of fashion – this in turn highlights the dispersal and isolation of sartorial objects in the museum context. Histories of costume ranged, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, from James Planché's *History of British Costume* (1834) with its conversational tone to indexed, multi-volume works drawing upon contemporary documents and drawings, as published by Le Comte Horace de Viel-Castel and Paul Lacroix.[3] The latter, encyclopaedic in character, contrasted with many nineteenth-century English works which were written as 'pattern-books' for historical painters.[4] These works on fashion were largely descriptive and drew upon painted portrayals of clothing rather than the tangible material culture itself, a

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[1] This so-called 'chatelaine' is of English manufacture, c. 1630-1660. Manchester City Galleries, Object No. 1984.60

[2] SBT 1993-35

[3] A full bibliography of eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth century antiquarian and popular fashion writing is discussed at length by Lou Taylor, 'The foundation stones – dress history from 1560-1900', *Establishing Dress History*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), 4-44

[4] Frederick William Fairholt wrote in his book of 1860, 'Correct information has become an acknowledged essential to the historical painter. The reign of imaginary costume has reached its close. … False costume is now an unnecessary obtrusion and not worth and excuse'; *Costume in England – a history of dress to the end of the eighteenth century*, (London, 1860), p. viii.

problem that Frederick William Fairholt's *Costume in England* (1860) sought to rectify.[5] All of these works, according to Lou Taylor, settled upon simplistic linear evolutions of dress types, and were for the most part devoid of interpretation, which fell to the sociologists and economists; in the works of Herbert Spencer, Thorstein Veblen and Werner Sombart, clothing became part of a political and economic discourse.[6] Fashion, according to Sombart for example, was the means by which the upper-classes most readily satiated themselves, producing and consuming ever-increasing quantities and ever-differentiated qualities of goods.[7] Semioticians like Roland Barthes 'were concerned with how fashion had been written about' – not with the material evidence of surviving garments.[8] Inevitably this theorization of fashion in the twentieth century eschewed objects and their use as primary sources in histories of clothing culture.

Susan Vincent has written of the 'monodirectional' tendencies of costume historiography, where clothes are seen merely as reflective of social contexts.[9] In contrast, scholars of the materiality of garments have emphasized the predisposition of the object to influence and even shape social action and meaning in the early modern context. Dress has been shown to order the relationships between individuals by shaping the wearer's physical deportment and demeanour; clothes constrain or enable movement, predisposing the body to specified behaviours.[10] These aspects of dress impinged directly upon the body and in this sense, clothing culturally influences and to some extent constructs its wearer. As a result, certain

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[5] Fairholt's influence as a historian of fashion lasted well into the 1930s. Lou Taylor, *Establishing Dress History*, p. 36-7.

[6] For Veblen and clothes see Valerie Steele ed, *The Berg Companion to Fashion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Werner Sombart's ideas are discussed with reference to fashion by Maxine Berg 'Luxury, and the Luxury Trades, and the Roots of Industrial Growth: A Global Perspective' in Frank Trenmann ed, *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Consumption*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) pp. 175-191

[7] Phillippe Perrot, trans. by Richard Bienvenu, *Fashioning the bourgeoisie: a history of clothing in the nineteenth century*, (New Jersey: 1994), p. xi

[8] Phillipe Perrot, *Fashioning the bourgeoisie*, p. xi

[9] Susan Vincent, 'To Fashion A Self: Dressing in Seventeenth Century England' *Fashion Theory*, Volume 3, 2, (1999) p. 205

[10] Susan Vincent, *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: 2003), p. 5-7.

types of clothing are often read from specifically 'embodied' perspectives. A piece of 'girdle-furniture' for example, derives some of its meaning from the context in which it was worn, and where it was located on the human body. For Vincent, the close practical relationship between body and clothing led some items to acquire a privileged, even potent status. Most garments, she argues, can be located upon a continuum between public and private, ranging from outer cloaks to underwear, whilst the glove, associated with the hand – an 'instrument of intimacy that yet acts in the world' – is found on all points of this continuum, communicating both highly visual and public meanings, as well as intimate and private ones.[11] For Clare Gettings, the white garments, and especially the soft kid-gloves used to dress a corpse, were part of a process of concealment designed to reinforce an aesthetic of post-mortem purity, particularly of virgin girls, in late sixteenth and seventeenth century England.[12] In summary, the material culture of clothing speaks a silent language that still has much to tell us about the identities of early modern people.

Identity, or the study of selves, within early modern scholarship, has been dominated by the connection between historic persons and their authored visual and literary re-presentations – a paradigm significantly developed by Stephen Greenblatt in his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (1980). Greenblatt's new notion of the human person, or rather, a human self as a cultural artefact, a 'historical and ideological illusion generated by the economic, social, religious, and political upheavals of the Renaissance', reversed Jacob Burckhardt's earlier formulation of the Renaissance man as a free, autonomous and independent human subject.[13] Greenblatt pays very little attention to the formation of female identity in his book, which is instead fascinated by discourses of power and the

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[11] Susan Vincent, 'To Fashion A Self', pp. 212-217
[12] Clare Gettings, *Death, burial and the individual in early modern England*, p. 102-118
[13] See Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning From More to Shakespeare*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 257; Jacob Burckhardt, trans. A.G.C. Middlemore, *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* (London, 1960) (1860); see also Keith Whitlock ed, *The Renaissance in Europe: A Reader*, (London: 2000), pp. 6-16

destabilization of certainties constructed around the universal Renaissance man. Taking up similar positions, feminist historians embraced Greenblatt's emphasis on identity in new ways, identifying with sharper clarity the ways in which institutions and ideologies limited the scope of female agency. Whilst Burckhardt saw Renaissance portraiture as evidence of an emergent individualism and 'pure artistic contemplation'[14], late-twentieth century art historians saw this as 'part of a larger, male-driven discourse', where female sitters were constructed 'according to convention, to be looked upon and subordinated by their male audiences.'[15] Burckhardt has been at times viciously and unfairly attacked for his 'patriarchal' and 'bourgeois' attitudes, and his methodological frameworks have been replaced with a feminist programme to reconstruct the lives of the female subjects represented.[16] In a creative re-application of Greenblatt's rather narrow historicism, this new feminist agenda articulated an appeal, seemingly across the ages, to the free historic subject, whilst wrestling with an awareness of her historic subordination and victimization.[17]

This conceptual shift towards identity and agency was accompanied by other movements, but it is only recently that the study of clothing culture has been associated with the recovery of personal historic identities, and a desire to understand the nature and scope of this personal agency.[18] In 2010, the Reformation historian Ulinka Rublack noted that clothes and

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[14] See Catherine M. Soussloff, *The Subject in Art: Portraiture and the Birth of the Modern*, (North Carolina, 2006), pp. 27-35

[15] A vigorous critic of Burckhardt in this vein is Patricia Simons 'Women in Frames: the gaze, the eye, the profile in Renaissance portraiture' *History Workshop: A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Historians*, 25 (1998), pp. 4-30; see a broader discussion in Paola Tinagli, *Women in Italian Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation and Identity*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 10-12; and Andrea Pearson ed, *Women and Portraits in Early Modern Europe: Gender, Agency, Identity* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), particularly her introduction, 'Portraiture's Selves', 1-13

[16] For more positive discussion of Burckhardt's legacy in portrait criticism, particularly his influence upon Aby Warburg, see Patricia Rubin, 'Understanding Renaissance Portraiture' in Keith Christiansen and Stefan Veppelmann eds, *The Renaissance Portrait: from Donatello to Bellini* (New York: 2011), pp. 2-25.

[17] See Jana Sawicki, 'Foucault and Feminism: A Critical Reappraisal' in Michael Kelly ed, *Critique and Power: Recasting the Foucault/Habermas Debate*, (Cambridge, MA: 1994), p. 355 - 'Feminist praxis is continually caught between appeals to a free subject and an awareness of victimization.'

[18] These movements include the inclusionary programmes whereby female artists and feminist perspectives began to be inculcated into mainstream scholarship; see Linda Nochlin, 'Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?', *Art News*, 69, (January 1971), pp. 22-39 and 67-71; and the interdisciplinary connections

accessories were 'toolkits' used to articulate and communicate personal attitudes toward life, where appearances were 'part of a rich symbolic world capable of transmitting compact information that people responded to, misunderstood, had fun with, or fought over'.[19] Clothing offered to early modern men and women socially constructed and even ready-made meanings and identities straight off the peg, which could be fully assimilated into one's personality, or merely toyed with. The somber artificiality of the self-fashioning human 'artifact' is instead replaced with light humanity; individuals pick and choose disposable and yet meaningful identities; they use clothes and 'visual practices' to change and challenge conventions, and by so doing, create culture in myriad ways.[20]

This positivism regarding fashion and consumption, which had been present in most feminist studies of clothing culture, is fully articulated in Rublack's discussions of the 'Material Reformation'. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the growth of commercial activities intensified European engagement with luxury. This presented opportunities for self-expression through adornment, but only if this was self-regulated by a personal moral ethic and emotional style in accordance with a broader notion of 'proper' or legitimate consumption.[21] Rublack has suggested that German sensibilities were shaped by Lutheran and Calvinist rejections of extremity: neither 'material spiritual enchantment' nor its opposite, monastic simplicity, could mediate God's grace, and therefore a notion of 'proper decorousness' manifested a style of bourgeois, pious gentility. Head to toe black, worn by both men and women, was favoured as the 'international … currency of restrained sumptuousness', but an enormous variety of polychromatic styles were also acceptable, as we shall see in the following discussion of an embroidered bodice in the Shakespeare Birthplace

between feminist film studies, sociology, anthropology and psychology, see Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard eds, *Feminism and Art History: Questioning the Litany* (New York: 1982), and *The Expanding Discourse: Feminism and Art History* (New York: 1992).
[19] Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up: Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. xviiii
[20] Rublack, *Dressing Up*: *Cultural Identity in Renaissance Europe*, p. xx
[21] Rublack, *Dressing Up,* pp. 270-1

Trust's collection. Rublack's vision of an enlightened consumerism during the period of Reformation engendered societies that knew how to consume 'properly' and were participators in and creators of their own clothing cultures – not the vainglorious dupes of merchants and international markets that so many contemporary male writers suggested.[22]

Scholars have recognized the political and moralizing aspects of early modern male views of the 'vanity' and 'wasteful consumption' of female clothing culture, but notions of national identity have been less well developed. Christopher Breward has written that costume was one of many 'cultural constructions' which, alongside manners, language, and physical gestures, helped to define and delineate categories that have become relevant to our understanding of the modern world, namely 'class, sexuality, and nationality'.[23] Equally important are the historic and context specific meanings of fashion, explored by Maria Hayward with reference to Henry VIII's choice of red clothing for key days during the liturgical year.[24]

Through her discussion of Germany in the early sixteenth century, Rublack has demonstrated how nationalist ideologies looked back to a classical past to inform their political frameworks and sartorial agendas. Classical writers, including Tacitus, who had emphasised the warrior status of 'indigenous' German people, informed later writers who mythologized a German nation moralized by druidical-humanism, and civilized under Charlemagne's empire of religion, philosophy and law. From these myths emerged various desirable social and cultural 'norms'; Old Germans loved simplicity (they ate only boiled cabbage), and in dress they embraced a thrifty elegance and utilitarianism. This model contrasted with new, urban

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[22] See Rublack, *Dressing Up*, particularly 'Introduction' and 'Epilogue: An Old Regime of Dress'; decorous consumption is equated with ideas of 'progressive civilization', 'social benefit' and new kinds of 'emotional competence' – drawing heavily on the work of the sociologist Eva Illouz, *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism* (London: Polity Press, 2006).
[23] Christopher Breward, *The Culture of Fashion* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 70.
[24] Maria Hayward, 'Crimson, Scarlet, Murrey and Carnation: Red at the Court of Henry VIII', Textile History, 38 (2007), 135-150.

and 'sophisticated' classes, whose reliance upon Italian markets had left them with diseased bodies and lascivious inclinations. Thus, political competition with rival powers, together with a distinctly misogynistic disgust for female decadence, informed German national identity, which was better expressed (in sartorial terms) with 'indigenous fabric and tailoring, and … frugal[ity] in expenses'.[25] Unlike most Germans, who could align themselves to a classical past enshrined in traditional institutions, law and government, Englishmen in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century found their ancient history to be lacking a distinctively British character.[26] Aileen Ribeiro has discussed the 'performative' aspects of nationhood using dress in her study of masques in seventeenth century England. Whilst a pseudo-classical Romano-British aesthetic was sometimes favoured in court entertainments, Inigo Jones's sketches of the 1630s often played upon a 'moderne' theme, recalling the dress of the early Tudors, whose reign was regarded as a time of prosperity and national awareness, and admired as being particularly 'English'.[27]

The clothed body and the body politic were therefore closely entwined in early modern England. In 1616, Ben Jonson published 'On English Monsieur', ridiculing the Englishman's obsession with French fashion: 'Would you believe, when you this Monsieur see, / That his whole body should speak French, not he?" He goes on to note that the man is becoming a foreigner in his own land, inviting foreign fashion 'hither', and with it the unsavoury 'French' qualities: vanity and moral laxity. If this wasn't enough, Jonson also points out the financial implications for England because of this 'scarf', 'hat' and 'feather' of France – the Monsieur 'must prove / The new French tailor's motion, monthly made, / Daily to turn in Paul's, and help the trade.' The middle aisle of St. Paul's, the fashionable catwalk of London society, is

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[25] Rublack, *Dressing Up*, pp. 125-135
[26] See Mary Floyd-Wilson, *English Ethnicity and Race in Early modern drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 23-47
[27] Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion and Fiction: Dress in Art and Literature in Stuart England*, (New Haven and London: Yale, 2005), pp. 152-155

in Jonson's view made into a shop-window, celebrating and perpetuating the domestic market

in foreign clothes.[28] Thomas Dekker saw the influx and the domestic consumption of foreign

fashions by indigenous subjects as tantamount to treason. The concern regarding a lack of

national dress is evoked in his *The Seven Deadly Sins of London* where he compares the

Englishman's suit to a traitors' body hung up in different places: the only English custom

when it comes to fashion, according to Dekker, is the practice of wearing several foreign

styles at once.[29]

Despite these vocal critics of female fashion, Rublack proposes that fashion was, at its core, a

refined, acceptable activity that was not strictly functional, utilitarian, pleasurable, morally

potent or economically driven – although it could be all these things. 'Books and magazines'

stimulated aesthetic activity and intellectual progression, whilst a technical education

stemmed from intricacies of cut, draping, and pinning. Knowledge of the market, of prices,

materials and materiality, were all learnt via a network of associations ranging from artisans,

traders, shop-keepers in the public sphere, to the 'bearers' of household knowledge:

domestic servants, mothers, nurses, even husbands and fathers.[30] Importantly, proper

decorousness was underpinned by a sense, inspired in the wearer, of wholesome creativity, in

which delight in a new item of clothing and expressions of taste were legitimate and

progressive rather than facile and ostentatious.[31]

6.2 English femininity: a seventeenth century bodice

Object-based research provides the opportunity to explore current trends of scholarship from

the perspective of material evidence. The study of historic clothing mirrors the

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[28] Roze Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England: Textual Constructions of a National Identity*, (Aldershot: 2008), pp. 103-4

[29] Quoted in Ann Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 1.

[30] Susan Vincent, 'To Fashion A Self' p. 205. Vincent argues that many men's knowledge of cut, material and fashion was significant.

[31] Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up*, p. 272

historiography of objects in the sense that garments themselves are usually present only as mediated images of clothes rather than as tangible objects themselves. Whilst contributions from conservators and museum professionals have deepened our knowledge of clothes in the early modern period, much still depends on the portraits of men, women and children in contemporary apparel – portraits that often merely repeated standardized patterns of dress and jewellery designs, creating images rather than reflecting the full range of objects and styles that were open to early modern people.[32] This section explores the physical characteristics of a bodice in the Trust's collection in light of recent scholarship regarding the formation of national and personal sartorial identities in early modern Europe. From this synthesis of material evidence and historical theory, various historical interpretations are offered which, in turn, may be used to clarify and reframe current debates.

The Trust's bodice has been dated to c. 1610 by Christie's auctioneers and the independent conservator who evaluated the object after its acquisition in 1993.[33] Made of fine linen, the front panels carry a tree design in blue thread and gold braided-stitching and the scrolling branches are adorned with silk thread leaves in shades of green, yellow and pink. The branches coil across the front of the garment, but the expensive and technical braid stitch terminates just below the arm pit on either side. The lower hem of the bodice is also unbraided. Similarly, the silver spangles and sequins (many of which are now missing), which form a background to this design, end in the same place. Green thread continues to outline the branches onto the back panels, but the overall effect is fragmentary and the garment appears incomplete.

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[32] Ulinka Rublack, *Dressing Up*, pp. 22-3

[33] See 'Lot Description' and 'Provenance' reports for Sale 6157 'Fine Costume and Textiles', lot 151; Christie's Archived Reports, June 29 1993; and Katherine Barker, Conservation report for SBT Collections Department, (Warwick: 1993), p. 1. Object History File, SBT 1993-35.

Figure 29 SBT 1993-35, A bodice, c. 1610-1620, linen, silk, gilt thread and spangles.

Figure 30 Bodice, side/rear view, showing incomplete braiding

The bodice retains original hook fastenings at the front, with modern lacings added to the back, and carries signs of use through some slight soiling on the back and forearms at the elbow. The design itself contains a muted spontaneity; blue thread used to lay out the design occasionally overcomes the borders and twists into the linen whiteness, as if the sewer was trying to introduce more of the curving, spiralling dynamism that is so closely associated with English embroidery of this period. The Trust's bodice does not possess the luxurious silk bows of Dorothy Cary's garment, nor does it attempt to represent the fruit, flowers, foliage and birds of Margaret Layton's bodice (Figs. 24 and 25). The original bodice, fully spangled and glimmering in the candle light, worn with laces, ruff, cuffs and gown as seen in these portraits, would have been impressive. The restrained design may reflect the lesser status of

its owner, but according to Katherine Barker – who carried out extensive conservation work on the object when it was bought by the Trust – the garment's quality and muted design suggests that it was not a product of the professional workshops but a home-made piece by a less-skilled or less ambitious hand.[34]

Figure 31 Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, detail, Margaret Layton, c. 1620, oil on oak panel. Victoria & Albert Museum.

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[34] Katherine Barker, *Conservation report for Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Collections Department*, (Warwick: 1993), p. 1.
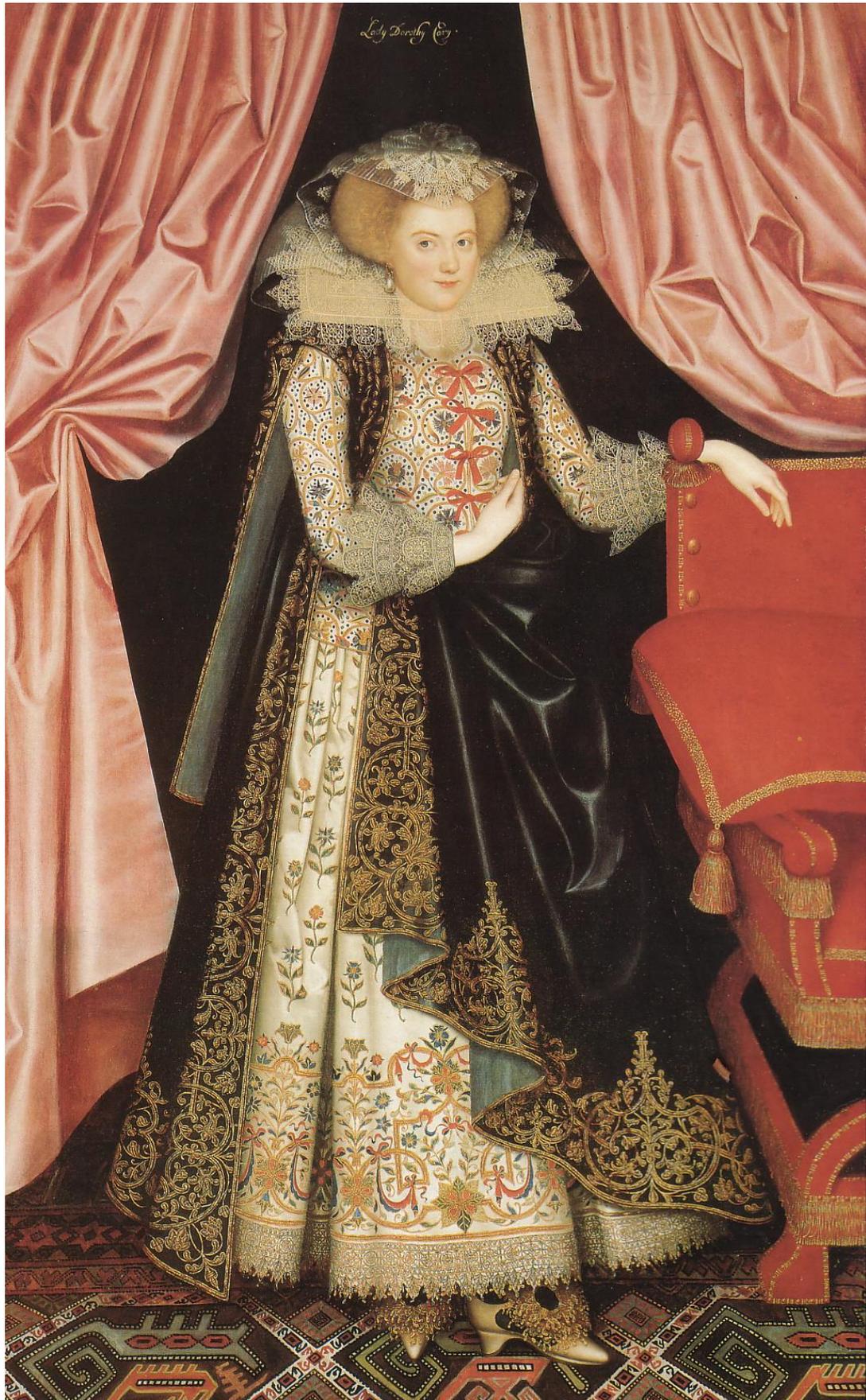
Figure 32 William Larkin, Lady Dorothy Cary, c. 1614, oil on canvas. English Heritage

As has been suggested, the bodice would not have been worn with the incomplete stitching on view and was probably paired with a long gown, similar to Cary and Layton's black garments. In Mary Evelyn's satirical poem, *Mundus Muliebris: or, The Ladies Dressing-Room Unlock'd, and her Toilette Spread* (1690), a bride's wardrobe containing 'One black Gown of Rich Silk', is thought 'odd … Without one Colour'd, Embroider'd Bodice' to wear beneath it.[35] This black 'night gown' has been described as 'informal wear', implying an outfit for the domestic sphere, although not one for sleeping in.[36] These outfits were an alternative to the late sixteenth century formal, tightly laced and busked bodices, which created triangular, compressed figures – broadening the body at the shoulders and hem of the skirt via a farthingale, and shrinking the body inwards at the waist.

The incomplete braid stitch on this garment presents two features. Firstly, it demonstrates how this garment was worn. Unstitched areas were either sheltered from view by a 'gown of rich silk' – whilst the unfinished peplum or fluted-hem of the garment could also be hidden by hitching up a cloak over the waist as demonstrated by Cary. Another use of the bodice is suggested by Margaret Layton who tucks the lower peplum of the garment under a high-waisted skirt which is covered with an apron. The unfinished braid stitch also has immense interpretive value in assessing the role this item played within the domestic economy of an early seventeenth century woman. The fact that the expensive gilt thread was used only on visible areas demonstrates frugality, reinforced by the immense versatility of the garment which could be worn in practical, elegant and informal ensembles.

As we have seen, the notion that clothing located the wearer on a spectrum of moral and national identity, ranging from patriotism and simplicity on the one hand to moral laxity and

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[35] Mary Evelyn, *Mundus Muliebris: or, The Ladies Dressing-Room Unlock'd, and her Toilette Spread, Together With a Fop-Dictionary, and a Rare and Incomparable Receipt to make Pig, or Puppidog-Water for the Face* (London: 1690), p. 2

[36] Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion & Fiction*, p. 67

even treason on the other, was a standard trope among early modern English writers. It is surprising therefore that scholars of early modern sartorial culture have resisted the application of these textual sentiments to extant material culture. This is perhaps determined by the nature of the literary evidence itself – ballads, broadsides, 'fop-dictionaries' and the like – which were never intended to describe what clothes meant to their wearers but were instead flights of male fantasy, or else satirical, moral and political tracts.[37] The undeniable misogyny and racism of some of these sources have also lent them an unsavoury character: callous caricatures of female clothing culture are not considered reliable sources of cultural history.[38]

It is partly for these reasons that English embroidered work continues to resist politically constructed categories such as 'Englishness' despite a scholarly consensus that early modern needlework was rooted in a late-medieval ecclesiastical tradition that was and still is unambiguously termed the *opus anglicanum* by a range of writers including contemporary authors, mid-twentieth century art historians, and recent interdisciplinary historians of gender.[39] Aileen Ribeiro has written that the search for the 'Englishness of English dress' is a mere 'aesthetic perception' of the historical past. The embroidery of Elizabethan and Jacobean England, with its flowers and insect motifs drawn from herbals and the borders of illuminated manuscripts only *seem* English to the English because, writes Ribeiro, 'of our proclaimed love of gardens and of nature', and of the 'beautiful, insular, charming, quirky even – … qualities which over the years we have come to think of as English, but which were

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[37] Early modern male writing about women is discussed with reference to class-tensions and sumptuary legislation in Ian Warren, 'Witty offending great ones'? Elite female householders in an early Stuart Westminster parish' in *The London Journal*, Vol. 32, No. 3, (2007), 211-28

[38] For a history of misogyny and dress, drawing upon ballads, theology, novels and other textual genres, see Aileen Ribeiro, *Dress and Morality*, (Oxford: Berg, 1986, 2003), pp. 1-19, 43-59.

[39] See J. L. Nevinson, 'English Domestic Embroidery Patterns of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *The Walpole Society*, Vol. 28 (1939-40), 1-13, p. 1, and Elizabeth Mazzola, *Women's Wealth and Women's Writing in Early Modern England: 'Little Legacies' and the Material of Motherhood*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009) p. 56.

not necessarily thought so at the time'.[40] 'Whatever notions people had about the concepts of Englishness', she continues, early modern people 'were more interested in specific identifications than in notions of identity, being especially concerned with a sense of place, as travel and better communications opened up new physical and mental vistas'.[41]

In *Fashion and Gardens*, an exhibition curated by Nicola Schulman at the London Garden Museum in 2014, the connection between fashion and a 'sense of place' is made explicit and tangible by a portrait depicting Lettice Newdigate, aged two, standing in front of her parents' Warwickshire garden. Schulman argues that the patterns on Lettice's blackwork embroidered bodice and needlelace collar echo the strap-work designs of the planned garden in the background, suggesting, for Schulman, a direct synthesis between English gardens and the iconography of English embroidery.

Figure 33 Unknown artist of the English school, *Lettice Newdigate (aged 2)*, c. 1606, oil on panel, Arbury Estate.

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[40] Aileen Ribeiro, 'On Englishness in Dress' in Christopher Breward, Becky E. Conekin, Caroline Cox eds, *The Englishness of English Dress*, (Oxford: Berg, 2002), pp. 17-18
[41] Aileen Ribeiro, 'On Englishness in Dress' p. 18

Whilst the use of pattern books was a pan-European phenomenon which, in French and Italian clothes, led to floral patterns and designs, Schulman argues that English embroidery evinces a precise knowledge of flora and fauna that derives from direct observation as well as print.[42] In light of recent object-based research therefore, Ribeiro's denial of 'Englishness' in favour of a 'sense of place' appears to be unsatisfactory, as places can never be meaningfully divested of geographical, national and political 'identifications'. It is to an assessment of the Trust's bodice within these national and politicized frameworks, that I now turn.

Unlike many garments from this period, whose provenance is completely unknown, a small amount of contextual information has survived for the SBT jacket. According to statements released by the seller's agent in 1993, the bodice had remained in the possession of a member of the Roe family of Woodford in Essex, before being sold at Christie's in South Kensington in 1993.[43] The seller's identity has not been released by the auctioneers, but the seller did report that she received the item from her 'ancestress', stating to the auctioneers that the item once belonged to Eleanor, the youngest daughter of Sir Thomas and Eleanor Cave of Stanford in Northamptonshire.[44] Whilst this provenance is vague, it helps us to consider the broader economic and social conditions under which such a garment was made and used, as well as providing some biographical depth to the jacket as a social object. In 1614, Eleanor wed Sir Thomas Roe at St. Margaret's in Westminster, but a four-year separation followed when Thomas was named ambassador to Mughal emperor Jahangir at Agra in India by James

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[42] Nicola Schulman, *Fashion and Gardens* exhibition, London Garden Museum, 7 February 2014 to 27 April 04 2014. See also, Nicola Schulman, 'Earthly Delights' in *Vogue*, February 2014, 150-155.

[43] See 'Lot Description' and 'Provenance' reports for Sale 6157 'Fine Costume and Textiles', lot 151; Christie's Archived Reports, June 29 1993. The 'vendor' referred to the item in the lot notes as the 'Property of a noblewoman'. See also Margaret P. Hannay, *Mary Sidney, Lady Wroth*, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), p. 297

[44] Christie's provenance report states that the item was: 'Worn by an ancestress of the vendor. Family tradition suggests that it was Eleanor Cave who married Sir George Beeston of Beeston Castle, Cheshire in 1609. She was widowed in 1611. She then married Sir Thomas Roe at St. Margaret's, Westminster on the 15th December 1614. She died in 1675. Sir Thomas Roe is best known as Ambassador the Jehangir, the Mogul in 1615-18 and to the Sublime Porte [Constantinople] 1621- 28. Lady Roe accompanied her husband to Constantinople.'

I.[45] No correspondence survives between the couple, however Roe did lodge a petition with

the Lord Treasurer via his attorney in London to ensure that an annuity owed to him should

be paid to his wife 'Dame Elinor' whilst he was absent.[46]

If the provenance is correct, the jacket was probably made by Eleanor whilst she lodged with

her uncle, Sir Oliver St. John, and, for shorter intervals, with Thomas Roe's friend and ally,

Sir George Carew, whose lengthy business letters to Roe survive.[47] Carew confirms his

guardianship, and briefly mentions Eleanor, in a letter dated January 18, 1616:

> … and so once agayne I pray God for my Lord Ambassador's saftie in the Indies,
> and for his safe retourne. Your Lordship may see thatt I have somme creditt with
> your Mrs., or rather with the best part of yoursellfe, for so it is rumoured,
> thoughe by her constantlye denied, but I amme confident it is so, and for your
> sake untill your retourne. I will not fayle to do her all the service I may.[48]

Carew, who had declined ambassadorial positions for himself, was Thomas Roe's eyes and

ears in England concerning matters of diplomacy, war, trade and commerce. Carew's letters

to Roe reveal a deep concern for the English cloth trade, and the manoeuvres of the Dutch

who had published an edict 'prohibitinge vppon payne of confiscation any of our clothes to

come into there portes'. The desire to stamp out the circulation of dyed and dressed English

cloth in the Netherlands was part of the perpetual commercial competition engendered by the

activities of English, Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese companies who were all seeking to

rationalize their trade routes and dominate key markets in the early seventeenth century. The

cloth used to create items like the SBT bodice, and the styles themselves, were therefore

subject to a variety of meanings. Eleanor's bodice was a practical garment and could be

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[45] Sir Thomas Roe, *The Embassy of Sir Thomas Roe to the Court of the Great Mogul, 1615-1619: As Narrated in His Journal and Correspondence* (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1899). See Colin Paul Mitchell, *Sir Thomas Roe and the Mughal Empire* (Oxford: Area Study Centre for Europe Publishing, 2001), pp. 141-165.

[46] See Anon, *Manuscripts in the Harleian Collection* (London: 1808), p. 26

[47] Michael Strachan, 'Roe, Sir Thomas (1581–1644)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, first published 2004. http://dx.doi.org/ [accessed June 2013]

[48] John Maclean ed, *Letters from George Lord Carew to Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador to the Court of the Great Mogul 1615-1617* (London: Camden Society, 1860), p. 79

worn with an apron or a more elegant gown. Furthermore, it was hand-made, drawing upon natural and indigenous iconography and traditional techniques; it was neither dowdy nor particularly lavish, and above all it demonstrated her industry whilst her husband was away, and her patriotic wherewithal to continue to partake in the domestic economy. Here we see how English early modern female dress was underpinned by a political significance – the clothes themselves 'were seen to manifest and even impart the customs and morals of cultures'.[49] The use of English materials certainly concerned her guardian, for whom nationalism, paternalism and common sense moved him to write of his fear that '600,000 persons who gained their livinges by the dressing and dyinge of Englishe clothe' should lose their incomes as a result of Dutch audacity. 'We are desirous', he continues, that this business 'should be kept within the realme for the reliefe of our poore people'.[50]

For some commentators, these economic pressures turned ostensibly foreign fashions into visible signs of wasteful decadence. Questions of prosperity and trade also served to politicize debates surrounding the virtue and vices of women – a favourite discourse among men since antiquity. Richard Braithwaite's *The English Gentlewoman,* vividly expresses this notion of entwined national and moral identity evident in clothes. He presents his own book to the female reader, as if it were 'one of your owne Sexe'; a guide whose 'improved Education', advice and good 'Behaviour' are in stark contrast to those 'YOVNG but loose ENGLISH GENTLEWOMEN, whose long mercinarie Prostitution … [has] made them grow too Stale, by being exposed to publike Sale.'[51] Braithwaite's language is reminiscent of Jonson's contemptuous reference to St. Paul's as a hub of fashion and vanity – fancy fashions hide a staleness of both soul and body. He speaks, not only with the supreme confidence of a member of the stronger, intellectual sex, but with the added insight of 'his' imaginary female

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[49] Rublack, *Dressing Up*, p. 125

[50] John Maclean, *Letters from George Lord Carew to Sir Thomas Roe, Ambassador to the Court of the Great Mogul 1615-1617,* p. 34

[51] Richard Braithwaite, *The English Gentlewoman, drawn out to the full body* (London: 1631), p. 2

authorial voice – but added to this, Braithwaite calls upon the wisdom of the ancient and modern 'histories': 'Nothing is held more contemptible with them,' he declares 'than apishly to imitate foraign fashions':

> We usually observe such a fashion to be *French,* such an one *Spanish,* another *Italian,* this *Dutch,* that *Poland.* Meane time where is the *English?* surely, some precious Elixir extracted out of all these. She will neither relye on her own invention, nor compose her selfe to the fashion of any one particular Nation, but make her selfe an Epitomized confection of all. Thus becomes she not only a stranger to others, but to her selfe. It were to be wished, that as our Countrey is jealous of her owne invention in contriving, so shee were no lesse cautious in her choice of wearing.[52]

Much like George Carew, Braithwaite proudly alludes to an English industry of manufacture, whilst introducing the uncanny idea that in their failure to adopt, and indeed invent an English fashion, women (and not the 'inventors' and 'contrivers' of cloth) are doing their best to fracture an already precarious national identity. Unfortunately, Braithwaite lacks any practical ideas of how to extract an English fashion from the 'Epitomized confection' of current trends. He can only give his reader's broad advice: in fashion seek 'but what Modestie onely affects'.[53] It is not certain whether Braithwaite respected that tradition of domestic industry whereby embroidered jackets, bodices, skirts, aprons, gloves, hoods and coifs were made in their thousands by women across England. Not only did these pieces draw upon a native tradition, they took for their subjects the native countryside – 'There's nothing neere at hand or farthest sought' / But with the Needle may be shap'd and wrought'.[54] In conclusion, Eleanor's jacket provides an insight into the way in which women were perceived by their husbands and male guardians. It also helps to consider the reception of home-made clothes like this, and their potential as sartorial markers of a particularly 'English' femininity, valued for its virtue, industry, practicality and wholesomeness.

