

## INTRODUCTION

Lady Anne Bacon (c.1528–1610) was a woman who inspired strong emotion in her own lifetime. As a girl, she was praised as a ‘verteouse meynen’ for her religious translations, while a rejected suitor condemned her as faithless as an ancient Greek temptress.<sup>1</sup> The Spanish ambassador reported home that, as a married woman, she was a tiresomely learned lady, whereas her husband celebrated the time they spent reading classical literature together.<sup>2</sup> During her widowhood, she was ‘beloved’ of the godly preachers surrounding her in Hertfordshire; Godfrey Goodman, later bishop of Gloucester, instead argued that she was ‘little better than frantic in her age’.<sup>3</sup> Anne’s own letters allow a more balanced exploration of her life. An unusually large number are still extant; she is one of the select group of Elizabethan women whose surviving correspondence includes over fifty of the letters they wrote themselves, a group that incorporates her sister, Lady Elizabeth Russell, and the noblewoman Bess of Hardwick, the countess of Shrewsbury.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>G.B., ‘To the Christen Reader’, in B. Ochino, *Fourtene sermons of Barnadine Ochyne, concerning the predestinacion and eleccion of god*, trans. A[nne] C[ooke] (London, 1551), sig. A2r. For Walter Haddon’s comparison of Anne to Cressida, a character from ancient Greek mythology, see BL, Lansdowne MS 98, fo. 252r.

<sup>2</sup>M.A.S. Hume (ed.), *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas, 1558–1603*, 4 vols (1892–1899), I, p. 20; N. Bacon, *The Recreations of His Age* (Oxford, 1919), p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>T.W. [Thomas Wilcox], *A short, yet sound commentarie; written on that woorthie worke called; the Proverbes of Salomon* (London, 1589), sig. A3r; G. Goodman, *The Court of King James the First*, ed. J.S. Brewer, 2 vols (London, 1839), I, p. 285. Goodman was writing many years after Anne’s death. For more on Goodman’s characterization of Anne, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 219–220.

<sup>4</sup>Both these women have recently had new editions compiled of their correspondence. See P. Phillippy (ed.), *The Writings of an English Sappho (Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell, 1540–1609)* (Toronto, 2012), and the online edition of the letters of Bess of Hardwick, <http://www.bessofhardwick.org/>. There are over seventy extant letters written by Elizabeth Bourne in the 1570s and 1580s, as well as a rich body of surviving letters of Joan and Maria Thynne. See J. Daybell, ‘Elizabeth Bourne (fl. 1570s–1580s): a new Elizabethan woman poet’, *Notes and Queries*, 52 (2005), pp. 176–178; A. Wall (ed.), *Two Elizabethan Women: correspondence of Joan and Maria Thynne, 1575–1611*, Wiltshire Record Society 38 (Devizes, 1983). There are over a hundred surviving letters written by Arbella Stuart, although many of these are Jacobean: see S.J. Steen (ed.), *The Letters of Lady Arbella Stuart* (Oxford, 1994).

Anne's letters have never been entirely forgotten. Thomas Birch's 1754 *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* included some extracts from her correspondence and in 1861 James Spedding included whole transcriptions of a small number of Anne's letters in the first volume of his work on her son, as did William Hepworth Dixon in his biography of Francis Bacon.<sup>5</sup> While these were valuable resources, they only made accessible a very small proportion of Anne Bacon's surviving correspondence. However, in manuscript form Anne's letters have continued to receive attention from scholars working on her sons and their wider circle and, in recent years, they have started to be studied for what they reveal about Anne herself.<sup>6</sup> A primary obstacle which surely prevents more scholars from using the letters is Anne's handwriting. It has been despairingly described as 'hardly legible' and 'indecipherable'; without long and painful acquaintance, it is decidedly impenetrable.<sup>7</sup>

This edition brings together for the first time nearly two hundred of the letters which Anne sent and received, scattered in repositories throughout the world. It allows fresh light to be shed on Anne's life and

<sup>5</sup>T. Birch, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, 2 vols (London, 1754); *Bacon Letters and Life*, I; W.H. Dixon, *The Personal History of Lord Bacon: from unpublished papers* (London, 1861). Gustav Ungerer included two letters in his work on the correspondence of Antonio Pérez: G. Ungerer, *The Correspondence of Antonio Pérez's Exile*, 2 vols (London, 1974–1976), I, pp. 219–221.

<sup>6</sup>For the use of Anne's manuscript letters by those working on her sons, see especially *Troubled Life*. Paul Hammer also made use of her correspondence in his work on the earl of Essex: see 'Patronage at court: faction and the earl of Essex', in J. Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I: court and culture in the last decade* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 65–86; *idem*, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the political career of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, 1585–1597* (Cambridge, 1999). For work on Anne Bacon herself, see M.E. Lamb, 'The Cooke sisters: attitudes toward learned women in the Renaissance', in M.P. Hannay (ed.), *Silent but for the Word* (Kent, OH, 1985), pp. 107–25; A. Stewart, 'The voices of Anne Cooke, Lady Anne and Lady Bacon', in D. Clarke and E. Clarke (eds), *This Double Voice: gendered writing in early modern England* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 88–102; L. Magnusson, 'Widowhood and linguistic capital: the rhetoric and reception of Anne Bacon's epistolary advice', *English Literary Renaissance*, 31 (2001), pp. 3–33; J. Daybell, *Women Letter-writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006); K. Mair, 'Anne, Lady Bacon: a life in letters' (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen Mary, University of London, 2009); G. Allen, "'A briefe and plaine declaration": Lady Anne Bacon's 1564 translation of the *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*', in P. Hardman and A. Lawrence-Mathers (eds), *Women and Writing, c.1340–c.1650: the domestication of print culture* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 62–76; G. Allen, 'Education, piety and politics: the Cooke sisters and women's agency, c. 1526–1610' (unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford, 2010); L. Magnusson, 'Imagining a national church: election and education in the works of Anne Cooke Bacon', in J. Harris and E. Scott-Baumann (eds), *The Intellectual Culture of Puritan Women, 1558–1680* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 42–56; J. Daybell, 'Women, news and intelligence networks in Elizabethan England', in R.J. Adams and R. Cox (eds), *Diplomacy and Early Modern Culture* (Basingstoke, 2010), pp. 101–119; K. Mair, 'Material lies: parental anxiety and epistolary practice in the correspondence of Anne, Lady Bacon and Anthony Bacon', *Lives and Letters*, 4 (2012), pp. 58–74; G. Allen, *The Cooke Sisters: education, piety and politics in early modern England* (Manchester, 2013).

<sup>7</sup>Ungerer, *Antonio Pérez's Exile*, I, p. 220; Daybell, *Women Letter-writers*, p. 96.

on her wider circle, including her children, her sisters, and her privy councillor relatives, as well as controversial figures such as the earl of Essex. Freed from the difficulties of Anne's handwriting, this edition makes accessible the more productive challenges which her letters pose to our knowledge of early modern women. Her correspondence allows us to question, for example, the practical utility of a humanist education for sixteenth-century women, as well as the extent of their political knowledge, from their involvement in parliamentary and local politics to their understanding of political news and intelligence. Furthermore, Anne's letters provide insights into her understanding of diverse issues, including estate management, patronage networks, finance, and medicine, as well as allowing an exploration of her religious views and her experience of motherhood and widowhood.

Although the edition that follows includes letters from all but the first decade of Anne's life, the coverage is uneven. Most of the letters date from after the death of her husband, Nicholas Bacon, in 1579; more particularly, the main body of her surviving letters are those exchanged between Anne and her son Anthony after his return to England in 1592. The types of letters included in this edition also vary: the published, dedicatory letters, which are concentrated in the earlier decades of Anne's life, have a very different function and audience in mind than the quotidian correspondence exchanged between Anne and Anthony during her widowhood, often written in haste. The introduction that follows seeks to outline Anne's biography and the thematic content of the letters, before considering the nature of the archive in more detail and the material issues which influence the reading of her correspondence.

## Early life

Anne Bacon was born around 1528 at Gidea Hall in Essex. She was the second of five daughters and four sons born to Sir Anthony Cooke and his wife; her sister Mildred had been born in 1526, and Anne's birth was followed by those of three other sisters, Margaret, Elizabeth, and Katherine. Of her four brothers, Anthony and Edward died while still young, but Richard and William both lived to serve as MPs.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup>Anne noted her brother Anthony's death of the sweating sickness in her Greek copy of Moschopolus's *De ratione examinandae orationis libellus* (Paris, 1545): see p. 5, n. 16. Edward Cooke died in France, shortly after accompanying his sister Elizabeth and her ambassador husband, Thomas Hoby, to Paris. For more details on these brothers, see M.K. McIntosh, 'Sir Anthony Cooke: Tudor humanist, educator, and religious reformer', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 119 (1975), p. 239. For Richard and William Cooke, see S.T.

Anne was named after her mother, who was the daughter of Sir William Fitzwilliam, a merchant tailor and sheriff of London, and later Northampton.<sup>9</sup> Her father, Anthony Cooke, was also politically well connected. After the death of his father, John Cooke, in 1516, he had been raised by his uncle Richard Cooke, a diplomatic courier for Henry VIII, and his stepmother, Margaret Pennington, lady-in-waiting to Katherine of Aragon.<sup>10</sup> Anthony Cooke was renowned for his humanist education and he acted as a tutor to Edward VI, most probably as a reader after the retirement of Richard Cox in 1550.<sup>11</sup> It seems that his contemporaries regarded Cooke as largely self-taught and there is no evidence that he attended university.<sup>12</sup>

## Education

Sir Anthony Cooke's greatest claim to posthumous reputation is that he provided both his sons and his daughters with a thorough humanist education, in both classical and modern languages.<sup>13</sup> The Cooke sisters were lauded in their youth for their remarkable learning. Anne was singled out for particular praise in 1551, when John Coke wrote that 'we have dyvers gentywomen in Englande, which be not onely well estudied in holy Scripture, but also in Greek and Latyn tonges as maystres More, mastryes Anne Coke, maystres Clement, and others'.<sup>14</sup> Walter Haddon described a visit he made to the Cooke household: 'While I stayed there,' he wrote, 'I seemed to be living among the Tusculans, except that the studies of women were flourishing in this Tuscany'.<sup>15</sup> The Cooke household was therefore acclaimed as a little academy, in which the girls were educated alongside their brothers, reading the same texts. In a copy, in the original Greek,

Bindoff (ed.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1509–1558*, 3 vols (London, 1982), I, p. 691; *History of Parliament*, I, pp. 646–647.

<sup>9</sup>M. Davies, 'Sir William Fitzwilliam', *ODNB*.

<sup>10</sup>M.K. McIntosh, 'The Cooke family of Gidea Hall, Essex, 1460–1661' (unpublished PhD thesis, Harvard University, 1967), p. 12.

<sup>11</sup>McIntosh, 'Sir Anthony Cooke', p. 241.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>13</sup>Marjorie McIntosh suggests that Cooke started serious study in the 1530s and may have pursued his education at much the same time as his children. See *ibid.*, pp. 235, 237, 240.

<sup>14</sup>The 'maystres More' and 'maystres Clement' to whom Coke referred were Thomas More's daughter and his adopted daughter, respectively Margaret More, later Roper, and Margaret Giggs Clement. See J. Coke, *The debate betwene the Heraldes of Englande and Fraunce* (London, 1550), sig. K1r.

<sup>15</sup>'*Equidem ibi versans, in Tusculanis mihi videbar vivere, nisi quod foeminarum etiam in hoc Tusculano vigeat industria.*' W. Haddon, *G. Haddoni Legum Doctoris . . . lucubrationes* (London, 1567), sig. R2r.

of Moschopulus' *De ratione examinandae orationis libellus* (Paris, 1545), Anne wrote the following inscription: 'My father delyvered this booke to me and my brother Anthony, who was myne elder brother and scoolefellow with me, to follow for wrytyng of Greke'.<sup>16</sup>

Alongside Greek, Anne's childhood education included schooling in Latin and Hebrew, as well as Italian, which she used to translate the sermons of the Italian evangelical Bernardino Ochino. In the prefatory letter which she appended to the first volume of her translated sermons, the twenty-year-old Anne described herself as a 'begynner' in Italian, although that may have been an expression of modesty rather than the literal truth (†). Together with her sisters, Anne's schooling also covered the five-part *studia humanitatis*, extolled by sixteenth-century educationalists, which consisted of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, moral philosophy, and history. Furthermore, her sisters Mildred and Elizabeth were interested in logic and dialectic, so it is possible that Anne also read works on those subjects.<sup>17</sup>

One result of this education was that it enabled Anne to become a translator. Bernardino Ochino had been invited to England in 1548 by Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, to assist with the reform of the English church. In the same year, Anne translated five of his sermons, the text being published anonymously.<sup>18</sup> By 1551, she had translated another fourteen of his sermons, which were published in two editions that year. One was an anonymous amalgamation of all of Anne's translations, plus a reprint of six of Ochino's sermons rendered into English by Richard Argentine in 1548.<sup>19</sup> The other 1551 edition contained only Anne's fourteen new sermons, this time printed under her own name.<sup>20</sup> Thus, by 1551, Anne was known as a published translator in her own right. These publications were Anne's contribution to the evangelical cause. In the prefatory letter to her second set of Ochino translations, she describes her mother's previous dislike of her Italian studies, 'syns God thereby is no whytte magnified'

<sup>16</sup>This quotation is included in an anonymous cutting held by Essex Record Office: Sage 773. I have located its original context as a note by a 'J.H. Mn' on 'Lord Bacon's mother' included in *Notes and Queries*, 95 (1857), 327. However, I have not been able to locate Anne's volume of Moschopulus.

<sup>17</sup>For a reconstruction of Anne's education and that of her sisters through their reading material, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 18–55.

<sup>18</sup>B. Ochino, *Sermons of Barnadine Ochine of Sena godlye, frutefull, and very necessarye for all true Christians*, trans. anon (London, 1548).

<sup>19</sup>B. Ochino, *Certayne Sermons of the ryghte famous and excellent Clerk Master Barnadine Ochine*, trans. anon (London, 1551). These twenty-five sermons were also reprinted in 1570, but then they were published as Anne's work: B. Ochino, *Sermons of Barnadine Ochyne (to the number of 25) concerning the predestinacion and eleccion of god*, trans. A[nn]e C[ooke] (London, 1570).

