



## Who Was Cecily Chaumpaigne?

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**ABSTRACT:** This article reviews the surviving evidence for the life of Cecily Chaumpaigne in light of the new discoveries relating to the litigation against her and Chaucer. Her father, William, had been a well-to-do merchant who was not simply a street baker but a dealer in corn. Her mother, Agnes, was aspirational and ambitious, and married after William's death the wealthy saddler William Pickerel, who had been Edward III's saddler. Cecily's eldest brother, Robert, was a valet in the royal household at the same time as Chaucer was an esquire there. He also sought unsuccessfully to take over the saddlery business of his stepfather and mother, but quickly ran into financial difficulties. Much of our understanding of Chaumpaigne is defined by the surviving information about her family, but some facts are clear. She came from a well-to-do, perhaps even prosperous background. At the time of Staundon's threatened prosecution, she was a mature woman in her early thirties and apparently still single.

**KEYWORDS:** Agnes Chaumpaigne, Cecily Chaumpaigne, Chaucer life-records, Robert Chaumpaigne, William Pickerel

Since the 1870s, there has been an intense effort to locate documents recording the life of Geoffrey Chaucer, but there has not been a similar interest in collecting information on Chaucer's associates, even though the archival records relating to them are just as rich, and sometimes richer, than those for Chaucer. Chaucer life-records are treated almost as holy relics, but the records relating

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to the people Chaucer knew, served, and did business with frequently remain unexplored and unlisted. This circumstance means that Chaucer's life is often presented in a kind of vacuum, and the social, business and intellectual networks that animated Chaucer's life are portrayed in, at best, a sketchy form, despite the wealth of documentation available.

The distortions caused by the failure to investigate the lives of Chaucer's associates are amply illustrated by Cecily Chaumpaigne. Previous discussion of the relationship between Chaucer and Chaumpaigne has focused on the light it sheds on Chaucer's character. Chaumpaigne has been denied her voice. The historical Cecily Chaumpaigne has been ignored, and she has been presented in variously denigratory forms. In her review of the extraordinary and sometimes outrageous ways in which Chaumpaigne has been presented in scholarly literature, Susan S. Morrison describes how she has been portrayed variously as "victim, cocktease, wimp, regretful or vengeful or lusty wench."<sup>1</sup> The new documents concerning Chaucer's dealings with Chaumpaigne published in this special issue of *The Chaucer Review* radically challenge all these over-imaginative and salacious depictions of Chaumpaigne, but it is by no means certain that, with the *raptus* controversy resolved, future portrayals of Chaumpaigne will be any less imaginative. She seems set fair to become a Cinderella figure in Chaucer's household, or perhaps a victim of the oppressive implementation of the labor legislation introduced after the Black Death, which has been so vividly described by Judith Bennett.<sup>2</sup>

The kind of vituperation suffered by Chaumpaigne seems to be only too typical of the treatment of medieval women such as Katherine Swynford and Alice Perrers, whose independence and worldly success were problematic for contemporaries. Scholars were happy to accept the slanderous claims of Thomas Walsingham that Edward III's mistress Alice Perrers was the daughter of a thatcher who before her relationship with the king had been the maidservant and mistress of a man variously described as a Lombard and a lunatic. It was only very recently, with the researches of Mark Ormrod and Laura Tompkins, that it was established that Alice was a member of a family of successful London goldsmiths called Salisbury.<sup>3</sup> Her first husband

1. Susan S. Morrison, "The Use of Biography in Medieval Literary Criticism: The Case of Geoffrey Chaucer and Cecily Chaumpaigne," *Chaucer Review* 34 (1999): 69–86, at 71.

2. Judith M. Bennett, "Compulsory Service in Late Medieval England," *Past and Present* 209 (2010): 7–51.

3. W. M. Ormrod, "Who Was Alice Perrers?," *Chaucer Review* 40 (2006): 219–29; W. Mark Ormrod, "Alice Perrers and John Salisbury," *English Historical Review* 123 (2008): 379–93; and Laura Tompkins, "Alice Perrers and the Goldsmiths' Mistery: New Evidence Concerning the Identity of the Mistress of Edward III," *English Historical Review* 130 (2015): 1361–91.