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[52] Braithwaite, *The English Gentlewoman*, p. 23
[53] Ibid, p. 3
[54] John Taylor, *The Needles Excellency: A new booke wherein are divers Admirable works wrought with the needle* (London: 1636)

6.3 Fragmented identities, disparate objects

This section will consider the various objects worn by early modern women from their belts or girdles.[55] Whilst being inherently useful, I argue that these items also constituted symbolic toolkits that were used to create and display visual messages about the wearer's identity – including marital status, domesticity and housekeeping, independence and piety, wealth, status, and fashionability. My argument is supported by the rare survival of a complete mid-seventeenth century *chatelaine* – comprising of linen embroidered bag, pin-cushion and knife-sheath – currently in the collections of the Manchester City Galleries, which was used to carry a series of items suspended from a girdle which were periodically changed according to need or desire (Fig. 33). Around this example, I shall discuss four other items from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's collection, including a so-called 'sweet bag', dating from the late sixteenth century (Fig. 38). An alternative to the textile knife-sheath is a box wood cutlery case, carved with Protestant variations of Catholic devotional imagery (Fig. 35). This item indicates the growing sophistication of dining culture among middling-classes during this period, but its range of meaning and complexity extends far beyond this: the material form is both phallic and gynaecological, and keys into older traditions of marriage customs, wedding-knives, and associated rituals of sexual maturation and unification. The presence of devotional imagery along its surface further deepens and problematizes the objects function, placing it alongside devotional texts, or girdle-books, that were hung on the body in similar ways. Books were often transformed into sartorial objects, wrapped in the same cloth and decorative elements that adorned clothes. The Trust's *Whole booke of Psalms* (Fig. 37), printed in 1639 and embroidered with silver braid and spangles, was small enough to be slipped into a bag at the waist and was probably used both in church and for private

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[55] Girdle, in modern nomenclature, refers to a light-weight corset, but in late medieval and early modern England the term meant what we understand as a belt. See Valerie Steele, *The Berg Companion to Fashion*, p. 368-70

devotions. A silver bodkin, barely 10 cm in length, was used in several important and

intersecting social processes (Fig. 39). It was used as an aglet for lacing up the bodice,

sleeves and various flaps of material that needed to be shaped whilst dressing and undressing.

It was also part of a highly visual ritual of hygiene management, and as a sewing implement,

was central to the performance of domestic leisure and labour.

Objects associated with 'girdle-fashion' are usually studied in isolation, or in relation to

practical function; approaches which tend to echo the seemingly authoritative descriptions

available in the museum catalogues themselves. All the objects studied in this chapter have

similarly descriptive entries or tags on the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's online catalogue,

and until now these two or three sentences constituted the extent of current knowledge

available for these items.[56] Whilst other scholars, notably historical archaeologists, have

considered a vast array of material culture in relation to themes such as embodiment,

corporeality, individual life courses, and materiality, I will consider the relationship between

these objects, and suggest that they are only fully understood when considered as part of a

system of objects worn on the body. I shall also consider what this system signified about the

construction of identities in the public realm.[57]

6.3.1 The early modern girdle

The girdle or belt was an important accessory for both men and women that came in a variety

of different sizes, lengths and materials. For early modern women at the middling and elite

levels, which are the focus of this chapter, the girdle was part of an ensemble of items which

could be either purely decorative, or essential for sculpting the rather bulky excesses of

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[56] See http://catalogues.shakespeare.org.uk/
[57] C. Gosden and Y. Marshall, 'The Cultural Biography of Objects', *World Archaeology*, 31 (1999) 169-178; Gilchrist, *Archaeology and the Life Course*; Y. Hamilakis, M. Pluciennik and S. Tarlow, eds, *Thinking Through the Body: Archaeologies of Corporeality,* (New York: 1998); G. Fisher and D. Loren, 'Embodying Identity in Archaeology' in *Cambridge Archaeological Journal*, 13 (2003) pp. 225–230

sixteenth and seventeenth century fabric.[58] As we have seen, fashions in this period tended to compress and flatten the female body, moulding it into an inverted triangle, wider at the top and narrowing to a point above the crotch. This emphasised and yet concealed the area of sexual and reproductive organs, creating, as Susan Vincent has described, a polysemic site comprising a visual 'social skin' and profoundly private body.[59] Girdles sat directly upon and around these areas of shifting social and personal meaning, and judging by the contemporary narratives associated with these items, were seen as both performative and imbued with aspects of non-human, religious or superstitious significance. As an item hung about the waist, its proximity to the belly imbued the girdle with a sympathetic essence that in some circumstances was thought to transmit thaumaturgic power. Before the Reformation, 'our lady's girdle' was a typical aid against miscarriage, and monastic houses regularly sent out their version of Mary's belt to sufferers in the locality.[60] A woman's own girdle could also avail in childbirth if it had been wrapped around the sanctified bells of the parish church. The evident femininity of this cure was recognized by reforming bishops of the 1530s who proscribed girdles, and the purses which customarily hung from them, in an attempt to undo the superstitious healing of childbed pain.[61] The evident identification of the girdle with the self echoes other garments, particularly shoes, which have been interpreted as receiving the identity or 'essence' of the wearer by virtue of close contact.[62]

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[58] For the process of dressing and quality of fabrics see Jenny Tiramani, 'Pins and Aglets' in Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson eds, *Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), pp. 85-94

[59] Susan Vincent, *The Anatomy of Fashion: Dressing the Body from the Renaissance to Today*, (Oxford: Berg, 2009), pp. 38-9; the 'social skin' is a term expounded in T. Turner, 'The social skin', in C. B. Burroughs and J. D. Ehrenreich eds, *Reading the Social Body* (Iowa: 1993), p. 15-39

[60] See Ronald Finucane, *Miracles and pilgrims: popular beliefs in medieval England*, (London: 1995), p. 34

[61] Peter Matheson 'The Language of the Common Folk' in Peter Matheson ed, *Reformation Christianity*, (Minneapolis: 2010), p. 283

[62] Denise Dixon-Smith, 'Concealed Shoes', *Archaeological Leather Group Newsletter*, 6 (1990), p. 3; Dinah Eastop, 'Outside In: Making Sense of the Deliberate Concealment of Garments Within Buildings', *Textile: The journal of cloth and culture*, 4 (2006), p. 241; Dinah Eastop, 'The Conservation of Garments Concealed with Buildings as Material Culture in Action', in Hamling & Richardson, *Everyday Objects*, p. 150

Archaeological finds have yielded numerous hard-wearing leather girdles from the fifteenth

and early sixteenth centuries, often embellished with circular tin mounts, with punched,

incised or engraved motifs.[63] Fewer textile girdles have survived from this period, but 10

finds (mostly from the City of London) reveal a variety of styles ranging from simple and

fairly cheap lengths of worsted cloth, to elaborate embroidered belts of linen and silk.[64]

Chains were also used, such as the cast silver-gilt example in the Victorian & Albert

Museum, which is thought to be representative of the girdle worn by most wealthy women in

sixteenth century Europe.[65] Other girdles were fastened with metal clasps, or knotted and

weighted, as can be seen in Hans Holbein's *An English Lady Walking*, where the textile

girdle is tied at the front and terminates in weighted knots and tassels.

Figure 34 Hans Holbein the Younger, *An English Lady Walking*, c. 1540. Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

The front knot was a hub from which other items could be hung (in this case a string of beads

or perhaps a length of chain). A robust girdle could suspend numerous items, however more

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[63] See D. H. Evans, 'Burial with the friars' in *British Archaeology*, 53 (2000), pp. 18-23.

[64] Geoff Egan and Frances Pritchard, *Dress Accessories 1150 – 1450*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2002), pp. 35-49.

[65] Shirley Bury, *Jewellery Gallery Summary Catalogue* (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1982), p. 38

delicate girdles of braided silk and metal thread may have been used to add detail and texture to an outfit – pieces of material up to 4 metres have survived which suggest that they were used to create layering or perhaps flamboyant 'circlets' stretching from the waist to the shoulders.[66] Leather girdles could be short (see below), or like the textile variants, exceedingly long, which would need to be wrapped around the body, hitched up in certain places, or draped before or behind. Holbein depicts a young woman of Basle (c. 1523) wearing a long leather girdle (perhaps 2 metres), threaded through a buckle or hoop collected at the small of her back. This girdle does not appear to aid in the management of the other garments, and was probably worn specifically for the strangely ruffled, almost hairy tubular case, empty of contents, that can be seen hanging low in her skirts. This may be a fur-lined cutlery case, of which no extant examples can be found in the object record.

Figure 35 Hans Holbein the Younger, *Woman of Basle*, c. 1523.

In a colour wash study by Lucas de Heere from the 1570s, shorter and tighter girdles are worn over the gown and fastened with clasps. The wealthy merchant's wife (second from

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[66] Victoria and Albert Museum, T.370-1989, a French girdle, ca. 1540-1580 http://collections.vam.ac.uk/ [accessed April 2013]

left) has a small and rather limp textile pouch suspended from her girdle-clasp, which may

have been used to store the fine linen handkerchief she holds in her left hand. More

commonly, the girdle and clasp held structured purses, ranging from utilitarian receptacles

with metal-mounts, probably used for securing and carrying money, to elaborate 'marriage'

purses decorated with heraldic motifs.[67]

Figure 36 Lucas de Heere, 'London Gentlewomen', from *A Description of England, Scotland, and Ireland*,

1573-1575, Add. MS 28330, f. 33r. British Library

Another purse can be seen in John Speed's *European Atlas* (1626), which illustrates an

Englishwoman standing in a long gown and farthingale, with stiff ruff and hat. A girdle is

tied beneath the bodice, and from this hangs a tasselled-purse with a knife hanging behind it.

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[67] See Victoria and Albert Museum, T.246-1927, a purse with four silk embroidered panels in a shield shape, each decorated in tent stitch on linen with the coat of arms of the Calthorpe family, c. 1540, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/ [accessed April 2013. S also John Lea Nevinson, *Catalogue of English Domestic Embroidery of the Sixteenth & Seventeenth Centuries*, (London: 1938), p. 97

Figure 37 'English Woman', illustrated in John Speed's *European Atlas*, c. 1626

This is the only known English printed image of an Englishwoman wearing a knife in this fashion. In English portraiture, the primary visual aide for the interpretation of female fashion, members of the urban elite were invariably painted with ornate front fastening girdles, hung with heraldic jewellery, devices or heirlooms that displayed the wealth and pedigree of the family.[68] The gold and enamelled portrait-medallions studded with rubies on Eleanor Benlowes' girdle, or Elizabeth Sydenham's diamond encrusted girdle with antique *intaglio*, were beautifully ornate but not representative of what most women used to carry their necessary wares.[69] Girdles were often seen in elite portraits of betrothed and recently married women. Hans Eworth painted eleven female portraits, seven of which have been dated within a year of the sitter's marriage.[70] If Eworth's repeated use of girdles as a *topoi*

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[68] Maurice Howard, *The Tudor Image*, (London: 1995), pp. 33-57; Diana Scarisbrick, *Jewellery in Britain, 1066-1837: A Documentary, Social, Literary and Artistic Survey*, (London: 1994)
[69] Diana Scarisbrick, *Tudor and Jacobean Jewellery*, (London: 1995)
[70] See Roy Strong, *Tudor and Stuart Monarchy*, (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1995) plates 88, 91–97, 100–101, 103, 111, 117

for the state of matrimony was an intentional and widely recognised device, it was only part

of larger sixteenth century awareness of the girdle's symbolism.

Figure 38 Unknown Artist, Eleanor Benlowes c. 1565, St. John's College Cambridge.

Figure 39 Unknown Artist, Elizabeth Sydenham (Lady Drake), c. 1585. National Trust.

6.3.2 'Give me my Girdle, and see that all the Furniture be at it'

Figure 40 Sweet bag, pincushion and knife-sheath, with chatelaine. Red satin, gilt and silver thread, gold spangles and silver foil, c. 1630-1660. Manchester City Galleries, 1984.60

This complete example of matching red-satin accessories, tied together with a double cord of red and gold silk, was made in England in mid-seventeenth century. It is hugely significant, for it unites into a coherent set three objects that are usually 'isolated' – 'sweet bags', pin-cushions and knife-sheaths. The latter type, particularly the elaborate textile items which survive with their contents, are now universally called 'wedding knives' in order to highlight the contemporary practice of matrimonial gift-giving in sixteenth and seventeenth century England.[71]

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[71] The best English examples are in the Victoria and Albert Museum, M.12 to B-1950, Pair of wedding knives, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/. For this custom see John Brand, *Popular Antiquities of Great Britain*, Vol 2, (London, 1849) p. 131; H. Syer Cuming, 'On the Sheaths of Girdle Knives', *The Journal of the British*

The significance of the Manchester girdle and accessories is deepened by primary textual sources, which reaffirm the interchangeability of objects and the 'everydayness' of girdle-wearing largely undocumented in English visual culture. Peter Erondelle's *The French Garden*, published in 1605, was written as a series of dialogues designed to teach ladies French. The author constructs a number of prosaic conversations between well-to-do women, their servants and members of the artisanal classes. The topics elucidate French phrases which ladies will need for their main occupations: household management and shopping. The day begins with 'The Rising in the Morning', in which the Lady is dressed by Prudence, the chamber maid, and Jolye, her waiting gentlewoman. After arguments over the incorrect lacings for her bodice, broken 'tagges' and a desperate lack of attention on the part of Prudence ('Shall I have no fardingale? Do you not see that I want my buske?'), the Lady finally calls for the finishing touches:

> Give me my Girdle, and see that all the Furniture by at it: looke if my Cizers, the Pincers, the Pen-knife, the Knife to close letters, with the bodkin, the ear-picker, and my seale be in the case.[72]

This scene connects together a series of contemporary disparate objects into a coherent set; 'furniture' that would have hung at the girdle of a lady in the early seventeenth century. We see a close connection between the artefacts of dressing and personal hygiene – the 'Cizers', 'Pincers', 'bodkin' and 'ear-picker' – which shall be explored with reference to a silver bodkin in the Trust's collection in a later section. Lady's reference to a case evokes later French *etui*, or small containers for personal use. An image from *Recueil de la diversite des habits* published in 1567 by Richard Breton, may illustrate this type of case – a roughly conical shape suspended at the girdle. *Etui* later developed in-built seals to the base of the

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Archaeological Association,133 (1861) pp. 113-118; G. Bernard-Hughes, 'Old English Wedding Knives', *Country Life*, 25 (1949), p. 666

[72] Peter Erondelle, *The French Gardern: For English Ladies and Gentlewomen to Walk in … thirteen dialogues in French and English* (London: 1605), see Dialogue One

item, a development which had not been widely embraced in the early seventeenth century, as Erondelle's Lady calls for her 'seale' as a separate item. In both Erondelle's narrative and the French illustration, it is possible that we are looking at projections of everyday Gallic fashion onto English archetypes.

Figure 41 'A English Woman', from *Recueil de la diversite des habits* (1567), published by Richard Breton.

In the narrative, it is possible that the bodkin, ear picker and seal are enclosed in the 'case', whereas the other items are stored in another receptacle (perceived as one with the girdle) or else hung directly from it. Most notable, is the presence of not one but two knives, a pen-

knife and a 'Knife to close letters'. A possible explanation for pen-knives and 'letter' knives

is offered by Hannah Woolley's *Compleat Servant Maid* (1683):

> Having a Penknife with a smooth, thin, sharp edge, take the first or second quill
> of a Goose wing and scrape it … cut a small piece off sloping, then to make a
> slit enter the knife in the midst of the first cut, put in a quill and force it up …
> and fashion the nib by cutting off both sides[73]

Knives, therefore, were important utensils for writing, and it is appropriate that the Lady in

Erondelle's dialogue should carry an item that enabled her to prepare her tools and materials.

Another important source, describing a male merchant, expands the itinerary of necessary

writing paraphernalia:

> An olde Marchant had hanging at his Girdle, a Pouch, a Spectacle-case, a
> Puniard [dagger], a Pen and Inckhorne, and a Handkertcher, with many other
> Trinkets besides, which a merry Companion seeing, said it was like a
> Habberdasher's shop of small wares.[74]

The girdles and their attendant items were therefore unisex systems, and here again we see

the presence of a knife; a 'Puniard' or poniard, which was a type of blade often associated

with the parrying weapons used alongside rapiers. Whilst these functional interpretations of

the knives are reasonable, folklore and early modern social customs associated with the

female possession of knives (plural), suggest that this practice was imbued with deeper

significance. A study of the material culture, and more specifically a single sheath owned by

the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, shall reveal the extent to which these girdle-items were

able to construct identities in the public realm.

6.3.3 A box wood cutlery case

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[73] Hannah Woolley, *The Compleat Servant Maid*, (London: 1683), p. 23, quoted in Laura Lunger Knoppers ed, *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's Writing*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 105

[74] Anthony Copley, *Wits, Fits and Fancies*, (London: 1614), p. 177

The SBT catalogue describes this object as a 'sheath for a pair of wedding knives', referring to a matrimonial custom and, in early versions of the catalogue, the moment in which Juliet, in Shakespeare's play, kills herself with a knife which is also a symbol of her imminent enforced marriage to Paris.[75] As we have seen, this narrative was first proposed by James Orchard Halliwell Phillips, a founder of the Trust, who donated this item in 1868. The explanation of the sheath emerged from a late nineteenth century consensus regarding this type of object, and even today these narratives permeate object catalogues and engender a desire to desire to see something *beyond* the object itself – an *object l'art* of the highest order, a Tudor marital custom, or a materialization of Shakespeare's poetry. In this section I will analyse the object itself, as it is through their specificity that objects influence particular kinds of social action and identity.

This sheath is covered with carvings depicting the Story of the Prodigal Son and (six) Works of Mercy.[76] It is inscribed with the date of production (1602), the name of the maker, W.G.W, and with a merchant's mark with the initials I.N. It is carved in box-wood, and is

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[75] Anon, *Catalogue of the books, manuscripts, works of art, antiquities and relics at present exhibited in Shakespeare's Birthplace: with 61 illustrations*, (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1910), p. 121; see Horace Howard Furness ed, *Romeo and Juliet*, (Philadelphia: 1871), p. 229, n. 23

[76] The corporal Works of Mercy had been an integral part of medieval Catholicism for hundreds of years; before the Reformation seven corporal works were generally accepted – feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the sick, relieving the prisoner, housing the stranger, and burying the dead. The removal of the latter from the sheath's iconography suggests the owner was Protestant. For Works of Mercy in a pre- and post-Reformation context see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580*, pp. 357-362

Figure 42 SBT 1868/3/903, cutlery sheath, carved box wood, dated 1602. Initials W G W, refer to maker, I N below a merchant's mark may refer to the merchant or individual for whom it was made. L 9 inches. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

part of a late-medieval, Northern European tradition of ivory carving which turned to hard woods when supplies were strangled during European conflicts with the Ottomans.[77] The bulbous termination is carved with two female and two male busts, and at the other end, beneath the smooth neck, a carved bevelled-shield or scutcheon held by an angel remains blank – perhaps awaiting the buyer's personal customization. The scutcheon has a latitudinal hole which would have held a silver ring as a means of attaching the object to the wearer's belt or girdle. This sheath is one of fifteen surviving pieces by W.G.W., all marked with these initials. This may refer to a single individual, but in all probability the letters constitute the name of a workshop or collective. Their output was mainly sheaths, made from 1-2 metre long branches of the *buxus*, a small shrubby plant native to the Mediterranean – but they also made hafts, or knife-handles.[78] The extant works, ranging from 1577-1626, display a gradual change in working methods; earlier works display a use of gouging tools to create expressive and almost abstract figurative designs, whereas later sheaths (post 1600) are increasingly standardized, unvarying geometric shapes, with deeper carved reliefs. Fine, hard chisels were used to produce the almost cuboidal forms of saints and Biblical characters as seen on the Trust's example.

My comparative analysis of this sheath with those in the British Museum indicates that the objects produced by W.G.W. are not in fact 'wedding-knife sheaths' but cutlery cases, and reflect the Continental fashion of a case with three implements of knife, fork and toothpick.[79] The sheath is therefore part of a large category of objects which conflate religious imagery and everyday tasks. The iconography is Protestant, as the removal of the seventh Work of

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[77] John Blair & Nigel Ramsay, *English Medieval Industries: craftsmen, techniques, products*, (London: Hambledon Press, 2001), pp. xv-xxxiv

[78] Only one example of a haft survives from this workshop, dated 1594, see Creative Catalogue.

[79] See Chapter 2. The silver ferrule of item 4 has three openings, two similar sized, and one far smaller. Despite have two compartments only, a long toothpick could be sequestered into one of the spaces. It is probable from this ferrule (which does not survive on the SBT example) that WGW made cases for cutlery, rather than sheaths for knives, which in addition, appears to be a localized English custom.

Mercy indicates.[80] This object appears to be another material prop to Protestant piety identified by recent scholarship which has argued that objects and images were important aids to devotion even in supposedly 'iconophobic' post-Reformation Protestant cultures.[81] As an implement directly related to eating and drinking, the sheath may have helped the user to approach key devotional themes, such as feasting and plenty, gratitude, pity, and charity, which are visually represented on the sheath, within specific social situations and spatial contexts.[82] The object was perhaps used as aid to prayer before or after the meal, or, as soon as the object was 'attached' to the body upon dressing.

Whilst the sheath itself is specifically associated with the English custom of wedding knives, the possibility of how an object like this was perceived in a culture that continued this custom is worth considering. As an imported item, it entered into a world of English marital custom, which, according to eighteenth and nineteenth century antiquarians and Shakespeare scholars, was defined by gifts of 'bride-knives' or cutlery.[83] This seems to be confirmed by Diana O' Hara's analysis of trial proceedings in Tudor Kent, and the litigation over contested betrothal and courting gifts, with gifts of cutlery prominent among them. In the 1520s at Elham fair, for example, Mary Wraight of Swingfield accepted a pair of wedding knives from her suitor (Mr) Hogben. These gifts or tokens had both symbolic and economic value, and could act as a way of cementing an understanding between the woman and suitor.[84] In addition, pairs of knives and their marital significance are commonly noted in early modern drama. In *The Witch of Edmonton*, the bride and groom are described as 'the new pair of Sheffield knives

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[80] See note 79.
[81] See Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household: Religious Art in Post-Reformation Britain* (New Haven and London: 2010).
[82] For the use of girdles as a paraliturgical and devotional object in Protestant culture, see Tara Hamling, 'Old Roberts Girdle'; I.M Green, *Print and Protestantism in early modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000) particularly the section 'Meditation in the Catholic and Protestant Traditions', p. 277-292.
83 See Francis Douce, *Archaeologia*, xii, 1796, pp. 215-16; T. F. Thiselton-Dyer, *Folk-lore of Shakespeare*, (1833) p. 332-333.
84 Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and constraint: Rethinking the making of marriage in Tudor England*, (Manchester, 2000)

fitted both / To one sheath'[85], whilst in Dekker's *Match Me in London* (1631), a bride

threatens her jealous husband to kill her if she be false, 'See at my girdle hang my wedding

knives! / With those dispatch me!'[86] These references were collected and interpreted by John

Brand in his monumental *Observations on the popular antiquities*,[87] whose commentary on

the subject of bride-knives has remained standard since its first appearance in 1777:

> Strange as it may appear, it is however certain, that knives were formerly part of
> the accoutrements of a bride. This perhaps will not be difficult to account for, if
> we consider that it anciently formed part of the dress for women to wear a knife
> or knives sheathed and suspended from their girdles; a finer and more
> ornamental pair of which would very naturally be either purchased or presented
> on the occasion of a marriage.

It could be argued that knives and sheaths and their public display from the girdle are

connected to shifts in marital identity and the sexual status of women. Edward Muir states

that social change was marked by rites of passage, and in turn these shifts were often

accompanied by gifts. Social change available to early modern women in Europe coincided

with 'modifications' of their sexual status, and specifically in marriage, which 'represented

[reaching] sexual maturity'.[88] Marriage marked the end of youth, a change of social standing,

and a new partnership that hoped to be economically viable and emotionally rewarding. The

custom of knife-wearing in England, where two elements slid into a single sheath, seems to

constitute a 'visual act', which was recognized as the marital and sexual union of two

people.[89] These aspects of sexual union are visible on the sheath. The double busts of female

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[85] John Ford, Thomas Dekker & William Rowley, (Arthur F. Kinney ed.) *The Witch of Edmonton*, 1658 (New York: 1998), Act II, Scene II, 42-3.

[86] John Brand & Henry Ellis, *Observations on the popular antiquities of Great Britain*, Vol 2, p. 131-2

[87] John Brand, *Observations on the popular antiquities of Great Britain: Including the Whole of Mr. Bourne's Antiquitates Vulgares* (1777); this was later revised by Sir Henry Ellis (in various editions from 1813), with many useful expansions, particularly on the subject of wedding knives and other gifts. I shall use Ellis's version.

[88] Edward Muir, *Ritual in Early Modern Europe*, (Cambridge, 2005), p. 33. It is only recently that these anthropological comparisons have received serious (albeit general) scholarly treatment, but the material culture of these gifts, i.e., the sheaths have not been discussed.

[89] This is implied in the text of *The Witch of Edmonton*, 1658 (New York: 1998), Act II, Scene II, 42-3.; 'the new pair of Sheffield knives fitted both / To one sheath'. The marriage ceremony itself uses similar language,

and male heads at the base, are echoed in other examples of marriage cutlery, such as a set in the Victoria & Albert Museum, where amber handles carry the likeness of a woman (fork) and a man (knife).[90] This gendering of the cutlery is not merely due to the ubiquity of the knife as a symbol of the masculine.[91] Eric Partridge notes that King Lear's crazed reference to forks in '… yond simpering dame / Whose face between her two forks presages snow' – alludes to the female buttocks and upper thighs.[92] What may be circumstantial or merely bawdy, is in fact embedded in a much older etymology – an Old English word for sheath, *scæð*, was understood to mean a split or forked stick into which the sword blade was inserted; whereas sheath is of course Latinized as *vagina*.[93] In this sense, a sheath worn upon the girdle could perhaps be indicative of the wearer's marital status, and in Scandinavia, where an empty knife-sheath was surreptitiously filled by a suitor's knife, the sheath becomes heavily embroiled in the rituals of courtship.[94] This detail gives added significance to the portrayals of seemingly empty knife-cases by Holbein, and elsewhere by Jacques de Gheyn.[95] In summary, language and customs inflect and are even directly expressed through the formal properties of the sheath itself.

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adapted from Genesis and used by both Catholics and Protestants: 'Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh', Genesis, 2:24

[90] http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O90882/wedding-knife-and/ Accessed August 2011.

[91] The phallic symbolism of the knife is discussed in Katharine Maus, 'Taking Tropes Seriously: Language and Violence in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 37 (1986), p. 72; and more extensively in Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy*, (London, 1968), p. 133, 188, 182.

[92] Partridge, Shakespeare's Bawdy, p. 109; the reference also alludes to pubic hair.

[93] See http://www.etymonline.com/

[94] Folkloric evidence from Scandinavia suggests that the man would place his knife into the empty sheath of a woman as a sign of his love-interest. In the nineteenth century, Scandinavian bridal costume still incorporated sixteenth and seventeenth century elements – chains, girdles and belts – not merely as custom, which may be overlaid any social practice in order to anchor it to an imagined past, but through the re-use of early modern objects passed down as heirlooms, as in the Icelandic ensemble in the Victoria & Albert Museum, See V&A Museum No: 258 to M-1869, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O115886/wedding-dress-unknown/, accessed January 2013.

[95] See Jacques de Gheyn, 'Family Saying Grace', c. 1595, etching on paper. http://collectie2008.boijmans.nl/en/ [accessed Jan 2013]. In this print, based on Psalm 128, the mother's domestic responsibility is evidence by her long girdle-chain of keys, whilst her marital identity is perhaps represented by her 'filled' sheath. The eldest daughter, in contrast, wears what appears to be an empty sheath, and a small pouch presumably used for her sewing and other domestic tasks.

The sheath may also be compared with other English devotional objects worn in this way, such as girdle-books. These books were often personally edited by the user, who transcribed or even cut whole passages from books and pasted them into their own assemblage.

Figure 43 A girdle book of *Morning and evening praiers*, binding by Hans of Antwerp, printed by Christopher Barker 1574, together with other hand selected and cut texts. Gold binding, with white, black and green enamel. The British Museum, M&ME 1894,7-29,1.

This particular example, measuring just over 2 inches in height, has been associated with Elizabeth I and contains a series of cut texts from other works, carefully arranged into a bound edition that could be worn upon the girdle via metal hoops.[96] The upper cover of the book illustrates the Brazen Serpent in the wilderness raised aloft before the Israelites, whilst the reverse depicts the Judgement of Solomon. In 1609 William Heale complained of 'those

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[96] See Helen Ostovich, Elizabeth Sauer & Melissa Smith (eds) *Reading Early Modern Women: An Anthology of Texts in Manuscript and Print 1500-1700,* (London: 2004) p. 471.

too, too holy women-gospellers, who weare their testament at their apron-strings' – a clear indication that in Heale's view something less literary and more suitable to their sex should hang there instead.[97] In this context, girdle-books were overtly performative of the wearers' literacy, clearly proclaiming their learning and status.[98] The sheath, in contrast may have been closer to Heale's liking – it carried utensils that were closely bound up with dining-table etiquette, which enabled the user to partake in both a 'practical science of sociability' and proper moral behaviour.[99] The user's participation in a devotional print culture is not excluded however, as the sheath sources imagery from an unidentified (probably Dutch) devotional text, similar in both theology and aesthetic to the popular illustrated English books of the late sixteenth century, such as Richard Day's *A booke of Christian prayers*.[100] This object may be said to demonstrate a variegated and complex personal identity and agency; from national and religious affiliation, to marital status; it may also be seen as an expression the wearer's sophistication, manners and therefore, social status. What is clear, is that these expressions are subtle, fluid and context-dependent, as other items worn alongside this sheath may have emphasised particular aspects of the wearer's identity over others.

6.3.4 Psalm books and bags

Devotional texts proclaimed literacy, but also piety. A beautifully embroidered *Whole Booke of Psalms*, printed in 1639 in the Trust's collection, is covered in linen with silver braid and silver and gilt spangles; the sequined areas are interspersed with roses and small blue flowers.

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[97] William Heale, *An apologie for Women*, (1609) quoted in Smith, *'Grossly Material Things'*, pp. 216-7.

[98] Helen Smith, *'Grossly Material Things': Women and Book Production in Early Modern England* (Oxford: 2012), pp. 1-16.

[99] See Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford), 1990, p. 33, pp. 192-193; Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford), 1998, p. 60. In the early modern period, an 'extensive practical science of sociability' grew out from the central theme of medieval courtesy literature – the dining table – which hybridized with parallel concerns for hierarchy, proper behaviour, consumption and display of goods, religious conformity, and the role of women in the household and society.

[100] Richard Day's *A booke of Christian prayers*, editions published in 1578, 1581, 1590 and 1608, accessed via Early English Books Online, September 2011. On other W G W products, the carver has included numbers within the imagery, suggesting that a printed source has been used. See the Appendix, No. 8, Le Louvre des Antiquaires in Paris, knife handle (with blade); and No. 9, British Museum, sheath with Passion iconography.

Figure 44 SR 98 83421815, *The whole book of Psalms. Collected into English meter by T. Sternhold, J. Hopkins and others*, (1639). 6 x 4 cm. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust,

Unlike other girdle-books, these items could not be attached to the girdle unless it was held within a bag – but the scarcity of complete sets has led to a disassociation of psalm books like this from the means by which they were carried and displayed upon the body. Embroidered bags, in contrast, proliferate in museum collections. A good example of the type can be seen in the Trust's collection, and dates to the late sixteenth-century. It has a dark pink silk satin ground, embroidered with yellow and pink silk flowers and green and yellow foliage in silk and metal threads. The border and background are also embellished with silver spangles, and the interior is lined with pink silk. The original seven-coloured plaited drawstring and cord survive, as do acorn terminals worked in metal threads on the drawstring. The bottom of the bag has three tassels attached to loops covered with metal thread; the two corners of the bag have intertwined bullion thread motifs.

Figure 45 SBT 1992-86, An embroidered bag, c. 1575-1600, silk linen, gilt and metal thread. H. 11cm W. 12.5 cm (length of cord 15cm).

Bags like this, and even bags found in sets such as the Manchester example, are usually

identified as 'sweet-bags'.[101] This term has been taken from contemporary inventories, but it

is by no means clear whether the term describes this specific type of object. The majority of

evidence, derived from the lists of New Year's Gifts to Elizabeth I, suggests that 'swete

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[101] See the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Accession No. 29.23.19; http://metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/120039927; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, Object No. T.245-1960, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O158663/bag-unknown/.

baggs' were primarily a kind of gift-wrapping for small trinkets. Lady Gresham gave Elizabeth a 'boxe with four swete-baggs in it' in 1562, whilst others gave handkerchiefs and bags together.[102] This explanation certainly accounts for the lack of original contents in these bags, but this may in fact be an attempt to impose a narrative upon them. In addition to gifts, purses of this size were thought to have had a variety of functions. They were often employed to hold a mix of dried sweet-smelling herbs, fulfilling a similar function to the earlier pomander. Another use derives from inventories of elite individuals, such as Charles II's goods at Somerset House, and Edmund Waring's linen cupboard, where 'sweet bags' are found among the linen, presumably to freshen and perfume them.[103] Numerous examples have survived with small pin cushions attached suggesting that they may have contained needles, thread and other sewing equipment. These sewing bags, although of a recognized type, have not yet found new nomenclature. One possible variation would be the word 'hussifs', which described a series of late-medieval bags associated with sewing. A Suffolk dialect word with regional variations, it described a 'convenient case of leather, or other sort, in which women keep together needles, thread, &c., at hand or in the pocket'.[104] This word became corrupted in the sixteenth century into 'huswife', and underlines the strong etymological link between female labour and the bags function.[105] The designation of 'sweet bag', is not merely based on customary museum use; some variation in identification can be also be noted. Generally, and by no means systematically, these bags are catalogued according to their 'delicacy'; comparatively robust bags with linings or minimal embroidery

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[102] Cyril Davenport, *Embroidered Bookbindings*, (London, 1899); George Wingfield Digby, *Elizabethan Embroidery* (London: 1964), p. 74.

[103] George Wingfield Digby, *Elizabethan Embroidery* (London: 1964), p. 12-16

[104] Edward Moor, *Suffolk words and phrases: or, An attempt to collect the lingual localisms of that County*, (London, 1823), p. 54.

[105] Natasha Korda, *Shakespeare's Domestic Economies: Gender and Property in Early Modern England* (Pennsylvania: 2002), pp. 15-23. It is clear that the Manchester example would be more accurately denoted a hussif as opposed to a sweet-bag.

are usually associated with sewing or all-purpose receptacles, whereas fine linen bags without linings are usually noted as 'sweet bags'.[106]

The Trust's bag has a draw-string which provides a means of carrying the object. At 12 cm wide it could easily envelope the tiny 6cm Psalter and many other small books of devotion. The bag that holds another *Whole Booke of Psalms* in the British Library, is a tighter fit and was probably bought as a distinct set.[107] Other documentary evidence, however, significantly adds to understanding of the social use of such objects. Men and women both used varieties of nosegays, or cut flowers, whilst at a middling-level 'nodules' of various herbs, beaten into powders, were 'knit in a peece of Taffety', or sewn in the users handkerchief, 'whereunto you must smell oftentimes'.[108] In *Anthropometamorphosis* (1653) however, the author complains that men, being without these devices, may achieve a similar effect by stroking the 'mustachoes' with perfumed gloves, providing a scented natural sweet-bag below the nose.[109] A gendered reading of the bags also yields another possible use. In some remedies, particularly against the plague, users were instructed to hang the bags around the neck, and place them (filled with physic) directly next their skin, against their heart.[110] The short cord drawstring on this item, if worn around the neck, would roughly place the body of the bag on the sternum. The association with heart and affections may have given these bags extra significance – particularly in relation to the culturally embedded meanings of their iconography. Flowers were considered to be emblematic of certain virtues; here, the yellow

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[106] Jacqui Carey, *Sweet Bags: An Investigation Into 16th and 17th Century Needlework* (London: 2010), pp. 1-20

[107] Whole booke of Psalms, (1639); Number. C17a21, 'In an embroidered binding with silver threads, enclosed in a bag, also embroidered'; bag is 'lined with blue silk'; see http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/BindingsDisplay.aspx?BookId=019-000001427

[108] Anon (Edwards?), *A treatise concerning the plague and the pox discovering as well the meanes how to preserve from the danger of these infectious contagions, as also how to cure those which are infected with either of them.* Printed by Gartrude Dawson, (London: 1652) Chapter VI

[109] 'J.B.', *Anthropometamorphosis: = man transform'd* (London, 1653), '*SCENE XII.* Beard-haters, or the opinion and pra|ctise of diverse Nations, concerning the naturall Ensigne of Manhood appearing about the mouth'.