<sup>20</sup>B. Ochino, *Fouretene sermons of Barnadine Ochyne, concerning the predestinacion and eleccion of god*, trans. A[nn]e C[ooke] (London, 1551).

(2). In dedicating this work to her mother, Anne emphasizes that the activity fulfilled her mother's insistence on godly labour and the letter makes clear her developing Calvinist beliefs in God's determination 'wythout begynnynge, al thynyes [. . .] to hys immutable wyll'.

Anne's scholarly pursuits continued after her marriage to Nicholas Bacon in 1553, shown by her 1564 translation into English of John Jewel's *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*. The production of Jewel's original Latin tract was closely associated with her husband's political circle, particularly William Cecil, her brother-in-law.<sup>21</sup> One of the major challenges facing the nascent Church of England during the early Elizabethan period was ensuring the preaching of the word to the laity. Close analysis of Anne's text reveals her intention to use her translation to engage with these issues, offering a creed for the Church of England, written for a wide readership in plain English.<sup>22</sup> However, the prefatory letter to the first published edition of the translation, written to Anne by Matthew Parker, the archbishop of Canterbury, chooses to present her text very differently. Parker suggests that Anne conceived the translation as a private, domestic act. He writes that he instigated its publication without her knowledge, stating that such action was necessary 'to prevent suche excuses as your modestie woulde have made in stave of publishinge it' (6). The presentation of Anne's translation in the prefatory letter is a deliberate framing device, designed to obscure any suggestion that this translation fulfilled official needs, yet Catholic observers astutely saw through such a ruse. Richard Verstegan later acknowledged Anne's role as translator, perceiving it as part of William Cecil and Nicholas Bacon's 'plot and fortification of this newe erected synagog', accurately identifying the usefulness of Anne's work to the early Elizabethan Church of England.<sup>23</sup>

Beyond her activities as a translator, Anne's letters reveal the impact of her humanist training more widely. Five of her letters are written entirely in Latin. She sent two Latin letters to the theologian, Théodore de Bèze; she also received three letters written completely in Latin, including one from her sister Mildred.<sup>24</sup> The majority of

<sup>21</sup>J.E. Booty, *John Jewel as Apologist of the Church of England* (London, 1963), pp. 42–45; Hume, *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, I, p. 201.

<sup>22</sup>For analysis of Anne's intentions with her translation of the *Apologia*, see Allen, 'Lady Anne Bacon's 1564 translation'. For a later analysis, see P. Demers, "'Neither bitterly nor brabblingly': Lady Anne Cooke Bacon's translation of Bishop Jewel's *Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*", in M. White (ed.), *English Women, Religion, and Textual Production, 1500–1625* (Aldershot, 2011), pp. 205–218.

<sup>23</sup>R. Verstegan, *A Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles* (Antwerp, 1592), p. 12.

<sup>24</sup>For the letters to Bèze, see 16, 17. For the Latin letters written to Anne, see 3, 20, 111. 35 is also primarily written by Anne in Latin. However, she also included an English postscript.

Anne's own letters are written in English, but even in these letters she frequently included odd lines in Latin, Greek, and, more rarely, Hebrew. She turned to classical languages when trying to conceal the contents of her letters, as will be discussed later, or particularly when seeking to persuade her correspondents. Such a motivation was behind her regular adoption of a sententious writing style in her letters. Through classical *sententiae*, pithy moral quotations, Anne was able to access the persuasive power of the cited authors in her correspondence. For example, she used Seneca's wisdom in his *Moral Epistles* to bolster her unwelcome advice to her son Anthony regarding his ungodly choice of friends.<sup>25</sup> Along with Seneca, Anne cited Publilius Syrus, Terence, Horace, and Pindar, as well as drawing on her reading of *The Life of Severus Alexander*.<sup>26</sup> Biblical quotations abound in her letters, unsurprisingly given that Anne described scripture as the 'infallible touchstone' of all believers (19). Although she used acknowledged and unacknowledged citations from both the Old and New Testaments in her letters, the greatest proportion of biblical quotations in her correspondence is drawn from the New Testament epistles, fittingly given the genre in which she was writing.<sup>27</sup> In acknowledgement of her learning, Anne's correspondents also frequently adopted a sententious style in their letters to her. Matthew Parker consciously employed such a style when seeking to persuade Anne to intervene with her husband on his behalf in 1568, quoting in Latin from scripture, particularly the Psalms, as well as from Sallust and Horace.<sup>28</sup> Anne's humanist learning is therefore a constant presence in letters from throughout her life.

## Marriage

In February 1553 Anne Cooke married Nicholas Bacon, as his second wife; Nicholas Bacon was a close friend of William Cecil, who had married Anne's sister Mildred in 1545. However, Anne had earlier been courted by Walter Haddon, shortly before he was appointed Master of Magdalen College, Oxford.<sup>29</sup> Haddon sought the assistance of both William and Mildred Cecil in his suit and when Mildred wrote to her sister to advise that she accept Haddon's hand, she

<sup>25</sup>See 113.

<sup>26</sup>See 96, 100, 109, 120, 142, 148, 186.

<sup>27</sup>For detailed engagement with Anne's use of scriptural citation, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 109–111.

<sup>28</sup>See 7. Nathaniel Bacon, Anne's stepson, also quoted one of Erasmus' *Colloquies* to his stepmother in a petitionary letter (8).

<sup>29</sup>For more on Haddon's appointment, see p. 55, n. 20, below.

chose to correspond in Latin (3).<sup>30</sup> Their shared knowledge of the classical language was appropriate for a letter so concerned with the importance of humanist education in sixteenth-century society, but, in spite of her sister's counsel, Anne eventually chose Nicholas Bacon instead of Haddon.<sup>31</sup>

The death of Edward VI ushered in an anxious period for the couple, as they were both well known for their Protestant convictions; not only was Anne the translator of the evangelical Bernardino Ochino, but Nicholas had been closely involved with many of those advancing religious reform during Edward's reign.<sup>32</sup> On the accession of Mary I, Anne had ridden to join her at Kenninghall in Norfolk and had pledged her support to the new queen. She was thus instrumental in securing Mary's goodwill towards her husband and her brother-in-law, William Cecil, who had been a reluctant witness to the king's instrument to alter the succession. Kenninghall was Robert Wingfield's house and he recorded that Anne was 'their chief aid in beseeching pardon for them'.<sup>33</sup> In many ways, Anne's actions in 1553 were fortuitous and contingent on circumstance, for Kenninghall was but a few miles from where the Bacons were then living at Redgrave in Suffolk, but they also reveal her understanding of the unfolding political events.<sup>34</sup>

The Bacons outwardly conformed during Mary's reign, but the years were ones of seclusion. The couple were comforted by their learning; Nicholas Bacon wrote a poem celebrating their shared intellectual interests, which concluded with the following verse:

Thinkeinge alsoe with howe good will  
 The idle tymes whiche yrkesome be  
 You have made shorte throwe your good skill  
 In readeinge pleasante thinges to me.  
 Whereof profite we bothe did se,  
 As wittenes can if they could speake  
 Bothe your Tullye and my Senecke.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>30</sup>For Haddon's letter to William Cecil regarding the match, see BL, Lansdowne MS 3, fo. 19r.

<sup>31</sup>For possible reasons for Anne's rejection of Haddon, see 3.

<sup>32</sup>R. Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon: the making of a Tudor statesman* (London, 1976), pp. 19–20, 52.

<sup>33</sup>D. MacCulloch, 'The *Vita Mariae Angliae Reginae* of Robert Wingfield of Brantham', *Camden Miscellany* 28, Camden Society, 4th series, 29 (London, 1984), p. 270.

<sup>34</sup>See Tittler, *Nicholas Bacon*, p. 53. For Anne's political awareness in seeking pardon for her husband and brother-in-law, see *Cooke Sisters*, p. 124.

<sup>35</sup>N. Bacon, *The Recreations of His Age* (Oxford, 1919), p. 27. By 'your Tullye and my Senecke', Nicholas Bacon was referring to Cicero and Seneca.

However, these years were not simply filled with intellectual pleasures. Later letters provide evidence of Anne's domestic skills. Her correspondence reveals that she taught other women how to brew and that she had some culinary knowledge: 'Trowts must be boyled as soone as possible because they say a faynt harted fysh' (143).<sup>36</sup> A verse written about Anne by the clergyman Andrew Willett confirms her expertise in 'huswifery'.<sup>37</sup>

The Bacons' fortunes rose with the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558, as Nicholas Bacon was shortly after made a privy councillor and lord keeper of the great seal. His position was a source of great pride for Anne, who long into her widowhood recalled her status as a 'cheeff counsellour's wyffe' and widow of the lord keeper (131).<sup>38</sup> Nicholas bought Gorhambury manor in Hertfordshire in 1560; construction of a new house there was complete by 1568 and thereafter much of the couple's time was split between Hertfordshire and residence at York House in London. The marriage seems to have been a happy one. Anne's frequent postscripts to Nicholas' letters reveal her intimacy with the contents of his personal correspondence (see figure 1).<sup>39</sup> She was perceived by others to hold considerable power over her husband: Matthew Parker described her in his letter from February 1568 as Nicholas Bacon's '*alter ipse*', his other self (7). Parker was loath to write to Nicholas directly, fearing the reception to his overture, but he was convinced that Anne would persuade her husband to help him ensure godly preaching for the people of Norwich.

While wife of the lord keeper, Anne contributed a Latin verse to an Italian manuscript treatise entitled the *Giardino cosmografico*; the work was compiled by Bartholo Sylva, a physician from Turin and Protestant convert seeking favour from the earl of Leicester.<sup>40</sup> Her sister Katherine and Anne Locke, another contemporary female translator, also wrote dedicatory verses for the treatise in 1571.<sup>41</sup> A little over a year later, the volume became a vehicle to regain courtly favour for Anne Locke's husband, the ostracized godly clergyman Edward Dering, at which point Anne's sisters Mildred and Elizabeth contributed Greek dedicatory poems.<sup>42</sup> Nicholas Bacon became the primary examiner of Edward Dering when he was called before the Star Chamber in 1573,

<sup>36</sup> For Anne's tuition in brewing, see 127.

<sup>37</sup> A. Willet, *Sacrorum emblematum centuria una* (Cambridge, 1592), sig. F1v.

<sup>38</sup> For subscriptions referencing Anne as widow of the Lord Keeper, see 16, 17, and 193.

<sup>39</sup> See 4, 10. Her sister Mildred was likewise widely thought to read her husband's correspondence. See *Cooke Sisters*, p. 135.

<sup>40</sup> For her verse, see Cambridge University Library, li.v.37, fo. 8r.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> For their poems, see *ibid.*, fo. 5v. For more detail on the Cooke sisters' involvement with this volume, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 169–172.

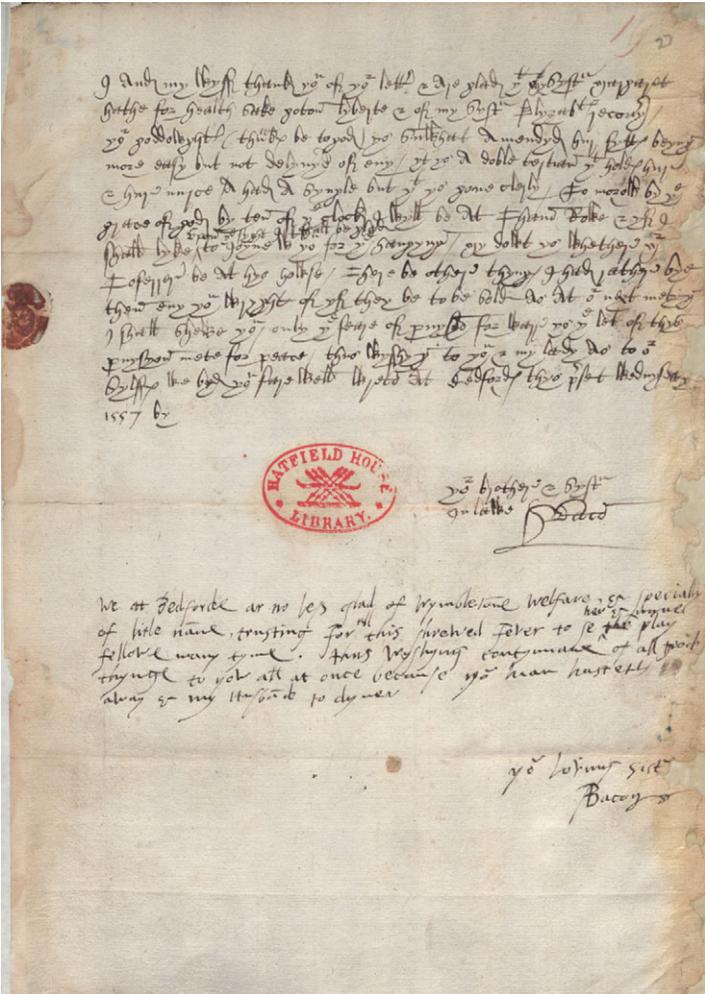


Figure 1. Nicholas and Anne Bacon to William Cecil, 18 August 1557 (4).

and so Anne’s name was partially erased from the manuscript, with only her initials remaining and the spaces for the name which would once have read ‘Anna Baconia’.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup>Cambridge University Library, Ii.v.37, fo. 8r.

## Motherhood

The marriage brought multiple pregnancies, but only two of Anne's children survived into adulthood, Anthony and Francis Bacon. John Walsall, the Bacons' household chaplain, later praised the couple's care in 'demeaning your selves in the education of your children' (14). Anne's memories of her sons' boyhoods occasionally come to the fore in her later letters: when she sent pigeons to the adult Anthony and Francis, she sent more birds to her younger son, explaining to Anthony that Francis 'was wont to love them better then yow from a boy' (126).