was Janyn Perrers, possibly of French origin, who had been apprenticed to a member of Alice's family in 1342 and became Edward III's jeweler. Janyn died in 1361–62, and Alice probably entered Queen Philippa's household shortly afterwards. Rather than being an upstart and immoral thatcher's daughter, Alice was a representative of the socially mobile and worldly-wise class of London widows who have been described by Caroline Barron, Anne Sutton, and Barbara Hanawalt.<sup>4</sup>

The clarification of Alice Perrers's origins has dispelled one of the persistent myths about Cecily Chaumpaigne, namely the claim made by Haldeen Braddy in 1977 that Alice Perrers was Chaumpaigne's stepmother.<sup>5</sup> Marta Powell Harley had already pointed out that this suggestion rested on faulty evidence, namely eighteenth- and nineteenth-century references to a niece of William of Wykeham called Alice Champeneys Perot, who was demonstrably a different person from Alice Perrers.<sup>6</sup> Ormrod's and Tompkins's detailed reconstructions of the family origins of Alice Perrers confirm that she was not related to Cecily Chaumpaigne.

Chaumpaigne was, nevertheless, very familiar with the world in which Alice Perrers grew up. Cecily Chaumpaigne was more than the "soft baker's daughter" that many biographers of Chaucer have pruriently imagined.<sup>7</sup> She was of similar social origins to Chaucer. She came from a wealthy and aspirational London family with strong connections to the royal household. Her mother was a prodigious figure who epitomizes the business and financial acumen of many London widows. Cecily's stepfather had been Edward III's saddler, a prestigious position comparable to Janyn Perrers's status as Edward III's jeweler, and her oldest brother Robert was one of Chaucer's colleagues in the royal household in the 1370s.

Cecily was a mature woman in 1380, probably not much younger than Chaucer himself. The will of her father, William Chaumpaigne, dated June 24, 1360, provides a lot of information about her family.<sup>8</sup> William was far from a

4. Caroline M. Barron and Anne F. Sutton, eds., *Medieval London Widows, 1300–1500* (London, 1994); and Barbara A. Hanawalt, *The Wealth of Wives: Women, Law, and Economy in Late Medieval London* (Oxford, 2007).

5. Haldeen Braddy, "Chaucer, Alice Perrers and Cecily Chaumpaigne," *Speculum* 52 (1977): 906–11.

6. Marta Powell Harley, "Geoffrey Chaucer, Cecilia Chaumpaigne, and Alice Perrers: A Closer Look," *Chaucer Review* 28 (1993): 78–82.

7. The phrase is from John Gardner, *The Life and Times of Chaucer* (New York, 1977), 253; qtd. in Morrison, "The Use of Biography," 73.

8. Summarized in R. R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting London*, 2 vols. (London, 1889), 2:13–14, but Sharpe omits many details from the will.

cornershop baker, but instead was a well-to-do man owning property in the city.<sup>9</sup> In a grant of houses and shops in the parish of St. Mary Abchurch made after his death, he is described as a “corn merchant,” suggesting his business interests extended beyond baking.<sup>10</sup> William’s first wife was Alice; his second was Agnes, Cecily’s mother, who had also apparently been previously married.<sup>11</sup> Agnes’s family came from Brancaster in Norfolk.<sup>12</sup> William had two sons, both by Agnes. Robert Chaumpaigne, the oldest, received his father’s best robe and twenty shillings. His younger brother, John, received his father’s second best robe and twenty shillings. John had apparently begun life as a baker and in 1349 was indicted for charging inflated prices in the wake of the Black Death.<sup>13</sup> He is described in his father’s will in 1360 as a draper and is also named as a “citizen and draper of London” in a recognition in 1362.<sup>14</sup> John was married and had a daughter, Juliana. It is not clear whether John is to be identified with the John Chaumpaigne who was named as one of the leading vintners in 1368,<sup>15</sup> but it seems likely that this is the same person and that in this connection he may have known Chaucer’s parents.

William had five daughters. At the time of William’s death, the eldest daughter Isabella was married to John Welde, also described as a baker but who showed deft financial and legal skills and served twice as a Common Councilman in London under the controversial Mayor Nicholas Brembre.<sup>16</sup> Welde took an active interest in the well-being of the Chaumpaigne family, for example, ensuring the payment of ten pounds left to William’s granddaughter, Juliana.<sup>17</sup> William’s four other daughters were, in descending order of age, Idonea, Marion, Cecily, and Alice. Idonea, Marion, and Cecily each

9. London, London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), CLA/023/DW/01/088, Husting Court Roll 1361–62, m. 1d.

10. LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/096, Husting Court Roll 1369–70, m. 19.

11. Agnes’s will stipulates that masses should be said in the church of St. Vedast Foster Lane for Edward de Thamiser, William Chaumpaigne, and William Pickerel for a period of one year from her death, suggesting that Edward may have been her first husband. Robert is identified as Agnes’s son in her will, and he is evidently older than Cecily, indicating that Agnes was her mother.

12. She states in her will that her brother was Peter de Brancaster, and in 1368 she took action against a former servant from Brancaster (*Calendar of Patent Rolls 1367–70* [London, 1913], 87).

13. A. H. Thomas, ed., *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London 1323–64* (Cambridge UK, 1926), 225.

14. *Calendar of Close Rolls, 1360–64*, 396.

15. *Letter-Book G*, 222, from R. R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall*, 11 vols. (London, 1899–1912).

16. *Letter-Book G*, 130; *Letter-Book H*, 75, 333; and A. H. Thomas, ed., *Calendar of Select Pleas and Memoranda of the City of London 1381–1412* (Cambridge UK, 1932), 34, 85.

17. *Letter-Book G*, 130.

received from William forty shillings together with a fur, a washing stand, and a metal pot. These bequests offer a striking insight into William's conception of a woman's place. They also suggest that all three women were at least teenagers at the time of their father's death. The youngest daughter, Alice, only received a bequest of twenty shillings, suggesting she was still quite young. If we assume that Cecily was at least thirteen when her father died, this would make her thirty-three at the time of the quitclaim to Chaucer, only a few years younger than Chaucer.

Following William's death sometime early in 1361, Cecily's mother Agnes married again very quickly, continuing her upwardly mobile path by marrying William Pickerel.<sup>18</sup> Pickerel had been a prominent and prosperous London saddler since the 1320s.<sup>19</sup> He served as Master and Warden of the Saddlers' Company in the 1320s.<sup>20</sup> In the 1340s, he married Alice, widow of Richard de Wilehale who had been an alderman of London.<sup>21</sup> In 1350, Pickerel represented the London Saddlers in a complex dispute with the Fusters about the increased prices charged by the Fusters for saddle-trees after the Black Death.<sup>22</sup> Pickerel was one of the major suppliers of luxury saddles to the household of Edward III during the earlier part of his reign and is described as the king's saddler. In one year, the royal household spent over £1,000 on the purchase of saddles from William.<sup>23</sup> An indication of the scale of his business is the way in which, in 1347, he helped underwrite a bond for the huge sum of £666 for a group of knights from Staffordshire, Oxfordshire, and Buckinghamshire.<sup>24</sup> William claimed a coat of arms that he used on his seal, a mark of social aspiration for a

18. Agnes's will is summarized in Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Wills*, 2:154–55. Strangely, Crow and Olson, eds., *Chaucer Life-Records* (Oxford, 1966), 146n3, suggest that the Agnes who married William Pickerel was a separate person, and they muddy the waters further by stating that Agnes had been married to another William Chaumpaigne who was a saddler. This is all mistaken, and there is no evidence to support it. The full text of Agnes's will makes it clear that she was married to William Chaumpaigne the baker and afterwards married William Pickerel. Indeed, as noted above, it seems that Chaumpaigne may have been her second husband and Pickerel her third. Her will suggests that her first husband was Edward de Thamiser.

19. London, British Library, Harley Charter 53 D.53 is a quitclaim to Pickerel of a rent in the parish of St. Mary Woolnoth, dated 1328.

20. *Letter-Book E*, 232

21. *Letter-Book F*, 89. For examples of Wilehale as an alderman, see *Letter-Book C*, 179, 180, 184, 188, 200.

22. Thomas, ed., *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls 1323–64*, 239.

23. Kew, The National Archives (TNA), E 361/3.

24. TNA, C 241/126/277/.

Londoner.<sup>25</sup> William's arms comprised a pun on his name, showing three young pikes or pikerels.