[110] Anon (Edwards?), *A treatise concerning the plague.* Printed by Gartrude Dawson, (London: 1652) Chapter VI

flowers may have been emblematic of charity, a virtue that is also celebrated in the imagery of the Works of Mercy on the cutlery sheath.[111]

6.3.5 A.M's Bodkin

Figure 46 SBT 2003-13, A bodkin, etched with the initials 'A M', silver, c. 1620. Shakespeare Birthplace Trust.

In some areas of Europe, women left bodkins attached to their bodice strings, together with the shiny aglets or 'tagges' at the terminus of each thread.[112] The bodkin could therefore be worn on the body, hanging conspicuously from the wearers' chest, below the waist line, or tucked into the hair. This implement in the Trust's collection is engraved with the initials 'A M' together with a series of simple etched and cross-hatched designs. It is just under ten centimetres in length, and a little over half a centimetre at its widest point. The shaft narrows to a dull tip, whilst at the other end the shaft is surmounted by a decorative collar with a hole, and beyond this is a terminal formed into a small rounded scoop. The shaft has a rectangular 'eye' or slot, through which a ribbon or drawstring could be threaded. Usually known as bodkins, these items were commonly used by both men and women for 'dunning in' strings or threading and re-threading ribbons, cords, and laces into doublets, bodices and corsetry.

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[111] Aileen Ribeiro, *Fashion and Fiction*, pp. 74-76.
[112] Jenny Tiramani, 'Pins and Aglets' in Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (eds) *Everyday Objects* (2010).

An influential antiquarian study of Irish costume placed bodkins in taxonomy of form deriving from use[113]; long pointed pins, for example, secured twisted knots of hair, whilst perforated bodkins were explicitly used for lacing.

In England, the word bodkin encompassed a range of forms from hairpins (which generally lacked the slotted-shaft) to stiletto-like daggers, which had sharpened points.[114] The SBT example had a wide variety of functions. The dull tip would have made it perfect for pushing ribbons through holes in the fabric without damaging the material; whilst the circular hole might have been useful for securing the bodkin to a girdle or pin-cushion when not in use. These small perforations had another use, which suggest that bodkins of this type were not simply functional sartorial utensils. A portrait etching by Wencelaus Hollar illustrates the practice of wearing small gems from the bodkin, here shown tucked into her hair beneath a coif cap. In Mary Evelyn's *The Ladies dressing-room unlock'd* (1690), she describes what all women desire: 'A Saphire Bodkin for the Hair, / Or sparkling Facet Diamond there'.[115]

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[113] J. C. Walker, Historical Essay on the Dress of the Ancient and Modern Irish, (London: 1893), see Mary C. Beaudry, *Findings: The Material Culture of Needlework And Sewing*, (Yale: 2006) pp. 66-68.

[114] Mary C. Beaudry, *Findings: The Material Culture of Needlework And Sewing*, (Yale: 2006) pp. 66-68

[115] Mary Evelyn, *Mundus muliebris: or, The ladies dressing-room unlock'd, and her toilette spread In burlesque. Together with the fop-dictionary, compiled for the use of the fair sex.* Printed for R. Bentley. (London: 1690).

Figure 47 Wencelaus Hollar, *Woman with ruff*, 1636, etching printed on paper, The Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, University of Toronto.

Ornamental bodkins were also used to communicate the wearers' marital status. In Friesland, a bodkin hung from the right-hand side of the bodice proclaimed an unmarried woman; elsewhere in the Netherlands, the custom was articulated via a bodkin on the right or left side of the cap.[116]

The initials, 'AM', displayed in prominent positions on the body, declared ownership, and therefore status. Whilst many bodkins were made of cheap alloyed metal, a large amount of finds are either silver, or overlaid with tin-wash to give the appearance of silver; in both cases

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[116] K. Sullivan, *Needlework Tools and Accessories: A Dutch tradition*. (Woodbridge: 2004); see also Mary C. Beaudry, *Findings*, p. 66-68; and Beaudry, 'Bodkin Biographies' in C. L. White, *The Materiality of Individuality*, (New York: 2009), pp. 95-108.

these were clearly made to be seen. The inscription has certainly been scratched or etched into the surface of the tool by inexpert hands, probably by the owner. As Peter Pope has written, such inscriptions are assertions of ownership and 'small affirmations of literacy' in a period when literacy was rare – they proclaimed "'I am literate,' and, therefore, in the context of the time and place, 'I have power'".[117] Whilst this bodkin has an inscription, it also bears other marks of use and personalization; the horizontal lines upon the shaft are uneven and clumsy, and are perhaps the work of the owner. The item is also worn and pitted at the tip, suggesting it was used fairly roughly, or habitually in some robust work.

But the bodkin could also help enact the wearers' social status and skill in the domestic economy. As Erondelle's lady demonstrates, personal hygiene was maintained using various accoutrements. Far from being private activities, public grooming demonstrated not only the importance of cleanliness, but the individual's learning and knowledge of conduct-literature and etiquette. For some men, scooping wax from the ear could be delegated to the barber - In other useful set of dialogues, this time written to improve the English gentleman's French, John Eliot places a rich and rather exacting man in a barber's shop who proceeds to have his face shaved and his ears picked. [118] For women, even ear wax was an important commodity in household industry. This bodkin has a scoop used to alleviate the user's ear of excess wax, which could be then applied to sewing thread to prevent the ends from unravelling.[119] It is clear that a bodkin with an earscoop would therefore be a perfect companion piece to a sewing bag and pin-cushion, hung from a girdle at the waist.

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[117] Peter Edward Pope, *Fish into wine: the Newfoundland plantation in the seventeenth century*, (North Carolina: 2004), pp. 272-273.

[118] In other useful set of dialogues, this time written to improve the English gentleman's French, John Eliot places a rich and rather exacting man in a barber's shop who proceeds to have his face shaved and his ears picked. See John Eliot, *Ortho-epia Gallica Eliots fruits for the French: enterlaced vvith a double nevv inuention, vvhich teacheth to speake truely, speedily and volubly the French-tongue. Pend for the practise, pleasure, and profit of all English gentlemen, who will endeuour by their owne paine, studie, and dilligence, to attaine the naturall accent, the true pronounciation, the swift and glib grace of this noble, famous, and courtly language*, Printed by John Wolfe (London: 1593). See Chapter 12, *The Barber*.

[119] A. J. F Dulley, (1967), 'Excavations at Pevensey, Sussex, 1962–6' in *Medieval Archaeology*, 11 (1967); pp. 209–232. see also Mary C. Beaudry, *Findings*, p. 66

Bodkins were also tools that moved upon a continuum of knowledge ranging from sewing, to hygiene, to practical physic. Ear-pickers, according to contemporary books on surgery, could be covered in wool to effect the removal of alien objects from the patients ear[120], whilst instruments 'in the fashion of an eare-picker' were also recommended for the removal of any 'grauell, stone, or phlegme' in the 'yard' of a child 'who cannot pass water'.[121] In these contexts, the bodkin becomes an all-purpose tool in the hands of a learned and concerned mother, whose personalized implement articulates various overlapping identities; from a provider of lay physic to a labourer within the domestic economy. In addition to the proclamation of identity and literacy noted above, the item is also highly functional to be used in dressing, sewing, health and hygiene. Amid all of these practical and yet personal manifestations of identity, a small area could be set aside to a demonstration of vicarious pleasure and luxury – 'A M' may have deconstructed her jewellery to enable a small stone to hang from her bodkin, or personalized it with various other appendages beyond the inscriptions and etchings themselves.

Conclusion

Clothing and accessories functioned together on the early modern female body. They pointed to a myriad of cultural, social and personal meanings that are often lost when museum objects are isolated from one another whether in terms of display, categorization or cataloguing. These items could be employed in household labour, or in the pursuit of personal interests, religious devotion or practical duties. Importantly they were also markers and makers of identity, acting in dialogue with other items, materials, images and narratives to create nuanced meanings and uses. This chapter has sought to enrich the Trust's understanding of

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[120] Christof Wirsung, *The general practise of physicke conteyning all inward and outward parts of the body, with all the accidents and infirmities that are incident vnto them, euen from the crowne of the head to the sole of the foote*, Printed by George Bishop (London: 1605).

[121] Jacques Guillemeau, *Child-birth or, The happy deliuerie of Women wherein is set downe the gouernment of women.* Printed by A. Hatfield (London: 1612). See Chapter XXVIII, *Of the difficultie of making of Water, wherewith young children are troubled*.

its own collection, by researching the provenance of items and relating them to a wide and rich historical context and a variety of primary and secondary sources.

These items, which have rarely been considered as individual objects, and never as a cohesive set within the Trust's collection – have been discussed utilizing a cross-collection comparative methodology embedded in a close reading of early modern cultural sources and the material qualities of the objects themselves. By placing articles of girdle furniture together both conceptually and physically, it is hoped that the detached approach to and disconnected display of objects will be enriched by a variety of narratives that point to female constructions of identity using material culture. This chapter has also developed themes explored in Chapters Four and Five – by establishing provenance for the Trust's bodice I have placed the object within in a specific social milieu and opened the object up for further examination by the scholarly community. In this sense, this chapter, and the thesis as a whole is in part an exercise in museological 'best practice' – it is focused upon increasing intellectual and physical access to museum collections. In addition, the Creative Catalogue (see Appendix) ensures that the object records are themselves seen in context with other objects in collection interconnected via meta-data, thematic categorization and fluid innovative description.

Conclusion

Throughout the writing of this thesis, a statement from the Victoria & Albert Museum's journal *things* has resonated and inspired my approach: 'in narrowing our focus to things,' the editor writes, 'we paradoxically widen the scope of our historical enquiry'.[1] This encapsulates the simplicity of the central contention of this thesis – that the study and use of objects can generate new knowledge about them and open up new ways of understanding history.

It must be noted that this apparently simple object-centred approach was, in reality, complicated by a fragmented field of material culture studies, which is still in its infancy, and, as this thesis as sought to make known, the multiple layers of institutional conjecture and interpretation that inevitably envelopes all museum collections. The first three chapters of this thesis identified the conventions and assumptions of the Trust in relation to the valuation, organisation, and interpretation of its material culture. In Chapter One, I examined the theoretical writings pertaining to material culture, identifying within the recent literature a shift from economic histories of objects revolving around cultural issues of consumption to a new confidence among scholars to see material culture as a fascinating, complex, unstable, but essentially 'objective factor' that helped to shape early modern lives and social interaction. Objects are therefore sources for social historians and are increasingly capable of articulating complex notions of identity, objective knowledge of everyday life, social and emotional experiences. The extent to which this will be generally accepted among early modern historians will, in my view, depend on the sustained support of collection based research at both universities and museums in years to come.

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[1] Anon, 'This and that' in *things,* Victoria & Albert Museum, 3 (1995): p. 112-3

As we saw in the opening chapter, material culture studies challenges researchers to embrace the wide variety of evidence available, and to test disciplinary boundaries. This sentiment perhaps illuminates the fragmented nature of material culture studies, whilst also explaining the character of this thesis, which follows the evidence of each object, from gardening to religion, fashion to folk belief. The opening chapter outlined a methodology informed by recent theoretical developments, whilst drawing the readers attention, via the Trust's 'medicine' chest, to the museological narratives and constraints that tend to ossify an object into grooves of nomenclature, assumed use and meaning. I recognize the debt owed to other researchers in this area, whilst unashamedly restating the importance of a time-consuming object-based approach as best practice. Chapter One therefore responds to a central research question regarding the legitimacy of objects-as-evidence, by proposing a methodological sequence beginning with first-hand performative analysis of the object which then informs subsequent historical research.

Also within Chapter One, we saw how the inherent meaning of objects is often submerged in the desire of the institution to tell a predetermined story. My performative analysis of the chest indicated both my methodological approach which was used throughout this project and the success of its outcome. In Chapter Two, I considered the tradition of the 'scholar-curator', particularly James Orchard Halliwell's predilection for Shakespearean gloss as opposed to object research. Halliwell's emotional, almost hagiographic impulse to collect and fashion evidence in order to materialize a Shakespeare biography in Stratford was shown to permeate current approaches to both object and building interpretation (Chapter Three). Here it was shown how object knowledge produced by museums is disseminated in catalogues and displays. These resources are the first point of entry for researchers and historians, and are a means of identifying pertinent examples and avenues for research. Lack of provenance often discourages the use of objects and as we have seen, inaccurate or

disengaging cataloguing promotes further error or anachronisms. When relevant objects are identified regulation of access and safeguards of conservation may hamper object-based analysis. Whilst Ulinka Rublack has noted that the 'assembly and dissemination' of object-based knowledge about the early modern period is one of the proper functions of museum research, this must be prefigured by a questioning of current museum knowledge and an interrogation of the objects in order to generate the basic data need for further hermeneutic inquiry.[2]

It was to this end then, that the final three chapters were deployed: to explore disparate aspects of the Trust's collection – civic material culture, folk-religion and fashion – whilst enabling intellectual and physical access to the museum collection itself. Careful considerations of nomenclature in Chapters Four and Six (chests, cupboards, girdle furniture) demonstrate the importance of engaging with both textual sources and objects. It is clear that if historians are to effectively engage with museum collections the museum objects themselves need to have the correct names to aid their discovery in the object record.

These chapters are therefore intimately concerned with identification: both of object type and the history of the item itself. Here the research questions and intended outcomes outlined in the Introduction have been addressed: to deepen the knowledge of objects in the Trust's care, and by so doing heighten both intellectual and physical access to these items.

Impact and outcomes

The benefit of this thesis to early modern historical studies may be measured by the new knowledge it has made available regarding a formerly undervalued and underused resource, and in its contribution to an on-going methodological debate about the ways in which objects may be used as 'evidence' in historical writing. In addition, I have contributed original

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[2] Ulinka Rublack, 'Matter in the Material Renaissance', p. 42

object-based knowledge to various historical debates including early modern medicine, collections history, the history of early modern local government, folk beliefs and seventeenth century fashion.

The wider museum-based and collaborative achievements of this research project are manifold. As an institution committed to exploring Shakespeare's world and helping public understanding of his plays, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust now has clear and accurate knowledge about a large portion of its object collections, which can be utilised by its various departments to creatively engage with its mission statement and aims. This has already begun: I have given talks to the Friends of the Trust, and delivered open talks and object handling sessions to the public as part of the Trust's interpretive and education programmes.[3] I benefited personally from feedback from museum staff and visitors on the content and delivery of these events, which were well attended and sparked new levels of engagement between staff, public and objects. This project has heightened the value of the collection as a scholarly resource; at the time of writing the 'creative catalogue' has already been utilized in two exhibitions, been deployed to improve object knowledge on the Trust's website, and contributed to a collaborative project with the University of Warwick curated by Professor Jonathan Bate.[4] Thanks to an online curatorial programme pioneered by Tara Hamling and Delia Garratt, I have also been able to raise the profile of the collection through blogs and special online 'exhibitions' curated by myself and fellow doctoral candidates at the Shakespeare Institute. I have also provided research and content to the Trust's Eye Shakespeare App, a downloadable tool for smartphones that explores Stratford-upon-Avon

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[3] I delivered a talk on three subjects to the Friends of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in February 2012: 'Yet I applie myself: a Stratford Corporation constable at work, 1552-1600'; 'Kitchen physic: the material culture of domestic healing'; 'She kept a sheath for another man's knife: tokens, gifts and courtship in early modern England'. For the education department I delivered two talks and object handling sessions: 'Good & Bad Magic in Shakespeare's England', The Shakespeare Centre, 5.2.2013; and 'Sex and Death in Shakespeare's England: Rapiers, hangers and pikes as male appendages', The Shakespeare Centre, 6.6.2013
[4] See Introduction, n. 8

using objects from the collection.[5] In addition, the research has helped the Trust to reengage with its object collections, identify uncatalogued objects and conservation risks, thereby contributing to the Trust's constant commitment to best practice.

A major outcome will be a book, *Shakespeare and the Stuff of Life*, to be published by Bloomsbury in 2015. Edited by Delia Garratt of the Trust and Tara Hamling of the University of Birmingham, I will contribute short essays on objects discussed in this thesis. It is thought that the book will provide interpretation to visitors to Stratford as they navigate the properties and displays of early modern material culture.

The apparent simplicity of returning to a 'performative' analysis of objects was not without its problems. Engagement with objects in museological contexts has been vastly improved in recent decades by the scientific study of materials, but the processes of investigation, preservation and presentation employed by some professional bodies, have been rejected here in favour of a methodology that puts interpretation above conservation. The 'use' of objects – opening drawers, figuring out how something was carried by physically manipulating the object, or filling objects with other objects to see how they 'worked' – does take more risks with the objects than most recognized forms of object inquiry recommended by museum professionals.[6] On this issue, I would like to warmly thank all the staff at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, and particularly those in the Museum Department, for their open-mindedness and patience throughout this project. From a conservation perspective, some questions may rightfully be raised regarding the applicability of the performative approach, although it should be noted that all appropriate conservation regulations were followed, and that my research focused upon objects that had been in store and were therefore not submitted to the environmental stresses of both public display and object-centred research.

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[5] See http://shakespeare.org.uk/visit-the-houses/eye-shakespeare-app.html [accessed 26.8.14]
[6] For example Karen Harvey 'Introduction: practical matters' in Karen Harvey ed, *History and Material Culture: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 1-23, pp. 16-17

With the 'creative catalogue' I have tried to do justice to all aspects of the early modern collection, but given the range of subject matter the thesis itself may have benefitted from a narrowing of scope. All these areas are specialisms in themselves, but the intention was to present each object in the collection against helpful cultural backgrounds and histories that had explicit and implicit connections to the objects discussed.

It is unfortunate that so few objects in the collection could be given accurate provenance, but I think this in part reflects larger issues of collecting culture in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; an issue that I have attempted to address in the thesis. To that end, I have only recently discovered the Minutes of the Trustee's at the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, which could potentially shed more light onto object acquisition during the time of James Orchard Halliwell. I have focused upon the collecting history of Halliwell, but in reality there are other significant collectors (such as Robert Bell Wheler) whose interests could have influenced the presentation and narrative treatment of the object collections. I chose Halliwell because of his importance and influence at a time when the Trust was building its museological approach, and because his work and thinking about objects are well documented. Further research could make use of his correspondence in the Folger Library; my thinking has been influenced by biographers and cataloguers of Halliwell's collections (such as Spevak and Somerset) who, I think, would not disagree completely with my reading of Halliwell's method and philosophy of Shakespeariana.

Appendix 1

Creative Catalogue Project

The catalogue consists of over seventy objects from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust's collections. It highlights some of the most interesting items in the collection, while addressing current methodological problems and debates. It presents original research, revealing neglected and uncatalogued objects, and gives us a wider understanding of the history of the collection. In its current form, it is a working model for an expanded museum catalogue, with proposed elements such as interconnected entries and thematic tagging (illustrated in the 'Related Objects' sections within each entry). Other aspects include comparative sections where the user can view similar 'Examples from Material Culture', i.e., other collections, and on some entries I have included direct links to Shakespeare's plays and poetry ('References in Shakespeare') if the link is pertinent.

All of the entries have been contextualized as far as possible and have been given, it is hoped, flexible and transparent narratives to aid their interpretation. The creative catalogue is a resource that has been designed to be used by a variety of communities from students, to individuals with a lay interest in the period or Shakespeare, as well as scholarly researchers. It is scholarly in character – 'References' to primary and secondary sources are offered whilst simultaneously proposing new avenues of research. The catalogue is also accessible, offering condensed factual information enhanced by narrative.

In summary, the catalogue presents creative starting points for understanding the object, and not limiting labels; it links disparate SBT collections together – object collections are (in some entries) cross referenced with archival information from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office; objects are interconnected via keyword tags or meta-data; it offers a constructive critique of museum practice in the sense that it reveals provenance, puts pressure

on nomenclature, problematizes the 'authorial voice' of the museum, and reveals the

contingent nature of the narratives that surround objects as opposed to the object-based data

itself; and finally, offers the potential to host other research platforms, i.e., scholars and

students could add to object entries and update research.[7]

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[7] 'Shakespeare's World in 100 Objects', http://findingshakespeare.co.uk/category/shakespeares-100, a blog that includes entries based on this catalogue, has already inspired both published academics and members of the public to contribute to the object research. Object 20, a witch-stool; and Object 43 a fire-back, in particular, have attracted attention.

A cast iron fireback, with David and Bathsheba?

Place of origin: Unknown (Wealden, Sussex possibly?)

Date: 1550-1650

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Iron, sand-casting.

Museum Number: No accession number.
Currently in Nash's House.

Physical description: square plate with rounded arched top, with three oval pommels ; ropework border at top, with heavy wear eroding what may have been an inscription. Main design consists of three figures; a tall woman in the foreground with an elegant raised headdress. Behind her a man in turban, with a boy in background, holding an instrument (violin?).

Firebacks formed a set of objects for cooking and heating, which included andirons, racks, pot-hooks etc., sometimes collectively called *gobertes*. Its' use implied the use of a brick built hearth with a chimney (a development that became more widespread in gentry and middling sort houses of the sixteenth century. Iron firebacks helped radiate heat into the room, and protected the expensive brickwork.

They could be fabricated easily: A carved wooden replica of the design was pressed into a tray of damp sand, leaving a mould into which molten iron was poured, producing the finished slab with designs protruding from the face. A blacksmith and carpenter were required for the process.

This scene remains unidentified. The three figures correspond to other representations of King David, playing the harp, accompanied by a boy with a violin. David is often represented in oriental garb, and if this is correct, the woman may be Bathsheba. Many firebacks incorporate fire themes or imagery, appropriate to their use, for example St. Paul's encounter with a snake on Malta, or the three children burned in the Fiery Furnace from the book of Daniel. If this episode is from David's life, the fireback in the grate may have operated as a warning against lust – with the pursuit of Bathsheba framed with the flames of the fire as a reminded of the fires of hell.

Related objects from the collection: Fireback commemorating the Caroline incident of the Royal Oak,c. 1660s References: Jeremy Hodgkinson, *British Cast Iron Firebacks of the 16th to mid-18th centuries*, (Crawley: 2010). Tara Hamling, *Decorating the 'Godly' Household: Religious art in post-Reformation Britain*, (Yale: 2010).

A seventeenth century bible box

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1630

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: oak, chip-carved, iron lock.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31/267

Dimensions: W. 665mm. H. 290mm D. 395mm

Keywords: Bible, apotropaic, literacy, storage.

An early 17th-century oak box; with a rectangular moulded lid and lunette-carved front edge; the front and sides are carved with enriched arches above a projecting carved and moulded base board. The wood surrounding the lock plate and hinges show signs of disruption, these, and the four sledge feet are probably later additions. The interior is without lining or partition.

This small box was originally used to store a bible. Bible boxes were often wooden but also survive in metal and ceramic. This example is richly carved with half-rosettes, and beautiful curving palmettes. In the seventeenth century, printed bibles were very expensive and great care was taken to store them away from harm. They were also used to record family history; births, marriages and deaths were written upon the flyleaf or endpapers. The family bible was therefore 'not merely … a source for ideas and images, but … a carrier for relationships'. It may have been one of very few books owned by the family, and the use of box was

surely both practical and honorific. The storage of the bible in a box suggests that the material object of the book was in itself significant. This can be gleaned from the numerous folkloric beliefs associated with Bible ownership/use. Oaths could be sworn on it; an open Bible could be enough to ward off evil spirits from the home; the records of births could be used to cast horoscopes; a key placed in the pages could be used in divination; and it was even used to help restless children sleep by placing the Bible on their brows.

Boxes like this are numerous from the mid to late seventeenth century, and proliferate in American households in the eighteenth century. Other examples have sloping lids giving credence to the theory that bible boxes developed into writing desks during the seventeenth century. This early seventeenth century English example is therefore quite rare, and provides an insight into how the Bible was revered and used in the domestic sphere.

References: David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order,* (Cambridge, 1980); *Natalie* Zemon Davies, 'Printing and the People', *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London, 1975); Jennifer Anderson & Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, (Pennsylvania, 2002). Examples from Material Culture: A bible box, 1600s, http://www.fireoflondon.org.uk/resources/imagebank/set1/Bible+box.htm. A bible box, c. 1680, with dragon motifs and owner's initials carve into face. http://www.periodoakantiques.co.uk/product.php?id=929. A 'bible box' or writing desk, with sloping lid, interior draws, initials on exterior and vine carved decoration, http://www.periodoakantiques.co.uk/product.php?id=254.

An early seventeenth century hanger or hunting sword

Place of origin: England (hilt?), Germany (blade?)

Date: Blade, mid-seventeenth century, guard probably eighteenth century, hilt nineteenth century.

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: iron (hilt), chiselled decoration, brass (pommel and guard).

Museum Number: No accession number

Dimensions: L. 704mm

Keywords: sword, hunting, honour, masculinity.

This short sword is heavily restored with an 18th c. guard and a modern (at least 19th c.) hilt. The blade has chiselled decoration in both the wide fuller and the flat face of the blade near the guard. The latter is typical late sixteenth or early seventeenth century ornament – scalloped palmettes and interlaced strapwork. Above this, a simple but lively chiselled scene of two hounds giving chase, or a single hound chasing a deer or small animal, can be seen. The blade is in a decent condition with patches of dark oxidization.

'Hangers' are commonly seen in wills and inventories of the gentry and nobility from the mid-fourteenth century onwards. Also known as 'cuttoes', derived from the French 'Couteaux de chasse', it is clear that they were used as a type of hunting sword, probably used to kill and dismember the quarry *in situ*. The presence of hounds in full sprint on the blade reinforces this reference to hunting. The form and size of the sword can be gleaned from the more detailed inventories, as in Henry VIII's arms taken in 1547, 'One little shorte hanger the crosse locker and chape of copp wt thafte of cristall

and the sheathe of velvet wt a knife and a bodkin'. Hangers were clearly short swords and part of a larger set of objects, including knives and bodkins, again useful in trussing and carving flesh.

In contrast to the rapier (see Examples), which was seen by contemporaries as an urban weapon, and for some a symbol of effete foreign culture displacing traditional English values, this hanger is strongly tied to the country and to notions of land and custom. Whilst the 'duelling classes' often flouted the monarch if their personal honour was at stake, the upper classes believed that their honour was maintained through a dignified lifestyle; this lead to them to emphasise the antiquity of their lineage, or their public office; their education, or their military prowess, their piety or godliness, and their skill in the hunting field.

A portrait of the conservative Sir Thomas Southwell (c. 1630), shows the landlord in full hunting costume with hanger and snaphance gun, with his country seat, Woodrising Hall, in the background. It is a statement of his local, paternal authority, his attachment to the land, and a celebration of his honourable lifestyle – both in the hunt and his readiness for war.

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Related objects from the collection: SBT 1868 3 1030, A Solingen rapier. References: Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life* (London, 2009); Felicity Heal & Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500-1700*, (Stanford, 1994); Anthony North, 'Hounslow Hangers',*The Park Lane Arms Fair*, (Spring 2004); Anthony North, 'English Hunting Swords', *The V&A Album*, (London, 1984). Examples from Material Culture: *Sir Thomas Southwell*, oil on panel, 200 x 103 cm, the Royal Armouries Museum, Leeds.

Surrey/Hampshire borderware, a jug

Place of origin: Surrey, Hampshire border

Date: c. 1620-1700

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Ceramic.

Museum Number: No accession number

Keywords: dining ware, middling-sort, English goods, English style, ceramics, boiling, cooking, intensive production.

In the 16th and early 17th centuries, potters on the Surrey and Hampshire border were well known for their vast range of durable and practical dining-ware, conspicuous by its green-glaze which waterproofed and decorated the surface. These vessels were mostly utilitarian and designed for everyday use, and were probably consumed by people across the social scale. By the mid-16th century, the industry had expanded, producing both thick-set practical tableware in a variety of forms such as bowls, costrels and chafing-dishes, together with finer (elite) decorative pieces such as tiles for wood-burning stoves. Excavations in London suggest that this style of table-ware was widely used. Later, different coloured glazes were introduced, including olive and browns, as well as a clear finish, which took on a yellow hue over the traditional white ground or fabric.

The fine clays of the Surrey and Hampshire region produced a very light, almost white finish after firing. The clay was easily formed to reproduce the angular contours of German pottery, which was highly prized and regularly imported, and together with the application of vibrant green glazes, this indigenous English product could appease, to some extent, the desire for colour and surface texture seen on Italian maiolica.

In a market heavily reliant on Dutch, German, French and Italian ceramics, it is possible that border-ware was seen as typically 'English' in style by early modern consumers. A tradition of white and green incorporated the famous 'Tudor green' ware (c. 1350-1500), and the sophisticated 'Mill Green' ware of the late thirteenth

century, which combined a red clay ground coated with white slip coating and speckled green glaze. The widespread use of Surrey/Hampshire border-ware in the 16th and 17th centuries could be seen as the result of a 'trickle down' of elite style as wells a steady development of ceramic technologies (particularly glaze mixing).

Vessels used for cooking, such as porringers, could be placed directly onto the embers of a fire, however London-based studies suggest that 60% of border-ware finds display no blackening – suggesting that they were used primarily in dining rather than cooking.

This particular jug does show signs of blackening, as the creamy ground has been severely discoloured near the base, almost to the seam of glaze. This may suggest a user from a lower-middling status household, who were able to afford ceramic, rather than wooden dining vessels, but were still using an open fire in the centre of the room, or against the wall under a fire-hood, rather than a grate. The jug is severely chipped on the lip and base. It has an angular lip or spout, a discernible neck, with two bands below – these were often included as a guide to the level of the glaze. The jug is pocked with kiln scars, or areas of wear and fragmentation. This show us that several items have been in contact during the firing process, suggesting that the kiln was over-packed, itself a sign of intensive production. This item may therefore date from 1620 onwards, when border-ware workshops were at the height of their production, supplying relatively cheap pottery throughout England.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 2005-18 A late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century Iznik polychrome dish, from Ottoman Turkey. / SBT 16 'Maiolica' style dish, cheaply produced for English **market** / SBT 1993-31/455 a French costrel, c. 1500, with curious partial yellow glaze, copied by English borderware potters / References: Bernard Rackham, "The virtues of English pottery", *E.C.C. Transactions*, vol. 2, no.7, 1959, pl. XXIVc and p. 102; Jacqueline Pearce and Alan Vince, *A Dated Type-Series of London Medieval Pottery. Part 4: Surrey Whitewares*, Museum of London, 1988, fig. 38. Examples from Material Culture: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O70266/jug-unknown/ http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/ceramics/pages/subcategory.asp?subcat_id=706&subcat_name=Surrey%2FHampshire+border+ware&page=13

A stool with concentric ring decoration

Place of origin: England (possibly, made)

Date: 1650-1800?

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Turned ash legs, oak or elm seat, four brass or iron pins in seat edges, brass plate on underside of seat (modern museum tag).

Dimensions: Width 30cm, Height 40cm

Location: Anne Hathaway's Cottage

Museum Number: No accession number

Keywords: domestic, hearth, apotropaic, witchcraft, witches' marks, protectionist graffiti, torture.

Sometimes referred to as low stools, foot stools or milking stools, these were common throughout Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries and could be used in numerous domestic tasks. The legs made from ash, are sunk into the underside of the thick elm/oak seat, and the surface of the seat is covered with concentric circle decoration, four circles with two rings and central dots, around a fifth circle, with three rings and a dot. These have been carved or gouged out from the surface. Whilst being highly decorative, it is possible that they relate to the objects' use or function. Ring decoration is often associated with evil-averting symbols. Apotropaic marks, inscribed into furniture, walls, beams etc., sometimes take the form of circles, and were thought to protect the sitter from harm, disease and witchcraft. Theories of apoptropaic marks are largely speculative. Shakeapeare fleetingly refers in *Troilus and Cressida* to a 'stool for a witch'. A tract on witchcraft by Thomas Cooper (1617) suggests that divination using pins, bodkins and a stool (on which the suspected witch would sit) could be used to detect or identify or draw out the evil presence. John Gaule (1646) writes of stools being used as a kind of torture device – the suspected witch would be strapped to or made to stand on it, and denied sleep and food. Watchers were posted in the room, to look for any signs of imps or familiars that would come to their master/mistress. Circles were heavily associated with divination and enchantment (see *The Tempest, V i 2054-2124*). In conduct manuals the circle was an image of propriety, everything within its bounds was good and virtuous. To be 'out of compass' (compasses were used to draw perfect circles) was to be improper and riddled with vice (see Henry IV I III, iii 2020-2027). The concentric circles of the stool could therefore refer to gradations of vice, or the attempt, via apotropaic and divinatory means, to draw the agency of evil within its bounds, trapping it. Other interesting ideas to explore in this context are anthropomorphic nature of the marks, with their similarity to nipples or 'teats' – witches' were thought to feed their familiars at a third 'teat' – and it was the purpose of these ritual tortures to discover the 'teat' and so prove witchcraft. The stool itself could also be a material representation of the cow's udder, thus visually linking the object with its intended purpose. Unfortunately no documentary evidence has yet been discovered that explicitly explores these beliefs and the role objects played in perpetuating/constructing them.

References in Shakespeare: Ajax: Thou stool for a witch! / Troilus and Cressida II i 898; Falstaff: ...and now I live out of all order, out of all compass; Henry IV I III, iii 2020-2027 Related objects from the collection: : Medieval ark or coffer, SBT 1995-21 – This coffer, modified in the 16th and 17th centuries, bears similar concentric ring markings, used to protect the contents of the box. Child's 'seat of ease', SBT 1995-21 – This medieval structure, showing signs of intense remodelling, is in its current form a child's chamber pot, (probably a constructed in the 16th century and remodelled in the 18th), and bears very large daisy-wheel mark, often thought to have apotropaic qualities. SBT ... Cache of shoes found in Hall's Croft SBT ... A daisy-wheel mark in the stair-well leading down to the cellar in the Birthplace. References: John Gaule, *Select cases of Conscience touching Witches and Witchcrafts*, (1646) pp. 78-9; Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (London, 1977); Timothy Easton, 'Scribed and Painted Symbols', in Paul Oliver (ed), *Vernacular Architecture of the World*, 1997/8 (four vols), CUP; Timothy Easton, 'Ritual Marks on Historic Timber', *Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Magazine*, Spring 1999, pp22-30; Examples from Material Culture: There numerous websites related to apotropaic marks, some are unreliable – http://www.apotropaios.co.uk, draws upon good scholarship. Ian Evan's site http://www.oldhouses.com.au/docs/ritual.html, provides a broader view; http://www.concealedgarments.org/ provides the best bibliography for ritual protection, plus an archive of concealed clothes and objects in England.

'Maiolica' style dish, cheaply produced for English market

Place of origin: Valencia, Spain (possibly, made)

Date: 1550-1650

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: earthen-ware, assimilating tin-glaze decoration

Museum Number: SBT 16

Keywords: dining, ceramic, trade, pottery, heraldry, flowering fleur-de-lis, artisan, merchant capitalism, putting-out system.

Maiolica is a type of clay pottery, painted with vibrant colours and glazed with a tin-based compound, usually associated with 16th century Italian workshops. These Italian centres were influenced by Moorish wares imported from southern Spain in the mid-15th century. (Maiolica is a corruption of the word Marjocan, as these ceramics came to Italy from Spain via the island of Majorca).

As a large plate it would probably have been used for presenting foodstuffs on the dining table, or displayed on a cupboard or dresser on special occasions. This dish appears to have been well used, as there are numerous knife-marks in the centre. This could suggest it was used to carve meat. The dish itself is mixture of cultural styles. The central heraldic motif, with five dots split with a flowering fleur-de-lise, topped with a crown, are present in numerous Italian designs and may have a connection to specific family. Heraldry usually suggests a connection to a wealthy patron; but it is unlikely in this case.

Numerous short-cuts have been taken during the making process, and the overall quality here is poor. The orange colour, still vivid on this item, was achieved by a first firing in the kiln, after which the plate was usually fully dipped in a glaze containing tin oxide which provided a ground onto which colourful patterns were painted. Instead of this, a slip (or liquid clay) and pigment mixture has been directly painted onto the face of the dish, contrasting with the terracotta fabric beneath. This meant that tin was not needed, and the dish needed less time in a second firing, saving outlay on expensive materials and fuel (wood), which allowed the workshop to intensify production. This suggests a cheap and quick mode of production, indicating that this item would probably have been made for a foreign 'mass' market. This type of production may have been part of a 'putting-out' system – where an entire workshop, working for wages, was employed by a merchant capitalist, who acquired materials and sold the finished products.