Anne was also close to at least some of her stepchildren during her husband's lifetime. In a letter from 1579, she referred to the long 'continuance of more then common amytee' shared with her stepson Nicholas, and a similarly close relationship is testified to by the extant correspondence between Anne and Nathaniel Bacon, prior to her husband's death (15). Nathaniel arranged for his stepmother to be involved in the education of his wife shortly after their marriage.<sup>44</sup> Anne Gresham Bacon was the acknowledged illegitimate daughter of Sir Thomas Gresham and a household servant. In order that she acquire the gloss of a gentlewoman, Nathaniel arranged 'to have her placed' with his stepmother (8). Anne Gresham Bacon wrote to her stepmother-in-law after her return from Gorhambury, stating herself to be 'greatly bounden to yow for the great care that yow alwaies had of my well doinge duringe my beinge with yow' (9). Relations were still close in 1573, when Anne Bacon was asked by Nathaniel and his wife to act as godmother to their new daughter; Anne asked her stepdaughter Elizabeth to deputize for her at the christening.<sup>45</sup>

Nicholas Bacon died on 20 February 1579. His will made thorough provision for Anne and it also detailed bequests to the children of both his marriages.<sup>46</sup> However, the magnitude of the late lord keeper's debts led both branches of the family to dispute their inheritance and William Cecil, by then Lord Burghley, was sought to intervene. The matter was eventually settled by 1580, although Anne's relationship with her stepsons Nicholas and Nathaniel thereafter seems to have been strained.<sup>47</sup> Although Anne mentioned Nicholas in a later letter,

<sup>44</sup>See 8.

<sup>45</sup>See 12 and 13.

<sup>46</sup>Anne received a life interest in Gorhambury manor in Hertfordshire and in the lease and copyhold lands surrounding the estate, the remnant of the lease of York House in London, and sheep stocks from her stepson Nicholas from Ingham and Tymworth in Suffolk, properties related to her jointure. She also received plate, jewels, horses, coaches, litters, and the household stuff from York House, as well as half the household contents at Gorhambury. See *Stiffkey*, II, pp. 25–29.

<sup>47</sup>For more details on this dispute, see 15.

his message was relayed via another family member.<sup>48</sup> Two years later, Anne did not know in advance that her stepdaughter Elizabeth would marry Sir William Peryam, lord chief baron of the exchequer.<sup>49</sup> However, Anne's last known letter is to Nicholas, reminding him to pay her annuity on time; there she describes herself as 'Your Lordship's mother, in the Lord, very frend' (197).

On the death of Nicholas Bacon I, Anne's elder son, Anthony Bacon, decided to use his inheritance to travel, first to Paris, with the aim of sending intelligence back to his uncle, Lord Burghley, and to Francis Walsingham. In 1581, he moved on to Geneva and stayed with the theologian Théodore de Bèze. Anne felt that the theologian would provide particularly trustworthy paternal guidance, as shown by her letters to Bèze from that year (16 and 17). Anthony's travels then took him to various French cities, with his continued absence from England authorized by the queen.<sup>50</sup> Walsingham's secretary, Nicholas Faunt, kept Anne apprised of her son's movements on the Continent; in April 1582, he reported back to Anthony that he had met Lady Bacon in Burghley's garden and had answered her questions 'in all such demand[s] as you may imagin shee did make, touching your estate of health, being, moction of employing your tyme, charges of lving in those partes, and purpose of further travayle'.<sup>51</sup>

By October 1584, Anthony was resident in the Huguenot town of Montauban, collecting information from Henry of Navarre's court to report back to England.<sup>52</sup> Increasingly, his continued stay in France caused consternation, never more so than with his mother. In April 1585, Anne petitioned the queen 'with importune show' to insist on her son's return; by the end of 1586, she was refusing to send funds to Anthony.<sup>53</sup> She particularly feared his friendships with the English Catholic figures Thomas Lawson, a servant, and Anthony Standen, a double agent now working for his home country. Lawson felt the effects of Lady Bacon's wrath when sent as a messenger to England in 1588. He was imprisoned for ten months by Burghley, the result of what Anthony later described as 'my mother's passionate importunitie, grounded uppon false suggestions and surmyses'.<sup>54</sup> Another messenger, Captain Francis Allen, reported Anne's state of mind in August 1589 regarding her son's continued Continental sojourn: 'she let not to say

<sup>48</sup> See 102.

<sup>49</sup> See 138 and also 140.

<sup>50</sup> *Troubled Life*, pp. 87, 94.

<sup>51</sup> LPL 647, fo. 125r.

<sup>52</sup> *Troubled Life*, p. 102.

<sup>53</sup> LPL 647, fos 189r and 219r. J.T. Freedman, 'Anthony Bacon and his world, 1558–1601' (unpublished PhD thesis, Temple University, 1979), p. 80.

<sup>54</sup> LPL 659, fo. 25r.

you ar a traire to God and your contry. You have undone her; you sieke her death, and when you hav that you sieke for you shall have but on [*sic*] hundreded pounds mor then you hav now'.<sup>55</sup> By 1591, Anne was even more resolute to procure Anthony's return; the godly preacher Thomas Cartwright found that he could not persuade her to soften her stance towards her son in this regard, nor induce her to a better opinion of his companion, Thomas Lawson.<sup>56</sup>

There is no evidence, however, that Anne knew of Anthony's prosecution on charges of sodomy in France in 1586.<sup>57</sup> She received a letter during this period from Michel Berault, the minister in Montauban, explaining her son's continued absence in France and alluding to the fact that she might hear 'some more serious opinion' of him; in that case, Berault argued, Anne must 'immediately set aside the matter' (20). It is possible that Berault wrote this during the summer of 1586 in response to Anthony's arrest; it could also refer to the hostility that Philippe du Plessis-Mornay and his wife held towards Anthony at this time.<sup>58</sup> However, Anne's later letters make fleeting allusions to both her sons' almost entirely masculine lifestyles.<sup>59</sup> She lamented their lack of wives and her consequent lack of grandchildren, in terms that recalled Anthony's Continental exile: 'I shulde have ben happy to have seene chylder's chylder, but Franncce spoyled me and myne' (188).

### Anthony's return: a mother's political counsel

Anthony's return to England in February 1592 marks the start of a voluminous correspondence between mother and son; Anne initially welcomed her son back to the country by letter.<sup>60</sup> A major concern

<sup>55</sup>LPL 647, fo. 245r.

<sup>56</sup>A. Pearson, *Thomas Cartwright and Elizabethan Puritanism, 1535–1603* (Cambridge, 1925), pp. 464–465.

<sup>57</sup>For Anthony's prosecution, see *Troubled Life*, pp. 108–111.

<sup>58</sup>Alan Haynes has suggested that Anthony's prosecution was connected to his dispute with Madame du Plessis-Mornay. For more details, see p. 93, n. 178, and A. Haynes, *Invisible Power: the Elizabethan secret services, 1570–1603* (Stroud, 1994), pp. 105–106.

<sup>59</sup>For her condemnation of 'that bloody Peerce', as Anthony's 'coch companion and bed companion', see 44 and 45.

<sup>60</sup>See 22. For discussion of other early modern women's maternal letters of advice, see L. Mitchell, 'Entertainment and instruction: women's roles in the English epistolary tradition', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 66 (2003), pp. 331–347; R. Anselment, 'Katherine Paston and Brilliana Harley: maternal letters and the genre of mother's advice', *Studies in Philology*, 101 (2004), pp. 431–453; Daybell, *Women Letter-writers*, pp. 179–182.

of this letter, and subsequent correspondence, was how her newly returned son should advance himself in England. The secretary Nicholas Faunt was suggested as a suitable companion, described by Anne as ‘one that feareth God in dede, and wyse with all having experience of our state’ (22). She was concerned that without a detailed knowledge of past political affairs, Anthony would be a poor judge of his new acquaintances. ‘Beleve not every one that speakes fayre to yow at your fyrst comming’, she told him; ‘It is to serve their turn’ (25). His understanding of state matters was a particular cause of anxiety: ‘Yow have ben long absent and by your sickliness cannot be your own agent and so wanting right judgment of our state may be much deceived’ (32).

For Anne, the combination of her educational background and her hard-earned political experience was a potent one: ‘I think for my long attending in coorte and a cheeff counsellour’s wyffe few *preclaræ feminae meae sortis* are able or be alyve to speak and judg of such proceedings and worldly doings of men’ (131).<sup>61</sup> Her warning to Anthony about the duplicitous nature of the countess of Warwick, a gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber and one of the queen’s closest intimates during this period, was therefore based on past experience.<sup>62</sup> Her sense of political intelligence was not simply self-aggrandisement. Her political understanding was acknowledged by Matthew Parker: in comparing Nicholas Bacon to three former lord chancellors, Thomas More, Thomas Audley, and Thomas Goodrich, Parker assumed Anne’s knowledge of these late politicians. The freedom with which Parker discussed his affairs with Anne contrasts with his statement that he had not spoken of any such matters with his own wife, Margaret Harleston Parker, a woman whom he admitted as being not without ‘reason and godlynes’ (7).<sup>63</sup>

After the death of their father in 1579, the assistance of their uncle, William Cecil, Lord Burghley, was crucial to Anthony’s and Francis’ career advancement. Francis, for example, sought help in September 1580 from the lord treasurer and his aunt Mildred in obtaining an honorary legal post from the queen.<sup>64</sup> On his return from Europe in 1592, Anthony Bacon and his mother expected that Burghley would aid his career. Anne approached Burghley in August 1593 but, while his subsequent letter declared his goodwill towards his nephews, it lacked

<sup>61</sup>For translations of the foreign languages included in the Introduction, see the relevant letter.

<sup>62</sup>See 140.

<sup>63</sup>For more on Margaret Harleston Parker, see p. 62, n. 57.

<sup>64</sup>See *Troubled Life*, p. 80; *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 145–146.

any practical assurance to further Anthony and Francis.<sup>65</sup> Anne also approached Robert Cecil in January 1595 regarding Francis' bid for the post of solicitor-general; after the latter's assurances that his father was seeking to advance his nephew with the queen, Anne concluded that Robert Cecil's 'spech was all kindly owtward and dyd desyre to have me think so of him' (116).

Despite such protestations, there is an increasing sense of unease regarding Anne's perception of her Cecil kin. Anne told Anthony in March 1594 that he should be careful in his 'use' of his relatives, particularly Burghley (98). Such suspicions were only increased upon the appointment in July 1596 of Robert Cecil to the post of principal secretary, after which Anne told her son, 'He now hath great avantage [*sic*] and strength to intercept, prevent and to toy where he hath ben or is, sonne, be it emulation or suspicion, yow know what termes he standeth in toward your self [...] The father and sonne are affectionate, joynd in power and policy' (158). Anthony kept his mother informed of changes in his relationship with his cousin; he told her in December 1596 that Robert Cecil had declared any past ill will as forgotten, with 'earnest protestation [...] he would be gladd and redye to doe me any kinde office' (183). Such information would have been welcome to Anne; despite her concern regarding Robert Cecil's goodwill towards her sons, he and his father had long been recipients of her more general requests for patronage.<sup>66</sup>

The failure of Burghley to act as a patron meant that Anthony and Francis Bacon sought the advancement of another well-connected figure, Robert Devereux, the second earl of Essex. Francis' friendship with Essex had begun in the late 1580s and he introduced his brother to the earl on his return in 1592. When the position of master of the rolls became vacant in early 1593, it was widely assumed that it would be filled by the current attorney-general, Thomas Egerton. Essex thus tried to secure the post of attorney-general for Francis Bacon; Anthony relayed his efforts with the queen to Anne.<sup>67</sup> Anthony declared to his mother in September 1593 that the earl was 'more like a father then a frende' towards Francis Bacon, arguing that, if only Lord Burghley would join with Essex, then Francis would succeed in his attempts at preferment (69). However, the Cecils sought to place Edward Coke as attorney-general; Francis, they suggested, would do better to try for Coke's post as solicitor-general. Anthony informed his mother, in minute detail, of the earl's efforts on Francis' behalf, reporting that Essex told their cousin Robert Cecil, 'Digest me noe digestinge, for the

<sup>65</sup>See 67.

<sup>66</sup>See 19, 109, 132, 193.

<sup>67</sup>See letters 52, 60, and 85.

Attourniship is that I must have for Francis Bacon' (85). When Edward Coke was made attorney-general on 10 April 1594, Francis' attentions shifted to securing Coke's old position. His mother, however, feared that his continued struggle for preferment was affecting his well-being, writing that her younger son 'hindreth his health' with 'inwarde secret greeff' (140).

Despite Anne's appreciation of Essex's efforts to advance her sons, his relationship with them caused her great anxiety. Anthony was soon organizing a secretariat for Essex, which gathered information from across Europe.<sup>68</sup> To be closer to this operation, Anthony moved from Gray's Inn into a house in Bishopsgate Street in April 1594. His mother was horrified at the relocation, given the lack of 'edifieng instruction' and the close proximity to the 'corrupt and lewde' Bull Inn (101). After a short residence in Chelsea during the spring and summer of 1595, Anthony had decided to move again, into the earl of Essex's residence on the Strand in August. His mother was opposed to the move from its inception, telling her son 'yow shall fynde many inconveniences not lyght' (141).<sup>69</sup> It would also bring Anthony closer to those whom she worried might infect him with Catholic sympathies. The influence of Anthony Standen and Thomas Lawson had long been a concern, but Anne now feared Anthony's closer association with members of Essex's circle, such as Antonio Pérez, the former secretary of Philip II of Spain, and particularly Lord Henry Howard, later the earl of Northampton. She described Howard as a 'dangerous intelligencyng man', adding 'No dowt a subtill papist inwardely and lyeth in wayte' (123).<sup>70</sup>

The political circles of Elizabethan London were not the only arena in which Anne sought to guide her son; she was concerned too with his political standing in Hertfordshire. She was a keen observer of local politics close to the Gorhambury estate and she informed Anthony of his failure to be elected as MP for nearby St Albans in 1593; her opinion was that the town had always been set on re-electing the same two principal burgesses and that the offer of support was a superficial one.<sup>71</sup> Anthony was instead elected MP for Wallingford in Oxfordshire that year.<sup>72</sup> When he was asked to serve as a justice of the peace, his mother's advice was clear: 'Take it not yet sonne, *si sapiis*' (98). Recent work on sixteenth-century women and politics has

<sup>68</sup>P. Hammer, 'The uses of scholarship: the secretariat of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, c. 1585–1601', *English Historical Review*, 109 (1994), pp. 26–51.