Cecily Chaumpaigne's mother, Agnes, undertook the running of the elderly William Pickerel's affairs with skill and enthusiasm. William had built up a healthy property portfolio in London. In 1352, he granted a number of quitrents to Robert Payn, a saddle-tree maker, in the parishes of St. George Botolph Lane, St. Mary Aldermanbury, St. Clement Eastcheap, St. Andrew Eastcheap, and St. Nicholas Acon.<sup>26</sup> William also apparently owned property in the parish of St. Vedast Foster at the southern end of Gutter Lane, close to the site of the present Saddlers' Hall. Agnes extended these holdings and acquired a share in a tenement in Cheapside.<sup>27</sup> William also owned land in Beckenham in Kent,<sup>28</sup> Edmonton in Middlesex,<sup>29</sup> and at Aynho in Northamptonshire,<sup>30</sup> and seems to have had interests in Westmorland.<sup>31</sup> Following William's death in about 1370, Agnes took legal action against her officials on the Beckenham estate to render proper accounts, and she seems to have continued his saddlery business.<sup>32</sup> She also paid the substantial sum of 100 marks in connection with a settlement of the land at Aynho.<sup>33</sup> Ironically, given that Cecily Chaumpaigne and Chaucer were afterwards caught up in a prosecution arising from labor legislation, Agnes herself brought a prosecution in King's Bench in 1368 against Matthew Winefield of Doncaster for leaving Agnes's service before the end of the agreed term. Matthew was outlawed and obliged to secure a pardon.<sup>34</sup>

Agnes's own will, drawn up in April 1373 and probate on July 25, 1373, is testimony to a capable businesswoman who liked to display both her wealth and her piety. Agnes made a wide range of bequests to the church of St. Vedast Foster Lane and other churches in the city, as well as to anchorites, friars, indigent widows, and prisoners. Agnes describes very precisely the elaborate

25. TNA, DL 25/1037; and Martin Henig, "The Re-use and Copying of Ancient Intaglios Set in Medieval Personal Seals, Mainly Found in England: An Aspect of the Renaissance of the 12th Century," in Noël Adams, John Cherry and James Robinson, eds., *Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals* (London, 2008), 25–34, at 30. At least two different dies were used by William. A simpler version of the seal is TNA, DL 25/1037, whereas the example at TNA E 42/295 is a slightly more elaborate design and has a different legend.

26. LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/081, Husting Court Roll 1353–54, m. 4d.

27. LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/089, Husting Court Roll 1362–63, m. 4; CLA/023/DW/01/099, Husting Court Roll 1372–73, m. 3; and details in Agnes's will.

28. *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1367–70*, 467; and *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1370–74*, 2.

29. *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1334–38*, 363; and TNA, JUST 1/557/7.

30. TNA, CP 25/1/178/82/525.

31. TNA, DL 25/1037/803.

32. *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1367–70*, 467; and *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1370–74*, 2.

33. TNA, CP 25/1/178/82/525.

34. *Calendar of Patent Rolls 1367–70*, 87.

candles she wanted to be made from her own wax supplies to decorate the tomb she would share with William Pickerel in the church of St. Vedast. She left the contents of her household, including a large collection of saddles, beds, silver and gold vases, metal dishes, and other fine furniture, to her son Robert, who was also her executor. However, her lady's saddles were to be sold, and a cloth of fine silk from her house, together with another matching silk cloth to be bought by her executors, were to be embroidered with the letters "W" and "A" and used to decorate their tomb at Easter. She also left a checkered coverlet and a piece of fine Rennes cloth for a similar purpose.

Following her mother's marriage to William Pickerel, Cecily Chaumpaigne had grown used to living in a rich and luxurious household. After Agnes's death in the spring of 1373, a major influence on her life would have been her elder brother and mother's executor, Robert. Agnes left property to Robert including her saddlery and property on Gutter Lane and Cheapside. The most striking feature of Agnes's will is that only one of her children is mentioned, Robert. There are bequests to her brother Peter Brancaster and his son William, to her godson William Galwey, her servant John Lucas and Johanna his wife, John Frenchman her page ("garconi meo"), and her kinsman John Forester, and pious bequests to a certain anchorite, Brother John Grasier of the Order of St. Augustine, and to Sister Cecily Albon of the Hospital of St. Bartholomew Smithfield, but there is no mention of Agnes's other son, John, or her daughters, Isabella, Idonea, Marion, Cecily, and Alice. It seems likely that the assumption was that Robert Pickerel al. Chaumpaigne (he used both surnames indiscriminately) as executor and now head of the family would look after them.