However, considerably skill was required to paint designs directly onto this vesse, which suggests that the workshop was capable but supplied with mediocre materials. Alternatively, this could merely be a 'basic' or cheap range of products specifically intended for lower status buyer.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 2005-18 A late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century Iznik polychrome dish, superior quality and craftsmanship, from Ottoman Turkey. Maiolica dish with St John the Baptist and 'midsummer' decorations, SBT 1993-31/280 – A dish of superior quality, but probably also made for the North European market. References: Tim Wilson, *Maiolica: Italian Ceramics in the Ashmolean Museum*, 1989; Bernard Rackham, Catalogue of Italian Maiolica, 2 Volumes, HMSO 1977. Examples from Material Culture: For similar exports, see John L. Cotter, *New Discoveries at Jamestown: Site of the First Successful English Settlement in America*.

References in Shakespeare:
Varying quality of merchant's produce
Let us, like merchants, show our foulest wares,
And think, perchance, they'll sell; if not,
The lustre of the better yet to show
Shall show the better.
Troilus and Cressida, I, iii 822-5

A parquetry chest with architectural fantasises

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1600-1620

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: oak, inlaid with various woods (bog oak, possibly), *tarsia a toppo*, inlay. Iron loop handles, lock.

Museum Number: SBT 266

Dimensions: L. 1210mm H. 650mm W. 610mm

Keywords: Nonsuch Palace, inlay, *cassone*, women, Renaissance.

A late sixteenth or early seventeenth century chest, of dovetailed planked construction. The lid comprises of three planks expertly joined using mitre-cleats – the top is inlaid with parquetry banding of alternating squares of bog oak and holly. Similar banding surrounds the iron looped handles at the sides. Bands of base moulding have been applied to the front and sides, but not the back, suggesting that this chest would have be pushed flush with the wall. The front is of superior craftsmanship. It is divided into two 'panels', although these are not recessed but remain flush with the front face of the chest. A central band once held a lock plate (now missing). Each 'panel' is subdivided into two further panels composed of marquetry and inlay pictures of lantern-topped towers. Bands of dormer windows adorn the top and bottom of the chest. The iconography is lifted straight from a late sixteenth century design by Hans Vredeman de Vries, and the form is very similar to that of the 'Nonsuch Chest' in the V&A (Examples). Inside, a till on the right hand side suggests that this might have been used to store both large and small personal effects, such as jewelry and dresses.

It is thought that architectural fantasies of this kind were inspired by German (or Rhenish) furniture imported into England in the early sixteenth century. German craftsmen working in Southwark are usually thought to be responsible for such items. This particular example supports the theory that these craftsmen produced chests in large quantities, and of varying degrees of quality. This chest is well made, and carries fashionable designs but the craftsmanship is a little heavy handed – particularly in the application of the inlay. This may reflect the common practice of local craftsmen applying pre-fabricated inlay onto chests, rather than buying or ordering a fully realised parquetry chest

It is difficult to assign a specific use to this object. Despite the interior till, Hughes has suggested that the V&A Nonsuch chest was probably used for storing plate or blankets.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 2001 5, a marquetry 'recipe' chest, c. 1580. SBT 1993 31 268, A French chest carved with heriones. References: Clifford Smith, *Catalogue of English Furniture and Woodwork, (*London, 1929). Benno Forman, 'Continental Furniture Craftsmen in London: 1511 – 1625*, Furniture History*. 1971. Vol. VII, pp. 94 – 120; G. Bernard Hughes, 'Chests for plate and for blankets' in *Country Life,* Oct. 8, 1964, pp. 934-7, plate 3 Examples from Material Culture: This chest seems to be a direct copy of the 'Nonsuch Chest', a late sixteenth century cassone using designs by Hans Vredeman de Vries, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9092/nonsuch-chest-nonesuch-chest-chest-vredeman-de-vries/.

Sheath for cutlery

Place of origin: Low Countries

Date: 1602

Artist/Maker: Artisan/workshop identified as W.G.W.

Materials and Techniques: Box wood, carved

Museum Number: SBT 1868 3/903

Keywords: marriage, cutlery, knife, courtship, sex, carving, girdle, artisan, merchant's mark.

This sheath has two compartments, probably for an ornate knife and fork. It is covered with carvings including the Story of the Prodigal Son and (six) Works of Mercy. It is inscribed with the date 1602, the name of the maker known only as W.G.W, and with a merchant's mark with the initials I.N. Carved in box-wood, it follows a tradition of late medieval carving in ivory before protracted wars against the Ottoman Empire steadily cut off the supply from the east.

Knife sheaths were usually worn by women hanging from their girdle or belt alongside other personal items such as purses, keys, or sweet-bags. In England, knives were given to prospective wives as part of courting rituals. Cutlery, i.e., knives and forks were couched in male and female symbolism. Shakespeare used the word 'knife' refering to the penis many times in his work, and fork was thought to represent the (female) upper thighs and buttocks (*King Lear*). The word 'sheath'was widely understood to refer to the vagina in early modern Europe.

It is possible that the knife sheath was a matrimonial gift, celebrating a specific date, 1602. Cutlery sets could also have be less formal gifts between men and women early in their courtship. Within certain situations, gift-giving and the type of gift proffered operated as a kind of silent language between couple. The potent symbolism of this object (including the unmistakable phallic form and the salacious Biblical narrative of the Prodigal Son entertaing prostitutes) creates a complex object that would have been read in different ways. The phallic form may have communicated legitimate marriage intentions, such as the hope for a fertile union, and/or the object may have revealed a desire for sexual intercouse. In some parts of Scandinavia and Flanders, an empty sheath worn by a woman was a sign that she was ready to marry – the object may have operated within a similar context in Britain. The presence of religious imagery (with Protestant leanings) may have been an attempt to restrain the object's overt phallic resemblance and its folkloric association with fertility. The Story of the Prodigal Son itself considers the themes of destructive passion, in drinking and dining scenes with prostitutes, and later, a banquet of redemption when the prodigal returns home. Overindulgence and restrained 'godly' enjoyment of pleasure are thus balanced, perhaps another allusion to an idealized married life.

Other works bearing W.G.W. can be found in the British Museum, and 14 items in total have been identified by this hand, ranging in date from 1577-1626. The sheath displays new approaches not seen in earlier works, such as deeper relief carving and changes in iconography. The prominence of a merchant's mark, and the relative decline in quality, and increase in uniformity, of the sheaths in the seventeenth century, may suggest that this sheath was the product of *merchant capitalism*, whereby investors (often merchants) took over the management of the production of their wares – by buying workshops, acquiring raw materials and employing craftsmen to produce commodities. This was in contrast with earlier guild systems where trade and construction were regulated by master craftsmen who largely controlled local markets.

Rapier

Place of origin: Blade forged in Solingen, Germany; hilt is probably English

Date: c. 1600

Artist/Maker: Blade-maker Petter Tesche (blade perforated with 'PEDRO TESCH')

Materials and Techniques: Steel (blade, pommel, quillons), twisted iron wire (handle).

Museum Number: SBT 1868 3/1030

Keywords: gentlemen, masculinity, bladesmith, duelling, imported goods, artisanal culture, folklore.

This blade was forged in Solingen in Germany in the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century. The markings and decoration, as well as the process of forging itself, help us to glimpse at issues of taste and quality that would have occupied the buyer of this item in the early modern period. The Spanish were thought to be the finest sword-makers in the world, and the southern stylization of the name Petter Tesche demonstrates an attempt by a German smith to tap into the fashionable Catalan blade market. It is not merely a cheap trick of advertising however. The peforations through the centre of the blade demonstrate that this has been expertly forged – using a crucible technique where wrought iron is heated with pieces of wood or green leaves to generate just enough carburization. Blades of lesser quality were often made using cementation – where steel is hammered around an iron core (although this could also produce very strong blades if done properly). This process, although skilled, was not an exact 'scientific' process as such – it was not until 1781 that the properties of steel were seen to depend on the ratio of carbon and iron. The forging of blades in

the 16th and 17th centuries was therefore both intuitive and to a certain extent, based on tradition and folkloric knowledge, incorporating the various local beliefs concerning the properties of leaves and wood. The blade was probably re-hilted in the English fashion – the current hilt carries what appear to be 19th century screws which have replaced older ones. For the 17th c. English buyer, the rapier was a symbol of gentility, but the Spanish-esque rapier was also a fashion symbol as well as being eminently functional. Rapier and dagger duels were common in England at this time, and a new style developed, disseminated through various printed books, where thrusting attacks were both deadly and long-range. Swords and concepts of masculinity are tightly bound – but rapiers were often seen in popular culture as 'foreign' and by extension effeminate. Some 17th century commentators bemoaned the foreign 'cunning' of rapiers in contrast with the resolute and brave sword and buckler tradition of fighting. In reality, a duel of rapier and dagger was a frenzied bloody affair; punching and kicking were common. The 'Spanish' name on this sword was therefore both a sign of deadly cunning, and un-English etiquette. Shakespeare often uses the broad sword to personify the old values of the nobility - the sword as a symbol of justice is uniformly represented in early modern texts as a broad-sword, not a light, swept-hilt rapier.

Related objects from the collection: Spanish swept-hilt rapier, SBT 1993-28, A Spanish rapier, silver and steel, about 1600. References in Shakespeare: The virtues of Spanish blades, and duelling culture more generally is often discussed by Mercutio in Romeo and Juliet. References in material culture: For other examples of Petter Tesche see the web catalogue of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Select bibliography: For Tesche's working practice see S. Grancsay, 'Swords from the Dresden Armory' *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 24 (1929). For duelling see Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: civility, politeness and honour*(Cambridge, 2003). Provenance: Comparative analysis with other blades by Tesche – this blade is rare for its Spanish stylization of the name, which only occurs on 2 other examples.

A signet ring

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1600? – 1800?

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: gold, stamped, engraved.

Museum Number: SBT 1868-3/274

Dimensions: H. 15.8mm W. 19mm

A large ring, with bezel or elevated collar, engraved with the initials 'W S'. *Provenance* – The ring was purchased by Robert Bell Wheler from the finder, a Mrs. Martin, on the very day of its discovery in 1810. Mrs. Martin retrieved the ring from a field adjoining the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church in Stratford-upon-Avon and it was later donated to the Shakespeare Museum (later SBT) by Wheler's sister Anne in 1868. The initials were thought to be William Shakespeare's; in addition, a signet ring of gold seemed highly appropriate for a man of Shakespeare's station (gentleman), with property and with business interests. Wheler was critiqued by his fellow Shaksepearian scholar, Edmund Malone, for failing to reveal to the public that there was another candidate with the same initials and of sufficient means to claim the ring living in Stratford at the time of the ring's supposed manufacture (c. 1600). William Smith (c. 1550-1618) was a wealthy draper, and would have certainly required a ring like this to authenticate documents. Circumstantial evidence points to the possibility that William Shakespeare did lose his ring, as his will was authenticated not by his 'seale' but by his 'hand' – the former word being struck out. Many nineteenth and twentieth century researchers have attributed this ring to William Shakespeare. Numerous scholars in the twenty-first century have contested the ownership of the ring, whilst reaffirming its status as an early seventeenth century object. *Object analysis* - Three designs (etched and punched into the bezel) are joined together, at the top is a true lover's knot, in the centre is a bowen or heraldic knot, and beneath is a rather clumsy termination reminiscent of tassels. The bezel has a rope or punched dot border. The collar is embellished with another border containing circular stamping. It is clear that the punched border was added

first, as the W penetrates this area and the angles of the letter itself are crisp and undented. Scratch marks within the initials show that the letters were added before the knot decoration. The scratching, the poor terminus to the knot, and the intrusion of the W into the border, allow us to question the authenticity of the object. A high level of craftsmanship was surely required to do justice to the gold material – here we see substandard work. In addition, the knot work is unusual for the period. The true lover's knot was widely employed in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to unite the initials of *two* people – see the 'Darnley ring' (V&A) – these objects functioned as keepsakes passed between lovers or friends. If this is a token of friendship, it is possible that the 'WS' refers to the initials of the giver; for example, a ring given to Elisabeth Edolff in the mid seventeenth century bore the initials 'S.G' (thought to be from her friend Susan Gaynsford). The bowen knot (usually seen in heraldic arms), would clearly speak to gentlemanly status of the owner – but only if it matched the possessor's coat of arms. There is no bowen knot in the Shakespeare's family arms issued by Dethick in 1596. *Conclusion* – the ring requires testing to determine when the inscriptions were made. It is possibly a seventeenth century bezelled ring that was cut in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries; however it is more probable that it was fabricated entirely in the nineteenth century. The keen cut marks may even suggest brass, although the patina and weight do imply low carat gold. The presence, if any, and process or application of gilding, should ratify the numerous narratives that surround this object.

References: William Dethick, The Grant of Arms to John Shakespeare (drafts), The College of Arms, London, Shakespeare grants 1 & 3, MSS, ink on paper. See also, William Shakespeare's will, 1616, http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/museum/additional_image_types.asp?item_id=21&image_id=29&extra_image_type_id=2. Tarnya Cooper, *Searching for Shakespeare* (London, 2006); *A catalogue of the antiquities and works of art exhibited at Ironmoger's Hall, London*, (1868), p. 504; see also Sandra Hindman, Ilaria Fatone, et al., *Toward an Art History of Medieval Rings: A Private Collection*, (Paris, 2007); Diana Scarisbrick, *Historic Rings: Four Thousand Years of Craftsmanship*, (Tokyo, 2004). Examples from Material Culture: cf. The Darnley Ring, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O62552/the-darnley-ring-ring-unknown/; and the collection of early seventeenth century rings in the Ashmolean, Oxford http://www.ashmolean.org/ash/objects/?mu=153, or Finger Ring Collection C.D.E Fortnum.

A 'chain dial'

Place of origin: England

Date: mid to late seventeenth century

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: metal, copper-alloy , brass.

Museum Number: SBT 1870-1

Dimensions: D. 5 cm

Keywords: time, *memento mori*, technology, inscription, jewellery.

A late seventeenth-century pocket dial; copper alloy; ring dial with a slot running around centre, around which slides a pierced ring; inscribed internally with hours of the day and externally with months of the year; suspension loop at apex. Interior inscription of 'S H W', the H is etched into the surface of the moveable ring (interior). In the first years of the seventeenth century, the English mathematician William Oughtred developed the 'ring dial', or small portable sundial. It comprised of a ring usually suspended on a chain. A narrow band of brass slides along a groove set in the exterior surface of the ring. This movable band has a hole in it, which can be aligned with the letters, or months, which are engraved on the exterior; the sun's rays penetrate this hole which then project onto an interior scale (running around the inside of the ring) of hours allowing the user to determine the time of day.

The Holme Portrait (V&A) is heavy with references to the transience of life and the passage of time. These sentiments are communicated via the exterior panel with its representation of a clock dial together with the inscription 'WE MUST... DIE ALL'. Inside, Henry Holme and his wife Dorothy both grasp a bible with their left hands – on Henry's wears a ring dial on his thumb. Even small time pieces like this could have been perceived and perhaps ritually used in way conducive to the *memento mori* tradition.

Ring dials were simplified forms of the pocket dial (or 'poke dial'); the latter were elite status, multi-functioning gadgets which included a compass; a *Nocturnlabe*, or an instrument which helps the user to tell the time by the light of the stars; and a sundial. The most celebrated poke-dial in England is probably the 1593 example owned by Robert Devereux, earl of Essex.By comparison, this ring dial is modest. Made of un-gilded brass, it is probably a late seventeenth century example of a fairly cheap dial. It has a suspension loop at the top, this was necessary for reading the sun, but it could also suggest that these rings were worn around the neck. It has been supposed that the 'S H W' is either a maker's mark, or inscription applied by the owner – but these letters occur on many dials from the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Although no documentary evidence reveals what these letters mean – it is likely that the 'H', being attached to the moveable brass ring that was oriented towards the sun, represents 'Helios', the Greek personification of the sun.

Related objects from the collection: **SBT 1910-14, early seventeenth-century pocket dial.** References: *John Bruce,* Esq. F.S.A. *'XXII.—Description of a Pocket-Dial made in 1593* for Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. By F.S.A.: in a Letter addressed to the possessor of the Dial*, Edward Dalton,* Esq. LL.D.' in *Archaeologia,* Volume40 / Issue02 / January 1867, pp 343-360; http://www.jefpat.org/CuratorsChoiceArchive/2011CuratorsChoice/Dec2011-Timekeeping%20in%20the%2018th%20Century.html. Examples from Material Culture: A ring dial with seal, http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/collections/search/displayrecord/?mode=displaymixed&module=ecatalogue&invnumber=51851&irn=1985&query=; Another example with 'SHW' inscription, from the Portable Antiquities Scheme/Department of Culture, Media and Sport, United Kingdom, http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/400486; The Holme Family Portrait, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O51693/the-holme-family-painting-unknown/.

A 'ring dial' inscribed with the name 'HANCOCK'

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1620 – 1650, modified in the eighteenth century.

Artist/Maker: 'Hancock'?, from inscription

Materials and Techniques: metal, copper-alloy, brass.

Museum Number: SBT 1910-14

Dimensions: D. 5.75 cm

Keywords: time, *memento mori*, technology, inscription, jewellery.

An early seventeenth-century pocket dial; copper alloy; ring dial with a slot running around centre, around which slides a pierced ring; inscribed internally with hours of the day and externally with months of the year; suspension loop at apex. Exterior inscription of 'S H W', above the name 'HANCOCK' – these letters appear to be eighteenth century in date. A notched scar on the grip for the moveable slide suggest that something was soldered onto this projection but is now lost.

The English mathematician William Oughtred developed the 'ring dial', or small portable sundial in the early 1600s. It comprised of a ring usually suspended on a chain. A narrow band of brass slides along a groove set in the exterior surface of the ring. This movable band has a hole in it, which can be aligned with the letters, or months, which are engraved on the exterior; the sun's

rays penetrate this hole which then project onto an interior scale (running around the inside of the ring) of hours allowing the user to determine the time of day.

The Holme Portrait (V&A) is heavy with references to the transience of life and the passage of time. These sentiments are communicated via the exterior panel with its representation of a clock dial together with the inscription 'WE MUST… DIE ALL'. Inside, Henry Holme and his wife Dorothy both grasp a bible with their left hands – on Henry's wears a ring dial on his thumb. Even small time pieces like this could have been perceived and perhaps ritually used in way conducive to the *memento mori* tradition.

This patina of this ring suggests gilt brass, although its condition is much worn, particularly on the interior. From this it may be suggested that it was preferred as a ring, like Henry Holme. The scarred grip for the sun-hole may have once carried a seal, as in the ring at the Museum of Science (Examples). The inscription may therefore have proceeded the loss of the seal, indicating a continuous use into the eighteenth century.

Related objects from the collection: **SBT 1870-1, early seventeenth-century pocket dial; SBT 1868-3/274, A signet ring.** References: *John Bruce,* Esq. F.S.A. *'XXII.*—Description of a Pocket-Dial made in *1593* for Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex. By F.S.A.: in a Letter addressed to the possessor of the Dial, *Edward Dalton,* Esq. LL.D.' in *Archaeologia,* Volume40 / Issue02 / January 1867, pp 343-360; http://www.jefpat.org/CuratorsChoiceArchive/2011CuratorsChoice/Dec2011-Timekeeping%20in%20the%2018th%20Century.html. Examples from Material Culture: A ring dial with seal, http://www.mhs.ox.ac.uk/collections/search/displayrecord/?mode=displaymixed&module=ecatalogue&invnumber=51851&irn=1985&query=; Another example with 'SHW' inscription, from the Portable Antiquities Scheme/Department of Culture, Media and Sport, United Kingdom, http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/400486; The Holme Family Portrait, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O51693/the-holme-family-painting-unknown/.

Two locks of William Shakespeare's hair (late eighteenth or early nineteenth century forgeries)

Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon, England

Date: 1793-1819

Artist/Maker: Mrs Hornby

Materials and Techniques: human hair, paper, wax, ink, coarse parchment (possibly vellum).

Museum Number: SBT 1971-12/1 (a single object from a larger packet of locks and papers).

Keywords: Shakespeare, relics, Mary Hornby, Samuel Rogers, mourning,

In 1971 (when these items were formally accessioned) they were considered to be the work of William Henry Ireland (1775 –1835), the infamous Shakespearian forger. In 2011, the hair was 'rediscovered' in the SBT's stores together with a handwritten letter dated January 10 1819, supposedly by the poet Samuel Rogers (1763 - 1855). This letter bequeaths the locks of hair 'to the nation' (although the recipient is unclear). The letter informs us that Rogers acquired these locks via Mary Hornby, the last resident of Shakespeare's Birthplace (lived there from 1793 to her eviction in 1820). During this time, Hornby sold numerous 'relics', including motes from chairs including the famous 'Shakespeare's chair' and the chair of Hamnet, the playwright's son.

The locks were probably mounted in their current form by J.O. Halliwell-Phillips (his signature is on the back), however Rogers notes in his letter that he added the wax to stop them falling to pieces. They are, almost certainly, early nineteenth century forgeries, produced by Mary Hornby during, or just after, her time at the

Birthplace. Numerous accounts survive that she forged material; even to point where she employed local craftsmen to produce items such as snuff-boxes and tobacco stoppers using the fabled mulberry tree of New Place.

The Hornby connection casts a long shadow over the authenticity of the object; but the material evidence itself is conclusive. It is highly unlikely that a lock of hair would have survived from the sixteenth or seventeenth century in this state – early modern mourning customs would have enmeshed the hair into a another useful or symbolic object, such as needle lace worked with human hair and worn as a bracelet, or perhaps into a hollow 'mourning' ring with hair curled inside it. (William Henry Ireland admitted to making a number of convincing finger rings in this way). In summary, this attempt reveals more about nineteenth century customs of mourning and attitudes to relics, than early seventeenth century practice.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 2002-49 The Shakespeare Chair – a mid seventeenth century chair with Shakespeare's armorial device and 'WAS' carved into chair-back.
References: Julia Thomas, *Shakespeare's Shrine: The Bard's Birthplace and the Invention of Stratford-upon-Avon*, (Pennsylvania, 2012); Examples from Material Culture:
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O125926/mourning-ring-unknown/ http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O10703/band-of-hair-unknown/;
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O10701/band-of-lace-unknown/

A pair of 'rememberance' gloves

Place of origin: England (London, possibly)

Date: c. 1600

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: leather, kid, silver thread, silk thread; embroidery

Museum Number: SBT 1992-2

Keywords: bribery, elite, status, duelling, funeral practices, Protestant remembrance, death, body, flowers.

These seventeenth-century gloves are made principally from white kid skin. The gauntlet panels consist of eight individual tabs, within each tab is stitched a curling stem which blooms into two floss-silk pansies. Each cuff is trimmed and lined with salmon pink silk and the seams are of silver bullion braid.   The lining is quite worn in places (a hole on the edge of the right-hand glove cuff). The fingers are elongated via stitching into a chisel shape.

The immediate impression of these gloves is their pristine whiteness. Given the tendency to stain, gloves like this are often associated with display rather than heavy use. In portraits of the nobility, gentry and urban elites, gloves are either worn in the usual way or held in the hand (a sign of 'getting on in life'), or tucked into the belt or hat-band. In all cases, gloves are usually seen as important identifiers of social position. They were also significant in gift-exchange. 'Presentation gloves' seem to have come into fashion in the sixteenth century, when great men of the realm (and their wives) received a pair of gloves upon taking office. They were also popular as courtship gifts, as well as a sign of challenge in a duel. Prices of gloves were moderate in the mid-fifteenth century but exploded in the late sixteenth. The level of sumptuous embellishment occasionally supports these prices, but it has been suggested that 'presentation gloves' were often a front or vehicle for a bribe.

As a luxury item, display of status offers the most obvious interpretation – however the symbolism of the pansy together with the whiteness of the material suggest that these gloves were 'rememberance' gifts; exchanged between lovers, or, more credibly, between the family of a deceased maiden (or bachelor), and the mourners at their funeral.

After the Reformation, Protestant funerals shifted away from rites and prayers for the dead, and towards a programme of remembrance and celebration of the deceased's earthly reputation. By giving tokens to mourners, the dead person was munificent even in death; the type of gift indicated the recipients' level of acquaintance with the dead; in short, gloves and other gifts functioned as *reminders* of this relationship,. Pall bearers routinely received gifts of gloves, as did close kin of the departed. Mourning cloaks, gloves, ribbons and bands were often black, but articles in white fabric were also common. A ballad of 1650 describes 'six maidens all in white / did bear her [the deceased virgin] to the ground', and the gift of kid gloves was seen as particularly appropriate for close family members. Pansies were often associated with remembrance (together with rosemary) and were also known as 'heart's ease', suggesting that early modern people felt that the flower could help them mitigate and survive the pain of loss.

References in Shakespeare: Gloves as courtship gift; The Winter's Tale (1610): 'Come, you promised me a tawdry-lace and/a pair of sweet gloves.' (4. 4. 241 – 242); Pansy and rememberance, 'There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,/ love, remember: and there is pansies. that's for thoughts.' References Clare Gittings, Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England, (London, 1988); Susan Vincent, Dressing the Elite, (London, 2003); James E. Thorold Rogers, A History of Agriculture and Prices in England (Cambridge: 1950); Diana O'Hara, Courtship and Constraint, (Manchester: 2000). Examples from Material Culture: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77421/pair-of-gloves-unknown/.

An Elizabethan cast measure

Place of origin: England

Date: 1601

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: copper-alloy (brass), cast.

Museum Number: SBT 1992-3

Keywords: Stratford Corporation, standardization, tax, measurement, government.

An official cast brass pint measure; with Royal crest and initials 'ER' and date '1601' in relief on the body of the vessel; this is a single piece of casting, and the details are very vivid. The rim and base are stamped with later marks of subsequent monarchs, including a Caroline mark, and those of George II and George III. This is an 'old pint', before the introduction of the Imperial measure. As the relief casting suggests, this object was made at the command of Elizabeth I (1533-1603) as a volume standard for England.

The process of standardization had begun in 1560-1, when Thomas Gresham moved against the debasement of silver coin which had caused a hike in inflation in the 1540s. Numerous copies of these Exchequer standards were cast and sent to boroughs across England. Cast copper-alloy (brass), or bronze, were favored for their heavy, robust condition, that was not easily deformed. This measure is made of brass, a material with a lower melting point than bronze – suggesting that it was not produced by the Exchequer's casters in London, however, the subsequent marks from Charles's reign do seem to validate its capacity. This object would have been kept by a governing body, such as the Stratford Corporation. In Stratford, the Bailiff and aldermen would keep standard measures in the Guildhall, close to the site of the weekly markets and fairs. The Court of Piepowder, which arbitrated between traders and customers, prosecuting where necessary, would produce this measure to determine the true capacity of a given vessel, ensuring fair measures, and tax. (The word pint derives from the vulgar Latin *pincta*, meaning to a mark a container).

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References: Fernand Braudel, Civilization and Capitalism, 15th-18th Century, Vol. III: The Perspective of the World, (Los Angeles, 1992); Levi Fox, The Borough Town of Straford-upon-Avon, (1953). Examples from Material culture: See other measure sizes, bushel, http://www.scienceandsociety.co.uk/results.asp?txtkeys1=Weights+and+measures; a gallon, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78472/gallon-measure-unknown/.

A set of twelve sycamore 'poesie' roundels

Place of origin: England

Date: 1597 (see SBT 2000-4, leather box for roundels)

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: sycamore, vegetable based ink.

Museum Number: SBT 1992-4

Dimensions: 130mm in diameter; 30mm thick

Keywords: trencher, poesie, entertainment, music, lute.

A set of twelve Elizabethan sycamore roundels. Verso – plain surface; Recto – black ink margin, painted decorative border, with an inked inscription in the centre; the script is a secretary/italic hybrid. It is widely held that these items operated as table mats. The verso (plain side) was presented to the diner, with a dessert (of sweetmeats or fruit) on top. After this was eaten, the diner would turn their roundel over and read or sing the verse to the rest of the company. An object used in this way would certainly be soiled with grease stains or sugary residue, and would probably also show knife-marks. These roundels display no such marks, and are in almost pristine condition. Between thirty and forty similar sets were examined by A.H. Church for the Royal Society in 1894 – none showed any sign of contact with food. An alternative theory is that roundels were part of an after-dinner entertainment where each selected a roundel and performed the 'poesie' or 'role' written on it, be it comic, philosophical or pious. This certainly appears to be the case with the so-called 'XII Wonders of the World' roundels (V&A); each one has a representation of a particular character, i.e., a Divine, a Merchant, a Bachelor or a Maiden, and surrounding this image runs assigned verses (written by Sir John Davies). These verses were set to music by John Maynard in his book of 1611. The circular form of the roundel is central to the performance, (it even appears on the title page), and emphasises the *homophonic* nature (or multiple parts moving in the same rhythm) of the music. We can imagine therefore a party of twelve each singing assigned roles, responding to an 'opposing' character, or singing in unison, accompanied by viol de gamba and lute (as recommended by Maynard).

It is by no means certain that these roundels in the SBT collection were used in the same or even similar way. Given the variety of verse types on existing roundels it is likely that clients requested verses according to their persuasion. The rhymes on some sets belie a sophisticated humanist education whilst others appear hackneyed. This set veers between light banter ('If women/were as litle as/they are good a pese/cod would make em y/gowne, and a/hood') and melodrama ('O death yi/power is great I/must confese I often/wish that it were/lese'). These verses could equate with the broad types set forth by Davies and Maynard (i.e., the Husband's complaint regarding his wife's outlay on clothes, and the Divine's turgid meditations on mortality). *Production* – there is strong possibility that a high proportion of these roundel sets came from the same workshop as the iconography across extant objects changes only slightly and the script varies little, although there is some fluctuation in quality. It is likely that one workshop produced a range of goods, of different quality, to fit the requirements of the buyer. Later in the seventeenth century, a more affordable practice emerged; engraved prints (bought by the sheet) were applied via paste to wooden round supports. These designs were both disposable when dirty and replaceable when a new 'poesie' or design was printed. In this way, well-to-do dining/convivial practice in the Tudor period became widespread after the Restoration. It is from these later examples, however, that the connection between roundels and dining has been constructed.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 2000-4 An Elizabethan pasteboard box for storing the roundels. References: J. Levi, *Treen for the Table: Wooden Objects Related to Eating and Drinking* (1988); Anon, 'May, from the Months, with a prologue on trenchers and other applied prints', http://www.bpi1700.org.uk/research/printOfTheMonth/may2008.html. Examples from Material Culture: Numerous examples survive from the same workshop (possibly) see Object Nos. 1965T2441.1-11 in the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, http://www.bmagic.org.uk/objects/1965T2441.1; the 12 roundels in St. Alban's museum http://www.stalbansmuseums.org.uk/; and the set of 8 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, http://www.metmuseum.org/collections/search-the-collections/120025861?img=1. Another set (64.101.1586) in the Met are rectangular, and may be by a different hand, or improved quality for humanist/scholarly client. For the 'XII Wonders' set in the V&A, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78997/twelve-wonders-of-the-world-set-of-roundels-unknown/.

Two tapestry borders for a long cushion, with hunting scenes

Place of origin: England, Warwickshire (possibly?)

Date: c. 1560-1600

Artist/Maker: attributed to 'Sheldon Workshop', but without provenance

Materials and Techniques: Wool, 22 warps per inch, modern stitching to create single piece.

Museum Number: SBT 1992-7

Dimensions: L. 87 cm H. 26.5 cm (13.25 cm each)

Keywords: 'Sheldon' workshop, tapestry, yeoman, middling-sort

These two fragments of tapestry have been stitched together to create a modern tableaux, but they originally formed the horizontal borders of a large cushion cover. A complete example can be seen in SBT 1993-31/299 (Related Objects), which is made up of a central panel abutted by two vertical and two horizontal borders at the top and bottom. These hunting scenes would have formed the horizontal borders; an almost exact copy of them can be seen in the Burrell Collection, where hunters with horns and hounds chasing stags and wild boar, adorn a large central panel depicting Faith, Hope and Charity (see Examples). It is probable that the Burrell cushion and these borders were made by the same workshop, as both are in wool with 22 warps to the inch. This particular hunting motif is, however, ubiquitous among small scale tapestry pieces , so any attribution based on iconography alone is problematic. These borders probably adorned a large cushion, approximately 100cm long. Given these dimensions, it is possible that it would have sat on a long bench, or upon a settle in the parlour or hall, or it may have been employed as a bolster upon the 'best bed', heirloom and investment pieces that were starting to appear in the homes of wealthy yeomen in the late sixteenth century. These beds were the focus of textiles and woven imagery of many types, including valances, coverelets, and curtains. Cary Carson states that 'ordinary people in England and northern Europe enjoyed a rising standard of living in the hundred years or so before the end of the seventeenth century. These were necessary improvements affecting dress, diet, shelter and furnishings.'

The attribution of 'Sheldon' to these woven pieces is largely due to twentieth century antiquaries who wished to chart a tradition of tapestry from the Arts and Crafts revival back to the entrepreneurial endeavours of William Sheldon (c.1500-1570). The 'Sheldon' workshop became a byword for a celebrated hand-made, English style, where traditional rural scenes of flora, fauna and rusticity merged with biblical stories, these were then elevated by the iconography of Renaissance ornament and classical forms.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31/299, A tapestry cushion cover, thought to be Sheldon, depicting the biblical Story of Joseph, 1570s. References: Hiliary L. Turner, http://www.tapestriescalledsheldon.info/index.html; Hiliary L. Turner, *Sheldon Tapestry Research paper*, an unpublished correspondence with Ann Donnelly, formerly Curator of SBT Museum Collection, December 2001; Helen Wyld , 'The *Gideon* Tapestries at Hardwick Hall' in *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Fall-Winter 2012), pp. 231-254. Clive Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes*, (Aldershot, 2005). Examples from Material Culture: Faith, Hope & Charity cushion cover, http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/starobject.html?oid=40258

A combined chrismatory and pyx

A wooden box, covered in sewn and wrought leather, decorations in smooth relief, with stippled background. The lid is decorated with a symbol of the Lamb of God, with long crucifix, amid curling stems, with a surrounding rope border; the front with two griffins, holding a strapwork shield, in the centre of which is a worn hole and a rip in the leather. Inside the wooden carcase are three circular recesses, and three original pewter ampullae (without handles). All bear light-punched markings (applied with a hammer); one is marked with the letter I; the second a C; the third marked with a dotted symbol, probably another C. There is also a small square recess on the left hand side (empty).

This object is often called a chrismatory, a container for the three holy oils used by the Catholic Church; the *chrism* (a mixture of consecrated oil and balsam, for baptisms and anointing specific places and people, such as monarchs or altars), the *oleum catechumenorum* (for new communicants to the faith), and the *oleum infirmorum* (most commonly used during the last rites or office of extreme unction. Larger reserves of these oils were preserved in the local church which had been blessed by a Bishop, and were decanted into smaller receptacles like these when needed. The leather binding sealed the box and prevented water damage; the use of leather also reinforces the idea that this box was specifically designed to be portable. The workmanship is comparable to secular leather-work of the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century.

Place of origin: Warwickshire?

Date: 1500-1605

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Wood, leather, pewter.

Museum Number: SBT 1992-10

Dimensions: L. 14cm H. 9.7cm D. 6cm

Keywords: recusancy, Gunpowder Plot, Rookwood, Reformation, Stratford Corporation.

This box was only accessioned into the collection in 1992. It was in fact part of a wider series of objects, known as the Borough Collection, cared for by the SBT since the early 1960s. This discrete collection consists of numerous objects owned and kept by the Stratford Corporation (incorporated 1552). It is unusual that this organisation should own a chrismatory, an ecclesiastical object that was rendered useless as well as illegal outside of mainstream Protestantism after the Reformation. The object may have been preserved among the effects of the Gild of the Holy Cross – after 1430, the Gild was denied its right to 'administer any sacraments to the sick' by the local, and superior, Dean of the College. From this point that box may have been kept or reused for something else. Alternatively, this object may have been seized by the bailiffs of the Corporation from Clopton Hall just outside Stratford in 1605. Ambrose Rookwood, one of the alleged Gunpowder conspirators, was arrested and his goods seized. An inventory in the SBT archive reveals the taken items: amongst them a number of 'popish relics', chasubles, a portable altar, and a 'pakes' – this may be a *pax*, a devotional image, but it is more likely a corruption of the word *pyx*, a box that used to the carry the communion wafer. In mid-sixteenth century inventories across England, the chrismatory and the pyx are conflated, and the small space inside this box may have been reserved for a small silver or latten box for the communion wafer. Whilst its origins are unsure, this object was undoubtedly suited to the underground practice of Catholicism in late sixteenth century England.