<sup>69</sup>See also 142.

<sup>70</sup>For more references to Howard, see 123, 125, 131, 137, 145, 186, 194.

<sup>71</sup>See 35.

<sup>72</sup>See *History of Parliament*, I, p. 372.

sought to reconceptualize their activities away from the traditional arenas of politics.<sup>73</sup> Anne's involvement in local politics, and, as we shall see, parliamentary politics, instead reveals that women in this period understood and participated in these 'conventional' political processes.

### The counsel of a godly widow

Anne did not only seek to counsel her sons regarding secular politics. Religion is a central issue in her surviving letters, in contrast to the correspondence of many of her female contemporaries.<sup>74</sup> One reason why Anne wrote so frequently concerning religion in her correspondence is that she felt the need to provide spiritual counsel to her son Anthony. She wanted Anthony to demonstrate his godly credentials clearly on his return to England, especially as he had 'ben where Reformation is' (22). She advised him to ensure that his household was ordered upon godly lines, telling him to 'exercyse godlynes with prayours and psalmes reverently, morning and evening' (64). Moreover, she urged him to place his trust in those of the 'syncerer sort' of religion; she had a particular regard for the Calvinist worship of the French Stranger Church in London (22).<sup>75</sup>

Anne frequently reflects on the spiritual progress of England in her letters from the 1590s. At times she refers to the need for further reform, suggesting that the country was 'styll wayting for our conversion' (148). Overall, however, there is a perception of religious decline in her correspondence. The queen was criticized, albeit somewhat obliquely, for her deficiency in stemming such a decline: 'God preserve her from all evell and rule her hart to the zeallus setting forth of his glory,' Anne wrote of Elizabeth I in October 1595, adding 'want of this zeale in all degrees is the very grownde of our home troubles. We have

<sup>73</sup>The literature in this area is extensive. Barbara Harris' work is seminal; see particularly B. Harris, 'Women and politics in early Tudor England', *Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), pp. 259–281. Another important volume is J. Daybell (ed.), *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450–1700* (Aldershot, 2004).

<sup>74</sup>James Daybell has suggested that one reason why there are so few surviving sixteenth-century women's letters discussing religion is that letter-writing was 'largely a secular domain'. See J. Daybell, 'Women's letters, literature and conscience in sixteenth-century England', *Renaissance Studies*, 23 (2009), p. 519. For religion in the letters of other early modern women, see *ibid.*; S. Doran, 'Elizabeth's religion: clues from her letters', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 51 (2000), pp. 699–720; J. Eales, 'Patriarchy, puritanism and politics: the letters of Lady Brilliana Harley (1598–1643)', in J. Daybell (ed.), *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450–1700* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 143–158; M. Morrissey and G. Wright, 'Piety and sociability in early modern women's letters', *Women's Writing*, 13 (2006), pp. 38–50.

<sup>75</sup>For the French Stranger Church, see also 138 and 142.

all dalied with the Lorde, who wyll not ever suffer him selff [to] be mocked' (145). The lack of godly preaching at court was particularly condemned, as infecting not only the queen's counsellors but also beyond through their 'lamentable example': 'For by expownding well the law and commandments of God, sinne is layde open and disclosed to the hearers and worketh in them by God his spirit more hatred of evell and checketh our pronness naturall, to all synn' (146).

Sections of Anne's letters almost encroach on the masculine domain of the jeremiad sermon, bemoaning the misfortunes of late sixteenth-century England as just punishment for society's impiety.<sup>76</sup> In April 1595, she wrote that 'evell dayes [were] imminent to be feared' (123). She went further in a letter to the ecclesiastical judge Edward Stanhope, condemning his role in England's spiritual decline, through his persecution of godly preachers:

By report, the enemies of God, of her Majestie and of our cuntrie are mighty and with cruell and fiery hartes preparing the readie to the pray and spoile of us all. We had need with most humble submission intreat the Lord of hostes . . . to torne away his wrath so greatlie provoked daily by the fearfull contempt of his holie gspell. (189)

Anne's letters reveal her attempts to inspire personal moral reformation. One particular recipient of her godly counsel was the earl of Essex, who received letters from Anne urging him to cease swearing and his adulterous acts.<sup>77</sup> She not only attempted to reform Essex's ways directly but also raised her concerns with her son Anthony and with other members of the Essex circle.<sup>78</sup> Anne's religious counsel was connected to her status as a widow. For her, widowhood was an opportunity to concentrate on spiritual matters.<sup>79</sup> She told Burghley in a letter from 1585 that she understood she must attend public preaching as 'a cheff duty commanded by God to weedoes' (19). Widowhood, however, had a further resonance for Anne, revealed through her correspondence. She chose to sign herself as 'ABacon  $\chi\eta\rho\alpha$ ' in ten of her letters, ' $\chi\eta\rho\alpha$ ' being the Greek for widow.<sup>80</sup> Two of the letters were directed to the earl of Essex, one went to Lord

<sup>76</sup>For jeremiad sermons, see M. Morrissey, 'Elect nations and prophetic preaching: types and examples in the Paul's Cross jeremiad', in L.A. Ferrell and P. McCullough (eds), *The English Sermon Revised* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 43–58.

<sup>77</sup>See 146 and 174. For Essex's response, see 176; Anne's subsequent reply is 177.

<sup>78</sup>For her letters to Anthony, see 140 and 166. For Anthony's response, see 168. See also 148 to Francis Goad, an army captain, regarding the morality of Essex's soldiers.

<sup>79</sup>In this, she contrasts with her sister Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell, who continued to be actively involved in political circles in her widowhood. See *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 146–157.

<sup>80</sup>See 29, 62, 114, 115, 118, 132, 133, 174, 190, 197. See also 146 for Anne's description of herself as 'husbandless' in Greek.

Burghley, six were sent to her son Anthony, and one was written to her stepson Nicholas Bacon II. It seems likely that Anne's use of the Greek term for widow in these letters derives from the role of godly widows expounded in the Pauline epistles, in his first letter to Timothy.<sup>81</sup> The biblical passage discusses how poor widows will be maintained and advises that a special group of widows receive assistance from the Church; the passage suggests that in return these godly widows will 'continueth in supplications and prayers night and day'.<sup>82</sup> The ten letters that Anne signed 'ABacon *Χηρα*' are united by the fact that they all include some form of intercessory prayer on behalf of the recipient; the letters to Anthony and Nicholas are familial correspondence, covering diverse matters, but all include at least a short intercession. Anne frequently incorporates written prayers in other letters, without the Greek subscription, even explicitly concluding three of these epistolary prayers with an English 'Amen' and four with the same word in Hebrew.<sup>83</sup> In some ways, the use of written prayers is a strategy for offering advice: the value of intercessory prayer for Anne, as a female counsellor, was that she could offer bold and authoritative godly advice through what was a religiously sanctioned act.<sup>84</sup>

### 'but quod my Lorde': reporting speech

When offering both political and religious counsel, Anne relied heavily on incorporating reported speech into her epistolary advice. Linguists have drawn attention to the use of reported speech in other forms of early modern writing, particularly in news serials, and it is striking that Anne's correspondence contains so much reported speech.<sup>85</sup> She has a particular awareness of the gap between the spoken word and

<sup>81</sup>For wider discussion of this point, see Magnusson, 'Widowhood', pp. 28–32; and *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 112–113.

<sup>82</sup>See 1 Timothy 5:5. For another New Testament discussion of the role of the godly widow, see Luke 2:36–37.

<sup>83</sup>For the use of Amen in English, see **120, 123, 148**. For the use in Hebrew, see **22, 142, 177, 188**.

<sup>84</sup>For more on Anne's use of written prayers, see *Cooke Sisters*, p. 113.

<sup>85</sup>For reported speech in other types of early modern writing, see in particular A. Zucker, "'but 'tis believed that . . .': speech and thought presentation in early English newspapers', in N. Brownlees (ed.), *News Discourse in Early Modern Britain* (Bern, 2006), pp. 105–126; N. Brownlees, 'Spoken discourse in early English newspapers', in J. Raymond (ed.), *News Networks in Seventeenth Century Britain and Europe* (Abingdon, 2006), pp. 67–84. For the use of reported speech in diplomatic correspondence, see N. Brownlees, 'Reporting the news in English and Italian diplomatic correspondence', in M. Dossena and G. Camiciotti (eds), *Letter Writing in Late Modern Europe* (Amsterdam, 2012), pp. 121–138.

action. She tells Anthony of a conversation between Lord Burghley and a quack physician,

a soden startupp glorious stranger, that wolde nedes cure him of the gowt by boast, but quod my Lorde, 'Have yow cured eny; let me know and se them'. 'Nay', sayde the fellow, 'but I am sure I can'. 'Well', concluded my Lorde and sayde 'Go, go and cure fyrst and then come again or elce not'. (113)

Her entire conversation with Robert Cecil in January 1595 is reported back to Anthony, and she also records her sister Elizabeth's speech to her in April of that year.<sup>86</sup> When Anne counsels the earl of Essex against swearing, she reports how she learnt of his behaviour in discussion with a court friend after a sermon and she includes much of the dialogue that ensued, which in turn involves the retelling of an even earlier conversation.<sup>87</sup>

There is the sense that Anne quotes so many speech-acts because they provide evidence for her advice-giving. This, in many ways, is similar to her use of *sententiae* to bolster her counsel, yet here the usage of reported speech functions as a form of rhetorical proof. Classical and renaissance rhetoricians emphasized that inartificial proofs were particularly persuasive, such as the judgments of earlier courts or the testimony of witnesses.<sup>88</sup> Anne's reportage of speech-acts, the testimony of her witnesses, is another technique designed to persuade her reader that her epistolary advice was based on strong, incontrovertible evidence.

### **'For occurents'**

Another basis for Anne's counselling activities was her access to intelligence. There has been much recent scholarly interest in early modern women's involvement with news.<sup>89</sup> Anne Bacon's letters provide an opportunity to expand our understanding of sixteenth-century women's acquisition of and interest in news. Her correspondence reveals her diverse intelligence networks. She was well served for local news; for example, she knew that Anthony had been

<sup>86</sup> See 116 and 125. For an acquaintance's description of Bishopsgate Street, reported in his own words, see 101.

<sup>87</sup> See 146.

<sup>88</sup> See particularly Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.2.2; and Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria*, 5.1.1.

<sup>89</sup> See particularly J. Daybell, 'Suche newes as on Quenes hye wayes we have mett': the news and intelligence networks of Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury (c. 1527–1608)', in Daybell, *Women and Politics*, pp. 114–131. See also Daybell, *Women Letter-writers*, pp. 152–157; *idem*, 'Women, news and intelligence networks'; N. Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 54–55, 110–113.

approached about becoming a JP before he confirmed the fact to her by letter.<sup>90</sup> She also maintained extensive contacts at court, including Ursula Walsingham and her daughter Frances Devereux, Lady Mary Scudamore, and Lady Dorothy Stafford.<sup>91</sup> Sometimes Anne heard news first-hand through conversation with these courtly figures, but on other occasions she received intelligence in letters from the women: ‘My Lady Stafford sent me word that her Majesti marveled yow come not to see her’ (144). Anne even had European contacts who supplied her with news. Captain Francis Goad wrote to her from Dieppe in June 1593 with details of Henry IV’s struggles to claim the crown of France, prior to his abjuration of Protestantism the following month.<sup>92</sup>

The greatest source of Anne’s intelligence, however, was her son Anthony. His letters supplied her with the latest news from London. Often this was closely concerned with her sons’ personal advancement. Anthony wrote on 5 February 1594 to his mother regarding his brother, Francis; he told her that what followed came to him via the earl of Essex, adding ‘I alter not one worde, thinkinge it best to set it downe as it hath bene delivered from my Lord’ (85). Similarly, a week later, Anthony again wrote to his mother, enclosing a letter written to him by Henry Gosnold, a young lawyer at Gray’s Inn, concerning Francis’ reputation.<sup>93</sup>

The news provided for Anne in her letters went beyond information concerning family members. In two different letters, Anthony told his mother of the progress of the investigation of Roderigo Lopez, former physician to Elizabeth I; Lopez was arrested at the end of January 1594 for conspiring to poison the queen and was executed on 7 June.<sup>94</sup> Anthony also provided information about household appointments at court and about City figures, telling his mother of the death of two London aldermen, one the lord mayor, in December 1596.<sup>95</sup> Anne was also interested in parliamentary activity. In the aftermath of the April 1593 parliament, Anthony answered each of his mother’s queries directly, providing information on the fate of her nephew Sir Edward Hoby after he had quarrelled with a parliamentary committee member, and the consequences of Peter Wentworth’s activities to reintroduce the issue of succession into parliament.<sup>96</sup>

<sup>90</sup> See 40.

<sup>91</sup> See 114, 123, 132, 144, 145, 174, 196.

<sup>92</sup> See 51, and especially p. 132, n. 384, which discusses Goad’s correspondence with Anthony Bacon.

<sup>93</sup> See 89.

<sup>94</sup> For Lopez, see 83 and 85.

<sup>95</sup> See 169 and 183.

<sup>96</sup> See 43.

European news was also relayed to Anne via Anthony. This was wide-ranging in its coverage; Anthony's letter of 13 July 1596 discussed the Thirteen Years' War and the Franco-Spanish War, as well as developments in the Nine Years' War in Ireland.<sup>97</sup> Much of this information was derived from Anthony's own political contacts with the earl of Essex and his circle. He provided his mother with detailed information regarding the duc de Bouillon's diplomatic activities to forge the Triple Alliance against the Spanish in 1596, much of which seemingly came directly from the Frenchman himself.<sup>98</sup> Anthony also heard French news through members of the French Stranger Church, which he relayed to his mother.<sup>99</sup> He was swift to inform his mother of the freshness of the news he provided: details regarding the Thirteen Years' War and the Franco-Spanish War were provided as 'newes arrived at the Court yesterday' (154).<sup>100</sup>

The news from London was sometimes clearly offered in exchange for goods from the Gorhambury estate. A letter from February 1594, reporting the reception of Francis Bacon's first cases in the King's Bench, was concluded, rather prosaically, with an appeal for another quarter of wheat.<sup>101</sup> Similarly, Francis Bacon concluded a letter lamenting his mother's ill-health with a postscript asking that she send him a bed from Gorhambury.<sup>102</sup> In each case, the request was seemingly purposefully left until the very end of the letter, as if an afterthought. Anthony's sustained dissemination of news to his mother, however, meant that he continued to facilitate her advice-giving activities, even if he did not always welcome the constant stream of epistolary counsel in return.