Presumably as a result of his stepfather's strong connections with the royal court, Robert was by 1369 a member of the royal household as a valet of the chamber.<sup>35</sup> Chaucer was, of course, at this time also a member of the royal household, in the more senior rank of esquire. Like Chaucer, Robert received an annual stipend and robes and was eligible for appointment to diplomatic and other posts. Cecily's brother Robert was thus a colleague of Chaucer's in the royal household, and they doubtless knew each other well. Robert also attempted to emulate his stepfather's and mother's success in the saddlery business. He was not very successful. He seems frequently to have got into debt and petitioned the king for help in collecting outstanding payments due to him.<sup>36</sup> In 1376, Robert owed £52 to Robert Boxford, citizen

35. Crow and Olson, eds., *Chaucer Life Records*, 99; and TNA, E 101/397/5 mm. 43, 43v, 82, 82v.

36. TNA, SC 8/135/6704; and TNA, C 241/164/3.

and draper of London, which remained unpaid in 1379, so that the sheriffs of London were ordered to imprison him and value his goods in London.<sup>37</sup> A general release by Robert to John Braunche the younger of Somerset in 1384 of actions arising from bonds, debts, and accounts seems to have been part of a further attempt to resolve his financial difficulties apparently arising from his saddlery business.<sup>38</sup> In 1374, there is an entry in the city records that Andrew Colthull, clerk, entered into a bond that he would not draw up any public instrument relating to a contract previously made by Robert Chaumpaigne and Lucy, daughter of Richard Russell.<sup>39</sup> Russell was a tailor, a fraternity closely connected with the saddlers and supported by Agnes, and Russell afterwards served on the Common Council. The reason for this prohibition on pursuing the agreement between Robert and Lucy is mysterious. It cannot be to do with marriage, as Robert was married by 1363 and his wife's name was Matilda.<sup>40</sup> More likely, the transaction with Lucy related to Robert's fitful activities as a saddler.

In January 1376, the sheriffs of London were ordered to prevent Robert going abroad with four other Londoners, namely William Hart, a baker, Thomas Norris, Robert Rider, and Thomas Birmingham.<sup>41</sup> The king had received information that Robert and the others proposed to go to foreign parts and prosecute many things to the harm of the king and his people. The sheriffs of London were ordered to take a very large payment from Robert and the others for their good behavior, and instructed that if Robert and his associates refused to pay, then they should be put in prison. Some friends of Robert put up money for their future good behavior, and the sheriffs were ordered to stay execution of the writ. The exact nature of the plots of which Robert and the others were accused is not clear. However, the cloud over Robert seems to have been lifted shortly afterwards, and he was back trying to make money from the saddle trade.

Compared with the luxury of her life in her mother's household, Cecily Chaumpaigne's time under her brother's tutelage must have seemed unstable and uncertain. However, her brother remained in the royal household and continued to receive a pension. It is perhaps in this context of financial uncertainty that we should see her employment with Thomas Staundon and Chaucer. However, we should perhaps not imagine her as a menial servant

37. TNA, C 131/27/7; and Crow and Olson, *Chaucer Life Records*, 346n3.

38. *Calendar of Close Rolls*, 1381–85, 588.

39. Thomas, ed., *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls 1364–81*, 173.

40. LMA, CLA/o23/DW/o1/o91, Husting Court Roll 1364–5, m. 2d.

41. *Calendar of Close Rolls 1374–77*, 281.



girl in Chaucer's household. Litigation concerning terms of services under the labor legislation was not cheap and would not have been undertaken lightly. Many of these cases were by the 1370s and 1380s more comparable to modern litigation over contracts and terms of employment, particularly in London. When John Tunstall complained that Sara Bayons who he had employed in Bedford as "ancilla domus" (house maid) had left his service to work for Henry Plomer of Northampton, he claimed that he had suffered damages of forty pounds.<sup>42</sup> With damages claimed at such a high level, Sara must have been closer to something like a housekeeper than a maid. Although we do not know in what office Chaumpaigne was appointed for Staundon and Chaucer, the suspicion must be, given the costly legal action, that it was at a more senior level.

The search for Cecily Chaumpaigne has only just begun, and there is undoubtedly a lot more to be discovered about her, which will shed light on the social position and expectations of a younger daughter from a well-to-do London family. The striking feature of the information assembled so far about Cecily is the extent to which she is defined by her family, particularly her mother Agnes and her brother Robert. We have very little direct information about Cecily herself, and it is difficult to judge anything of her character. The involvement of Chaucer in dealing with the threat of prosecution after she left Thomas Staundon's service can quite reasonably be interpreted as a response to someone who needed care and protection. Yet Cecily's mother was a dynamic businesswoman and enthusiastic litigant. The fact that Agnes had herself brought a prosecution under the labor legislation may perhaps have encouraged Cecily to insist that she be shielded as far as possible from the risk of litigation.