Related objects from the collection: SBT L513, The newe cubborde of boxes, SBT Lt2, The gild muniment and *tresor* chest – many 'relics' from the time of the guild were kept here that the Corporation did not reuse or destroy. References: For provenance, inventories and related documentation see SBTRO ER27/14, PR385/2, PR385/3, ER1/20/9 (f. 22); See Lewellyn Jewitt's, *The Reliquary*, Vol. 11, (1894) for descriptions of pyx and chrismatory combined; Levi Fox (ed.), *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, (Hertford: 1990). Examples from Material Culture: Chrismatories in the British Museum – there are no similar leather bound boxes in the object record, however Jewitt, above, mentions them in his research of pre-Reformation MSS, http://www.britishmuseum.org/. .

A sixteenth century sharpening steel with swan and thistle ironwork
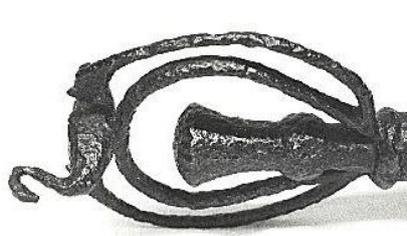
Place of origin: England

Date: 1500-1600

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: metal , wrought-iron.

Museum Number: SBT 1992-47

Dimensions: Full L. 65.2 cm (handle 20 cm), W. 7.5 cm at top.

Keywords: broad sword, government, execution,

A sixteenth-century sharpening steel of wrought iron. The decorative handle is integral with the 'blade' and has a thistle-shaped terminal surmounted by two hooped bands with a swan mounted on the top. The main handle-shaft has incised or chiselled banding, and a frilled finger-guard; the steel sharpening end is square-sectioned, and tapers to a point.

It is very unusual for sharpening steels to survive as they are subject to heavy wear. They were usually slotted into the scabbard of the blade they were made to serve – this can be seen on one of the few prints illustrating their use (above). In the 1562 treatise on capital punishment, the *Praxis rerum Criminalium*, we see a steel being used to hone an executioner's broad sword. The scabbard has an appendage or sheath for the steel. Hunting swords, or hangers, often came with related paraphernalia such as bodkins and daggers, all of which would have required sharpening before and after the quarry was dismembered.

The SBT steel is approximately the same size as the one illustrated in the *Praxis*, suggesting that this was a companion piece to a large sword. The original sword probably bore similar but finer wrought-iron work upon its guard.

The swan motif is quite common in sixteenth century ironwork, as everything from pot hangers, to candlesticks, to wall brackets, roughly conform to this serpentine form. The thistle motif is more unusual. Thistles are widely employed on eighteenth century Scottish dirks, however some seventeenth century Sheffield knives have been described with thistle handles. This motif on a sixteenth century sharpening steel makes this object particularly rare.

Related objects from the collection: SBT ..., An seventeenth century hanger blade. References: Guy Francis Laking, *Catalogue of the European Armour and Arms in the Wallace Collection*, (London, 1910); Anon, *Praxis rerum criminalium iconibus illustrata,* Antwerp, 1562); Marian Campbell, *Decorative Ironwork*, (London, 1997). Howard Blackmore, *Hunting Weapons from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, (Ontario, 1971) Examples from Material Culture: No extant sixteenth century examples.

A 'hussif', 'swete-bagg' or 'Psalm bag'

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1562-1600

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: silk, metal, gold, silver, tent stitching.

Museum Number: SBT 1992-86

Dimensions: H. 11cm W. 12.5 cm (length of cord 15cm)

Keywords: elite, 'huswife', reading, devotion, flowers, female labour.

A late sixteenth-century sweet bag; dark pink silk satin ground, embroidered with yellow and pink silk flowers and green/yellow foliage in silk and metal threads, the border and background are also embellished with silver spangles; lined with gold/pink silk; seven-colour plaited drawstring and cord; the drawstring has acorn terminals worked in metal threads; the bottom of the bag has three tassels attached to loops covered with metal thread; the two corners of the bag have intertwined bullion thread motifs.

Purses of this size had a variety of functions. They were often employed to hold a mix of dried sweet-smelling herbs, fulfilling a similar function to the earlier pomander. The majority of evidence, derived from the lists of New Year's Gifts to Elizabeth I, suggests that 'swete baggs' were primarily a kind of gift-wrapping for small trinkets. Lady Gresham gave Elizabeth a 'boxe with four swete-baggs in it' in 1562, whilst others gave handkerchiefs and bags together. These were probably fragrant bags, used to perfume the box and napery. In similar way, a probate inventory of Edmund Waring's linen cupboard (1625) reveals that bags may have been placed amongst the clothes to keep them smelling sweet. Numerous examples have survived with small pin cushions attached (see Examples), suggesting that these bags may have contained needles, thread and other sewing equipment. These sewing bags derive from earlier objects which were called 'hussifs' (a Suffolk dialect word, although it appears to have regional variations) which described a 'convenient case of

leather, or other sort, in which women keep together needles, thread, &c., at hand or in the pocket'. This word became corrupted in the sixteenth century into 'huswife', and underlines the strong etymological link between female labour and their social role. The cord pulls the draw-string together and provides an appendage for carrying the object. This may have fastened onto a girdle, or belt, which was worn by women, particularly in the home, throughout the sixteenth century. This example does not have a pin-cushion, although this may have been detached at an early time. A leather bag is far better for storing pins and needles, and the fineness of the satin, together with the silk lining of this bag and its excellent condition suggest that it was not used for everyday labour. A more plausible explanation could be that it was used to store a small book of devotion. The British Library holds a copy of the popular *The Whole Booke of Psalms*, with an embroidered binding, enclosed in a bag. The bag is lined with blue silk, and is virtually the size as this object. Cyril Davenport argues that bags for embroidered books were 'always of canvas', that is, coarser linen rather than silk and satin – however book bags are nearly always silk-lined, rendering the toughness of their outer material moot.

This object would have been used by a prosperous woman, suspended from the belt, alongside other personal effects (see Related Objects), and used in her daily routines of pious reading or devotion.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1995-14, an embroidered silk pillow; SBT 1994-31, A blackwork coif; SBT 1868-3/903, A cutlery case with devotional imagery. References: Jacqui Carey, *Sweet Bags: An Investigation into 16th and 17th Century Needlework*, (2010); Cyril Davenport, *Embroidered Bookbindings*, (London, 1899); Edward Moor, *Suffolk words and phrases: or, An attempt to collect the lingual localisms of that County*, (London, 1823). For gifts to Elizabeth see Lanto Synge, **Art of embroidery:** *history of style and technique*, (London, 2001). Examples from Material Culture: A 'hussif' or sewing bag, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77545/purse-unknown/. The embroidered bag for *The Whole Booke of Psalms*, c. 1639. http://www.bl.uk/catalogues/bookbindings/BindingsDisplay.aspx?BookId=019-000001427. See also the eminently useful website, http://www.larsdatter.com/sweetbags.htm.

A Spanish swept-hilt rapier

Place of origin: Spain, Valencia (possibly).

Date: c. 1600-1610

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Steel (blade, pommel, quillons), twisted bronze wire (handle), hilt with gilt-silver designs.

Museum Number: SBT 1993 28

Keywords: gentlemen, masculinity, silver smith, blade smith, duelling, imported goods, artisanal culture.

Physical description: A swept-hilt rapier, formerly identified as English – but certainly of Spanish form; has a cupped or shell-guard – a common feature of many Spanish hilts – which suggests that it was made in one of the great Spanish workshops that were celebrated all over Europe. The style and construction suggest a date of about 1600-1610, but unfortunately, the makers' name (struck into both sides of the blade) is illegible. The oviform pommel and shell guard are decorated with encrusted silver, in a flowing somewhat abstract decorative scheme – this is probably a type of Kuffic (Iraqi) script which became fashionable on goods for the European market during the sixteenth century.

The patina is raised and encrusted silver; the grip and one *quillon* appear to be old restorations; and the hollow-ground blade with its single fuller on each side is struck with a blade-smith's name which is unfortunately illegible). The blade is pitted with rust in some places, and bears numerous abrasions, suggesting it was well used. It's weight and overall quality suggests the use of the Catalan forge-process – wrought iron is heated with pieces of wood or green leaves in a crucible to attain carburization; this produced a superior quality steel that

was highly desired. Rapiers were used by men to defend their honour in duels. There was a strong element of sport in these contests – although for many sixteenth and seventeenth century writers, the participants were more concerned with proving their status to their peers than in asserting the validity and morality of their cause.

English men had a complex relationship with foreign goods at this time. On the one hand, the fine craftsmanship and ingenuity of the decoration made these items alluring; they could be used to show off their cosmopolitan tastes, their status or position. However, 'foreign' stylish swords in English contexts, particularly this item with its Moorish designs and narrow length, often carried perjorative meanings – rapiers were seen as 'cunning' and 'deadly' – and many English writers thought that they were 'weake, fantasticall' and, by implication, effeminate. They were treated with suspicion, as they seemed to challenge English customs rooted in 'sword-and-buckler men', with its emphasis on bravery and virility, and hunting, which implied gentry status, country residency and land ownership.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1868 3 1030 – A German rapier, stlyed as a Spanish blade References in Shakespeare: The virtues of Spanish blades, and duelling culture more generally is often discussed by Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet* References: S. Grancsay, 'Swords from the Dresden Armory' *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, Vol. 24 (1929). For duelling see Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: civility, politeness and honour*(Cambridge, 2003).

A *vanitas*, 'Death and the Maiden'

A late sixteenth century oil painting on board, probably English, c. 1570. A Latin phrase in the top right of the picture reads `MORS/ULTIMA/LINEA RERUM EST, 'Death is the thing which is last in line' - from Horace, *Epistles*. A young woman strums a lute, a symbol of learning, harmony and pleasure. She wears an embroidered V-shaped bodice, with gown and fine damasked under-skirt, slashed sleeves, and a small head-dress beneath an impressive white-feathered hat. On a table draped with green cloth sit two volumes of music, one lies open but the staffs are blank. An elderly gentleman holds a skull in his right hand and a convex mirror in his left. As he holds up the mirror for the woman to gaze into, we see that her own reflection sits alongside the reflected image of death. This type of painting is known as a *vanitas* – so called for its reference to Ecclesiastes 1:2, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity'. *Vanitas* images reminded early modern viewers that despite wealth, learning and power, death awaits all. The subject matter emerges from medieval Catholic tradition, however it has clearly been shorn of any explicit Roman Catholic imagery, and the dress is contemporaneous with the fashions of the 1570s. Its size suggests that it could be hung in a large chamber.

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1570

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: oil on oak board.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-30

Dimensions: 650mm x 490mm

Keywords: elite, fashion, slashed sleeves, Elizabeth I, William Cecil, learning, *vanitas*, death, lute, painting, gender.

The form of the lute, i.e., the length of the neck (this reflects an English fashion for nine, rather than the usual eight frets), and size, together with the implication that a plectrum is being used (the woman's forefinger and thumb are pressed together, but the plectrum has paled due to varnishing and retouching) suggests that this is an unusual 'treble' lute, as seen in Morley's *First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599). The treble-lute was used to play higher notes within the 'whole' consort, or for added (and improvised) audibility in a 'broken' or 'mixed' consort. The blank pages of the songbook suggest that the woman is indeed improvising, and looking out towards us – we may imagine the viewer of this painting (male) imagining or actually playing a duet with his painted companion; or perhaps a Great Chamber where men strike up a mixed consort, with this sobering yet pleasing image looking down on them. We see here that the *vanitas*, albeit a trope, may have been used as focus of actual, and interrelated, practice – in short, the material evidence suggests that the viewer(s) may have played music whilst admiring and/or meditating upon this image. As such it is an interesting example of a paraliturgical image in the domestic sphere in post-Reformation England.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1992-4 Sycamore roundels. References: Thomas Morley, *The First Booke of Consort Lessons* (1599); Matthew Spring, *The Lute in Britain*, (Oxford, 2001); Peter Forrester, 'An Elizabethan Allegory and some hypotheses', LSJ 34 (1994), pp. 11-14. Examples from Material Culture: Nicholas Hilliard, *Elizabeth I playing the lute* c. 1580, Trustee of the Will of the 8th Earl of Berkeley, vellum on card, 48mm x x39mm.

A turned high chair

Physical description: An ash child's high chair; turned spindles and legs; limbs of the chair are adorned with 'cresting' with a mixture of pinnacles and buttons. The back contains a panel of five uprights connected by eight reels with buttons and free rings; he two-plank panelled seat is especially fine, with true mitre joins. Above the foot-rest (which in itself is a very rare survival) is a frieze of three spindles with further bobbins; the front legs rising to form hand-rests, whilst the lower front, back and sides with intermediate vertical spindles are joined by four stretchers. Damage: one iron reinforcing bracket to left hand rear leg; one ring missing from back.

Place of origin: Wales (possibly)

Date: 1580-1640

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Ash; turn legs and spindles, panelled seat.

Museum Number: SBT 1993 31 22

Keywords: Children, family, dining, craftsman, display.

This object has been described as one of the finest productions of its type (References). Early modern children's chairs ranged from basic and practical to, like this, decorative and extravagant. This chair seems to lack the earthy practicality of many other children's chair types (see Related Objects) and appears to be connected more with display then everyday use. Chairs and furniture for children connect to specific emotional and practical cares such as concerns for safety, but also to more abstract ideas concerning childhood and childrearing.

Joiners and carpenters have made this chair, a cooperative venture which suggests a specific order for a client, rather than a stock-in-trade piece. The chair shows no signs of repair (although does show signs of pest infestation); and importantly, no wooden-bar to fix the child in place. Unless a broad sash or belt tied around the child was used, the child (evidently under five years of age from the size of the object), would've been secured only by pushing the entire structure against the table. This does not seem to be in keeping with the ample care taken by the maker to cater for the clients' wishes, i.e., the scheme of turned spindles, and the foot-rest. This object may have been part of a highly ritualized performance or display of family unity and piety in the early modern period, where the child was expected to sit without parental support (as a measure of civility); or more likely, an object that was meant to be displayed rather than used.

Related objects from the collection: A child's seat of ease – a seat which appears to have doubled as a 'potty' (c. 1500-1850). References: C. Heywood, *A history of childhood: children and childhood in the West from medieval to modern times*, (Cambridge: 2001) pp. 32-3 Victor Chinnery, Oak Furniture: The British Tradition, A History of Early Furniture in the British Isles and New England, (Woodbridge: 1980) Examples from Material Culture: For lower class chairs, see Jan Bruegel, *Visit to the Farm* (also known as *Visit to the Wet Nurse*), oil on canvas, c. 1597.

Bronze mortar

Place of origin: Malines, (now in modern Belgium).

Date: 1581

Artist/Maker: Peter van der Ghein

Materials and Techniques: Bronze; cast.

Museum Number: SBT 1993 31 92

Keywords: casting, bronze, copper, alchemy, cooking, herbs, medicine, artisan.

Physical description: A bronze mortar, dated 1581, with two handles and with seven slightly raised rings around the body, and a central floral/grotesque decorated band. Inscribed below the lip 'PETRUS VANDEN GHEIN ME FECIT MDLXXXI [cross] M [cross]'. The two handles carry foliate decoration. Pestle has knob and central leading-ring. The green patina or surface colour in places is a result of the untreated surface reacting with moisture – it also demonstrates that there is a very high copper content in this piece.

During the 16th century, mortars and pestles were standard domestic utensils. They were used for making powders, oils, and ointments for aches and pains, as well as culinary recipes and even beauty treatments. Mortars were also associated with alchemy, the quest to turn base metals into gold. The etymology of the word mortar throws some light on the anthropology of technology. Used for making gunpowder, the mortar may have been the stimulated, by literal explosive accident, the barrel shaped cannon.

This example is stamped with the date in Roman numerals, MDLXXXI (1581), together with the artisan's name 'PETRUS VANDEN GHEIN ME FECIT'; 'Peter van der Ghein made me'. The van der Ghein's were well known casters from Malines who specialized in church bell-casting. Hundreds of mortars from Peter, and his dynasty, survive.

In the sixteenth century, bronze was mostly mined in Hungary, Thuringia (central Germany) and Sweden, and was widely used to make coins. This mortar has a copper content of over 90%, so it is unsurprising that Peter van der Ghein was inclined to cast his name on the piece; this would advertised his access to, and skill in casting, an expensive natural resource. The natural golden colour of the bronze is vivid here – but this can only be maintained by polishing. Mortars with low copper contents are inclined to turn grey if not burnished, which then show a rust-colour patina.

Related objects from the collection: SBT... Bronze mortar, with inscription. References: Grafton, A. *Magic and Technology of Early Modern Europe*. Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Libraries (2005). Examples from Material Culture:
http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/gallery/recentacquisitionsdrawingsprints/gallery/opac/cataloguedetail.html?&priref=13525&_function_=xslt&_limit_=10;
http://heimatblaetter.heimatverein-duelmen.de/hefte/1-2002/die_moerser_der_stadt_duelmen/index.html; http://www.worksofart.be/nieuwsbrieven/nieuwsbrief11.pdf;
www.christies.com The auction house has numerous records for van der Ghein bronze sales.

A cast iron fireback, belonging to the Stratford Corporation

Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon (possibly)

Date: 1585

Artist/Maker: A member of the Hiccox family (possibly)

Materials and Techniques: Iron, sand-casting.

Museum Number: SBT 1993 31 261

Physical description: rounded plate with wings to each side, one side cracked and missing. Design consists of three classical columns, foliage and flowers. Letter 'W' in one arch, alongside coat-of-arms. Arms of three leopards two above and one below, a chevron. Another larger leopard head at centre top of piece. Wings have curled scroll patterns with small bunches of fruit.

Firebacks formed a set of objects for cooking and heating, which included andirons, racks, pot-hooks etc., sometimes collectively called *gobertes*. Its' use implied the use of a brick built hearth with a chimney (a development that became more widespread in gentry and middling sort houses of the sixteenth century. Iron firebacks helped radiate heat into the room, and protected the expensive brickwork.

They could be fabricated easily: A carved wooden replica of the design was pressed into a tray of damp sand, leaving a mould into which molten iron was poured, producing the finished slab with designs protruding from the face. A blacksmith and carpenter were required for the process; the latter probably worked from one of Hans Vriedman de Vries' Renaissance pattern books which were popular with English craftsmen in the sixteenth century.

Although many firebacks were cast with religious and mythological themes which reflected the piety or learning of the owner, this item carries the arms of the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon; it is therefore a 'civic' fireback, which belonged either to the Corporation itself, gracing the hearth of the chamber in the Guildhall on Church Street, or it belonged to an individual who used the Corporation's coat-of-arms to decorate his own iron plate. It is, in both cases, an expression of civic identity that was flowering in Stratford after the Reformation, as commoners and tradesmen, rather than clergy and petty gentry, became increasingly involved in local government.

Related objects from the collection: SBT ... Allegorical fireback, c. 1600, SBT 1993 31.518, Fireback commemorating the Caroline incident of the Royal Oak,c. 1660s References: J. Blair (ed) *English Medieval Industries*. Jeremy Hodgkinson, *British Cast Iron Firebacks of the 16th to mid-18th centuries*, (Crawley: 2010); Levi Fox (ed.), *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, (Hertford: 1990); J. O. Halliwell, *A Brief Hand-list of the Records Belonging to the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon, Showing their General Character; With Notes of a Few of the Shakespearian Documents in the Same Collection* (1862). Examples from Material Culture: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78432

A maiolica footed dish, with St. John the Baptist and grotesques

Place of origin: Urbino, Italy? Antwerp, Netherlands?

Date: c. 1670

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Ceramic, tin-glaze earthenware.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31/280

Keywords: dining ware, fruits, middling-sort, imported goods, Reformation, solstice.

A late-seventeenth century maiolica dish; white background with blue, yellow and orange decoration; scalloped edged dish, circular with raised centre; central roundel with semi-naked, almost hermaphroditic representation of St. John the Baptist emerging from a river, figure with stole, holding a cross; pastoral background; mythical winged and tailed female grotesques and foliage around the edge. Moulding on base is knobbly one edge cracked and mended; wired on back for hanging (modern). This tin-glazed ceramic dish was probably certainly intended for use during the Midsummer and St John's Day celebrations. The quality is not outstanding and given the date of production it was probably made for export in one of the major Italian cities. Maiolica is type of clay pottery, painted with vibrant colours and glazed with a tin-based compound, usually associated with 16th century Italian workshops. These Italian centres were influenced by Moorish wares imported from southern Spain in the mid-15th century. (Maiolica is a corruption of the word Marjocan, as these ceramics came to Italy from Spain via the island of Majorca). This design is copied from an Italian source of

the 1570s and the central image shows a young St. John the Baptist. We know this is John, despite the feminine figure, by the thin wooden crucifix. This depiction of the saint emerging from the river Jordan was made popular by Leonardo da Vinci in the early 1500s.

The figures around the edge are 'grotesques' as seen in Raphael's famous renditions in the Vatican, as well in numerous Renaissance pattern books; they consist of part human part animal forms, entwined with plants. The foliage, rudimentary in draughtsmanship, resemble various seed-headed plants, possibly the herb mugwort – the 'Dian's bud' of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The conjunction of the midsummer celebrations with the Feast of St. John the Baptist makes the use of these folkloric and Christian elements likely. In Shaksepeare's play, Oberon uses mugwort to restore conjugal relations amongst the plays' couples, and not least between himself and Titania. Mugwort is also known as St. John's Plant, and was traditionally used to cure eye conditions and restore sight. Cures or spells associated with vision abound at this time – collecting seeds in dishes at midnight was thought to induce a vision of one's future love. As a piece of dining ware, we can imagine this dish being passed around, cupped in the palms of both hands around the central foot, and offered to guests. Dishes like this were often moulded to create the impression they held fruit or nuts. The moulding here is not specifically shaped into any foodstuff, but it has been crafted so as to give it an organic texture.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 2005-18 A late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century Iznik polychrome dish, superior quality and craftsmanship, from Ottoman Turkey. Maiolica dish with St John the Baptist and 'midsummer' decorations, SBT 1993-31/280 – A dish of superior quality, but probably also made for the North European market. References: T.F. Thiselton Dyer, *Folk-lore of Shakespeare*, (1883); Tim Wilson, *Mailoica: Italian Ceramics in the Ashmolean Museum*, 1989; Bernard Rackham, Catalogue of Italian Maiolica, 2 Volumes, HMSO 1977. Examples from Material Culture: For similar exports, see John L. Cotter, *New Discoveries at Jamestown: Site of the First Successful English Settlement in America*; http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O161135/dish-urbini-francesco/; http://www.ashmolean.org/ash/objects/makedetail.php?pmu=371&mu=372&gty=brow&sec=&dtn=25&sfn=Title&cpa=3&rpos=66

Surrey/Hampshire borderware, a costrel

Place of origin: Surrey, Hampshire border

Date: c. 1600-1700, with modern repairs

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Ceramic

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31/286

Keywords: dining ware, middling-sort, ceramics, portable, storage.

In the late 16th and early 17th centuries, potters on the Surrey/Hampshire border were well known for their vast range of durable and practical dining-ware, which was elevated by a pleasing green-glaze on the upper surface. These vessels were used by the middling-sort, but orders made by the prestigious Inns of Court in London, primarily for drinking vessels, suggest that this style was also favoured by the rising urban elites for their everyday use. By the mid-16th century, the industry had expanded, producing a variety of forms, such as bowls, costrels, and chafing-dishes. Excavations in London suggest that this style was widely used in the home. Later, different coloured glazes were introduced (including olive and browns), as well as a clear finishes, which took on a yellow tinge over the traditional white ground or fabric.

The fine clays of the region produced a very light, almost white finish after firing, but their principal virtue lay in throwing and decoration. The clay could easily be formed to reproduce the angular contours of German pottery, which was highly prized and regularly imported, and together with the application of vibrant green glazes, this indigenous English product could appease, to some extent, the desire for colour and surface texture seen on Italian maiolica, or for a more direct parallel, the coloured earthenware of Spain and France (See Related Objects).

Vessels used for cooking, such as porringers, could be placed directly onto the embers of a fire, however London-based studies suggest that 60% of border-ware finds display no blackening – suggesting that they were used primarily in dining rather than cooking.

This item was previously thought to be French, however comparisons with a cache of recently excavated border-ware in the Museum of London strongly suggest that it is English (see Examples). The neck has been replaced with another similar sized spout and is probably modern, as is the leather strap. Costrels were given raised lugs on the upper sides of the 'belly' in order to be suspended – the form developed from the pilgrim's flask of the medieval period. They were probably used to store thin beer, whilst the owner was on the move, but this example could stand on the table during meals.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 2005-18 A late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century Iznik polychrome dish, from Ottoman Turkey. / SBT 16 **'Maiolica' style dish, cheaply produced for English market /** SBT 1993-31/455 a French costrel, c. 1500, with curious partial yellow glaze, copied by English borderware potters / References: Bernard Rackham, "The virtues of English pottery", *E.C.C. Transactions*, vol. 2, no.7, 1959, pl. XXIVc and p. 102; Jacqueline Pearce and Alan Vince, *A Dated Type-Series of London Medieval Pottery. Part 4: Surrey Whitewares*, Museum of London, 1988, fig. 38. Examples from Material Culture: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O70266/jug-unknown/ http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/ceramics/pages/subcategory.asp?subcat_id=706&subcat_name=Surrey%2FHampshire+border+ware&page=13

An Italian cedarwood chest

Place of origin: Italy, (Adige, Venice, possibly).

Date: c. 1600

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Cedar, carved (intaglio), penwork, ink, iron.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31/340

Dimensions: 185 cm x 55 cm

(when closed).

Keywords: Imported goods, cassone, smell, touch, marriage items, textiles.

A large cedar wood chest. The front panel is decorated with a central scene of a fountain with three levels, and with six roundels: at the top, two winged men riding lions; in the centre, two birds of prey; at the bottom, two pairs of lovers. Scenes either side evoke an arched portico with figures within, and a seascape with galleons. These designs were undoubtedly enriched with penwork (i.e., inking together with punched incisions), but the draughtsmanship has faded. Inside, the penwork is much more vivid. Two Italianate soldiers flank two scenes of hunting and courtship. The fountain theme is continued in the central panel, between the applied iron cleats which stabilize the two planked lid.

The iconography is difficult to identify, perhaps mythological; the decorative designs are certainly inspired by Renaissance grotesques that were popular at this time. The exterior patina is very dark owing to photo-oxidation, some of the interior woodwork retains the golden hue of the cypress that would have appealed to the sixteenth century buyer. The negative space of the frontal designs have been incised or cut away, known as *intaglio* work. Damage: lock has been removed, faded inkwork.

Chests of this type used cedar or cypress wood, partly because it was easy to carve the shallow reliefs in the soft wood, but also because the process of carving release the natural scent of the material. This chest was probably an elite status object, used for storing hangings, clothing and linens. *The Taming of the Shrew* notes the 'cypress chests' containing 'arras, counterpoints, costely apparel, tents, and canopies, fine linen, Turkey cushions ... pewter and brass, and all things that belong to house of house-keeping' . The smell of the wood dispersed into the room, but also scented the contents; it was also thought to repel moths.

Penwork cypress or cedar chests were often given as bridal chests; custom made pieces often carry the initials of the betrothed. This example carries no such marks, and the rather conventional scenes and decorative schemes used here suggest that it was made for general export; they appear in numerous early modern inventories. It is yet another example of the English reliance on imported designs and products in this period.

Related objects from the collection: Other marriage items including SBT 1868 3 903, a cutlery case; SBT 1992-86, A sweet bag; SBT 1994-82, A herb burner. References: A chest like this was listed in a 1626 Inventory of Cockesden (see P. Thornton, 'Two problems', Furniture History, 1971, p. 68). See also Charles Tracy, *Continental Church Furniture in England*, Woodbridge, 2001, pp. 142-157. Examples from Material Culture: A small cedarwood chest, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O135902/chest-on-stand-unknown/

Amphora

Place of origin: France?

Date: c. 1500?

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: ceramic, glaze.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31/455

Keywords: ceramic, boiling, cooking, storage, apotropaic object.

This object, despite prolonged analysis, continues to evade clear categorization. It is a large ceramic vessel of amphora/rounded baluster form (round bellied), with a circumference of 250mm rising to a narrow 30mm lip. The pinched lugs moulded with fingertip decoration are reminiscent of coxcombs. These lugs have two pierced holes, and were probably for suspension. The top of the item has a swirl of yellow glaze, whilst the majority of the belly remains unfinished, the fabric is grey worn ceramic. A large chip scars the face, with evidence of cracking in other external regions. There is extensive evidence of blackening from use on open fire on the base. The base is worn smooth with splashes of glaze visible, probably remnants of hot glaze on kiln shelf.

Previously referred to as a 'costrel', this object problematizes the relationship between name and thing. A comparable item (with yellow glaze over green body) dates from 19th century France, and is called a costrel. The large handles are in keeping with its supposed use as a wine jar. This item however has 'costrel' lugs for suspension, but is at least twice the size of any of extant sixteenth century examples. The word *costrel* derives from the Middle French word *costier*, suggesting the manner of wearing such items from the side or 'rib' (*coste* = rib). Costrels are usually associated with carrying liquids from the belt as a flask; but this is clearly too large and heavy; in addition it has been used for heating as well as storing fluids. The holes for suspension are puzzling, for the massive weight of the item when full must have worn even the strongest leather straps. It is reasonable to assume therefore that the coxcomb lugs are ornamental – similar 'pinched' decoration can be seen on ancient (Etruscan) pottery – and possibly symbolic (i.e., the coxcomb is highly visible among late-medieval sexual signs/amulets).

The ratio between the voluminous belly and the tiny spout discounts the item as a kind of pitcher, as it would of proved far too cumbersome to handle. Its ovi-form and size are paralleled by mid-sixteenth century Italian drug jars, but the form suggests a vessel for storing large quantities of liquids. It may have been used in some sort of fermentation or distillation process.
If the item is indeed sixteenth century, it is extremely rare, and sits at an interchange between smaller late-medieval amphora-form objects (imbued with paraliturgical powers, such as ampullae and pilgrim badges), and larger, durable, mass-produced storage items that were appropriated for popular rituals in the early modern period (i.e., Bellarmine jars). Carbon-dating of the fabric and glaze, as well as analysis of the residues inside may provide a more accurate categorisation.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31, a celebratory bartmannkrug, or communal drinking vessel. References: For a 'Tudor Green' costrel see, http://www.robertfinan.co.uk/April2002_f.htm#ceramics; for the 19th c. example see http://www.crescentcityauctiongallery.com/7.23.11.asp?searchc=701, lot 702. Rackham, Bernard, "The virtues of English pottery", E.C.C. Transactions, vol. 2, no.7, 1959, pl. XXIVc and p. 102.; Roberta Gilchrist, Medieval Life, (2012); George Ewart Evans, The Pattern Beneath the Plough, (1968); Ralph Merrifield, The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic, (Batsford: 1987); Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (Weidenfeld and Nicholson: 1971).

A tapestry panel, perhaps a cushion cover or table carpet, depicting scenes from the life of Joseph

Place of origin: England, Warwickshire (possibly?)

Date: c. 1560-1600

Artist/Maker: attributed to 'Sheldon Workshop', but without provenance

Materials and Techniques: Wool, 22 warps per inch.

Museum Number: SBT 1993 31/299

Dimensions: L. 99cm H. 55cm

Keywords: 'Sheldon' workshop, tapestry, yeoman, middling-sort, Old Testament, William Gouge, servants.

A framed and glazed tapestry, stitched onto a modern blue backing. Central composition of three scenes from the life of Joseph (from Genesis 37 & 40), separated by two marble columns with hexagonal bases. In the first (left-hand) scene, we see the young Joseph sold into captivity, with two men in turbans; Joseph restrained by two men whilst four soldiers holding pikes form a background. In the second scene, Joseph rebuffs the temptations of Potiphar's wife, who tugs on his cloak as he attempts to leave the room. The third scene shows a bearded Pharoah, in a cloak, crown and bare-legged with boots, holding a sceptre. Top and bottom borders: vases with flowers, pears and pumpkins; shields with busts; in the top border a blank scroll sits beneath these heads, these were possibly meant exhibit the Bible verses from which these scenes are taken. In the top corners of the vertical columns we see arrangements of fruits and leaves (blue, green and red highlights) in vases sitting on top of cusions; below this, further vase and flower combinations, and at the bottom a nymph with fig-leaf garlands forms the centre-piece of a fountain which flows into a pond. This design may have covered a large cushion sitting on a long bench, settle, window seat, or bed. Cushion covers were smaller and cheaper than 'chamberings' i.e., large scale tapestry wall hangings, and probably formed the main output of most native workshops, who catered for the affluent middling-sorts in late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century England. Given the size of the piece, this may also be a table carpet. The attribution of 'Sheldon' to these woven pieces is largely due to twentieth century antiquaries who wished to chart a tradition of tapestry from the Arts and Crafts revival back to the early modern period. The 'Sheldon' workshop became a byword for a celebrated hand-made, English style.

This object is designed to be visible, decorative, but also instructive. The story of Joseph was edifying for young men making their way in the world, navigating the temptations of the flesh but also the spites of the powerful. For the early seventeenth century writer William Gouge however, the story of Joseph was particularly relevant for servants – Potiphar put trust in Joseph, made him the overseer of his house, and Joseph repaid him in both faithful service and by refraining to sleep with his wife. Similarly the bondage borne by Joseph in the first scene was seen by Gouge as a lesson in fortitude – servants should patiently bear the 'reproof and correction' handed to them, as 'Joseph patiently endured fetters… and imprisonment inflicted on him most unjustly'; 'buffeting' writes Gouge, by a 'froward master is to be borne', how much more so the 'lighter correction of a good and gentle master'.This object could therefore be seen, in the late sixteenth century Protestant household, as an opportunity for Bible-oriented reflection by both master and servant alike.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1992-7, Two tapestry cushion borders. References: William Gouge, *Of domesticall duties: eight treatises* (1622); Hilary L. Turner, http://www.tapestriescalledsheldon.info/index.html; Hilary L. Turner, *Sheldon Tapestry Research paper*, an unpublished correspondence with Ann Donnelly, formerly Curator of SBT Museum Collection, December 2001; Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household*, (Yale, 2010); Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes*, (Aldershot, 2005). Examples from Material Culture: Faith, Hope & Charity cushion cover, http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/starobject.html?oid=40258.

Surrey/Hampshire borderware, a dish

Place of origin: Surrey, Hampshire border

Date: c. 1595-1605

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Ceramic.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-19

Keywords: dining ware, middling-sort, ceramics, cooking.

This lipped bowl provides a glimpse into the world of mass-produced ceramics in the early seventeenth century. It has a lustrous deep-green glaze, uneven in places, and beneath this the creamy fabric can be seen. This item was first thrown on a wheel, trimmed (the potter's knife marks can still be seen on the underside) and then fired. Glaze was then poured into the fired vessel and swirled around to cover the surface. The speckling of green on the underside is probably from this process; the potter was careless and let the glaze splash onto other pieces. In addition, a small area of white on the lip of the bowl is possibly where the potter placed their thumb whilst applying the glaze. This bowl is quite heavy and so the potter was certainly both strong and dextrous to splay the fingers beneath and steady the bowl with the thumb whilst churning the liquid glaze inside. The streak of glaze on the underside suggests that a brush or similar implement may have been used to spread the glaze evenly around the lip of the bowl.

The small brown marks, and the general streaking is due to the high iron content of the glaze. Later seventeenth century glazes were more evenly mixed and eliminating this kind of marking. As a result, the piece can be dated to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century.

This bowl is one of a number of border-ware vessels in the collection. They were both utilitarian and attractive, providing a splash of colour to the table, although border-ware was often used to cook directly upon the embers of the fire (see the blackening on other examples). This bowl is in fantastic condition and was either a prized object or rarely used.