## Receiving advice

Anne certainly often worried that her advice was mocked and, worse, ignored by her sons, writing, for example, 'But my sonnys hast not to harken to their mother's goode counsell in time to prevent' (27).<sup>103</sup> Her exasperation even caused her to utilize the additional persuasive power of Latin: '*haud inane est quod dico*' (133). There is little direct evidence of Francis' reactions to his mother's counsel. When she tried

<sup>97</sup> See 159.

<sup>98</sup> See letters 147, 157, 165, 168.

<sup>99</sup> See 83, 178.

<sup>100</sup> For more European news, see 63, 164.

<sup>101</sup> See 86.

<sup>102</sup> See 105.

<sup>103</sup> For more discussion of the reception of Anne's advice, see Magnusson, 'Widowhood'; Mair, 'Material lies'; and *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 114–116.

to advise him on how to order his finances in April 1593, he accused her of treating him like a ward, which Anne retorted was ‘a remote phrase to my playn motherly meaning’ (45). Anthony’s responses to his mother’s advice were varied. Sometimes he resorted to silence, something which enraged his mother and necessitated him providing a further justification:

so in matter of advice and admonition from a parent to a childe, I knowe not fitter nor better answerre then signification of a dutyfull acceptance and thanks, unlesse there were juste cause of replie, which howe reasonable soever it be, manie times is more offensive then a respective silence. (65)

Such cool anger was also frequently his response to what he termed her ‘misconceite[s], misimputatione[s] or causeles humorous threatres’ (150). The sheer quantity of correspondence between mother and son, however, suggests that Anthony did value the relationship, if at times only to ensure a supply of goods and money from Gorhambury.<sup>104</sup> There is also evidence that he read his mother’s letters closely. In answer to her comment regarding the stormy weather in June 1596, he responded with a sentiment designed to appeal to his godly mother:

the changes whereof as they were used for threatnings by the prophettes in ancient time, so ~~no doubt but~~ ‘God graunt’ they ‘may’ worke more ~~in all good Christians minde amongst~~ ‘in’ us as due and timelie apprehension of God’s hevie judgements, imminent over us, for the deep prophane securitie that rayneth to much amongst us. (154)

The many corrections made to this draft suggest that Anthony was trying to please his mother with his response to her advice. Moreover, when he received word of the queen’s kind comments about him in October 1593, he was swift to tell his mother, writing that his motivation was not ‘vaine glory’, but that she would be ‘partaker of my comforts, as advertised of my crosses’ (73).

## Patronage power

The political roles held by early modern women within their patronage society has been the subject of much scholarly research.<sup>105</sup> Anne’s letters provide evidence as to her role as an intermediary to influential patrons. She would write on behalf of kin: for example, she appealed to Matthew Parker in 1561 for a distant cousin.<sup>106</sup> After a letter of request by her son Anthony, Anne also wrote to Burghley concerning

<sup>104</sup>Magnusson, ‘Widowhood’, pp. 12–13.

<sup>105</sup>See above, p. 17, n. 73.

<sup>106</sup>See 5.

a wardship dispute involving Robert Bacon, her nephew.<sup>107</sup> She told her brother-in-law that this was the first patronage request that Robert had ever made of her, and that kinship compelled her to write on his behalf. In this instance, she was more persuaded by their close kinship than was her sister Elizabeth, whom Robert also approached for assistance with the wardship.<sup>108</sup> Anne also intervened on behalf of servants. When Anthony's servant 'little' Peter sought new employment at the Doctors' Commons, she wrote to Julius Caesar, the master of requests, and to her relative Thomas Stanhope on his behalf, although she was explicit that this was her first and last intervention for Peter.<sup>109</sup> She would also intervene on behalf of neighbours in Hertfordshire, if they shared her godly beliefs.<sup>110</sup>

During her widowhood, Anne's energies as an intermediary were particularly focused on intense support of godly preachers, in response to John Whitgift's attempts to enforce religious conformity as archbishop of Canterbury from 1583. Nicholas Faunt described Anne's activities at court on behalf of the suspended preachers, writing to her son Anthony 'that I have bene a wittenes of her earnest care and travaile for the restoring of some of them to their places, by resorting often unto this place to sollicite those causes'.<sup>111</sup> Her letter to her brother-in-law, Lord Burghley, from February 1585, demonstrates not only the nature of her religious beliefs but also her willingness to use her family connections to further the godly cause. Anne was 'extraordinarily admitted' through Burghley's favour into the House of Commons, when Whitgift gave his response to a petition against his 'Three Articles', which had led to the suspension of many godly preachers.<sup>112</sup> Following this particularly heated session, Anne asked that her brother-in-law, perhaps with other privy counsellors, grant some of the godly preachers a private audience:

And yf they can not strongly prove before yow owte of the worde of God that Reformation which they so long have called and cryed for to be according to Christ his own ordinance, then to lett them be rejected with shame owte of the church for ever. (19)

<sup>107</sup> Anne described Robert Bacon as her husband's 'eldest brother's onelie sonne' (193).

<sup>108</sup> For Elizabeth's involvement with Robert Bacon, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 143–144.

<sup>109</sup> See 163.

<sup>110</sup> See 109 and 179. The godly Sir Henry Cocke, the deputy lieutenant of Hertfordshire, also sought Anne as an intermediary in his repeated petitions to Burghley. See *Cooke Sisters*, p. 142.

<sup>111</sup> LPL 647, fo. 145r.

<sup>112</sup> The longer history of women listening to parliamentary debates is discussed in E. Chalus, *Elite Women in English Political Life, c. 1754–1790* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 47–52. For an alternative view, see Magnusson, 'Imagining a national church', pp. 42–56.

Despite Anne's energetic petition, there is no evidence as to any positive outcome from her appeal to Burghley.

Anne also acted as a religious patron in her own right. In his letter of 1581, Théodore de Bèze suggested that his dedication to Anne of his meditations on the penitential psalms was inspired purely by her humanist learning.<sup>113</sup> However, the dedication was a calculated move. In 1583 and 1590, Anne donated funds to the Genevan church.<sup>114</sup> In 1593, she was once again prevailed upon to contribute to the European cause and was presented with a recent edition of Bèze's meditations.<sup>115</sup> However, Anthony's letters reveal that no contribution was forthcoming from her, so he himself sent a gift to Bèze. The draft of his letter to his mother, explaining the gift which he had sent, is revealing through its multiple corrections and additions, as Anthony struggled to find the right words to write to his mother.<sup>116</sup> It would appear that by 1593 Anne was less predisposed to donate to the European cause, perhaps because her primary concern was with local provision of godly preaching.

Anne's letters thus reveal her considerable support of puritan preachers at Gorhambury in the 1590s. In May 1592, she made reference to the 'comfortable company' of Percival Wyborn and Humphrey Wilblood, both of whom had been deprived of their benefices. Her condemnation of those who persecuted the godly was clear: 'Thei may greatly be afraide of God his displeasure which worke the woefull disapointing of God his worke in his vineyarde by putting such to silence in these bowldie sinning dayes' (26). Wyborn and Wilblood stayed at Gorhambury at various points throughout the early 1590s, providing 'fatherly and holsome heavenly instructions' to the household and local community (185).<sup>117</sup> Anne frequently tried to send them to her sons in London; she urged that Anthony should interpret the visits of these 'learned men [...] as tokens of [God's] favour' (58).

During her widowhood, Anne presented the clerical livings to two benefices in Hertfordshire: St Michael's in St Albans and the nearby Redbourn parish. Her clerical presentations were all godly preachers, who were subjected to close scrutiny by the ecclesiastical authorities.<sup>118</sup> The archdeaconry of St Albans was under the diocese of London at that time and John Aylmer, bishop of London from 1577 to 1594,

<sup>113</sup>See 18.

<sup>114</sup>See Stewart, 'Voices of Anne Cooke', p. 96; *Cooke Sisters*, p. 186.

<sup>115</sup>See 52.

<sup>116</sup>See 53 and *Cooke Sisters*, p. 186.

<sup>117</sup>See also 48, 62, 64, 92, 100, 103, 120, 139, 182, 185.

<sup>118</sup>For these presentations, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 177–183.

was described by Anne as a ‘godles Bishop’, committing even worse persecution in her eyes than the Marian bishop Edmund Bonner (103). Those serving the archdeaconry of St Albans were described as ‘byting vipers, the hole pack of them [. . .] hindrerers of goode men’ (102).<sup>119</sup>

Anne’s correspondence reveals in detail the dealings of one of her clerical choices, Rudolph Bradley, with the ecclesiastical authorities. Appointed vicar of Redbourn parish in 1592, Bradley was required to send a certificate of orders in February 1597 to Edward Stanhope, chancellor to the London diocese, and, on the latter’s failure to receive them, Bradley was declared excommunicate.<sup>120</sup> Anne’s response was to send a vehement letter of reproach to Stanhope, arguing that his role should instead be to ‘incouradge the faithfull and painefull preachers of Jesu Christ’ (189). After further intervention from Anthony Bacon, Bradley was reinstated and continued at Redbourn until 1602, although Anne refused to see herself as beholden to Stanhope, whom she had earlier condemned as a ‘fylthy adulterer, yf not fornicator too’ (163).<sup>121</sup> Anne’s correspondence concerning Bradley reveals her belief that if the parishioners were not guided by a preacher, they would fall away from godly living; she wrote to Anthony that she feared that, in the absence of scriptural instruction from the pulpit, ‘Now belyke Robin Hooode and Mayde Marian are to supply with their prophan partes, for leave is geven’ (33).

Anne’s letters demonstrate that even after clergymen ceased to live under her direct patronage she continued to perceive them as being under her care; in 1597, she used her connections with the earl of Essex to help William Dike, who had previously been an assistant curate at St Michael’s, even prevailing upon her son to add his influence to her suit.<sup>122</sup> Edward Spencer, one of Anthony’s servants, wrote to his master in August 1594 from Gorhambury, informing him of Anne’s financial support of godly preachers: ‘Mr Willcockes had a paper withe agrete delle of Gould in it, Willblod had 2 quartares of whete, Dicke had somthinge the other day, what I know not’.<sup>123</sup> Anne’s local religious patronage as a widow even went beyond her own clerical candidates. In 1589, Thomas Wilcox, one of the authors of the 1572 Presbyterian manifesto, *An Admonition to the Parliament*, wrote of the ‘sundrie favours’ she had shown towards ‘many worthie ministers’ over the years (21).

<sup>119</sup>See also Anne’s description of Thomas Rockett, the official and registrar to the archdeacon of St Albans, in 167.

<sup>120</sup>For Bradley’s appointment, see HALS, ASA 7/15, fo. 8v.

<sup>121</sup>For Anthony’s intervention, see LPL 655, fo. 1r; and *Cooke Sisters*, p. 182.

<sup>122</sup>See 190 and 191. For Dike borrowing Anne’s coach in 1596, see 161.

<sup>123</sup>LPL 650, fo. 253r. ‘Mr Willcockes’ was Thomas Wilcox, ‘Willblod’ was Percival Willblood, and ‘Dicke’ was William Dike.

Anne has also long been associated with the puritan apologia, *A Parte of a Register*, published in 1593. John Field was responsible for collecting this mass of documents recording the struggle of the godly; the aim was to form a puritan register which would imitate Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. William Urwick, the Victorian historian of nonconformity, suggested that *A Parte of a Register* was 'probably issued with the sanction and at the expense of Lady Bacon' and this suggestion has been echoed by later scholars.<sup>124</sup> A letter written by Anne in July 1593 to Anthony makes a cryptic reference, perhaps to the documents that formed the *Register*: 'I wolde have the two kallenders very saffly returned hether' (58).<sup>125</sup>

## Sisterhood

Despite the fact that Anne's historical reputation is partly based on her status as one of the learned Cooke sisters, little mention is made of her sisters in her letters. Nicholas Bacon's letter to William Cecil, husband to Anne's sister Mildred, refers to Elizabeth and Margaret Cooke as living with the Cecils during the Marian period, although Anne's postscript to the letter makes no further direct mention of her sisters.<sup>126</sup> There is greater evidence of Anne's relationship with Elizabeth during their widowhoods. She referred to receiving a letter from Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell, but stated that she had replied, advising her not to visit in person while she was unwell.<sup>127</sup> She borrowed her sister's coach on occasion and visited her Blackfriars house after attending Stephen Egerton's sermons at the nearby St Anne's church.<sup>128</sup> There Elizabeth tearfully revealed their nephew Robert Cecil's rejection of her advice. Anne's response was to write to Robert on her sister's behalf, but Elizabeth was resolutely opposed to such a course: "No, no", *inquit*, "It is to late, he hath marred all and that against my counsells lyking at all" (125).

Anne counselled her sons not to take notice of their aunt's actions, or become embroiled in such courtly intrigue. Elizabeth, Anne believed, could be a fickle ally; she told Anthony that Henry Howard would

<sup>124</sup>W. Urwick, *Nonconformity in Herts. Being Lectures upon the Non-conforming Worthies of St Albans and Memorials of Puritanism and Nonconformity in All the Parishes of the County of Hertford* (London, 1884), p. 82.

<sup>125</sup>See Magnusson, 'Widowhood', p. 30; Magnusson, 'Imagining a national church', p. 49. For further discussion of Anne's role in *A Parte of a Register*, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 189–192.

<sup>126</sup>See 4.

<sup>127</sup>See 70.