The only way answers to such questions might emerge is by expending as much effort on tracing Cecily Chaumpaigne life-records as has gone into searching for Chaucer life-records. They are there; it is simply that the same focused effort has not gone into searching for Chaumpaigne as has gone into looking for Chaucer. One complication in tracing Chaumpaigne is that she probably used more than one name. As has been noted, her brother Robert used both the surname of his father, Chaumpaigne, and that of his stepfather, Pickerel, indiscriminately without the alias being recorded. Cecily Chaumpaigne undoubtedly went by the name of "Cecily Pickerel" as well. In the focus on finding Cecily Chaumpaigne, references to Cecily Pickerel have probably been overlooked. And then there is the question of whether Cecily

42. TNA, KB 27/474 m. 55d.

ever married, which might mean that she appears in the records under a third or even fourth surname.

There is one intriguing reference that is almost certainly a false lead but is nevertheless worth recording. Robert's shaky finances made it difficult for him to hang onto the property he inherited from his mother in Gutter Lane. In 1379, he made grants to John Bathe, weaver, and his wife Christina of a tavern called "The Horn on the Hop" in the parish of St. Vedast and tenements in Gutter Lane.<sup>43</sup> Various conditions were attached to this grant, which would be void if certain costs were met, suggesting that Robert was either using this property to obtain funds or trying to avoid the land being seized. On August 7, 1382, Robert again made a grant of his property in Gutter Lane, this time to Nicholas Rote, a vintner of London, and his wife Cecily.<sup>44</sup> Initially, Robert granted this property to Nicholas and Cecily for the term of his life, again suggesting a maneuver caused by his shaky finances. On October 15, 1382, Robert made an outright grant of this property to Nicholas and Cecily.<sup>45</sup> Nicholas and Cecily in turn sold this property to John Wakelyn, a vintner, and Richard Firby, a grocer, in March 1385.<sup>46</sup>

The fact that Robert should have sold the family property to a London vintner whose wife's name was Cecily is striking, and it is impossible to help wondering whether this could be the married Cecily Chaumpaigne. Sadly, the new discoveries of the prosecutions against Chaucer and Cecily under the labor legislation suggest that Rote's wife is not to be identified with Cecily Chaumpaigne. Rote had married his wife at least as early as 1374.<sup>47</sup> It is unlikely that the wife of a well-to-do London vintner would have been in the service of either Thomas Staundon or Chaucer, so Cecily Rote is not to be identified with Cecily Chaumpaigne.

This emphasizes the key point that the new discoveries about Cecily Chaumpaigne bring home. Chaumpaigne was in 1379–80 a mature woman in her thirties and apparently unmarried. What does this tell us about her life and circumstances? Bennett has illustrated how labor legislation was routinely used to force single women, and even wives, to work, but most of the examples she provides are from rural settings.<sup>48</sup> It is unclear how such compulsory service might have worked in London, and how far it might have

43. LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/107, Husting Court Roll 1379–80, m. 11d.

44. LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/110, Husting Court Roll 1382–3, m. 18d.

45. LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/111, Husting Court Roll 1383–4, m. 5d.

46. LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/112, Husting Court Roll 1384–5, m. 16d.

47. LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/102, Husting Court Roll 1375–6.

48. Bennett, "Compulsory Service."

been applied to women of Chaumpaigne's comparatively privileged status. Jeremy Goldberg suggests from York evidence that single women commonly worked in a variety of different households, building up a range of skill and experience. He cites as a characteristic case Margaret Hall of York, servant first to a goldsmith, then to a chandler, and finally to his widow.<sup>49</sup> How far might Chaumpaigne have followed a similar path? How characteristic was such an experience for the younger daughter of a well-to-do London merchant? How unusual was Chaumpaigne in remaining as a single woman in her thirties? What was the life of a single woman in London at that time like? These are all questions worth investigating, and we owe it to Cecily Chaumpaigne's memory to try to explore them.

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49. P. J. P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c.1300–1520* (Oxford, 1992), 335.