The application of green glazes was probably seen by contemporaries as an 'indigenous' English style that had its antecedents in 'Tudor green' and earlier 'Mill Green' types. This may explain the frequency of border-ware finds in seventeenth century English colonies in the West Indies and America.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 2005-18 A late sixteenth or early seventeenth-century Iznik polychrome dish, from Ottoman Turkey. / SBT 16 'Maiolica' style dish, cheaply produced for English market / SBT 1993-31/455 a French costrel, c. 1500, with curious partial yellow glaze, copied by English borderware potters / References: Bernard Rackham, "The virtues of English pottery", *E.C.C. Transactions*, vol. 2, no.7, 1959, pl. XXIVc and p. 102; Jacqueline Pearce and Alan Vince, *A Dated Type-Series of London Medieval Pottery. Part 4: Surrey Whitewares*, Museum of London, 1988, fig. 38; 2000, Barrett, Jason and Madeleine Donachie, Borderware at Port Royal Jamaica, World Wide Web, URL, http://nautarch.tamu.edu/PROJECTS/PR-project/border/index.htm, Nautical Archaeology Program, Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas. March 14, 2001. Examples from Material Culture: http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O70266/jug-unknown/; http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/ceramics/pages/subcategory.asp?subcat_id=706&subcat_name=Surrey%2FHampshire+border+ware&page=13

A tin-glazed pouring jug

Place of origin: Unknown (Westerwald?, Raeren, Germany?)

Date: 1576 (from inscription)

Artist/Maker: E.VH? (from inscription)

Materials and Techniques: Stoneware, cobalt-blue applied designs, tin-glaze.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31/253

Dimensions: D. 17 cm (around belly, 5.5 cm mouth) H. 28 cm.

Keywords: domestic drinking, middling sort,

A Raeren-style stoneware jug. The surface has blue designs on a grey ground; the tin glaze produces a shiny reflective surface. Two rings around top; behind spout a coat of arms; Adam, Eve and possibly the Tree of Life on neck and eight lion-head masks; on the belly, a medallion with coat of arms and 'E.VH 1576', this is supported by lion on the right and griffon on the left, a design which is repeated on both sides. The foot has three blue rings. At the base of the spout, there is a grotesque bearded face. The spout handle and body have small applied flowers; spout has second strengthening attachment to rim – the spout shows signs of repair.   Around the rim, there is slight chipping and some blackening – this could have been from a metal cap which has been removed.

This has been described as a Raeren or Westerwald jug – but its origins are unclear. It has none of the stamped and incised relief moulding of these regions however, and the round belly is closer to Koln stoneware, whereas the tin-glaze and some of the motifs suggest mid-seventeenth century Delftware.

This is an early example of spouted stoneware that was beginning to be used by the middling-sorts in early modern Europe. Stoneware drinking vessels were favoured because they were both durable and non-porous, and could be cheaply manufactured despite their decorative schemes. This spouted jug is a variation of the Koln-based *bartmannkrug*, jugs or mugs with rounded bellies, collars or necks. This example bears a grotesque face, rather than the bearded 'wildman' or 'Bellarmine' face type seen on most *krugs* – the design shows an awareness of Renaissance prints, and probably reflects the influence of *Kleinmeisters* (or miniaturist engravers) such as Cornelis Bos, Abraham de Bruyn and Adrian Collaert. The motifs; the lions-head masks, the heraldry, and the Scriptural themes, strongly deviate from the folkloric and largely rustic themes on other types of the stoneware. In addition, the tin glaze provides a completely different feel – the light grey ground gives the impression of transparency, and the surface is glassy and almost slick to the touch. This is a jug designed for delicate pouring – an action that was in stark contrast with the majority of drinking-ware consumed by middling-sort clients at this time.

 This object coincides with the rise of domestic entertaining, or private drinking, in the second half of the sixteenth century, and may have been part of larger set of drinking apparatus, such as bowls, glasses, a glass-keep and linen napery.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31 275, A wall mounted glass-keep. SBT 1993-31/401, A celebratory bartmannkrug, for communal drinking; SBT 1993-31/274 A mid-17th-century wall-mounted cupboard, used for storing drinking glasses. This has an open compartment which may suggest it was used as a dole cupboard-come-dresser (see also Examples). References: Beatrix Adler, Early Stoneware Steins from the Les Paul Collection, (2005); Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life* (London, 2009); Adam Smyth (ed.), *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in 17th Century England*, (Woodbridge, 2004) Examples from Material Culture: A Westerwald spouted jug, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O160861/spouted-jug-unknown/; A Delft jug c. 1630, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O161546/jug-unknown/; See sales catalogue of Period Oak of Petworth, http://www.periodoakantiques.co.uk/product.php?id=1078, a carved oak spindle dole cupboard, c. 1650.

A chest, with carved panels depicting Lucretia, Mars and Judith

Place of origin: England (joined, possibly?), France (panels, carved)

Date: c. 1570

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: oak, panelled, mason's mitre, relief-carved.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31 268

Dimensions: L. 111cm H. 76cm

Keywords: joined, classical, Biblical, import, elite.

A late 16th-century oak chest; the cruciform panelled rectangular lid above a three-panelled front carved with figures of (left to right) Lucretia, who is shown driving a dagger into her chest; Mars?, in armour with long broad-sword (which is unusual in representations of him), helmet with raised visor (which is common); and Judith holding the head of Holofernes in her right hand and a sword in her left. The patina of the chest is ruby brown colour, with no traces of polychrome. This chest originally sat directly on the floor, and has subsequently been raised on a shaped apron, with four projecting feet. It is thought to be French, c.1575 – this largely due to comparisons with separate panels carved in France; new lipping to lid; lock plate and hinges replaced.

A common thread of narrative is difficult to apply to these classical, mythological and Biblical figures. The unifying character of Mars, the god of war, seems appropriate, as Lucretia's suicide precipitated a conflict which gave birth to the Roman Republic, and Judith's daring mission to kill Holofernes ended the Assyrian siege of Bethulia. It is perhaps enough to observe that collectively they display a knowledge of antiquity (predominantly Roman), moderated by Judeo-Christian tradition, principles that were inherent in the humanist learning of the period. The fashion of the figures is essentially classical, however the upper arms of the female figures have separate or slashed sleeves with rounded bulges of linen at the shoulders, a style favoured in the 1570s. The plate-pedestals which support the figures are beautifully carved, and are typical of Renaissance decoration. Again, these are essentially classical forms; however the globular moulding is reminiscent of the fashionable *facon de Venise* glassware of the late sixteenth century.

This object would have been appreciated for its superb craftsmanship as well as its learned subject matter when it was first placed into a prosperous home in the 1570s. As a piece of furniture and joinery it is exquisite. The four panels that make up the lid were a technical innovation that enabled domestic furniture to be lighter and more elegant in form, in contrast with the earlier boarded or planked chests which consisted of heavy slabs of wood. Panelling was widely used in elite homes of the sixteenth century; rooms were 'seyled' with wainscot or wooden panels to keep in warmth, and the furniture itself was often fashioned to merge in with the wainscot design (see Related Objects). Steadily these panelled pieces of furniture were embellished with chip-carved designs, or, as in this case, with sophisticated relief carvings of figures. The panels were probably carved separately (see Examples) and bought by joiners who constructed the piece. The construction of this chest could therefore be English.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31/437, An Elizabethan linenfold chest, with paneling made in England. References: Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition, A History of Early Furniture in the British Isles and New England*, (Woodbridge: 1980); Examples from Material Culture: A panel, carved both sides, with grotesques and linefold designs. http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O120056/panel-unknown/

A 'glass-keep', or wall-mounted drinking glass cupboard

Place of origin: England

Date: first half of the 17th century

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: fruit wood, mason's mitre joinery, carved moulding

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31 275

Dimensions: 670 mm (26.5 ins) x 740mm (29.25 ins)

Keywords: middling sort, drinking, communal/private, anacreontics, artisan, wine, salt, napery.

This wall-mounted cupboard, constructed in the first half of the seventeenth century, was used for displaying and storing drinking glasses. It has three shelves and a single central lattice door flanked by two immovable lattice windows. The lattice consists of (totally unique) diamond-section spars running horizontally and vertically. The base is comprised of three irregular pieces, which appear to be offcuts. The joinery is assured but relatively simple – stiles are fixed into rails via *mason mitre* joints, which by the mid-seventeenth century, had been surpassed by the *true mitre* in most workshops. Simple chip-carved moulding in the style of grape bunches adorns the casings, stiles and mullions. Primitive ovolo forms with shallow concentric circles also adorn the hinge stile in the door, and the base panel lip. Top and backboards have been replaced.

Whilst this is similar in form to some livery cupboards, the unusual diamond-section spars, the spacing of the shelves, and the grape decoration all strongly suggest

that this is a cabinet for drinking glasses, or in early modern terminology, a *glass keep*. Regional studies suggest that these items were relatively common from about 1580 up until the 18th century, and were favoured by prosperous merchants, tradespeople and craftsmen. The 'glass keep' is occasionally a box, but more often a free-standing or hanging cupboard situated in the hall or parlour (or sometimes the chamber). The parlour seems to have been the principle location for domestic entertaining away from the dinner table – a differentiated space equipped with the apparatus of conviviality: glasses, bowls, coolers, jugs or ewers, linen napery and perhaps a side-table beneath. In addition, some sort of salt-receptacle (a saltcellar or box) would have been nearby to help facilitate the cleaning or 'scouring' of glasses.

Whilst recent scholarship of drinking in early modern England has identified a body of contemporary literature that revels in non-partisan friendship and communal drinking in public (anacreontics, and particularly the poetry of Ben Jonson), items like this provide a glimpse into domestic drinking rituals, which perhaps reflect the growing dislike of communal (and compulsory) festivities and expressions of 'neighbourhood' identity.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31/274 A mid-17th-century wall-mounted cupboard, used for storing drinking glasses. This has an open compartment which may suggest it was used as a dole cupboard-come-dresser (see also Examples). References: Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition, A History of Early Furniture in the British Isles and New England*, (Woodbridge: 1980); Keith Thomas, *The Ends of Life* (London, 2009); David Butcher, *Lowestoft, 1550-1750: Development and Change in a Suffolk Coastal Town*, (Woodbridge, 2008); Adam Smyth (ed.), *A Pleasing Sinne: Drink and Conviviality in 17th Century England*, (Woodbridge, 2004) Examples from Material Culture: See sales catalogue of Period Oak of Petworth, http://www.periodoakantiques.co.uk/product.php?id=1078, a carved oak spindle dole cupboard, c. 1650.

A cushion cover depicting the Elders before Daniel

Place of origin: England, Warwickshire (possibly?)

Date: c. 1560-1600

Artist/Maker: attributed to 'Sheldon Workshop', but without provenance

Materials and Techniques: Wool, 16/17 warps per inch.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31304a

Dimensions: 505 mm x 505 mm

Keywords: 'Sheldon' workshop, tapestry, yeoman, middling-sort, Old Testament, sexual imagery, piety, domestic space.

This is the fifth in what would have been a six-part set depicting the Apocryphal story of Susanna and the Elders. The border has a crimson background, with caryatid figures bearing trophies of fruit, with fruit, vegetables, and flower embellishment around them. Susannah, the wife of a rich merchant, rejected the advances of two Elders, who threatened to accused her of adultery unless she agree to sleep with them. She refuses and is charged, before Daniel intervenes. Here we see one of the Elders brought before Daniel, himself an Elder despite his youth; sitting upon a dais, with a blue draped fabric behind him; he wears a red robe and tunic; two soldiers guard the pleading Elder, who wears red and blue. A third soldier guards the entrance to the audience chamber, separated from the exterior by a white balustrade. The second Elder, standing amongst a crowd awaits the verdict.

Probate inventories suggest that cushions were displayed in the larger rooms of the house, often in seating areas where guests could appreciate them. A complete set of six cushions were probably arranged so that they were read sequentially, so a large space was needed to display them properly. The combination of form, and risqué subject matter – the Elder's spy upon Susannah whilst she bathes, before propositioning her – make this object part of a set of luxurious, and therefore, problematic, furnishings for the pious Protestant household. Unlike the large or 'long' cushions (usually 100cm long), this 'short' cushion could be easily stored away depending on the company. The more suggestive scenes could be kept out of sight around children or servants for example. A full set of Susannah cushions can be seen in the Burrell Collection, and are near exact copies but for their emphasis on hunting scenes as opposed to fruit and caryatid borders.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1992-7, Two tapestry cushion borders. References: Hilary L. Turner, http://www.tapestriescalledsheldon.info/index.html; Hilary L. Turner, *Sheldon Tapestry Research paper*, an unpublished correspondence with Ann Donnelly, formerly Curator of SBT Museum Collection, December 2001; Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household*, (Yale, 2010); Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes*, (Aldershot, 2005). Examples from Material Culture: Susannah going to the bath, cushion cover, http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/starobject.html?oid=40273.

A cushion cover depicting Susannah on her way to execution
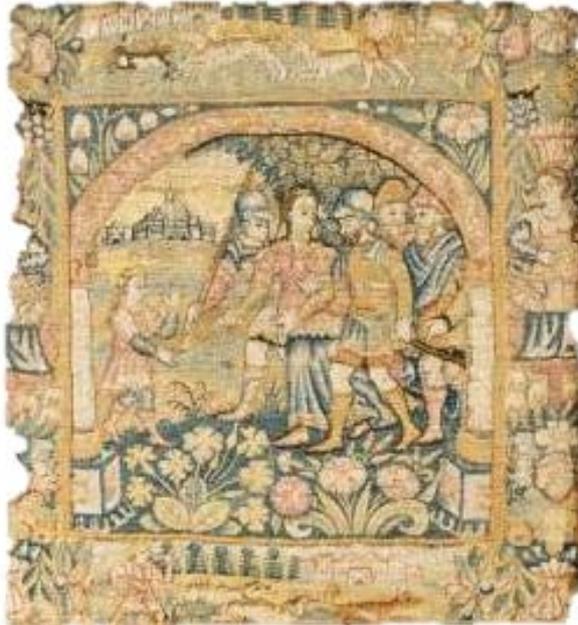
Place of origin: England, Warwickshire (possibly?)

Date: c. 1560-1600

Artist/Maker: attributed to 'Sheldon Workshop', but without provenance

Materials and Techniques: Wool, 16/17 warps per inch.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31 304b

Dimensions: 505 mm x 505 mm

Keywords: 'Sheldon' workshop, tapestry, yeoman, middling-sort, Old Testament, sexual imagery, piety, domestic space.

This is the fourth in what would have been a six-part set depicting the Apocryphal story of Susanna and the Elders. The border has a crimson background, with caryatid figures bearing trophies of fruit, with fruit, vegetables, and flower embellishment around them. Susannah, the wife of a rich merchant, rejected the advances of two Elders, who threatened to accuse her of adultery unless she agree to sleep with them. She refuses and is charged, before Daniel intervenes. Here we see Susannah escorted under armed guard toward her execution, with the Elders following. Similar caryatids and vases with flowers adorn the vertical borders, whilst hunting scenes depict hare-coursing and fox hunting in the upper and lower horizontal borders.

Probate inventories suggest that cushions were displayed in the larger rooms of the house, often in seating areas where guests could appreciate them.

A complete set of six cushions were probably arranged so that they were read sequentially, so a large space was needed to display them properly. The combination of form, and risqué subject matter – the Elder's spy upon Susannah whilst she bathes, before propositioning her – make this object part of a set of luxurious, and therefore, problematic, furnishings for the pious Protestant household. Unlike the large or 'long' cushions (usually 100cm long), this 'short' cushion could be easily stored away depending on the company. The more suggestive scenes could be kept out of sight around children or servants for example. On this cover, the hunting scenes (reminiscent of SBT 1992-7) suggest that this was not part of the set that included SBT 1993-31 304b. A full set of Susannah cushions can be seen in the Burrell Collection, and this example appears to be closer to this workshop in terms of iconography.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1992-7, Two tapestry cushion borders. SBT 1993-31 304b, The Elders before Daniel. References: Hilary L. Turner, http://www.tapestriescalledsheldon.info/index.html; Hilary L. Turner, *Sheldon Tapestry Research paper*, an unpublished correspondence with Ann Donnelly, formerly Curator of SBT Museum Collection, December 2001; Tara Hamling, *Decorating the Godly Household*, (Yale, 2010); Edwards, *Turning Houses into Homes*, (Aldershot, 2005). Examples from Material Culture: Susannah going to the bath, cushion cover, http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/starobject.html?oid=40273.

Susannah and the Elders

Place of origin: Antwerp?

Date: 1550s

Artist/Maker: Attributed to Frans Floris (Flores), c. 1519-1600.

Materials and Techniques: oil on oak board, gilt frame

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31 315

Dimensions: 440mm x 570mm

Keywords: Panel painting, nudity, allegory, classicism,

A small, mid sixteenth-century painting, attributed to Frans Floris; depicting Susannah and the Elders. Susannah clasps her before her in a praying position; she is dressed in white diaphanous gown, and a diagonally striped robe trimmed with ermine; a headdress with pearls sits high upon her head. She is seated on stone steps, which probably lead down to the bath from which she has emerged. The elders: the fair-headed man on left has a long beard and moustache, a pinkish jerkin, and red cloak which is thrown over his right shoulder and fastened at right side of waist, his left hand is placed on Susannah's shoulder. The man on right wears an olive jerkin over red shirt tied at waist, red material draped over right shoulder in folds behind him with left hand resting on them. The background is a knot-garden, subdivided into rectangular sections with English/French *parterres*. This is bordered by a bower-walk of trained shrubs. The two figures exiting the garden are probably Susannah's maids – dismissed from her whilst she bathed. Beyond the bower-walk, a building and cupola tower can be seen. Beside Susannah on the stone step is a glass goblet and rope of pearls, or pearl rosary. Susannah and the left-hand Elder are framed by a wall with a projecting column – atop this sits a tortoise (just

above Susannah's head) which appears to be spitting water at the Elder on the right. The frame is original, and elaborately moulded with gilt. The recto of the panel is a single piece, plain, showing no signs of splitting or truncation.

This painting has been attributed to Frans Floris of Antwerp. This is based on stylistic comparative analysis and is far from conclusive. Numerous subjects of this type have been credited to Floris, all of which are radically different in execution, composition and quality. It appears that paintings which lack provenance and depict nude subjects are generally attributed to the Floris's school, circle or followers. That being said, Floris has been described as a 'classically oriented' painter, and this conjecture is maintained by the composition – the figures are draped is antique garments, and the knot-garden draws upon what contemporaries would have seen as typically Italinate designs. The most bizarre aspect of the picture, the spitting tortoise, may allude to the reptile as a symbol of steadfastness and innocence – virtues which are entirely apposite in a scene where a women maintains her chastity and integrity despite the advances, threats and conspiracies of men.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31304a, The Elders before Daniel, cushion cover; SBT 1993 30, A *vanitas*, 'Death and the Maiden'. References: Todd M. Richardson, *Pieter Bruegel the Elder: Art Discourse in Sixteenth Century Netherlands*, (Farnham, 2011); John Dixon Hunt (ed.), *The Dutch Garden in the Seventeenth Century,* (1990) Examples from Material Culture: See Thomas Goddard Bergin & Jennifer Speake, *Encyclopedia of the Renaissance and the Reformation* (NY, 2004); for other works by Floris see www.scholarsresource.com/browse/artist/451.

An Elizabethan linenfold chest
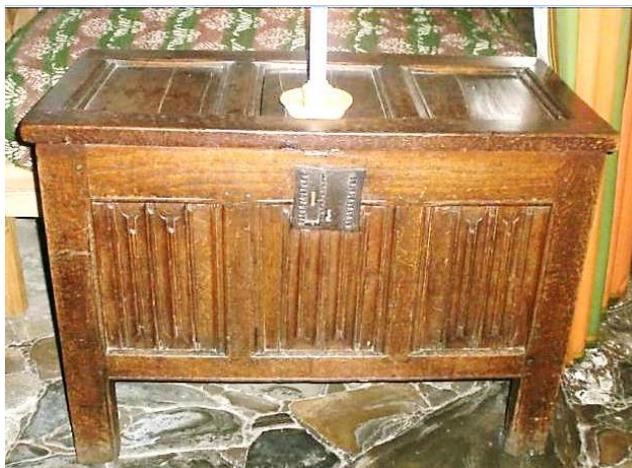
Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1580

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: oak, panelled, carved.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-31 437

Dimensions: L. 93 cm H. 67cm

Keywords: middling-sort, linenfold, panelling, storage.

A late 16th-century oak linenfold chest; the three-panelled rectangular top above three linenfold front panels; two-panelled ends raised on stile feet; English, c.1580; top panel split; lock plate replaced.

In contrast to the panelled and carved chest with classical figures (see Related Objects), this chest employs a linenfold design. This motif was common even in the mid fifteenth century, so at the time of this chests construction in 1580, it would have been considered old-fashioned. Linenfold carving gives the impression of folded cloth, and in some examples the hooks and edgings of textiles are included in the design. It was commonly used on 'wainscot' or wooden panelling on interior walls in homes throughout the sixteenth century. Pieces of furniture were joined using leftover panelling that 'seyled' the walls; and later the furniture itself was fashioned to merge in with the wainscot design (see Related Objects). It is possible that this object was made for a room that did not have panelling at all – in the same way that small tapestry cushion covers were bought by middling households who could not afford 'chamberings' or full scale tapestry wall coverings. Nevertheless, this chest shows signs of superior craftsmanship. The three plain panels that form the lid are joined by true mitres – a style of join that ensured the decorative moulding remained unbroken rather than ending abruptly at the corners. If the top is original, this chest would have fetched a decent price in the 1580s. We may speculate that this object was made for a relatively wealthy client who wanted a piece of traditional furniture with technologically advanced elements. The stile feet that raise the chest off the damp floor, suggest that the contents were susceptible to the elements – it may have stored books, papers, lighting equipment, or even linen.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31/268, A chest with figural panel carving, French and English. References: Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition, A History of Early Furniture in the British Isles and New England*, (Woodbridge: 1980); Examples from Material Culture: A panel, carved both sides, with grotesques and linefold designs. http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O120056/panel-unknown/

A 'pair of bodies', c. 1620s

An embroidered 'pair of bodies', or bodice, about 1610. *Construction* - is made of fine linen; the front embroidered with gold braided-stitching forming scrolling branches, terminating in leafy tips in shades of green, yellow and pink silks. The background is sewn with silver spangles or sequins (many missing); laced up back, with hook fastenings at the front. The gold braiding for the branches finishes at a vertical angle just below the arm pit on both sides, this eventually runs into the blank linen panel at the back. Some slight soiling on the back and forearms. Restored in 1993, by Katherine Barker, St. John's House Museum, Warwick.

The seventeenth century term, a 'pair of bodies', describes the two-part construction of the garment: the elaborate front piece, heavy with embroidery, and the plain back panel, where the linen ground is left blank. The two are attached by silk ties, and at the front, small iron fasteners. Remarkably, the fabric of the garment is entirely original – only some of the sequins have been replaced. At first inspection, the garment appears to be

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1620s

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Linen, embroidered with coloured silks, silver and silver-gilt thread

Museum Number: SBT 1993-35

Keywords: elite, fashion, embroidery, customization.

unfinished. The braiding finishes below the pit of the arm, although green thread continues the outline of the branches. Hemwork at either side ends in roughly the same place. This however is part of the design. This bodice was designed to be worn with a long sleeveless open jacket, as in the portrait of Margaret Layton by Marcus Gheeraerts (c. 1620).

The Layton Portrait is essential to understand this bodice. Layton's garment was custom made in 1610, but was transformed into an entirely new outfit by the time Margaret sat for Gheeraerts in 1620. In that time, fashions had changed, favouring a higher waistline – this was managed by pulling a petticoat high over the 'peplum' and pairing it with a long open black jacket. In line with current trends, the owner of the SBT bodice ordered a high-waisted garment – this can be seen in the ratio between sleeves and length of front, which is very small compared with the Layton bodice. The short bodice was then worn with a long jacket which completely covered the plain back, the unstitched hem and panels. It is therefore a work of high fashion dating from the 1620s, and a work of economy, as the expensive braiding was dispensed with in areas that the wearer knew would not be on display.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1994-31, A blackwork embroidered coif; SBT 1992-2, Kid gloves with embroidered pattern References: Hart, Avril and Susan North. Historical Fashion in Detail The 17th and 18th Centuries. London: V&A Museum, 1998; Nevinson, J.L. 'English Embroidered Costume, Elizabeth and James.' The Connoisseur, CDXII, January 1936; For more on pinning and "painful prickings", see Jenny Tiramani, 'Pins and Aglets', in Hamling and Richardson, eds. *Everyday Objects*, Ashgate, 2010. Examples from Material Culture: Marcus Gheeraerts, *Portrait of Margaret Layton*, oil on panel, c. 1620. http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O11095/jacket-unknown/.

A collection of needlework slips

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1500-1700

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: wool and silk on linen ground, (modern damask background). Tent, rococo stitch.

Museum Number: SBT 1993-69

Dimensions: Slips of various sizes.

Keywords: embroidery, customization, wall hangings, prints, curtains.

A collection of thirty-one sixteenth and seventeenth-century English needlework slips; worked in coloured silks and wools; depicting vines, butterflies, birds and flowers; applied to a modern cream damask panel.

These slips are worked in wool and silk into linen canvas, and were then cut from their linen ground to produce individual designs. They depict numerous flowers; columbine, dog rose, rose hip, daffodil, primrose, carnation, hawkbit, as well as small representations of caterpillars, butterflies, moths and birds. The slips are mostly tent stitched. The colours are exceptionally good, and many of the slips appear unused.

The nomenclature for these objects reveals a lot about the practice of embroidery and the wider interests of their makers. The word *slip* is used to describe both the embroidered flower and plant, nearly always depicted attached to a stem with foliage, and the gardeners' practice of taking cuttings. In horticulture, cuttings were potted up to form a new plant, whereas in needlework, the maker's desire for variety and intricate detail often resulted in two completely different flowers emerging from the same stem. In this way, gardeners and needleworkers 'grafted' plants and designs together. Popular reading habits among women reveal a keen interest in treatises on gardening and new developments in botany. These embroidered motifs were cut from the linen ground and transplanted to other surfaces such as wall hangings, curtains, and clothes, again mimicking the cutting, drying, and display of flowers (a posy) to beautify the home.

Needlework pieces often focused on Biblical subject-matter, usually copied from imported prints. Original prints that survive and their needlework counterparts reveal the extent to which women altered or modified these exemplars – often embellishing the image with slips like these (See Examples, References, particularly Susan Frye).

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1992-86, An embroidered sweet-bag, with floral designs. SBT 1992-2, A pair of kid gloves with embroidered flowers. References: Thomasina Beck, *Gardening with Silk and Gold*. (London, 1997); Susan Frye, *Pens and Needles: Women's Textualities in Early Modern England*, (Philadelphia, 2010); Melinda Watt & Andrew Morrall, eds. *English Embroidery from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1580–1700: Twixt Art and Nature*. (New Haven,2008); Anthony Wells-Cole, *Art and Decoration in Elizabethan and Jacobean England: The Influence of Continental Prints, 1558–1625*. (New Haven, 1997); Examples from Material Culture: The Tree of Life, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/64.101.1305; Life of Abraham, after the print by Gerard de Jode (discussed by Frye), http://www.metmuseum.org/Collections/search-the-collections/120046696?rpp=20&pg=1&rndkey=20120930&ft=*&what=Canvas%7cNeedlework&who=Gerard+de+Jode&pos=1

A bible box and stand

Place of origin: England

Date: 1580-1630

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: oak, scratch-carved, iron lock (later addition).

Museum Number: SBT 1994-22

Dimensions: H. 26cm L. 41cm W. 37cm

Keywords: Bible, apotropaic, literacy, display, education.

The box/desk is very light, being made of thinly sawn oak panels, and would have been considerably lighter when it was first fashioned due to a large iron lock and plate addition in the eighteenth century. The patina of the sloping lid is curious. The wood around the iron hinges has, unsurprisingly, oxidized, but this has continued separately in the central part of the lid, near the ledge at the bottom. Elsewhere the surface is smooth and retains some of its near-original buff colour. This oxidization does not stem from the iron fixings of the ledge – these have been hammered from the inside. The patina reflects many years of constant use, and long periods of contact with metallic fixings on the surface of the lid. The ledge is not in keeping with the simple chamfered edging and scratch carving of the front. Neither is the ledge ergonomically suited – whilst it is perfect for annotating open books, it would hindered the act of writing straight onto paper.

It is widely held among furniture historians that bible boxes – flat, chest-like receptacles commonly used to store the family bible – developed into writing desks during the seventeenth century. However, surviving examples clearly show us that elite clients were using writing desks long before this. The transformation of the Bible, especially the family Bible, into an object of religious reverence and social importance in the domestic sphere, was only just underway when writing desks were in favour.

This object, led two 'lives' during the early modern period, and helps us to glimpse at the reorientation towards the Word of God that took place in the household. Its original function was as a writing desk, probably constructed in the 1580s when scratch-moulding would have been a relatively acceptable decorative element for a literate client. Since then, perhaps the mid-seventeenth century, it has been customized into a bookstand, almost certainly for a Bible. The thick scrolled ledge probably replaced a thinner one that was widely used on most sixteenth century writing desks (see Examples). The areas of oxidization were probably caused by (the well-documented, but poorly represented) metallic clasps that secured family bibles in this period. In the seventeenth century, family bibles were a hugely important, being expensive investment pieces, records of family history and for some the very presence of the divine Word of God. An open Bible lying on a stand in a public room in a seventeenth century house was part of a wider desire to educate and edify the household, promoted by pictorial decoration, collective prayer and bible readings, and sometimes, by the mere presence of and proximity to Holy Scripture.

Related Objects from the collection: SBT ... A seventeenth century Bible box, SBT 1993-31 299, A tapestry with Biblical subject matter, aimed at servants References: David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order,* (Cambridge, 1980); *Natalie* Zemon Davies, 'Printing and the People', *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (London, 1975); Jennifer Anderson & Elizabeth Sauer (eds.), *Books and Readers in Early Modern England: Material Studies*, (Pennsylvania, 2002). See also portrait of Thomas Overbury, http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw194023/Sir-Thomas-Overbury. Examples from Material Culture: A bible box, c. 1680, with dragon motifs and owner's initials carve into face, http://www.periodoakantiques.co.uk/product.php?id=929. A 'bible box' or writing desk, with sloping lid, interior draws, initials on exterior and vine carved decoration, http://www.periodoakantiques.co.uk/product.php?id=254; An elite writing desk, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O79021/table-desk-unknown/.

A seventeenth century blackwork coif

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1600

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: textile , linen , gilt thread , silk

Museum Number: SBT 1993-30

Dimensions: L. 42cm W. 24 cm

Keywords: blackwork, wild flowers, female labour.

An early seventeenth-century coif cap; linen with blackwork embroidery (flowers) in silk thread and gilt thread embroidered coiling stems and stamen detail (plaited braid, chain and knot stitches). The iconography includes: columbine, rose hips, flowering rose, pea, foxglove, hazelnuts and wild strawberries. This coif is one of the finest examples of blackwork embroidery seen in England. A series of black threaded petals, leaves and stamen are unified by curling and twisting coils of silver and gilt thread, which terminate in beautifully observed wildflowers, including columbine, rose hips, flowering rose, pea, foxglove, hazelnuts and wild strawberries. They decorate a coif, an informal cap worn by women. The high quality and intricacy of the design suggest that it was made by a professional Broders' Company, or embroiderers' guilds, which were established by Elizabeth I in the 1560s. Most coifs are the work of the intended wearer, however, and it is equally possible that this was sewn by a noblewomen, or member of the wealthy and leisured merchant classes.   Blackwork refers to the use of black silk thread on a white linen ground, and was thought to have been popularised in England by Catherine of Aragon; indeed these designs, seen on jerkins, hats, gloves and petticoats, were termed 'Spanish Work' by Tudor men and women. Although blackwork was an art-form associated with foreign regal style, it should also be seen as an expression of a long tradition of embroidery in England, which during the medieval period, revelled in realistic representations of animals, birds, flowers and foliage. The cap would have been worn quite high upon the head, with about two inches of hair visible. Sometimes an additional 'crosscloth' was worn over the top or underneath. In practice, coifs could be worn in a variety of ways, depending on the mood, occasion and desired effect. This coif shows signs of picking along the peak; it has been customized with trimming which was since been removed because of damage, or simply reused.

Coifs were both practical and symbolic. They kept the hair neat and provided warmth both in and outside the house. They also conveyed status. According to some early modern writers, it was appropriate, if not desirable, that single women should go bareheaded, and that their hair be worn long; hair cut above the collar was for some a sign of sexual immorality.   The coif was also something to be worn informally and in the domestic sphere. The coif also conferred modesty. Amanda Flather notes that in fights between women, the ripped coif pulled from the opponent's head was in itself an accusation of sexual disgrace. The wild strawberry, beautiful and sweet despite its tendency to grow among among worms and creeping plants, was perceived as being incorruptible, and symbolised honest female virtue. The symbolism of these flowers and fruits is hugely important to reading the meaning of these objects. William Gouge instructs women to walk with their heads inclined downwards, with 'a reverend carriage and gesture'. In the context of the home, where this coif would be worn, this would display the decoration to its full effect, the silver and gold thread absorbing and reflecting the light within the darkened interior.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1992-6 An embroidered cap, mid-17th century; SBT 1992 2 A pair of kid gloves References: William Phiston's *Schoole of Goode manners* (1609); William Gouge, *Domesticall duties* (1622). Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England*, (Rochester, NY: 2007). Catherine Richardson, Shakespeare & Material Culture, (Oxford, 2012) Examples from Material Culture: A seventeenth century coif, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O364613/womens-coif-unknown/;

A herb-burner

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1550-1600

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Earthenware

Museum Number: SBT 1994-42

Keywords: disease, miasma, herbs, huswifery.

A container for aromatic substances; earthenware with a dark brown mottled glaze. Two small applied loop handles; bowl has been punctured before firing with a twenty-four holes. A segment of the lip has broken off and been re-applied in crude repair.

The people of England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries lived through 'the era of urban plague epidemics'. London was the worst effected; the plague struck London parishes in 1578, 1593, 1603-10, 1625, 1636 and 1665. The disease was explained by contemporaries in Hippocratic terms, a healthy body was defined by the qualities of the soil, water and air that surrounded it. Contagion was thought to be caused by *miasmas*, invisible effluvia released from decaying matter – in this medical model anything foul-smelling was considered dangerous. In times of plague therefore, in addition to the confinement and separation of infectious people from the rest of the community, evil-smelling miasmas were countered with perfume. Pomanders, which had been used throughout the first half of the sixteenth century, were joined by sweet-bags, which were worn next to the body and/or placed in confined areas to scent and protect the environment. Another late-sixteenth century

development was the herb-burner, which were often simple steep-sided bowls with two handles, punctured with holes. Other surviving burners have shallower bowls on top of a cylindrical foot with a small aperture, designed for a candle or flame (see Examples).

This bowl is charred and blackened inside, suggesting that faggots of wood or coal were directly placed within, alongside the aromatic substance. Strong smelling frankincense was used by the rich, together with musk, civet, juniper, and bay-leaves. The civic authorities in London encouraged the used of brimstone; but most people used any herbs to hand, and often onions and garlic were burnt. Perfumes were in great demand during times of contagion. Thomas Dekker noted in 1603 that an armful of rosemary rose in price 12d. to 6 shillings in a matter of days.

The bowl would have been prepared, with large bunches of green herbs until it smoked profusely, and carried throughout the house and held up into the corners of rooms and under beds. In most households this sort of work would have been performed by the mistress of the house. Here, Hippocratic and Galenic medical knowledge combined with long-standing herbal tradition in the hands of the housewife.

Related objects from the collection: Bronze mortar, SBT 2003-39/2 – Mortar for crushing herbs etc for medicines/culinary purposes. Probably used in domestic setting considering its inscription 'MY HOP[E] IS IN THE LORD'; SBT 2001/5, A recipe chest, probably used by a noble or gentlewomen for keeping herbs, spices and recipes, all of which would have promoted good diet and good health. Urine flasks, SBT L1952-2 and L249n – 17th century. Uruscopy was the practice of examining the patients urine for symptoms of disease, used by physicians. References: Mary Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early modern England*, (Cambridge,); Holly Dugan, *The Ephemeral History of Perfume: Scent and Sense in Early Modern England*, (2011). Examples from Material Culture: A herb-burner found in Moorgate, London, late 16th century, http://www.heritage-images.com/Preview/PreviewPage.aspx?id=1191675&licenseType=RM&from=search&back=1191675&orntn=1.

# A late-medieval ark, with concentric circle apotropaic marks

Place of origin: Warwickshire, England

Date: Riven carcase c. 1350-1500; hinge mechanism, front lock plate, front plank of lid, replaced c. 1500-1600.

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Riven oak, clamped-board construction, iron lock.