<sup>128</sup>See 151 and 125.

surely betray him to his aunt Elizabeth.<sup>129</sup> There is evidence in Anne's letters that her sister certainly did try to become involved in Anthony's affairs. In October 1593, he told his mother that he had heard from his aunt that the queen had openly lamented his ill-health and three years later Elizabeth Russell tried to heal the mistrust which had developed between the two sides of the family, the Bacons and the Cecils, since Robert Cecil's elevation to the secretaryship in July 1596.<sup>130</sup> To assuage this bad feeling, Elizabeth went to and fro between her brother-in-law, Burghley, and her nephew Anthony, on 8 September 1596.<sup>131</sup> That Anthony was suspicious of his aunt's intentions was confirmed by a later letter to his mother. He told her that he was pleased that his aunt had solicited a profession of goodwill from Burghley, stating that her mediation 'hath dried upp the torrent of my Lord Tresurer's mightie indignation, at the least by show and his owne profession and so autenticall a testemony as my Lady Russell's' (172). In the reference to Elizabeth's 'autenticall' testimony, there is surely the suggestion that, like his mother, Anthony felt that his aunt would publicize her actions.

## Inheritance and finances

Anne's letters provide important evidence regarding the financial dealings of a sixteenth-century woman, which complements recent research on eighteenth-century women and their money.<sup>132</sup> It seems that Anne kept relatively detailed accounts; in June 1596, for example, she broke down the £220 of payments made by her that year.<sup>133</sup> Her sons proved a great and unpredictable drain on her finances. A frequent refrain in her letters is that she had spent all her wealth on

<sup>129</sup> See 123.

<sup>130</sup> See 73 for Elizabeth relaying a message from the queen.

<sup>131</sup> For a reconstruction of the saga, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 149–157.

<sup>132</sup> For eighteenth-century women, see A. Laurence, 'Lady Betty Hastings, her half-sisters and the South Sea Bubble: family fortunes and strategies', *Women's History Review*, 15 (2006), pp. 533–540; R. O'Day, *Cassandra Brydges (1670–1735), First Duchess of Chandos: life and letters* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 14–26; A. Laurence, 'Women investors, "that nasty South Sea affair" and the rage to speculate in early eighteenth-century England', *Accounting, Business and Financial History*, 16 (2007), pp. 245–264; *eadem*, 'The emergence of a private clientèle for banks in the early eighteenth century: Hoare's Bank and some women customers', *Economic History Review*, 61 (2008), pp. 565–586; A. Laurence, J. Maltby, and J. Rutherford (eds), *Women and Their Money 1700–1950: essays on women and finance* (London, 2009); R. O'Day, 'Matchmaking and moneymaking in a patronage society: the first duke and duchess of Chandos, c. 1712–35', *Economic History Review*, 66 (2013), pp. 273–296.

<sup>133</sup> See 156.

them: ‘Goodes shall I leave none as mony or plate [...] I have ben too ready for yow both till nothing is left’ (44).<sup>134</sup>

Many of Anne’s letters discuss the financial ramifications of her husband’s will. Francis Bacon’s financial difficulties stemmed from the fact that he had been less well served by his inheritance, gaining some marsh lands in Kent and in Essex.<sup>135</sup> Due to her ‘natural love and affection’ for her younger son, Anne granted him the manor of Marks and associated land near Romford, Essex, in January 1584; however, her grant had the proviso that, upon payment of ten shillings, Anne could void the agreement.<sup>136</sup> Anne and Francis jointly leased the manor to George Harvey in October 1584.<sup>137</sup> In April 1592, Francis, ignoring the conditional nature of the grant from his mother, mortgaged Marks to Harvey, the lessee.<sup>138</sup> In order to repay £1,300 on 30 April 1593, Francis proposed selling Marks to Harvey, although he needed his mother’s agreement. Anthony reminded her of her ‘motherlie offer’ to bestow the whole interest in Marks upon his brother (42), but Anne initially angrily protested that Francis had told her he would not part with the property, but would instead borrow money from other creditors; she then softened her stance, but demanded that Francis produce a written note of all his debts and that she handle the financial settlement with Harvey.<sup>139</sup> Francis responded with outrage, to which Anne protested that her ‘playn purpose was and is to do him good’ (45). Francis rejected his mother’s offer on such terms and instead arranged a second mortgage with Harvey on 26 May 1593, which he repaid in full in May 1594.<sup>140</sup> Marks was again mortgaged to Harvey in May 1595, but Anne seems to have released all her interest in the property, for Francis alone conveyed the property to Harvey in May 1596, when unable to find the funds to reclaim the manor.<sup>141</sup>

Anthony had been better served by his father. He had inherited the three Hertfordshire manors of Minchenbury, Abbotsbury, and Hores in Barley, although the estate was entailed and his half-brother Nicholas had an interest as ‘remainderman’, which meant that he would have inherited the estate on the death of Anthony.<sup>142</sup> Nicholas

<sup>134</sup>For other letters in which Anne is adamant that all her finances are spent, see 99 and 140.

<sup>135</sup>‘Money-lenders’, p. 239.

<sup>136</sup>See Essex Record Office, D/DMs/T12/4.

<sup>137</sup>‘Money-lenders’, p. 239.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 240. On 24 February 1593, Harvey wrote to Anthony, demanding his brother’s six-month interest on the money. See LPL 648, fos 153r–154v.

<sup>139</sup>See 44.

<sup>140</sup>Anne referenced the Marks lease in July 1593 (58). For Francis’ new mortgage with Harvey, see ‘Money-lenders’, p. 240.

<sup>141</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 242–243.

<sup>142</sup>*Bacon Letters and Life*, I, p. 246.

Bacon II therefore had to approve any sale of the land. Several of the letters discuss Anthony's attempts to sell Barley in 1593.<sup>143</sup> Difficulties arose because Nicholas was loath to agree to the sale.<sup>144</sup> The potential buyer of the estate, Alderman John Spencer, also drove a very hard bargain.<sup>145</sup> An indenture dated 4 September 1593 records the sale of Barley estate to John Spencer, although the agreement of Nicholas was still uncertain.<sup>146</sup> Anne also gave her life interest in the manors of Windridge, Burston, and Napsbury in Hertfordshire to Anthony on 10 November 1593, along with lands around Gorhambury and Redbourn rectory, with the proviso that she could reclaim them for the payment of 20 shillings.<sup>147</sup>

In spite of waiving her interest in these properties, Anne repeatedly argued that the sale of land for reasons of expediency caused her sons' financial ruin. 'Have yow no hope of posterite?', she asked Anthony. 'Only my chyldern countned in the worlde unworthy their father's care and provyding for them' (188). The last evidence of Anne's activities before her death concerns these inherited properties: on 1 March 1606 she gained licence to alienate Gorhambury manor and on 14 June 1608 she received a pardon for improperly alienating her interest in the manors which she signed over to Anthony in November 1593.<sup>148</sup>

Anne's letters also reveal that she paid many of her sons' bills.<sup>149</sup> She questioned the huge bill that Anthony had run up for coal in the summer of 1596; likewise, the bill of £16 for coal in March 1597 was declared by Anne to be 'monstrous' (194).<sup>150</sup> She also questioned Anthony's grocery bills. She asked the grocer himself to inform her of her son's balance, without Anthony's consent; Robert Moorer told her that Anthony owed him £15 or £16 and that his bill had not been settled since the previous autumn.<sup>151</sup> Anne advised that this was a common ploy and one she had known used by the apothecary Hugh

<sup>143</sup>See 41, 48, 58, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 69. For an overview of the sale of the Barley estate, see *Bacon Letters and Life*, I, pp. 246–250; and Freedman, 'Anthony Bacon and his world', pp. 184–185.

<sup>144</sup>See 66, 68, 69. For Francis Bacon's draft of a letter to be sent by Anthony Bacon to Nicholas Bacon II to convince him of the sale, see *Bacon Letters and Life*, I, p. 247. For Anthony's attempts to persuade his half-brother, see LPL 649, fo. 305r–v.

<sup>145</sup>See 63, 65, 66, 68. Both Francis Bacon and the barrister Nicholas Trott attempted to help Anthony with the sale; see 66 and *Bacon Letters and Life*, I, pp. 248–250. For John Spencer's reputation for truculence, see I.W. Archer, 'John Spencer', *ODNB*.

<sup>146</sup>See 68, 69; 'Money-lenders', p. 241; *Wealth of the Gentry*, p. 102.

<sup>147</sup>'Money-lenders', pp. 241–242.

<sup>148</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 240–241, 253. 36 discusses Nicholas Bacon I's posthumous fine for alienation of the Barley and Napsbury estates.

<sup>149</sup>This included settling payment on a tailor's bill due to her stepson Nathaniel. See 11.

<sup>150</sup>See 170 and 171.

<sup>151</sup>See 151 and 156.

Morgan, who had treated Nicholas Bacon; Morgan had wanted to wait until prices rose to submit his bills, rather than submit them quarterly, although Anne sought to counteract this scheme.<sup>152</sup> Anne stated that she would pay the grocer's bill for Anthony only if he would sign an itemized version, for fear he was being overcharged.<sup>153</sup>

It was not only money that Anthony and Francis required of their mother; goods and services from Gorhambury were sought by the brothers to save further expenditure. Anthony thus made frequent requests for goods from Hertfordshire, particularly for beer.<sup>154</sup> Anne's letters often detail plans for the transportation of beer to London, along with other produce from the estate, including game birds, fish, and strawberries.<sup>155</sup> Francis also asked his mother for household implements, for he had discovered, he reported, 'howe costlie the buyinge of it newe is' (91). Anne complained that her sons stripped the Gorhambury manor of all its finery; in response to Anthony's request for a long carpet and the pictures of the 'ancient learned philosophers', she lamented 'yow have now bared this howse of all the best' (133). The exchange only very occasionally went the other way. Anthony sent Spanish dainties and wine to Anne from London; the latter was not for herself, Anne protested, but to offer to the clergymen who regularly visited her at Gorhambury.<sup>156</sup>

### At home in Hertfordshire: Gorhambury manor

Barbara Harris has shown that aristocratic widows in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries were energetic estate managers.<sup>157</sup> Anne's letters provide later evidence of such activity, revealing in close detail her management of the Gorhambury estate during her widowhood. Anne had considerable involvement in the leaseholds held by some of the Gorhambury tenants. These were fixed-term

<sup>152</sup>See 156. For an earlier mention of Morgan, see also 151.

<sup>153</sup>See 151 and 156.

<sup>154</sup>For Anthony's requests for beer, see 54 and 151.

<sup>155</sup>See 29, 31, 32, 112, 126, 142, 143, 144, 145, 166, 170.

<sup>156</sup>See 100, 121, 122, 140, 142, 164, 185.

<sup>157</sup>B. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450–1550* (Oxford, 2002), p. 145. There is also evidence of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century wives running estates in their husbands' absence. See A. Wall, 'Elizabethan precept and feminine practice: the Thynne family of Longleat', *History*, 75 (1990), pp. 23–38; Eales, 'Patriarchy, puritanism and politics'. For an example of an unmarried early modern woman's involvement in estate management, see R.G. Griffiths, 'Joyce Jeffries of Ham Castle: a seventeenth-century business gentlewoman', *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society*, 10 (1933), pp. 1–32; 11 (1934), pp. 1–13; 12 (1935), pp. 1–17.

agreements, bounded either by a number of years or by life span.<sup>158</sup> She often interceded on behalf of tenants with her son and she also had the authority to grant new leases.<sup>159</sup> The lease held by Hugh Mantell, Anthony's steward, was described by Anne as 'subtile and combersome' and she sought further advice on how to proceed (**61**).

She was also forthcoming in passing judgement on tenants, again advising caution from Anthony at his return from Europe: 'they will all seek to abuse your want of experience by so long absence' (**27**). Furthermore, the letters reveal Anne's concern with the Gorhambury manorial court. Every manorial lord had the right to hold such a court and they enforced the manorial customs, copyhold land transfers, and local community matters, including the administration of local justice for minor crimes.<sup>160</sup> Although it had some powers of social control, the court leet, held once or twice a year, had greater powers concerning local order, such as regulating misbehaviour, including drunkenness and assault.<sup>161</sup> These courts were usually presided over by a steward, often a senior estate official, appointed by the lord of the manor.<sup>162</sup> Anne was adamant that William Downing, a London notary, should act as steward for the Gorhambury courts, ideally with the assistance of the lawyer Thomas Crewe.<sup>163</sup> She also revealed a particular interest in holding regular sessions of the court leet, which may suggest that she valued its ability to enforce social regulation.<sup>164</sup> She certainly noted tenants who had particular business with the court; William Dell's 'nawghty dealing' meant that her court steward 'hath had much a doo with him' (**82**). Anthony's letters reveal that he was happy to leave the organization of the court to his mother: 'For the time of keeping the Court, as it hath ben, so shall it be allwaies of your Ladyship's pleasure and appointment' (**119**).<sup>165</sup>

In line with Anne's interest in the moral regulation provided by the court leet, her letters reveal her concern with behaviour on the estate and in the local parish. Her fear was that ungodly behaviour would spread: 'I wrong my men lyving well and christianly in their honest

<sup>158</sup>R.W. Hoyle, 'Tenure on Elizabethan estates', in R.W. Hoyle (ed.), *The Estates of the English Crown, 1558–1640* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 164.

<sup>159</sup>See **79**, **114**, **118**, **119**, **126**.

<sup>160</sup>C. Harrison, 'Manor courts and the governance of Tudor England', in C. Brooks and M. Lobban (eds), *Communities and Courts in Britain, 1150–1900* (London, 1997), p. 49–50.

<sup>161</sup>J. Hamilton-Baker, *Oxford History of the Laws of England: 1483–1533* (Oxford, 2003), p. 317; Harrison, 'Manor courts', p. 44.

<sup>162</sup>M. Bailey, *The English Manor c. 1200–c. 1500* (Manchester, 2002), p. 170; Hamilton-Baker, *History of the Laws of England*, p. 315.

<sup>163</sup>See **117** and **167**.

<sup>164</sup>Anne wrote in August 1596 that the 'next coorte is lete also, which wolde not be neglected' (**167**).

<sup>165</sup>For Anthony's correspondence on the manorial court, see also **135**.

vocation to suffer them to be ill entreated and my selff contemned' (125). Yet Anne encountered difficulties in exerting her authority over Anthony's multiple inherited manors. Many of Anthony's tenants clearly recognized Anne's jurisdiction over her son's properties. She interceded for a tenant from the Barley estate, who had heard that his farm was to be sold by Anthony; Anne protested that the same family had dwelt in the farm for a hundred and twenty years and so should continue there.<sup>166</sup> Yet nearby properties held by Anthony also represented a threat to Anne's authority at Gorhambury. She argued that her position was contested by Anthony's men from his Redbourn estate, stating that 'Idle Redborn men have hunt here allmost dayly; yf I were not syckly and weak I wolde owt my selff with all kind of doggs against them and kyl theirs' (93). She told Anthony that she must be held in authority over her own servants and over Gorhambury manor: 'Elce I geve over my autorite to my inferiours, which I think is a discredit to eny of accompt that knows rightly their place from God' (194).

Anne's interactions with Edward Spencer, another of Anthony's servants, provide further evidence of the difficulties that she had in establishing her authority. During the summer of 1594, Spencer relayed to his master in a series of letters from Gorhambury how 'unquiet my Lady is with all her household', suggesting that Anne was in dispute not only with her household servants but also with Anthony's friends and servants at Redbourn manor:

She have fallen out with Crossby and bid him get him out of her sight. – Now for your Doctor at Redbourn, she saith he is a Papist or some sorcerer or conjurer or some vild name or other. – She is as far out with Mr. Lawson as ever she was, and call him villain and whoremaster with other vild words.<sup>167</sup>

Previous scholarship has placed emphasis on Spencer's accounts as evidence of Anne's mental instability, together with the later testimony of Godfrey Goodman, bishop of Gloucester, who wrote that Anne was 'little better than frantic in her age'.<sup>168</sup> Yet Anne's collected letters reveal that she and Spencer were regularly in dispute, and that undue weight should not be placed on his testimony from the summer of 1594; Anne described him in May 1593 as 'an irefull pevish fellow yf he be looked into and checked for his loose demeanour' (48).<sup>169</sup>

<sup>166</sup> See 57.

<sup>167</sup> This modernized version of Spencer's letter is from *Bacon Letters and Life*, I, p. 312 (though note that Spedding retains 'vild' for 'vile'). For the original, in Spencer's idiosyncratic spelling, see LPL 651, fo. 254r.

<sup>168</sup> Goodman, *Court of King James*, p. 285.

<sup>169</sup> For other disputes with Spencer, see 46, 47, 50, 111, 114, 127. For further discussion of these disputes, see *Cooke Sisters*, pp. 219–223.

Anne's authority was partially contested by her status as the life-tenant at Gorhambury; many of her servants thus looked towards Anthony as their master instead of her. Anne acknowledged the difficulty of her position: 'I have it as I myght not, greiving liberly to their hurt and my discredit, because I wold yow shulde every way be well and comfortably here' (127). Anthony promised not to interfere with his mother's business and, on occasion, actively sought to defend her from attacks on her authority. In January 1594, Winter had acted towards Anne with 'undewteyfull demeanour and speeches', according to Anthony Bacon, who came to hear of his mother's treatment (81). He urged his mother that Winter should 'be called to account' for his words and actions; as he was at Redbourn, Anthony proposed sending Richard Lockey, a principal burgher of St Albans, to intervene on his behalf. Anne's response was to reject his offer, entreating her son not to call upon Lockey: 'He is an open mouthed man with owt all discretion, full of foolysh babling. He wolde make all the town ryng of his foolyshnes. I pray yow defend not me this way; I nether lyke it ner nede.' Anne argued that she was accustomed to such treatment and so she did 'rather contemn then regarde' (80). Yet the combination of her decreasing status and her decreasing funds was a source of much grief to her: 'I am halff impotent now my selff,' she wrote in July 1596, 'and every thing deciaies with me' (161).

## Medicine

Early modern women's interest in medicine has been well established, particularly through analysis of the textual evidence of women's expertise in healing.<sup>170</sup> Anne's letters contain frequent discussion of afflictions and their treatment. She regularly described her own health to Anthony and asked for details about his state in return. When suffering from kidney stones, Anthony told his mother that he was in much less pain after having passed three stones, 'the leaste as bigge as a barlie corne' (65). Anne was concerned that her sons' loose living caused their ill health; she lamented that Francis' weak stomach was exacerbated by 'untimely late going to bed and then musing *nescio quid* when he shuld slepe and then in consequent by late rising and long lyeing in bed' (27). Her great fear in terms of health was extreme behaviour of any kind: 'Extremitees be hurtfull to whole, more to the

<sup>170</sup>See, for example, L. Pollock, *With Faith and Physic: the life of a Tudor gentlewoman, Lady Grace Mildmay, 1552–1620* (London, 1993); J. Moody (ed.), *The Private Life of an Elizabethan Lady: the diary of Lady Margaret Hoby 1599–1605* (Stroud, 1998); P. Bayer, 'Lady Margaret Clifford's alchemical recipe book and the John Dee circle', *Ambix*, 52 (2005), pp. 271–284.

syckly' (28). Keeping to his bed would only prolong Anthony's gout, in her opinion: 'The gowt is named *pulvinarius morbus* because it lyketh softness and ease' (62). She feared that taking the warm water on a trip to Bath would only increase Anthony's 'hote' gout (50). Too strong beer was also mistrusted as it would 'bestur' the gout (133). Purging was questioned as too extreme, for Anne told her son 'me thinks it shuld make nature nether to work digestion ner strength being so long still pulled' (196).

Anne feared the actions of certain doctors, particularly those whose prescriptions were too extreme. Much of her knowledge of kidney stones and gout was drawn from her experience of her husband's affliction with the same complaints.<sup>171</sup> For example, when Anthony was suffering from kidney stones, she told him that his father had found relief by anointing his genitals with oils, drinking almond milk, and taking a bath strewn with herbs; describing the bath, she told her son, 'Yf yow wyll lett me, I wyllingly wyll come and make it for yow' (84). It may be that Anne also first learnt the effectiveness of distilling strawberries for their medicinal properties when treating her husband (29). Other positive first-hand recommendations of treatments were also trusted. After receiving encouraging reports from her stepson Nicholas, Anne suggested that leeches might bring comfort from the gout.<sup>172</sup> Ultimately, she considered that illness was providentially ordained, a sign of 'fatherly correction' (133).<sup>173</sup> The only sure cure was prayer, through which God would work in the 'syck body to the reviving of his sowle' (120).

## Composition

The content of the letters, discussed in detail above, needs to be considered in relation to their composition. Most, but not all, of Anne's letters are written in her own hand. While this means that her message was unmediated by a scribe, it poses its own difficulties, both for the contemporary reader and, presumably, for her sixteenth-century readers. Anne's hand, a loose form of italic, is infamously difficult to decipher.<sup>174</sup> It has been noted that it was acceptable for high-ranking men and women to have illegible handwriting, labelled

<sup>171</sup> See 84 and 114.

<sup>172</sup> See 102.

<sup>173</sup> For a restatement of this view, see 186.

<sup>174</sup> Anne's hand is closer to her sister Mildred's handwriting than it is to the much clearer italic handwriting of her younger sister Elizabeth. For Mildred's hand, see Bodleian Library, Carte MS LVI, fo. 475r. For Elizabeth's hand, see, for example, SP 12/255, fo. 37r.

by Graham Williams as ‘uglyography’; Anthony Bacon described the earl of Essex’s hand to his mother as being as hard to read as any cipher, ‘to those that are not thoroughlie acquainted therewith’ (73).<sup>175</sup> Anne’s handwriting may reflect her sense of high status, but it certainly worsened as she aged (see figures 1 and 2). The fact that her letters are almost all in her own hand did not preclude the involvement of others in their composition; for example, she sent drafts of important letters to her son for his advance approval before sending.<sup>176</sup>

Almost all of Anthony’s letters, and those of most of Anne’s other correspondents, are not holograph. Most of Anthony’s extant letters to his mother are drafts. It is likely that he worked closely with his secretaries over their composition, but it is impossible to reconstruct the particular authorship roles held in this process.<sup>177</sup> As has been discussed, the various changes made to these drafts reveal the effort placed upon their composition and the message that Anthony sought to convey to his mother. There are complex issues regarding the composition of other letters in the edition, too. Anne Gresham Bacon’s letters to her stepmother-in-law are actually in her husband’s hand, revealing his role in their composition.<sup>178</sup> There are also questions regarding the composition of the letter from Mildred to Anne in 1552. The letter, seeking to persuade Anne to accept the proposal of Walter Haddon, is actually written in Haddon’s own hand, so may possibly have been composed by him; more probably, however, Haddon was shown and then made a copy of Mildred’s letter of advice.<sup>179</sup>

Furthermore, epistolary conventions dictated the form of some of the letters in the edition. Anne’s sister Mildred owned a copy of Erasmus’ letter-writing manual, *De conscribendis epistolis*, and Anne’s own letters reveal her familiarity with contemporary epistolary practices.<sup>180</sup> The majority of Anne’s correspondence is familial. Erasmus had designated that such letters should be defined as a separate category of correspondence, differentiated from the classical rhetorical categories of judicial, demonstrative, and deliberative correspondence. In terms of internal structure, then, most of Anne’s

<sup>175</sup>J. Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: manuscript letters and the culture and practice of letter-writing, 1512–1635* (Basingstoke, 2012), p. 89; G. Williams, ‘Theorizing uglyography: the socio-cultural implications of George Talbot’s gouty hand’ (unpublished paper given at the Cultures of Correspondence Conference, University of Plymouth, 2011).

<sup>176</sup>See 90.

<sup>177</sup>For an example where the process can be reconstructed, see A. Stewart and H. Wolfe, *Letterwriting in Renaissance England* (Washington DC, 2004), p. 55.

<sup>178</sup>See 9 and 13.

<sup>179</sup>See 3.

<sup>180</sup>Mildred’s copy of Erasmus’ work is held at Hatfield House, with her signature mark on the title-page. Hatfield House, D. Erasmus, *Opus de conscribendis epistolis* (Antwerp, 1564).

33 67

My dear, my dear, as he says it may be some in the field  
 when you are young at it, I would be desirous to belong unto you  
 he is by his being remaining unto my love of New York.  
 yet now placed in the forest of your under the god's hand his  
 state is that it would please you to accept of his service  
 in matters, me his own, you to appreciate it all but  
 because his service is not of service to a substantial man  
 in this world, where I dwell. We wish him to be such the  
 world. We wish not deny him. But because I find  
 it to be an ordinary that I am refer to the receipt of  
 because he is a comely man or taken to be in good case  
 his manner of speech to require me to write him this. Which  
 seems to me disagree. that he might have you pleasure  
 if he might be so bold to move that I am because of him  
 self he would not take upon him in respect of you. This is  
 as you would as it were accepting or writing you this  
 he would prove the advantage to speak for him for the  
 accepting. At the first sight or before every way  
 or also his friends in the way of god. I willingly made you  
 in his behalf as he requires. Learning yet you can be  
 for my man health upon his being dead & pale a part  
 of electing of my heart in burning. but leave  
 or leave again very much troubled & am in god's love  
 in the world's part when you or but as pleases him  
 or can be content to have some remedy upon you can  
 god's grace but my poor soul. For my health  
 shall not speak concerning to appease trust in the  
 world let them learn to depend upon god in his service  
 that I write upon him with good hope. For sure if he  
 they lack the suffering way of a trust in their will  
 just yet well and happy to god's grating assistance  
 in god's service of his love towards you. Given  
 the 13 July  
 your humble servant  
 Anne Bacon

**Figure 2.** Anne Bacon to Robert Cecil, 13 July 1594 (109).

letters are freely formed, although her letters to Essex, unlike the majority of her correspondence, occasionally adopt the formal rhetorical structure of early modern letters.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>181</sup>For more formally structured letters, see 146 and 174. The formal rhetorical structure of early modern letters consisted of an *exordium* (introduction), *propositio* (declaration of the

Epistolary conventions also had an impact on specific areas of Anne's letters. Letter-writing manuals were explicit that the wording of the subscription should be reflective of the social status of the writer and the recipient. In *The Enimie of Idlennesse* (1568), William Fulwood made the point that sixteenth-century correspondents writing to their superiors must close by stating 'By your most humble and obedient sonne, or servaunt, &c. Or, yours to commaund, &c.'; inferiors only necessitated a sign-off of 'By yours, &c.'<sup>182</sup> Such social considerations govern Anne's writing of subscriptions. To potential patrons, such as Théodore de Bèze or Edward Stanhope, Anne's subscription noted that she was the 'late Lord Keper's widow' (189).<sup>183</sup> As has been discussed, she used the Greek for widow, 'Χηρα', in ten of her letters. To her sons, her subscriptions varied; generally she closed with 'Your mother' in either English or Latin, but she also used the subscription to amplify the emotional persuasion of the letter. In December 1594, she felt that she needed to emphasize her status as a godly widow and affectionate mother, signing off as 'your loving and careful mother for yow. ABacon Χηρα' (114). On other occasions, too, the personal descriptions used in subscription reveal Anne's emotional state. After informing Anthony of the death of John Finch in 1593, she signed the letter 'Your sad mother, ABacon' (72). In this, she followed the practice of her sister Elizabeth, who likewise utilized the subscription of her letters to bolster their emotional resonance.<sup>184</sup>

The addresses or superscriptions, providing the name of the recipient and their location, included on the outside of the letters, are also illuminating. Details are provided as to the necessity for swift carriage: a letter to Anthony in May 1595 was addressed with the note that it was to be carried 'with some spede' (129). Sometimes notes were even written on the outside of letters, perhaps because news had reached Anne after the rest of the epistle had been sealed. 'Part not with your London howse *temere ne forte peniteat tui*', she wrote on the outside of a letter to Anthony in June 1595 (135).

substance of the letter), *confirmatio* (amplification), *confutatio* (countering of objections), and *peroratio* (conclusion). For more on this structure, see J. Gibson, 'Letters', in M. Hattaway (ed.), *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 615–619; Daybell, *Women Letter-writers*, pp. 240–243.

<sup>182</sup>W. Fulwood, *The Enimie of Idlennesse* (London, 1568), sig. B2v.

<sup>183</sup>Her letters to Theodore de Bèze used the Latin version of this subscription: '*vidua Domini Custodis*'. See 16 and 17.

<sup>184</sup>See, for example, her subscription to SP 12/255, fo. 37r: 'By your aunt that hath not above 600 l de claro in the world to live on left, Elizabeth Russell, that liveth in scorn of disdain, malice and rancor, fearing, serving and depending only upon God and my sovereign, Dowager'.