Museum Number: SBT 1995-21
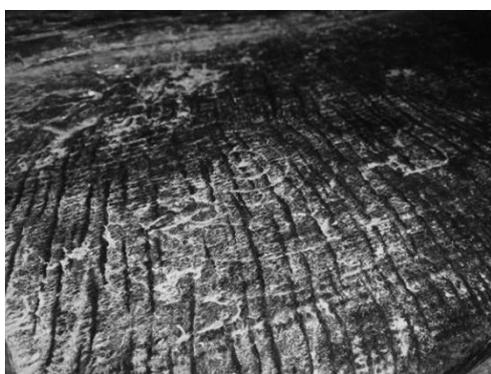
Keywords: apotropaic marks, boarded, bread-making, grain, household, 'huswife', repair, customization, local style.

This heavy clamp-boarded ark is constructed of riven boards. This suggests a very early construction, or an item built by a provincial craftsman with a limited access to tools. The canted lid has shaved cleats, and is hinged on wooden pivot-pins; the front is of clamped-board construction displaying the remnants of arched shaping to the feet and offset carved niche, possibly for an early strap lock. The front plank of the lid is faintly inscribed with eight concentric and eight overlapping circles; probably protectionist or apotropaic graffiti safeguarding the contents. This front plank is a sixteenth century replacement, as is the front board with lock plate, this may be early seventeenth century. The base boards have also been replaced.

Objects like this are usually called arks, but regional variations exist, such as binnes, hutches or coffers. Arks were heavily involved with the bread-making process, storing the grain, which when milled into flour was kneaded with other ingredients in the arched recess of the lid. Lids were lifted and overturned, and rested on the riven cleats. The wooden pivot-pins are therefore

contemporaneous with the front lock plate, as the offset carved niche, for a strap-lock, sealed the ark closed before hinges were added. Reasons for the modification are numerous – the owner may have wanted to keep the heavy chest for security, to store valuables; it may reflect changing living or food production habits, where less grain was required for the household; it may suggest a new owner.

The incised circles in the lid, 16 in total, can be dated quite surely to the front panel, lid and lock plate replacements of the late sixteenth century. The marks themselves are very lightly inscribed – like many other ritual marks they are difficult to see without raking light shone at an angle. A variation of the overlapping circles seen on this ark have been recorded on a sealed door at Harvington Hall in Worcestershire by Timothy Easton – these circles were possibly introduced to strengthen the threshold against evil spirits.

The concentric sequence is unusual, Easton records single circle and dot marks, but the repetition of circles eight times is undocumented. The concentric circle design is repeated, (but with sequences of three circles), on another object in the SBT's collection, a stool (see Related Objects). The ark and the stool, both of which carry provenance rooting them in the Stratford area (at least upon their accession in the 1860s), may reflect a local tradition of apotropaic mark-making.

Related objects from the collection: SBT ..., A 'witch stool', four legged stool with similar concentric circle decoration; SBT ... Cache of shoes found in Hall's Croft; SBT ... A daisy-wheel mark in the stair-well leading down to the cellar in the Birthplace. References: John Gaule, *Select cases of Conscience touching Witches and Witchcrafts*, (1646) pp. 78-9; Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (London, 1977); Timothy Easton, 'Scribed and Painted Symbols', in Paul Oliver (ed), *Vernacular Architecture of the World*, 1997/8 (four vols), CUP; Timothy Easton, 'Ritual Marks on Historic Timber', *Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Magazine*, Spring 1999, pp22-30; Examples from Material Culture: There numerous websites related to apotropaic marks, some are unreliable – http://www.apotropaios.co.uk, draws upon good scholarship. Ian Evan's site http://www.oldhouses.com.au/docs/ritual.html, provides a broader view; http://www.concealedgarments.org/ provides the best bibliography for ritual protection, plus an archive of concealed clothes and objects in England.

Stratford Corporation 'tenths' box, with graffiti
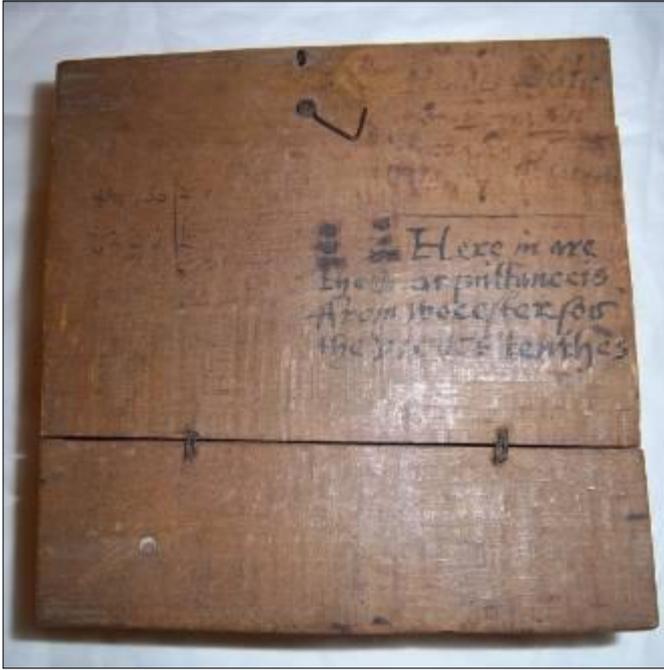
Place of origin: Stratford-upon-avon, (possibly, made)

Date: 1534-1600

Artist/Maker: Lawrence Abell (possibly), maker of the Cupboard of Boxes, and commissioned by the Stratford Corporation

Materials and Techniques: Oak, iron wire

Museum Number: SBT 1996 33/1, part of the Borough Collection

Keywords: Borough Collection, government, Stratford Corporation, , Reformation, taxation, first fruit and tenths.

This is a customized box used to store legal papers belonging to the Stratford Corporation. It is covered in ink 'graffiti' probably written by a late sixteenth century clerk of the Stratford Corporation. It is part of a new taxation device employed by the Crown as part of the Reformation. Up to 1534, the English clergy paid 'first fruits' or a annates to the papacy upon taking up an appointment to an ecclesiastical position. Subsequently, a tenth of their revenue was paid annually to the pope. In an ongoing attempt to assert his royal supremacy, and to fund wars in France, Henry VIII redirected these 'first fruits and tenths' to the Crown.

In large lettering on the top can be read: 'here in are the acquittanceis ffrom Wocester for the Vicars tenthes'. An acquitance is a receipt of payment, so this refers to receipts documenting the 'Vicar' or Bishop of Worcester's payment of tenths to Henry VIII. Minutes from Chamber meetings inform us that the Corporation had attempted to excuse their own vicar from payment of firstfruits in a petition to Elizabeth in 1593.

The box is made of thinly sawed oak planks, with iron loop and hook fastenings and iron wire hinges. Also on the lid are scrawls of grafitti including rough workings of a sum. This, and similar boxes, were part of a larger 'cupboard of drawers or boxes' made in 1595, to organize the documents handled by the Corporation in its increasingly important role in regional administration. These smaller stored the Corporation's most important documents. Others include a box for Mr. Oken's bequest of £40 for various good causes, including poor relief and for a learned preacher to visit the town once a year, and a box containing various deeds of land and annuities owned by the Corporation. Another box fragment, cut to similar thickness and bearing similar saw marks, bears the ink inscription 'for the chamber', indicating that boxes of this kind may have been regularly ferried between their storage position and Chamber meetings.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1992-86 'Cupboard of Boxes',— A large cupboard with draws in which these boxes were kept. SBT ... Bond box, This once contained 'bonds of consequence' as seen by graffiti. Bears branded key mark. References For first fruits see Diarmaid MacCulloch ed., *The Reign of Henry VIII: politics, policy and piety*, chapter 4. For theories of Tudor government see John Guy, *Tudor England*, chapter 6. Further relationship between box and specific Corporation activities can be researched in *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon*, Vols I-V, 1553-1598. (1921 onwards); see also R. Bearman's recent Volume VI (2011).

A 'bond box' with graffiti
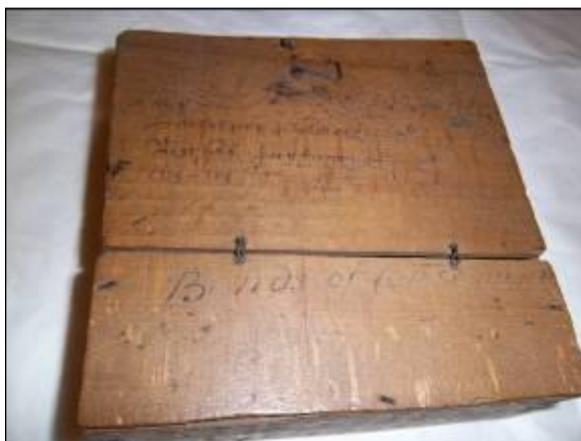
Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon (possibly, made)

Date: 1550-1600

Artist/Maker: Lawrence Abell (possibly), commissioned by the Stratford Corporation

Materials and Techniques: Oak, iron wire

Museum Number: SBT 1996 33 5, part of the Borough Collection

Keywords: Borough Collection, government, Stratford Corporation.

The box is made of thinly sawed oak planks, with iron loop and hook fastenings and iron wire hinges. It is part of set of four boxes of similar dimensions, clearly made by the same hand, probably that of Lawrence Abell, who also joined the 'cupboard of boxes' for the Corporation in 1595.

It is covered in ink 'graffiti' probably written by a late sixteenth century clerk of the Stratford Corporation. The legible description reads: 'the Bondes for Mr. Oken & Hugh Baker / there monie / Lawrence Palmer 10 / Nicholas Ingrham 10 / Hamlet Smyth 10 / Bonds of Consequence'.

The Oken bond was an important bequest for the Corporation. Oken gave £40 annually for various good causes, including poor relief and for a learned preacher to visit the town once a year. This money also paid for the Corporation members and preacher to enjoy a drink after the service.

This set of boxes stored the Corporation's most important documents. Other boxes include a 'tenths' box, which kept reciepts relating to the taxation of clergy in Worcester, and a box containing various deeds of land and annuities owned by the Corporation. Another box fragment, cut to similar thickness and bearing similar saw marks, bears the ink inscription 'for the chamber', indicating that boxes of this kind may have been regularly ferried between their storage position and Chamber meetings.

The other bonds probably relate to similar payments to the Corporation from various townsmen. Bonds could also be written agreements between men that bound them to specified obligations. If one man promised to perform a duty by a specific date and did not, he would owe a sum of money as penalty. The Corporation had an agreement that any member who spoke about Chamber business outside the Guildhall would forfeit their position and have to pay a fine. Bonds were also associated with kinship, i.e., to give each other loyal service, counsel and protection. These boxes give us an insight into the social structure of Tudor England. Bonds were essentially an ancient expression of loyalty between master and man, as well as being a 'legal ligament' binding two parties to their word, and holding both parties to account. Whilst bonds could be seen as a progression toward a fairer society where dealings between classes were refereed by the law, the sixteenth-century was nevertheless a period of personality politics where proximity to centres of power counted most. An efficient bureacracy did not suit the policies of most Tudor monarchs, the commonwealth was still thought to be best served by local magnates to whom the lesser ranks swore loyalty, and who in turn served the king. This is a complex object that reveals much about the changes in England during Shakespeare's time.

A carved doll

Place of origin: Unknown

Date: Unknown – possibly seventeenth century

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Walnut. Carved.

Museum Number: SBT 1996-43

Keywords: Toys, apotropaic, touch, fertility, concealed items, fashion.

Physical Description: A small female figurine carved in walnut wood, on an oval shaped block base. Figure appears to have short hair bound in a head-dress, with hands clasped to front and a necklace hanging low in the chest; wears a mid-calf length dress decorated with crescents. The hands, breasts, nose and back of head are all worn smooth.

This item is similar to another fermale figurine found in Chinnery (see *British Tradition*, Fig. 3:469), and could be have been carved by a furniture maker using an off-cut, perhaps to supplement his regular stock. Medieval children certainly played with doll's, known as *mawmets* or *mammettes*, *poppets* or *puppets*; this name was often prefixed with the place of manufacture. In Germany, the dollmaker was a specialised craft going back to at least the 1490s; Clauß Schach of Nuremburg carved wooden figures like this in the

sixteenth century, selling them in oval-boxes (see Examples section). William Turner wrote in his *Herbal* (1562) of the "little puppets and mammettes which come to be sold in England in boxes".

Short hair was preferable because it was easier to carve (see Examples section), and some dolls have been associated with apotropaic or evil-averting practices. One similar example was reputed to have been found behind panelling in a house in York (see Examples section and concealed items). June Swann has recorded finds of 'two dolls and a doll's eye', which were 'cemented into the centre of a gable of Upwood House built in 1578'. It has been suggested that this was to ward off the 'evil-eye'. The emphasised breasts on this figure is in keeping with figurines which are thought to symbolize, or magically enhance, fertility.

References: Victor Chinnery, *Oak Furniture: The British Tradition, A History of Early Furniture in the British Isles and New England*, (Woodbridge: 1980); Antonia Fraser, *A History of Toys, London*, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966; Nicholas Orme, 'The Culture of Children in Medieval England', in *Past and Present* No. 148, August 1995, pp. 48 - 88. Examples from Material Culture: A mid 17th century English carved oak doll, supposedly found behind panelling in York. http://www.periodoakantiques.co.uk/product.php?id=1077

An earthenware 'rose sprinkler' made by 'Jhon Legh'
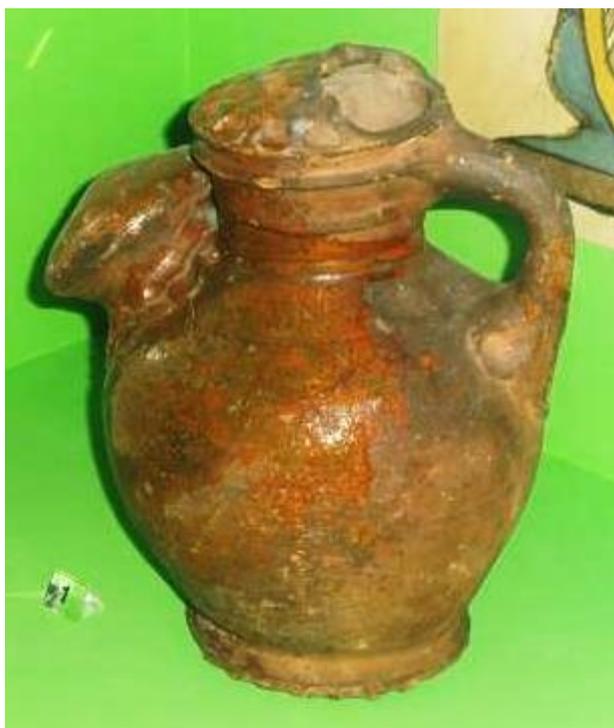
Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1500-1600

Artist/Maker: Jhon Legh (from inscription)

Materials and Techniques: earthenware, slip glaze.

Museum Number: SBT 1996-27

Dimensions: H. 29cm

Keywords: gardening, middling-sort, male-labour, leisure.

A watering jug/pot of earthenware. The sides carry patches of orange/green glaze – the rim and partially covered lid bear thumbed decoration, as does the rim on the base. It has a deep belly with a heavy reinforced applied loop handle, again with thumbed decoration. The 'rose' funnel sits on a short wide neck with thumbed grooving around. At some point the rose has broken off and been re-applied (glued?). Beneath the rose funnel, in a late-sixteenth century hand written into the wet clay can be read 'Jhon Legh' (written twice).

Earthenware watering pots changed little in the medieval period – they consisted of a narrow neck with a single hole in the top, a wide belly and a perforated base. They were plunged in a tub of water, filled and then the user placed their finger on the hole at the top, keeping in the air and providing a natural suction so the water didn't escape from the base. The pot was then carried around the garden, and the contents released over tender young seedlings and plants by taking the finger away from the hole. The second type, appears from around 1500, and is shown here. It is a 'rose sprinkler', so called for its rose-shaped funnel. This was filled from the top, and carried by a robust handle. In London, both types have been excavated, with the greatest concentrations of finds on the sites of the city's principal medieval gardens. In mid-late sixteenth century, the owners of small manor houses were expected to plan enclosed gardens using raised beds in geometric tubs, divided by pathways, and to devote some part of their ground to a 'knot' or 'knotted' garden, which consisted of a more abstract and complex section, made up of low lying plants, and beds of different coloured earths filled with ornamental flowers. These larger gardens were watered by pumping-tubs – a large wooden cask-like container with two tubes, one for pumping air in, and another which sprayed the water out through a perforated funnel. Another method for the small manor house garden was a series of trenches or irrigation channels that were routinely 'fed' from a pump.

The signature, and the thumb-print decoration on this pot is probably the maker's own - John Legh (Lee). We do not anything about him, and he does not appear in the Stratford parish records.   Although a pot like this would be useful in a large garden, it is reasonable to assume that Legh maintained a more manageable plot, as opposed to a large enclosed 'knot' which were watered in different ways.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-68, A collection of slips, denoting female horticultural knowledge. References: Rebecca Bushnell, Green Desire: Imagining early modern English gardens, (2003); Thomas Hill, A most briefe and pleasaunte treatise, teaching how to dresse, sowe, and set a garden, (1563); Anon, The Gardeners Labyrinth, Printed by Adam Islip (1594); Examples from Material Culture: http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/London-Wall/Whats-on/Galleries/medieval/objects/record.htm?type=object&id=744169; A watering pot of the 1500s, British Museum, see Bate & Thornton, Shakespeare: Staging the world, (London, 2012), fig. 17, p. 71.

Stratford Corporation box for keys, anuities and deeds
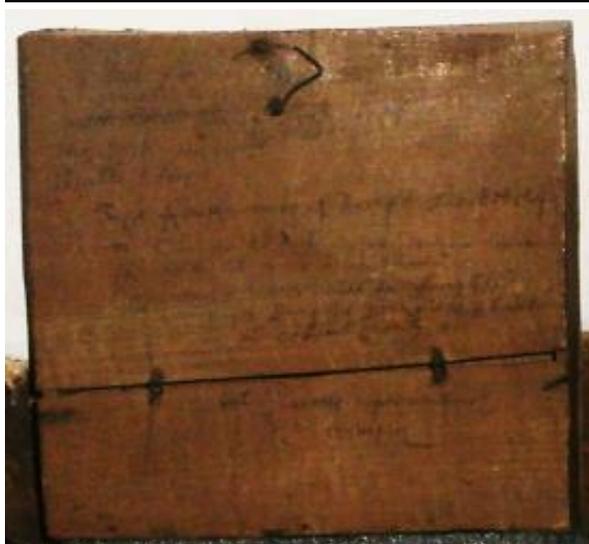
Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon

Date: c. 1595

Artist/Maker: Lawrence Abell (possibly), commissioned by the Stratford Corporation

Materials and Techniques: Oak, iron wire

Museum Number: SBT 1996-33 2

Keywords: Borough Collection, government, Stratford Corporation

The box is made of thinly sawed oak planks, with iron loop and hook fastenings and iron wire hinges. It is part of set of four boxes of similar dimensions, clearly made by the same hand, probably that of Lawrence Abell, who constructed the 'cubborde of boxes' (COB) for the Corporation in 1595 (see Related Objects).

It is covered in ink 'graffiti' probably written by a late sixteenth century clerk of the Stratford Corporation. The legible description reads: 'Dead Lane & the terrer of the lande in brigetownefelde', / 'Deedes of lande and anuities in the 6 wardes' / 'Keys belonging to the Long Box'.

The 'Long Box' refers to the muniment chest of the Gild of the Holy Cross (SBT Lt2). It was retained by the Corporation after the dissolution, and probably stood near the 'newe Cubborde of Boxes' on the ground floor. The keys are for the three locks of this massive elm chest. It is unclear what the Corporation kept in the long-box; the COB was not used to store monies, and as the 'Long Box' was suited to hold a small amount of coin, this function may have been retained. This small box does provide us with important evidence that the muniment chest and COB were important receptacles at the heart of the new administrative structure set up by the Corporation.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1996-33 1, 3, 5; Small boxes for deeds, bequests, keys; these items were stored with the cupboard and designed to be ferried between it and the Chamber. SBT 1996-33 4; a leather covered box, lined with printed book pages (c. 1580), probably used by an officer of the Corporation (constable or serjeant-at-mace) for collecting payments and issuing receipts ('aquittances') to residents. SBT 1868-3/1043.1 & SBT 1868-3/1043.2; two maces stored within the COB. SBT Lt2, The gild muniment and *tresor* chest. References: References: Levi Fox (ed.), *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, (Hertford: 1990); J. O. Halliwell, *A Brief Hand-list of the Records Belonging to the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon, Showing their General Character; With Notes of a Few of the Shakespearian Documents in the Same Collection* (1862).

A table carpet

Place of origin: England

Date: c. 1590-1620

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: oil on oak board.

Museum Number: SBT 1997-43

Dimensions: L. 175cm W. 90cm

Keywords: dining ware, embroidery, classical, English, middling-sort, tapestry.

Textiles provided much need colour in the early modern domestic interior. England had numerous workshops that produced small tapestries or embroidered cloths, which were put to use as bed valances, cushion covers, coverlets, slips used for personalised decoration, or table carpets. This object is certainly an example of the latter. The border consists of fruits such as lemons, apples and pears, peaking through dense foliage and flowers. The central panel consists of four foliate roundels, of strapwork surrounds, whose borders are embellished with feathered palmettes. The interiors of these roundels alternate. Two roundels recede, these contain classical vases and coloured flowers in pinks and orange (perhaps originally red). The two forward roundels have fruit trees, to the left a pear or quince, with what appears to be a white hound standing beneath it. The right hand roundel is a plum tree, with a squirrel beneath and a bird pecking the fruit. The themes here are evidently rooted in the natural world, and the piece may be considered unusual for its lack of religious theme, or human characters. Printed pattern books generated patterns for embroiderers, and in addition generated a wide interest in plants, animals and gardening. The classical vases, and the flowers they hold are certainly non-native, but these jostle with native favourites such as quince, apple and plum. As Melina Watt has written, the garden itself was already an accepted site for both entertainment and private contemplation, and the natural world was celebrated as a manifestation of God's abundance and gift to humankind. It is highly appropriate that this carnival of plenty should decorate the eating table. It is unlikely, however, that an expensive article like this would be eaten from – table carpets were often covered with linen or removed completely before eating.

William Harrison gives us a good insight into the probable owner of such an item:

'The farmer… [will] think his gains very small towards the end of his term if he has not   six or seven years rent lying by him, therewith to purchase a new lease, besides a fair garnish of pewter for his cupboard… three or four feather beds, so many coverlets and carpets of tapestry, a silver salt, a bowle for wine, and a dozen spoons to furnish up the sute…'

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31 299, A tapestry panel, possibly a table carpet. References: William Harrison, *The Description of England 1577*, (1587), p. 197; H. L Turner, Transplanted: a floral tapestry-woven table carpet once at Knole, Kent, http://www.kentarchaeology.ac/authors2/HLTurner/HLTurner01.html; Examples from Material Culture: http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/broi/hd_broi.htm.

A late sixteenth century recipe chest

Place of origin: Koln, Germany (possibly made)

Date: 1580s

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Oak, bog-oak, holly, varnish, printed paper, iron lock (replaced), silk pulls on draws, brass tacks and silk ribbon. Parquetry.

Museum Number: SBT 2001/5

Keywords: medicine, recipes, privacy, 'huswife', parquetry, physician, kitchen physic, herbs.

dark bog oak and holly were at the height of fashion in the 1580s. The wallpaper pasted into the lid matches a similar design in the Victoria & Albert museum, also dating to 1580. Given the cohesive pattern adorning both the exterior and interior drawers, this was probably a commission or custom-made piece, perhaps made by craftsmen working in London from Cologne, an important centre of parquetry work of this type. The printed wallpaper with Elizabeth I's coats of arms and insignia together with a stylized pomegranate may have reinforced later curatorial views that this was a medicine chest, used by a professional physician (the pomegranate was used by the College of Phsicians from 1513). (The presence of 20th century pins, thread and button fragments suggest that the chests' last owner, Mrs Graham Rees-Mogg, wife of a prominent West Midlands collector, used it as a sewing kit in the 1930s). The connection to a professional physician remains untenable however. The nine drawers, thirteen compartments, five wooden pots (two missing) and hidden compartment yield many nooks and crannies, but there is not sufficient space for the large glass urine bottles that physicians used in the 16th and 17th centuries. In addition, this is very much a fixed furnishing, too large and awkward to be portable and surely too small to contain the large range of powders and instruments required by a peripatetic physician. Based on current evidence, this should be seen as a 'recipe' or 'reciept' chest commissioned by a noblewoman for use within her own household. 'Recipes' could refer to both medicinal rememdies

and culinary dishes, a well dressed chicken, for example, was seen as a cure for many ills. 'Receipts' were similar, but the word refers to their *recieved* nature – i.e., Elinor Fettiplace's reciept book contained cures given to her by various grandees, including Sir Walter Raleigh. A chest like this would have therefore contained the various herbs and spices associated with 'kitchen physic'; ingredients largely sourced from gardens – lavender, camomile, etc., together with more expensive but widely available spices, cinnamon, cloves and nutmeg. The ribbon fixed into the lid (a rare survival) seems perfectly suited to storing sprigs of herbs or dried flower heads that were often used in remedies. The lives of early modern 'huswifes', however, meant that these women had few possessions that were truly their own, and it is likely that this chest was a communal item, to which some members of the household may have had occasionally access. The lock, a later addition, suggests that the original box could be accessed freely. This explains the secret compartment, located in the top panel, which is accessed by a small buff-coloured cotton pull in contrast to the red silk pulls on the other drawers. Whilst clearly not undetectable, an initial exanmination took about 10 minutes to locate it – a servant accessing the chest under the gaze of the mistress would probably miss it. Such a draw, elongated and shallow, probably contained the most expensive ingredients, or perhaps the most posionous. The presence of the drawer raises broader questions of female privacy in this period.

Related objects from the collection: Bronze mortar, SBT 2003-39/2 – Mortar for crushing herbs etc for medicines/culinary purposes. Probably used in domestic setting considering its inscription 'MY HOP[E] IS IN THE LORD' Urine flasks, SBT L1952-2 and L249n – 17th century. Uruscopy was the practice of examining the patients urine for symptoms of disease. References in Shakespeare: *All's Well that Ends Well* – receipts and traditional/feminine 'non-professional' physic are used by Helena, I.iii. 237-244. References in visual/material culture: For wallpaper see http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O83814/wallpaper; for an example of similar parquetry designs see http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O9092/chest-coffer-nonsuch-chest-nonesuch-chest. For a useful general comparison, see the famous medicine chest of Vincenzo Giustiniani c. 1560, a symbol of humanist scholarship showing knowledge of professional developments in medicine. Select bibliography: For parquetry practice in London see Edmund Bolton's *Elements of Armories* (1610), and C. Edwards *Encyclopedia of Furniture Materials, Trades and Techniques* (2000). For physicians/kitchen physic see R. Porter, *Disease, medicine and society in England, 1550-1860*; Hilary Spurling, *Elinor Fettiplace's Recipe Book*. Provenance: Bought at Sotheby's on recommendation of Victor Chinnery in 1998 (personal communication from ex-curator). Previous owners Colonel Rees-Mogg of Coughton Court (1930s-40s). Provenance/date established by object-based analysis.

A late medieval 'cucking-stool' modified into a child's 'seat of ease' or commode chair?

Place of origin: England

Date: Two structures – main base and back are late medieval. Fruitwood tray and present commode seat probably date from 1800, but may have modified an earlier sixteenth- seventeenth century form.

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Oak, fruitwood, upholstered cushion (19th century), iron hand-forged nails with square tapered shanks (pre 1800), round headed machine-made nails (c. 1800-1875). Pit-saw marks, late medieval. Some signs of riving (rudimentary carving or splitting of planks) using a froe (c. 1500-1750). Compass marks on seat back are undated, could have been present on medieval wooden structure.

Museum Number: SBT 2003/22

Keywords: commode, toilet, medieval, children, cucking stool, shaming rituals, domestication, apotropaic mark, modification/recycling, private and public.

This object is deeply problematic. No clear narrative has been established for its use and meaning, nor can it be sufficiently dated and placed within a wider historical context. In its present state, it has a seat cut with a hole like a commode chair with fruitwood tray and arm rests, set in a boarded oak structure with heavy base and recess (presumably for a chamber pot). The chair back is carved to give a throne-like impression, and bears riving marks from a froe or heavy knife-like tool used for splitting planks. It carries a hexafoil or daisy-wheel mark made with a pair of large compasses. The handle is a replacement and was probably added with the tray in the 19th century. The boxed or stall-like exterior structure is certainly late medieval – the riving and saw marks demonstrate this – and was once much taller. Signs of water damage suggest that the original structure was shortened and a based added, perhaps from some of the left-over material (which has since rotted away). There are, essentially, two structures; a medieval 'stall' and a commode chair which has been truncated and recycled the original building material (nails and wood). The presence of the hexafoil is consistent with both late medieval and early modern practices of apoptropaic symbols (see Examples), but the original medieval stall/seat structure has few precedents. One possibility is that the larger structure was a type of cucking stool. Box-like boarded structures were used as ritual shaming seats or stools throughout the late-medieval and early modern period. They are

etymologically connected with defecation: for example *cuck* derives from a 13th century expression meaning to 'void excrement'; and this also connects to customary use – criminals were often carted through towns in tumbrels (wagons) used for dung-collection. The English words associated with defecation often imply the process of separation or tearing off, and it could be argued that the paralells between a criminal being shamed and defiled through association with excrement and being ritually torn away or separated from their community, were all straightforward meanings understood by both group and individual. The box-like structure, coupled with the toilet function, could be seen as a further humiliation, juxtaposing the stool (which implies private ownership of a seat, and hence a person of quality) with the ritualization of public defecation for all to see. If at some point in its biography this structure was a cucking stool, it is intriguing how its earlier form and use has been almost completely inverted. By cutting the object down, applying an apotropaic mark, and by taking it inside and using it to 'domesticate' the human body through toilet training, the earlier life of the object has been changed almost beyond recognition. Whilst vastly speculative, this reading has been based on an analysis of form and construction of cucking-stools and commode chairs, and upholds many anthropological theories of social development and the role objects and language play in this process.

References On cucking stools and their various forms see T. N. Brushfield, 'On Obsolete Punishments, With particular reference to those of Cheshire' in *Journal of the Architectural, Archaeological, and Historic Society for the County and the City of Chester*, 2, and W. Andrews, *Bygone Punishments*, 1899. On bodies and communities and civilizing processes see M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: an analysis of concepts of pollution and taboo,* (London: 2003), p. 142 and N. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: sociogenetic and psychogenetic investigations*, revised compendium edition (London: 2000), pp. 109-42. For early modern attitudes to cleanliness, dirt and the 'training' of children see K. Thomas, 'Cleanliness and godliness in early modern England', A. Fletcher & P. Roberts (eds.), *Religion, Culture and Society in Early Modern Britain: essays in honour of Patrick Collinson*, (Cambridge: 1994, 2006), pp. 56-70; P. Crawford, Blood, bodies and families in early modern England, (London: 2004), pp. 155-6; C. Heywood, *A history of childhood: children and childhood in the West from medieval to modern times*, (Cambridge: 2001) pp. 32-3. Examples from Material Culture A child's seat, dated 1641, with large roundel decoration perhaps an apotropaic mark, see http://www.periodoakantiques.co.uk/product.php?id=1062.

An Elizabethan gold 'Angel'

Place of origin: London, England

Date: 1578-1581

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: gold, stamped, die-struck.

Museum Number: SBT 2003 4/4

Weight: 5.11g

Keywords: medicine, healing, currency, monarch, Reformation.

An Elizabethan gold angel c. 1578-81, with a mint-mark in the shape of a cross. The obverse, depicts the Archangel Michael, with feathered legs, armour, tunic, standing on and spearing a dragon through the mouth. Beading separates the text border, which reads 'ELIZABETH D G ANG FR ET HI REGINA', or 'Elizabeth by the Grace of God Queen of England, France and Ireland'. The minting mark to the left of Michael's head. The reverse has a ship with a mast in the form of a cross, and set in the midst is Elizabeth's coat of arms, quartered fleur-de-lis and three lions, surmounted by the letter E, and opposite, between the cross, a rosette. Similar beading encloses the design, the inscription reads, 'A DNO FACTUM EST ISTUD ET EST MIRABI', 'This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous'.

This coin was made at the Royal Mint in the Tower of London. Sheets of gold were cut or stamped forming the round metal disks prior to striking (called planchets). These disks were then placed in a die which carried the inverse of the design. This coin is well centred, with a little planchet showing at the sides.

Whilst being the official currency of the realm, Angel's were especially prized in the sixteenth century for their thaumaturgical power. According to the historian Keith Thomas, at a special ceremony, conducted by leading Anglican clergy together with the monarch, sufferers of the malady known as the 'King's Evil', or scrofula, queued patiently to be touched by their sovereign. They approached, one at a time, knelt before the king or queen and were touched on the face, whilst a clergyman read aloud 'They shall lay hands on the sick and they recover' from the Gospel of Mark. The patients then retired, later returning to receive a gold Angel strung from a white ribbon. Many coins survive with punched holes through which a ribbon may be threaded (see Examples). However the absence of a hole does not necessarily exclude this object from such a ceremony. Thomas looks only at post-Tudor practice, and it is clear that Elizabeth I took the ceremony very seriously, and even performed it spontaneously whilst on progress. At Kenilworth in 1575, Elizabeth publicly prepared for the ritual 'prostrate on her knees, body and soul rapt in prayer'; in addition to the laying on of hands, she also made the sign of the cross, with the gold coin, over the actual sore itself. Pierced coins were also employed by Mary I, as were 'cramp rings' touched by her and distributed to epileptics.

Angels without piercings were nevertheless powerful because of their mixed iconography; St. Michael was England's most visible and accepted saint of the early post-Reformation period, accepted in part, because of his symbolic role as a prop to the monarch's sacerdotal power. A recent discovery of a hoard of angels in grounds belonging to Eton College in the sixteenth century, suggests that some institutions preserved these coins especially for their material and thaumaturgical.value (Examples).

Related objects from the collection: SBT ..., A Wildman amulet; SBT... A cast measure, part of Elizabeth's reforms (which included weights, measures and currency; References: Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation*, (Oxford, 1993); Herbert Appold Grueber, Handbook of the Coins of Great Britain and Ireland in the British Museum, (1899); Carole Levin, 'Would I Could Give You Help and Succour': Elizabeth I and the Politics of Touch', *Albion 21.2* (Spring 1989), 204, fn. 47; Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (Weidenfeld and Nicholson: 1971); http://www.ox.ac.uk/media/news_stories/2010/100912.html Examples from Material Culture: http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/dept/coins/exhibitions/CoinOfTheMoment/angel/, http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/London-Wall/Whats-on/Galleries/medieval/Objects/718405/.

An Iznik dish

Place of origin: Iznik, Turkey

Date: c. 1570 - 1575

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: ceramic, Armenian bole, copper staples (seventeenth century)

Museum Number: SBT 2005-18

Dimensions: D. 32.5 cm H. 5cm

Keywords: imports, Ottoman, repair.

This dish was made by potters working at the kilns of Iznik in north-west Anatolia. This dish was probably produced in the 1570s, although some designs are repeated at intervals into the seventeenth century (see Examples). It is possible to date Iznik pottery fairly accurately if the design contains crimson elements – this is Armenian bole, a special mixture of clay, which was introduced into Iznik ceramic production after 1557. Before this date, the palette consisted of a range of blues and greens, and the designs flowed across the various surfaces of the dish – the bottom, cavetto and raised rim. The colours here consist of intense blue, red and emerald, embellishing the intersecting but entirely naturalistic flora

(carnations). Dishes were largely made for export outside the Ottoman empire; within it, the demand was for ceramic tiles for revetments on civic and religious buildings. In London during the 1580s only four merchants imported Iznik ware from the East, making it incredibly rare, and hugely expensive.

The copper staples are probably English, dating from the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, elite items were more likely treated with bitumens, animal glues or resins, althoug the practice of stapling continues throughout the long 18th century. The used here are a testament to English admiration of Iznik ware, and the lengths English owners went to to preserve it. As the cracks are wide (not to mention still visible) at the front, rendering the dish useless as a receptacle, we can only assume that the repair was for aesthetic reasons. In the late sixteenth to early seventeenth century, a dish like this would have been proudly displayed on a court cupboard in the Hall or among prized possessions in the parlour.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1993-31 280, A tin-glazed earthenware dish, with St. John the Baptist; SBT 16, A maiolica style dish, made cheaply for export. References: Jane Bobko (ed.), *Only the Best: Masterpieces of the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon*, (New York, 1999). Stephen Koob, 'Obsolete fill materials found on Ceramics' *JAIC* 1998, Volume 37, Number 1, Article 5 (pp. 49 to 67) Examples from Material Culture: An Iznik dish with similar iconography, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O113286/dish-unknown/.