The material nature of Anne's letters also has much to tell us about how the letters would have been read. The use of space on the page was significant in early modern letters; the space between the salutation and the main body of the letter, and between that and the subscription, reflected deference towards the recipient, in an age when paper was an expensive resource.<sup>185</sup> It has been remarked that, in practice, such conventions governing the use of space were often loosely followed and Anne Bacon's letters reflect a general application of this principle. Letters to Théodore de Bèze and to the earl of Essex all have a marked space between the salutation and the body of the letter (see figure 3).<sup>186</sup> On occasion, there is some space left between the body of the letter and the subscription; the greatest space left in any of her surviving letters between the main letter and her sign-off is in her second letter to Théodore de Bèze, but even then Anne did not place her subscription at the bottom of the page, indicating that, while she wanted to show Bèze deference, she was aware of her own status as the 'widow of the Lord Keeper' (17).<sup>187</sup>

While Anne was familiar with contemporary epistolary practice, her letters reveal the additional constraints placed on their composition. Time pressures limited the ability to write. She told her brother-in-law, William Cecil, that she was cutting her message short 'because your man hasteth away and my husbände to dyner' (4); another letter was written '*raptim*', in haste (35).<sup>188</sup> As she aged, Anne's eyesight also hindered long periods of letter-writing.<sup>189</sup> Often letters were written in stages and postscripts are a common feature in her correspondence. During her marriage, Anne frequently wrote postscripts to her husband's letters, amplifying her husband's message, rather than providing new information to the reader.<sup>190</sup> Here it appears that a holograph postscript itself conveyed an important message to the recipient, by its presence highlighting Anne's own interest in the matter in hand.<sup>191</sup> During her widowhood, she more often used postscripts

<sup>185</sup>See, for example, A.R. Braummuller, 'Accounting for absence: the transcription of space', in W. Speed Hill (ed.), *New Ways of Looking at Old Texts* (Binghamton, NY, 1993), pp. 47–56; J. Gibson, 'Significant space in manuscript letters', *Seventeenth Century*, 12 (1997), pp. 1–9; A. Stewart, *Shakespeare's Letters* (Oxford, 2008), pp. 39–74; Daybell, *Material Letter*, pp. 90–95.

<sup>186</sup>See 16 and 146.

<sup>187</sup>There is also a relatively large space left between the body of the letter and the subscription in Anne's May 1595 letter to Lord Burghley (132).

<sup>188</sup>See also the letter written by her sister Mildred, which stated to Anne that she would like to write more, but travelling made it impossible (3).

<sup>189</sup>See 19 and 179.

<sup>190</sup>See 4 and 10.

<sup>191</sup>Anne only signed and wrote the postscript to 12 in her own hand. For the message conveyed by holograph writing, see Daybell, *Material Letter*, p. 86.



to provide afterthoughts concerning letters written in stages or for additional emphasis, often about the destruction of the letters.

## Delivery

As private correspondence, most of Anne's letters were carried by bearers. Information concerning the letter carrier is frequently included on the page and Anthony's secretaries also often noted who delivered Anne's letters.<sup>192</sup> Neighbours and servants were regularly trusted to carry letters for Anne to London; when utilizing a new bearer unknown to Anthony, Anne provided a justification in her letter.<sup>193</sup> In line with Anne's concern over the quality of her mail carriers, it is clear that not all letters written by her were actually delivered to their intended recipient.<sup>194</sup>

Anne and Anthony's correspondence networks were interlinked, to the point where the same letter could be inscribed by both parties: Anne returned one of his letters to Anthony, adding a postscript detailing another letter she was enclosing.<sup>195</sup> Anthony likewise recorded sending other letters to St Albans with the bearer of the letter to his mother.<sup>196</sup> Anne's correspondents sometimes sent their letters to Anthony for him to forward to her. Captain Francis Goad, for example, sent his letter from Dieppe to Anne via Anthony Bacon at Gray's Inn, as can be seen from the superscription; the seal, however, is still extant, so presumably his message to Anne was secure until it reached her.<sup>197</sup> Anne sent letters to Essex via Anthony and they were returned to her by the same process. However, this did not mean that Anthony was initially privy to all correspondence between his mother and the earl; Anthony asked to see a sealed letter sent to his mother by Essex and to see a copy of his mother's reply, which she wrote out again in her own handwriting.<sup>198</sup> It seems that Anthony did not see at least one other of his mother's letters to Essex. Her letter condemning the earl's swearing is held in the Cecil Papers at Hatfield House, rather than at Lambeth Palace Library in Anthony's papers. She was explicit in the letter that she would not show her message to her sons: 'my

<sup>192</sup>For example, Anthony's servant, 'little' Peter, was often recorded as delivering letters. See **83** and **86**.

<sup>193</sup>For neighbours as bearers, see **41**, **43**, **44**, **45**, and **143**. For the warning about a new bearer, see **124**.

<sup>194</sup>For the failed delivery of one of Anne's letters, see **136**.

<sup>195</sup>See **135**.

<sup>196</sup>See **169**.

<sup>197</sup>See **51**.

<sup>198</sup>See **175** and **177**.

deerest, who neyther are, nor never shalbe made prevy of this my doing' (146). Its eventual inclusion in the Hatfield archive suggests that it was part of the cache of Essex papers that was acquired by Sir Robert Cecil after his rival's downfall.

Anne's correspondence also highlights how much communication occurred off the page. She told her stepson Nathaniel that she understood the finer details appertaining to his daughter's christening from his 'man' (12). This reliance on bearers to impart additional information was connected to the fear of epistolary insecurity, something that frequently worried Anne.<sup>199</sup> She feared that Thomas Lawson, 'that foxe', was 'acquainted' with all her letters, telling Anthony that Lawson 'commonly opened undermyningly all lettres sent to yow from councell or frends' (22).

One response for Anne as a learned woman was to turn to her knowledge of classical languages. Sometimes she used her knowledge of the Greek alphabet purely to conceal information in her letters. The technique of transliteration, using characters from the Greek alphabet instead of Roman letters, was an established method of seeking epistolary privacy for Anne's contemporaries.<sup>200</sup> Although not a fool-proof system, only providing protection from the prying eyes of bearers, a letter from Anne in March 1595 reveals the utility of this method, for she transliterated the names of Henry Howard, Anthony Standen, Antonio Pérez, the earl of Arundel, and her sister Elizabeth Cooke Hoby Russell into Greek characters (see figure 4). Latin was a far less secure means of concealing information, but sometimes it would suffice for letters written in haste. When informing Anthony that he had failed to be elected as MP for St Albans in 1593, Latin at least meant that the message was hidden from the bearer of the letter.<sup>201</sup> Anne also attempted to ensure additional epistolary privacy through the folding of her letters; she folded her letters with the 'tuck and seal' method, which meant that there was generally an additional folio of paper covering her writing.<sup>202</sup> She also then sealed her letters

<sup>199</sup>For the response of other early modern letter-writers to concerns about epistolary privacy, see Daybell, *Material Letter*, pp. 148–174.

<sup>200</sup>For the use of Greek transliteration by the Edwardian diplomat Richard Morison, see, for example, SP 68/6, fo. 213r. For the use by Anne's brother-in-law, William Cecil, see BL, Lansdowne MS 118, fo. 83v.

<sup>201</sup>See 35. See also Anne's Latin comments regarding the countess of Warwick in 140.

<sup>202</sup>For the 'tuck and seal' method, see C. Burlington and A. Zurcher, "'Secretary to the Lord Grey Lord Deputie here": Edmund Spenser's Irish papers', *The Library*, 6 (2005), pp. 59–60; Daybell, *Material Letter*, p. 49. For the more varied use of folding by Bess of Hardwick, see A. Wiggins, *Bess of Hardwick: reading and writing Renaissance letters* (Aldershot, forthcoming).

I wrote yesterday to my fa = Washington w by her to the countess. He told  
 yt with w troubled me. The countess is very near her brother's time  
 I beseech God of his goodness make her t joyful not to die by reason  
 of her his pleasure you her w gent. Beware in of the lo  
 it. Oodde, he is a dangerous intelligent man. no doubt t  
 secret papist inwardly w wats in waye. I adventure he has some  
 close working w sardor w the Spanish in w to you, you can  
 not tell, be not to open. He will betray you to die. w to yo  
 Advice Oodde Among. The date had been above but by his  
 preaching w still solitary. I am to the Duke vndering w the  
 French of Arrond. Avoid his familiarities w you late  
 the truth w yo self. A very important of the Spanish papist  
 no treasure know or let this I write but burn it yo own hand  
 w yo me. For preventing curiosity work myself secretly.  
 I have

**Figure 4.** Detail from *Anne Bacon to Anthony Bacon*, 1 April 1595 (123).

with wax; she mentions her seal ring to Anthony and evidence of her seal can still be seen on her letters.<sup>203</sup>

After reading, Anne felt that the only way her correspondence could be kept confidential was for it to be returned, burnt, or torn.<sup>204</sup> Otherwise, she was certain that her letters were not secure from Anthony's servants: 'Your men and your brother's pry in every matter and lysten. I pray send back or burn this [letter] to be sure' (114). The secretarial endorsements on the letters both received and sent by Anthony Bacon, noting the sender and the date in French, reveal that Anne's fears were not ungrounded. However, it must be remembered that Anne did not necessarily want all her letters to remain secure. Her condemnation of Edward Stanhope has been noted to read almost like a jeremiad sermon. It is plausible to think that Anne may have wondered whether her letter would have been circulated beyond its intended recipient, in which case it offered her an opportunity to

<sup>203</sup>For Anne's seal ring, see 194. For complete seals on her letters, see 61, 123, 124, 145, 163.

<sup>204</sup>For Anne's messages to Anthony on this subject, see 35, 46, 58, 97, 102, 123, 125, 126, 134, 145, 158.

provide religious admonition to those whom she perceived as the enemies of the godly.<sup>205</sup>

### **Afterlives: the making of the Bacon archive**

The locations of Anne Bacon's letters are revealing as to their afterlife.<sup>206</sup> The vast majority are contained within the papers of her elder son, Anthony Bacon. The boundaries of the Bacon archive at Lambeth Palace Library therefore dictate much of the breadth of Anne's surviving correspondence. None of Anthony's letters after 1598 survive; it seems likely that he destroyed his correspondence after that date when he left Essex House in March 1600.<sup>207</sup> After his death, Anthony's papers were first in the possession of his brother, Francis, and they were then passed to Francis' chaplain, William Rawley. After the latter's death in 1667, the papers came to Thomas Tenison, a close friend of Rawley's only son, also called William. Anthony's papers arrived at Lambeth Palace Library when Thomas Tenison was made archbishop of Canterbury in 1695.<sup>208</sup>

The Bacon papers are now in fourteen volumes at Lambeth Palace Library. Another volume of Anthony Bacon's papers is held at the British Library, although that contains no correspondence with his mother.<sup>209</sup> Correspondence with other family members lies primarily within their respective papers: letters from Anne's stepchildren are held within the collections of their papers at the Folger Shakespeare Library and at the University of Chicago Library, while correspondence with her sister Mildred and her brother-in-law, William Cecil, is found within their papers at Hatfield House and the British Library.

There is a hinterland of additional correspondence behind that included in the current edition. Much of Anne's correspondence has been lost. There are very few letters extant sent between Anne and Francis Bacon; those that do survive are copies made for Anthony.<sup>210</sup>

<sup>205</sup> See **189**.

<sup>206</sup> For work on the afterlives of correspondence, see Stewart and Wolfe, *Letterwriting in Renaissance England*, pp. 181–205; Daybell, *Material Letter*, pp. 217–228.

<sup>207</sup> It is also possible that the correspondence was confiscated, but, if so, it must have been subsequently destroyed.

<sup>208</sup> See Birch, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*, I, p. 2; T. Birch (ed.), *Letters, Speeches, Charges, Advices, &c. of Francis Bacon* (London, 1763), sig. A5v; Ungerer, *Antonio Pérez's Exile*, I, p. xiv.

<sup>209</sup> See BL, Additional MS 4125. This volume was compiled by Thomas Birch, around the time when he was writing his 1754 *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*; some of the papers were probably originally held at Lambeth.

<sup>210</sup> See **23, 78, 91, 105, 112**. Anne sent letter **100** to both Anthony and Francis jointly.

These were often copied because the letter discussed particularly important matters, rather than more prosaic concerns.<sup>211</sup> Bar the published dedicatory letter written by Thomas Wilcox to Anne in 1589, none of their other correspondence survives; a manuscript volume of Wilcox's letters has been lost, although Anne is listed as a correspondent in a surviving note made on the preacher's letters.<sup>212</sup> This edition has attempted to bring together all the extant letters written by and to Anne Bacon. That decision has therefore precluded the many other letters that were not written directly by or to Anne, but that she would have seen and read. Her correspondence certainly reveals the presence of further epistolary communication, as other letters were frequently noted as included with correspondence directed to Anne. Matthew Parker sent her a copy of his letter to her husband, contained within his letter to her in 1568.<sup>213</sup> Anthony also forwarded letters he had received to his mother. Thus he sent her a letter written to him by Henry Gosnold, concerning his brother Francis, in February 1594; he also forwarded a letter from Robert Cecil in July 1596.<sup>214</sup> Anne likewise provided covering letters which enclosed patronage requests from clients.<sup>215</sup> These letters were all part of the wider world of Anne Bacon's correspondence, but beyond the scope of this volume.

Every attempt has been made to locate and bring together all of Anne's direct, extant correspondence for this edition. It is possible, however, that more of her letters still survive, awaiting discovery by future scholars of the formidable Lady Bacon.

<sup>211</sup> For example, a copy was made of Francis Bacon's letter to his mother in February 1594 because it '*touchant le fait de Mr Kemppe*', according to the endorsement by Anthony's secretary. See **91**.

<sup>212</sup> See **21** and P. Collinson, 'The role of women in the English Reformation illustrated by the life and friendships of Anne Locke', in P. Collinson (ed.), *Godly People: essays on English Protestantism and puritanism* (London, 1983), p. 275.

<sup>213</sup> See **7**.

<sup>214</sup> See **89** and **162**.

<sup>215</sup> See **190**.