'Game, Poultry, Fish and Vegetables with a Maid Plucking a Goose', oil painting on panel

Place of origin: Unknown, England/Low Countries (possibly)

Date: c. 1601-1633.

Artist/Maker: Unknown (Anglo-Dutch school)

Materials and Techniques: Wood, oil paint, bevelled panel.

Museum Number: SBT 2006/9

Keywords: Kitchen, cookery, 'huswifery', consumption,advertising, wealth, middling-sort, painting, panelling.

Physical description: still life on a bevelled panel, probably constructed and painted in the Low Countries. Reverse of panel carries marks associated with German/Dutch panel-making companies, but has yet to be identified. The join between panels can be seen in a slight depression running top to bottom on the right hand side. It has been suggested that the panel was once used as a shop decoration; a supposition based on the size of the panel (63.5 cm x 93.5 cm). Style is undoubtedly influenced by Flemish still life painting, particularly the work of Joachim Beukelaer (b. 1530, d. 1573). The kitchen maid is a prominent motif in still lives of this type. Representation of piece of paper nailed into the top-left corner reads: 'I have choice for my kitchen'.

The treatment of space in this painting is interesting; the background which encloses the painting, upon which the butterfly and tacked slip of paper appear, is inappropriately positioned, disrupting the perspective achieved by the larger objects in the foreground. Rather than attempting an accurate representation of an urban elite, middling-sort or prosperous yeoman's kitchen, every inch of the picture plane is used to display the produce itself – rabbits, a hare, swan, pike, trout, suckling pig, partridge, pigeons, mallards, turkey, lemon, apples, oranges, onions, carrots, turnips, cabbage, plus a variety offal and bones, hooves, and most striking of all, a skinned cows head on a butchers block.

The major preoccupation of most people in early modern England was generating enough produce and/or income to have enough to eat. The spread we see here would have been seen only in the grander houses, or possibly large successful butcher's shops. The tag itself suggests the clients' authorial voice – boasting of their productivity, wealth and status. It is dwarfed by most still-life paintings of this type – suggesting that it could have hung in middling-sort house, but one with pretentions.

Related objects from the collection: SBT… a 'berkemeier' prunted glass; SBT.., A 17th-century embroidered linen coif; SBT 1995-47; a simple coif cap as seen here. References: See Kathleen Dardes, Andrea Rothe (eds.) The Structural Conservation of Panel Paintings, (New York: 1999); Thomas Tusser,*Five Hundred Points on Good Husbandry*, 1557

The Stratford Corporation's 'Newe Cubborde of Boxes'

Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon
Date: 1594
Artist/Maker: Lawrence Abell (joiner), Oliver Hickox (Hiccox) (blacksmith/ironmonger)
Materials and Techniques: Oak, iron. Locks, keys, 'skrewe pinnes'. Panelled and joined, 'nayles', glue, mason-mitre joints.
Museum Number: SBT L513
Dimensions: H. 186 cm L. 150 cm
Keywords: Stratford Corporation, government, state formation, self governance.

An oak cupboard built in 1595, to store the Stratford Corporation records. *Description* - the plank-built carcase has a pair of eight-panel doors mounted on wrought iron strap hinges and with three iron-key plates (all three keys survive); two 'skrewe pinnes' or brackets with screws, were installed to reinforce the doors – these being thinly panelled and easily wrenched apart. The interior is fitted with twelve drawers of nailed construction with iron ring handles. In one sense, this is a Tudor 'filing cabinet' specifically made for the Stratford Corporation in 1594. It reflects a new found confidence in the Corporations' ability to self-govern the Borough of Stratford, and may also be seen as the means by which the English state was formed and regulated. The item was used until the mid-nineteenth century. **Use** – The Corporation's minute books, together with an 1862 inventory by Halliwell-Phillips, gives us sense of how this item was used. The twelve drawers, or boxes, contained items which secured the corporations customary and legal privileges; six boxes were set aside for leases and rent rolls for each of the six wards of the borough, whilst the other drawers stored statutes, the Common seal (granted in 1553), the silver gilt maces, and later, the Chamber Bible and Prayer-book. Haptic and comparative research has since connected disconnected items from the collection with this item. A series of smaller boxes (see Related Objects), which bear the same saw marks as the cupboard, were probably made by the same joiner, Lawrence Abell (or a carpenter working for him). These items bear late 16th century secretary-hand inscriptions detailing their contents. Unlike the Gild muniment chest before it (SBT Lt2),

these boxes within the COB were for documents only, leases, deeds, and records of long-standing bonds like that of Mr. Oken (See SBT 1996-33 5). The COB was clearly for storage, but beyond this it was a material expression of the Corporation's working methods and philosophy. An examination of these boxes and their contents reveal that the Corporation was an important instrument of Reformation, i.e., collecting tenths from Worcester clergy, as well as white-washing images in the Guild chapel. The maces, Bible, and other items deposited within, in themselves objects of power, piety and authority, were ferried between the COB and the Chamber – giving substance to the descriptions of Corporation rituals in the minute books.

The 'Cubborde of Boxes' (COB) is also remarkable for its accompanying documentation – the Corporation accounts record the prices paid for raw materials and labour. Here we learn that the cupboard was joined by Lawrence Abell, a resident of Church Street in Stratford, and that the most or all of the ironwork was fashioned by another local man, Oliver Hiccox. Abell was a doubtless a member of one of the craft companies established by the Corporation in 1572; his work for the Corporation reflects their strict rules concerning 'foriners' plying their trade outside the companies, but may also reflect a policy of patronage or favouritism towards Abell by the Chamberlain's Abraham Sturley and Richard Ange, who two years previously had exempted the joiner from paying rent. The evidence is slight, but there is some hint of preferential treatment. Likewise, Sturley's daughter Elizabeth married John Hiccox, a relative of Oliver the ironmonger. It is clear that high-ranking members of the Corporation bestowed patronage, through prestigious craft commissions, and that these were part of wider social relationships in the town.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1996-33 1, 2, 3, 5; Small boxes for deeds, bequests, keys; these items were stored with the cupboard and designed to be ferried between it and the Chamber. SBT 1996-33 4; a leather covered box, lined with printed book pages (c. 1580), probably used by an officer of the Corporation (constable or serjeant-at-mace) for collecting payments and issuing receipts ('aquittances') to residents. SBT 1868-3/1043.1 & SBT 1868-3/1043.2; two maces stored within the COB. SBT Lt2, The gild muniment and *tresor* chest. References: Levi Fox (ed.), *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon and Other Records*, (Hertford: 1990). Examples from Material Culture: A near contemporary example, similar construction, but probably a domestic press cupboard. http://www.antiqueoakfurniture.co.uk/view_details.asp?prod_id=488.

The muniment and treasure chest of the Gild of the Holy Cross

Place of origin: England

Date: Before 1458

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Elm, iron, vermillion paint (cinnabar). Mortice-and-tenon joints, iron-strapped.

Museum Number: SBT Lt2

Dimensions: H. 72.5cm L. 169cm

Keywords: Gild of the Holy Cross, polychromed, Stratford Corporation, plate, storage.

This chest was used for storing the Gild's 'evydences' and 'tresor', i.e., records and treasure, such as charters, deeds, coin and plate. *Description* - It is built of heavy planks of elm which have been strapped together using iron brackets, two at each side, three along the carcase – these have fleur de lis finials, and probably reflect one of the Gild's titular holy figures, the Blessed Virgin. Of the three locks, the left is substantially damaged and replaced. Exterior panels retain traces of vermillion paint – the sparse ironwork suggests that the chest had a painted iconographic scheme – perhaps for the Virgin, Saint John and images of the Holy Cross. Inside, the chest is divided into two sections. A wooden partition on the right hand side creates a small coffer within the chest, approximately 45 cm square, this also has a lid and lock. *Provenance* – Inventory of Gild property, 1475: One of 'two cofurs with Evydences' stored in the 'Botery' or ground floor chamber adjacent to the Hall in the Guildhall on Church Street. 1862 inventory (Halliwell-Phillips) places chest in Guildhall, containing rolls and charters of the Gild, and in the right hand-side recess, some nineteenth century disputes over tithes. The chest had remained in the Guildhall since the dissolution of the Gild, and was still used by the Corporation (council) in the nineteenth century.

The Gild of the Holy Cross (1403-1552) was a socio-religious guild whose primary focus was to care for the bodies and souls of its members. To this end, the Gild built hospitals and almshouses, and employed priests to say masses in the Gild Chapel and at the altars of St. John and the Virgin in the parish church. An initial admission fee was required of new members, ranging from 20d. to 20s., usually paid in money, but services and goods were also accepted. Members were expected to make regular payments, known as *light-silver*, for the upkeep of the oil-lamps and candles on the altars and before holy images. The coin and plate donated for this purpose was probably stored in this chest in the Guildhall (which still stands today).

The three locks probably relates to the practice of three key-holders, the Master, a Proctor, and another layman. The chest stood in the 'boteria' and an inventory of 1475 reveals what was stored within it: A variety of silver gilt dishes and cups including a 'Stondynge Cuppe of Selver … gylded by the Bordurs' as well as a variety of mazers, or turned wooden dishes with silver mounts, one had a 'Beeste therein of Selver' and a dozen silver spoons 'with flatte gyldyn Knottes at the Ende'. The Gild Register also records a 'silver chales' given in payment for prayers for the soul of Thomas Chastleyn and his wife in 1422; whilst John Stanley, a merchant of Bristol, and his wife, gave a set of twelve silver-gilt spoons for the souls of their parents in 1458-1459.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1868-3 1043.2, The fifteenth century Bailiff's mace; SBT BRTI/I Straford Upon Avon Gild Register References: Inventory of Gild property, 1475 (SBTRO BRU15/3/9). J. O. Halliwell, *A Brief Hand-list of the Records Belonging to the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon, Showing their General Character; With Notes of a Few of the Shakespearian Documents in the Same Collection* (1862). See W. E. Tate, *The Parish Chest: A Study of the Records of Parochial Administration in England*, 3rd edn., (Chicester, 1983), pp. 37-42; J. C. Cox & A. Harvey, *English Church Furniture*, (1907). J. H. Bloom (ed.), *The Register of the Gild of the Holy Cross, the Blessed Mary and St. John the Baptist… of Stratford-upon-Avon*. Examples from Material Culture: A medieval standard or chest, owned by Richard de Bury with polychromed exterior, http://collections.glasgowmuseums.com/starobject.html?oid=34448.

The Stratford Corporation Mace; used by the Serjeant-at-mace

Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon

Date: c. 1552-3

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: metal, silver, gold.

Museum Number: *SBT 1868-3 1043.2*

Dimensions: L. 349mm D. 55 mm (diameter of bowl) Keywords: Stratford Corporation, authority, weapon, ceremony, ritual, government

This mid-sixteenth century mace has a silver gilt stem, which is divided in half by a corded collar with mouldings. At the top is a robust bowl consisting of cresting trefoils, only two remain intact, with much denting in the top; in the centre of this bowl are the royal arms, English and French quarterly, enamelled in blue, red and gold on a green ground. On the flat pommel the arms of Stratford with three ornamental brackets attached (one of which is broken away). It was commissioned by the Stratford Corporation soon after receiving its Royal Charter in 1553. This object, together with SBT 1868-3 1043.1, were used by the serjeants-at-mace. This office, whilst not of high status, added to the grandeur and authority of the Corporation. Serjeants issued processes and summoned defendants to the court (leet and manorial); and appear to function in a similar capacity to constables, although the latter was a lowlier position. William Rogers, who certainly used one of these objects, was serjeant-at-mace at his death in 1597, and lived very comfortably in his house in Stratford – the probate inventory of his goods reveals a chimney (a sign of relative wealth), painted cloths and a table carpet. The mace was a symbol of force – deriving from its medieval status as a weapon; it was also a symbol of the legitimacy of the local governing body. *Use* – Stratford residents were incorporated under the Bailiff and Burgesses of Stratford-upon Avon who held perpetual succession, the power to make by-laws, and a common seal (see Related Objects). The mace had practical functions, and ceremonial roles. The serjeants were required to carry the objects when on duty, however it is doubtful that they were often required to use them as constables did most of the heavy work. At inauguration ceremonies, the mace was ritually passed between outgoing and incoming Bailiffs; it was carried in procession by the serjeant who preceded the Bailiff and Justice of the Peace – the mace could be said to be representative of the personhood of the former, and the legal authority of the latter.

Historians presume that sixteenth century maces were purely ceremonial, however the extensive damage on this object suggests that it was routinely used. The damage can hardly derive from inadequate storage, as the Corporation's mace, muniments and even treasured items of the Gild were carefully stored in the large muniment chest and Cubborde of Boxes. Whilst the constable carried halberds and truncheons, and often put them to use, it is probable that the serjeant-at-mace used this implement to fulfil his duties, i.e., banging on doors to summon defendants to court hearings.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1868-3 1043.2, The fifteenth century Bailiff's mace; SBT Lt2, The Gild's muniment chest; SBT L513, The Cubborde of Boxes; SBT L2003-1/35, The Common Seal of the Borough of Stratford-upon-Avon, about 1553. References: George Russel French, Appendix B. 'The Straford Upon Avon Corporation Maces' in Shakespeare Genealogica (London, 1869). Fox, Minutes and Accounts of the Stratford Corporation, Vol 1, (Oxford, 1921) Examples from Material Culture: For good illustrations of mace types see L Jewitt & WH St John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales*, Vol. 2, (London, 1895)

A fifteenth century bailiff's mace; modified in the sixteenth century by the Stratford Corporation for the office of Serjeant-at-mace

Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon

Date: c. 1475; 1552-1553, modified

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: metal, iron, silver.

Museum Number: *SBT* 1868-3/1043.1

Dimensions: L. 419.1mm D. 45mm (diameter of bowl)

Keywords: Stratford Corporation, authority, bailiff, weapon, ceremony, ritual, government

A silver mace, over an iron shaft, late fifteenth century in date with mid sixteenth-century modifications. The bowl of the mace contains the etched Tudor monarch's coat of arms, a quartered shield with fleur-de-lis and three lions, surmounted with a crown and bordered with two ostrich feathers. The rim of the bowl has a number of projections which appear truncated. It is possible that a crown structure, of a kind seen on the Hedon Mace (presented to the town in 1415), has been removed. This structure symbolized crown authority, but many of these were removed during the Protectorate. Whilst it is possible that the Bailiff's mace was cut down in this period, it was probably modified in the sixteenth century by members of the Stratford Corporation, when that body proclaimed that two serjeants-at-mace were required for proper governance. Another mace (SBT 1868-3/1043.2) was made in 1552 or 1553 as the Corporation sought to implement this change.

In the early modern period, the mace was a symbol of force – deriving from its status as a weapon; and a symbol of the legitimacy of the local governing body – maces in the medieval period were relinquished by the most senior office holder in the town to the visiting sovereign, who then kissed and returned it. Although this object has been associated with the Guild of the Holy Cross, it was essentially a ceremonial item used by the Bailiff of Stratford (a annually elected position) – only with the rise of the Gild did membership of the Gild and the office of Bailiff become virtually inseparable. Use – it was certainly carried by the bailiff, or perhaps a mace-bearer who walked in front of him, on important official occasions – but there is also some evidence to suggest that bailiff's were expected to carry the mace at all times. As the most prominent Stratford citizens were also Gild members, administrative functions and lay-religious duties coincided, and the complex of Gild buildings on Church Street effectively became the seat of local power. Given the overlap of power, it is likely that the bailiff's mace was stored in the 'Countynge house', a chamber on the first floor of the Guildhall.

Related objects from the collection: SBT 1868-3/1043.2 References: L Jewitt & WH St John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales*, Vol. 2, (London, 1895); Robert Bearman, 'The Early Reformation Experience in a Warwickshire Market Town: Stratford-upon-Avon, 1530-1580', in *Midland History*; Levi Fox, *The Borough Town of Stratford-upon-Avon* (Stratford: 1953); Gordon McMullan (ed.), *Reading the Medieval in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge, 2007); Robert Tittler, The Face of the City: Civic Portraiture and Civic Identity in Early Modern England, (Manchester, 2007). Examples from Material Culture: For good illustrations of mace types see L Jewitt & WH St John Hope, *The Corporation Plate and Insignia of Office of the Cities and Towns of England and Wales*, Vol. 2, (London, 1895)

A large German stoneware jug

A mid-sixteenth century stoneware bartmannkrug; salt-glazed, with brown round belly, with bearded face on neck. Below this, a central roundel depicting a sheep-shearing scene with 3 figures, one with sheep in hands, one female sitting down; houses and trees at back. At the bottom of this central roundel the letters IM-MEI can be seen. The entire surface of the jug is covered with applied moulded rosettes. Three more roundels are placed around the middle, in a line with the first; each contains a female bust. All the roundels radiate pyramidal leaves.

Stoneware was the strongest ceramic material available and was favoured in taverns, kitchens and even on board ships throughout the sixteenth century. During this time, stoneware manufacturers designed jugs with pouring spouts – these were meant to be used for decanting liquids into smaller vessels. This object is called a 'krug', a German word for a general purpose mug – it does not bear the later spout as seen on Raeren wares (see Related Objects), but was probably used for communal drinking. The designs suggest that it was intended to cater for the household at work during the sheep-shearing season, whether during the shearing itself when much refreshment was required for the male workers, or at the celebratory dinner that immediately followed its completion. Communal dinners were often arranged by the landlord at different times of year, i.e, at harvest or Christmas. These celebrations were for men and women, which perhaps explains the presence of female busts on this object.

Place of origin: Köln

Date: c. 1550

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Stoneware, salt-glazed, applied moulded decoration.

Museum Number: *SBT 1993-31 401*

Dimensions: D. 28cm (6.5 cm mouth) H. 38cm.

Keywords: drinking, rites of passage, masculinity.

Christopher Cumberpatch has suggested that vessels like this were made especially for drinking bouts that marked rites of passage – for example, celebrating moments in the agricultural calendar, weddings, or a boys' coming of age. The presence of the bearded face may allude to this passage, when the boy began to grow facial hair. Hair was a potent sexual symbol for both men and women; and routines of preening, tweezing and combing hair, especially among younger men, are attested by the archaeological record (References, Gilchrist's discussion of the *Mary Rose*).The anthropomorphic nature of this vessel, which looks like a fat, bloated man, is appropriate to the sheep-shearing festival, where labour has been repaid with a good yield and expectation of profits.

Related objects from the collection: SBT ..., A Wildman fertility amulet References: Christopher Cumberpatch, 'Face to face with medieval pottery: some observations on medieval anthropomorphic pottery in north-east England', *Assemblage* 9, http://www.assemblage.group.shef.ac.uk/issue9cumberpatch.html; Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England*; Colin Townsend, 'Pots from the Mary Rose'. *Ceramic Review*, Jan/Feb 1984, No. 85; Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, (2012), pp. 91-2; ; Examples from Material Culture: Another Koln drinking vessel, http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O65763/bartmann-jug-unknown/.

Concealed shoe cache – early modern shoes, fragments of leather, fruit stones and straw

Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon, England

Date: c. 1600 – c. 1900

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Leather shoes of various sizes; leather, hemp?, wool?, beeswax,

Museum Number: Not accessioned (rediscovered in stores 2011).

Physical description: five shoe fragments with one unidentifiable piece of leather. One shoe is largely complete; the elasticated gusset appears dates it to the late 19th or early 20th century. Two earlier fragments consist of an upper and part of the sole, stitched via a rand – or thin folded piece of leather. Both appear well-worn, the leather stiff and dry, and coated with what appears to be mud in some places. Thread used in stitching consists of woven strands of hemp yarn, and is covered with small globules, perhaps beeswax which was commonly used by cordwainers (shoemakers) – all these fragments may date to the late 16th-17th century. The third shoe, the smallest, has a seam at the centre back (above the heel), a method of construction which suggests a date of late 16th or early 17th century. It closely resembles another 17th century baby's shoe found in the Hursley cache in Hampshire. It has two tabs which would have fastened together at the instep with a buckle (now lost). It bears a large cut at the instep – the cut is very precise and clean, and was surely made with the razor-sharp half-moon knife of the shoemaker. It is no more than 12cm long and probably belonged to a child aged 6-18 months.

Context: These shoes, leather fragments and associated material were found in the roof-space under boards at Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon in 1982. Their significance was not realized until 2011 when they were rediscovered and analysed by PH as part of the Creative

Cataloguing Project. Unfortunately, the specific location, and detailed inventory of the cavity was not recorded, but there is a brief entry in the object history file that reports that the shoes were found in a bundle of straw with seed, husks and fruit stones, caked in mud and dust. Hall's Croft was begun in 1612/13, and underwent major structural changes in 1614 and 1670. It is probable that the earliest shoe fragments were deposited in the roof-space during this time.

Analysis: The objects date from c. 1600-1900, suggesting that the cache was removed, added to, and replaced during this period. Caches of objects are commonly found in early modern buildings. They are generally thought to be protective or apotropaic collections of objects – although the significance of shoes themselves is still debated. The underpinning idea used to explain these 'middens' is a system of sympathetic magic, discussed by Ralph Merrifield and Keith Thomas, whereby an individual's essence or soul could be used, read and manipulated by witches if they possessed an object closely associated with that individual. Some of these objects are listed by Shakespeare's Dromio of Syracuse: "Some devils ask but the parings of one's nail / A rush, a hair, a drop of blood, a pin, / A nut, a cherry-stone'. Analogical arguments also suggest that garments, and particularly shoes, protected the wearer, and therefore shoes may have been understood to have protective qualities that could be extended to the fabric of the house, guarding it against fire or witchcraft. These well-worn shoes may

have been seen by early modern people to retain the shape of the wearer's foot – and by extension retain the essence of the individual.

Similar finds have been made in medieval and early modern buildings all over England. Over a thousand shoes have been catalogued by June Swann in various concealed locations, 22% of which were found under floors or above ceilings. Merrifield has speculated that shoes left in ground-level locations within the house (i.e., ground floor voids and foundations) are part of 'foundation burials' whereby live animals and even babies were buried to protect the household. According to Swann, these burials were practiced in Roman Britain, and may have formed the basis for later customs – shoes were also given as votive offerings to Roman deities. In the European consciousness, shoes have been intimately connected with marriage symbolism – English folklore alludes to a practice where the father of the bride presented his daughter's shoe to the groom, to mark the transfer of male authority. In Lancashire, the custom of 'smickling' involved 'young, childless, married women trying on the shoes of a friend who had just had a baby, in the belief that they would quickly become pregnant afterwards' (Denise Dixon-Smith, 'Concealed Shoes', *Archaeological Leather Group Newsletter,* no.6, p. 2). Some archaeologists explain these caches in terms of memorializing the family's connection to, or habitation of, a dwelling; a notion derived from the idea that the different sizes of shoe represent the family (a pattern that is sometimes repeated in these finds).

The vast majority of shoes bear signs of slashing or cutting – these cuts were often made to relieve the wearer from their bunions/corns (see A medieval shoe in the collection of the Museum of London, accession number BC72[250] <3777/1>; image number 000550, http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/) – but it has also been suggested that deposited shoes were *ritually* slashed. According to Merrifield, breaking an object ritually 'killed' it, and despatched it to the world of spirits. With reference to a post-Reformation context and to garments concealed within early modern houses, Miriam Duffield has suggested that the intentional mutilation of objects renders them less serviceable to the frugal and sparing householder, who is then more 'psychologically' able to put the object to ritual, perhaps apotropaic, uses. This view assumes a link between Protestantism and parsimony; and fails to acknowledge the fact that magic was not merely a popular activity but an economic exercise, and elite pastime.

There are numerous interpretations and opinions regarding the significance of 'special' and concealed deposits (ranging from shoes, garments, to pottery). Joanne Bruck's studies of Middle Bronze Age settlements emphasises the transient relationship people had with their built and natural environments. In a culture where many houses were only occupied for a season, greater significance was placed on ritual 'leave-taking' or 'closing' deposits, for example, leaving smashed pottery in abandoned houses. By extension, shoe deposits could be seen as a means of establishing

and materialising the 'close metaphorical relationship between the lifecycle of the settlement and that of its inhabitants'. Bruck also argues that wider spheres of interpretation, beyond the domestic space, are necessary for understanding these deposits; this is also hinted at by Gilchrist for the late-medieval context: 'ritual practice was integrated with aspects of everyday life and directed towards specific practical purposes such as agriculture and technology' (Gilchrist, p. 229).

Following this, PH has suggested that the significance of the shoe-maker or cordwainer is central to understanding these caches. In late-medieval and early modern society, the ritual value of shoes may have been rooted in the religious-freedom and relative marginality of shoemakers, who were allowed to practice their trade on Sundays (in order to service people's footwear, especially on pilgrimage routes). Shoemaker's are often seen as mystical, troublesome, politically subversive, or free-spirited – they are punned upon as being 'soul (sole) menders' in early modern plays (See Chapman). As crafts people they may have been seen to possess special, ritual knowledge that in some sense appealed to or drew upon the Church's own sacral power. After the Reformation, the shoemaker and shoes themselves may have retained something of this significance, which steadily evolved over time.

The sentimental attachment to objects must not be overlooked. It is still difficult for many people to throw out old clothes, and especially the clothes/shoes of their young children who have outgrown them. Swann notes the reactions to disclosed shoes in the twentieth century: many of her informers were cautious and uncomfortable around discovered shoes. Men, she writes, were generally in favour of putting them back, much to the bemusement of their wives (Swann, 'Shoes Concealed in Building', June Swann, 'Shoes Concealed in Buildings' p. 65). In another instance, a letter from a Hampshire woman shows how belief in the shoes apotropaic power persists: The woman found the shoes, and sent them to London for identification. 'While they were away, the house which had hitherto seemed so benign, had strange noises from the attic room where they were found. She even went to let the cat out, only to find nothing there. When there was a sensation of the floor shaking, her son refused to sleep there. She had heard that shoes were put in the chimney to keep out evil, which came in at the highest point' (p. 63). The deposition of a shoe in the cache at Hall's Croft in the twentieth century seems to reinforce to continual belief in protective magic; although it must be noted that many caches are disrupted and destroyed by builders who are employed to renovate properties (see the Concealed Garments Project).

References: R. Meeson and N. W. Alcock, *Hall's Croft, Stratford-upon-Avon: an architectural survey and history*, unpublished report for the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, 1998. Cameron, Pitt, Swann and Volken, 'Hidden Shoes and Concealed Beliefs', *Archaeological Leather Group Newsletter*, issue 7, Feb 1998. Ralph Merrifield, *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic*, 1987, Batsford. June Swann, 'Shoes Concealed in Buildings', *Costume Society Journal*, no 30, 1996, pp56-69. Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1971. Joanne Bruck, 'Houses, lifecycles and deposition on Middle Bronze

Age settlements in southern England' *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, No. 65, pp. 145-166. Joanne Bruck, 'Ritual and Rationality: some problems of interpretation in European archaeology' *European Journal of Archaeology*, Vol.2 (No.3). Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, 2012. Miriam Duffield, *Interpreting Evidence of Wear and Deliberate Damage in Four Deliberately Concealed Garments*, Unpublished MA dissertation, University of Southampton (2004). Alison A. Chapman, 'Whose Saint Crispin's Day Is It?: Shoemaking, Holiday Making, and the Politics of Memory in Early Modern England', *Renaissance Quarterly,* Vol. 54, No. 4, Part 2 (Winter, 2001), pp. 1467-1494.

Examples from Material Culture: www.concealedgarments.org.

Leather bound 'constable' box, interior pasted with 16th century printed books

Place of origin: Stratford-upon-Avon

Date: 1578-1600

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: hard wood (oak?), leather, printed paper, ink

Dimensions: 105mm wide, 125mm long, 35mm deep.

Museum Number: SBT 1996 33/4

Keywords: Borough Collection, exploration, clerk, religion, Puritanism, government, constable, state, Martin Frobisher, Thomas Bentley.

This small box is made of thinly cut wooden panels, held together by fine wire staples, and bound in leather. The leather covers the exterior but inside pages from printed books are pasted directly onto the wood. The box was probably the work of various craftsmen working in Stratford in the mid-sixteenth century. The leather is probably pig-skin; some hair folicles are still visible. On the lid a rip in the leather exposes the wooden surface and an inscription in a mid-sixteenth century hand: 'Aquittances for the Subsidye et al. Acquitts'. This box may have been used for storing legal papers on behalf of the Stratford Corporation as it is part of the Borough Collection (a set of items associated with governance of the town since its incorporation in 1553). Subsidies were taxes granted to the Crown by Parliament, and were calcuated for each individual based on what they owned. Taxes were collected by local constables, so it is possible that this box was used by a petty constable to store receipts in as he made his visitations around the borough. The box has loops which were probably used to fasten it to the belt and in addition the leather waterproofed the box, suggesting it was a working object rather than one used for storage (see Related Objects). The paper lining comes from two late 16th century works – an account of

Frobisher's voyage to find the north-west passage by George Best (1578) and a devotional work by the Puritan writer Thomas Bentley (1582). The pages from Best are uncut which suggests they are 'seconds' which have not been bound. Using paper to line drawers or to seal and decorate boxes was common practice in early modern England; carpenters and joiners would have stacks of paper on hand for this purpose, and therefore links with printers. The same kind of glue was used for sticking leather and paper to wooden surfaces – made from 'fleshings' taken by tanners from skins and hides – so it is possible that the paper was set in place at the time of construction. We could speculate that the texts give some insight into the reading habits of both the box-maker and/or the user of the item – it is clear that someone responsible for gathering payments would have been literate, and this being so it is unlikely that they could have ignored the text as they opened the box when carrying out their duties. The legible passages narrate hunting expeditions and incidents at sea and are combined with Bentley's pious self-examinations and invocations of God's help, in the top left corner is curiously poistioned biblical reference: '1 Cor 10'.
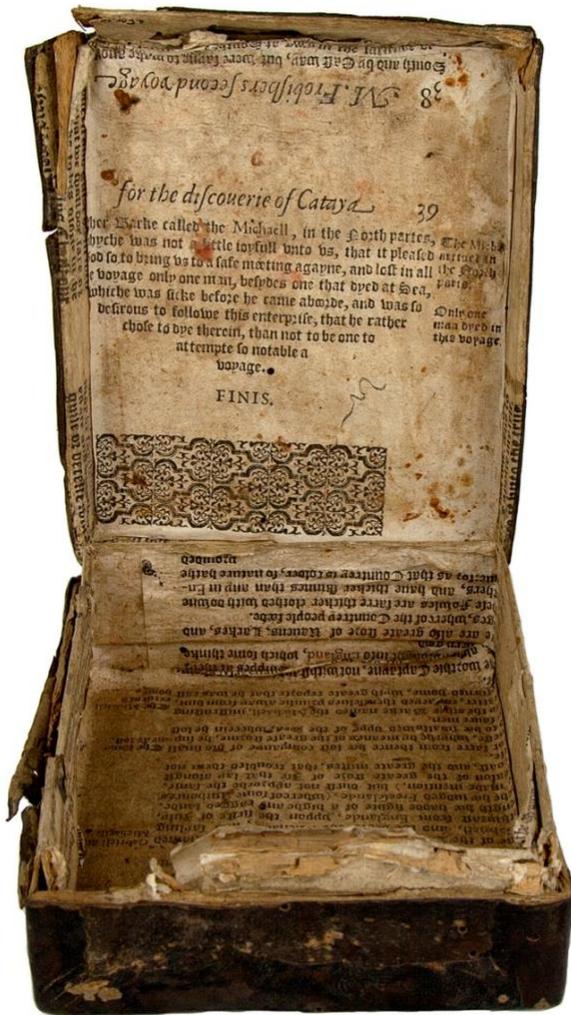
Related objects from the collection:

'Cupboard of Boxes', SBT 1992-86 – A large cupboard with draws used by the Straford Corporation. The 'acquittances' or reciepts were probably transfered here.
Bond box, SBT – A larger box which was kept within the cupboard of boxes. This storage box differs considerably from the leather bound box, whilst also having inscribed graffiti in a similar hand.
References in Shakespeare: The (satirized) role of the constable is prominent in Much Ado about Nothing. References in material/visual culture: See related objects above. Various visual representations of constables appear in print c. 1580-1680; a particulary good resource is http://ebba.english.ucsb.edu.

Select bibliography: For the role of constables in Tudor England see Michael J. Braddick's *State formation in early modern England, 1550-1700*, and J. Kent, 'The English Village Constable, 1580-1642' *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (Spring, 1981), pp. 26-49; For graffiti see J. Fleming, Graffiti and the Writing Arts of Early Modern England; for construction processes J. Blair (ed) *English Medieval Industries*.

Provenance: Paleography dated to mid-1500s by Mairi MacDonald (former Head of Local Collections at SBT, Dec 2010). Tangible links between records and objects in the Borough Collection have never been made – the documents were extracted from the boxes and bound whilst the objects themselves were stored collectively by the local council in Stratford. The Shakespeare Birthplace Trust acquired various objects for display, including the Cupboard of Boxes (now in Nash's House); graffiti on boxes represents the strongest connection between object and historical record or subsidy collection, bondsmen contracts and other business, such as first fruit collection. Further relationship between box and specific Corporation activities can be researched in *Minutes and Accounts of the Corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon*, Vols I-V, 1553-1598. (1921 onwards); see also R. Bearman's recent Volume VI (2011).

A daisy-wheel mark

Place of origin: England

Date: after 1601?

Artist/Maker: Unknown

Materials and Techniques: Inscription, compasses, on architectural timber.

Location: Shakespeare's Birthplace, Henley Street, stairwell to cellar.

Museum Number: No accession number

Dimensions: D. 10cm

Keywords: protection, apotropaic, graffiti, hexafoil, Shakespeare.

A daisy-wheel mark, lightly inscribed into a wooden beam in the stair well of the cellar in the Birthplace. Six elliptical petals around a central point, enclosed in a circle.

In medieval and early modern houses, exposed timbers, lintels, hearths and many other surfaces that surround thresholds or passageways of ingress, were inscribed with marks that are thought to reflect some ritual undertaken by the owner of the building or the craftspeople constructing it, to invoke good fortune or protection for the house and its contents. Marks are usually well-hidden, or if in exposed positions, difficult to see without raking light, for example, the incisions into the timber in the Birthplace are a mere fraction of a millimetre deep. This suggests that some symbols were not necessarily meant to be read after their application, but rather the process of application and the presence of the mark was enough to ensure protection or the completion of the ritual. Daisy-wheel marks, or hexafoils, are generally clear and visible, and it has been suggested that they were used to plan the layout and proportions of the building – by inscribing circles around a central point, the carpenter could determine the

angles needed for roof pitch etc., ensuring a safe and durable structure. It is possible that this means of measurement translated into an apotropaic mark that was thought to guarantee the stability of the building.

These marks were probably made when the cellar was introduced in the seventeenth century to serve the Maidenhead Inn, who first proprietor, Lewis Hiccox, rented the property from William Shakespeare who was then living at New Place. The mark probably was added sometime after September 1601 – when John Shakespeare died and the property reverted to William. It is possible that the mark was merely an architectural plan; but it may have been an attempt to protect the recent building project in the cellar; or as protectionist graffiti to protect the contents of the cellar itself.

Related objects from the collection: SBT ..., A 'witch stool', four legged stool with similar concentric circle decoration; SBT ... Cache of shoes found in Hall's Croft; References: Philip Styles (ed.), A History of the County of Warwick, Vol. 3., (1945); Keith Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (London, 1977); Timothy Easton, 'Scribed and Painted Symbols', in Paul Oliver (ed), *Vernacular Architecture of the World*, 1997/8 (four vols), CUP; Timothy Easton, 'Ritual Marks on Historic Timber', *Weald and Downland Open Air Museum Magazine*, Spring 1999, pp22-30; Examples from Material Culture: There numerous websites related to apotropaic marks, some are unreliable – http://www.apotropaios.co.uk, draws upon good scholarship. Ian Evan's site http://www.oldhouses.com.au/docs/ritual.html, provides an international view; http://www.concealedgarments.org/ provides the best bibliography for ritual protection, plus an archive of concealed clothes and objects in England.

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BRU4/1
BRU 4/1
BRU15/3/9
BRU 15/6/163
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