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Medieval Londoners

Essays to mark the eightieth birthday of Caroline Barron

Edited by Elizabeth A. New and Christian Steer



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Caroline Barron at the 2019 Harlaxton Medieval Symposium.
Photograph: © Catherine Rendón.

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Abbreviations

BL	British Library, London
BRUC	A. B. Emden, <i>A Biographical Register of the University of Cambridge to 1500</i> (Cambridge, 1963)
BRUO (to A.D. 1500)	A. B. Emden, <i>Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1500</i> (3 vols., Oxford, 1957–9)
BRUO (A.D. 1501–1540)	A. B. Emden, <i>Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D. 1501–1540</i> (Oxford, 1974)
Cal. Letter Bks. A, B, C, etc.	<i>Calendar of the Letter Books preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London</i> , ed. R. R. Sharpe, A–L (11 vols., London, 1899–1912)
CCR	<i>Calendar of Close Rolls</i> (46 vols., London, 1892–1963)
CIPM	<i>Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem</i> (London and Woodbridge, 1904–)
CPMR	<i>Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London 1323–1482</i> , ed. A. H. Thomas and P. E. Jones (6 vols., Cambridge, 1926–61)
CPR	<i>Calendar of Patent Rolls</i> (54 vols., London, 1891–1916)
CUL	Cambridge University Library
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. H. C. G. Matthew and B. Harrison (60 vols., Oxford, 2004)
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
PROME	<i>Parliament Rolls of Medieval England 1275–1504</i> , ed. C. Given-Wilson et al. (16 vols., Woodbridge, 2005)
STC	A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, <i>A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad</i> ,

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1475–1640, 2nd edn. revised and enlarged by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson and K. F. Pantzer (3 vols., London, 1986–91)

TNA

The National Archives of the UK

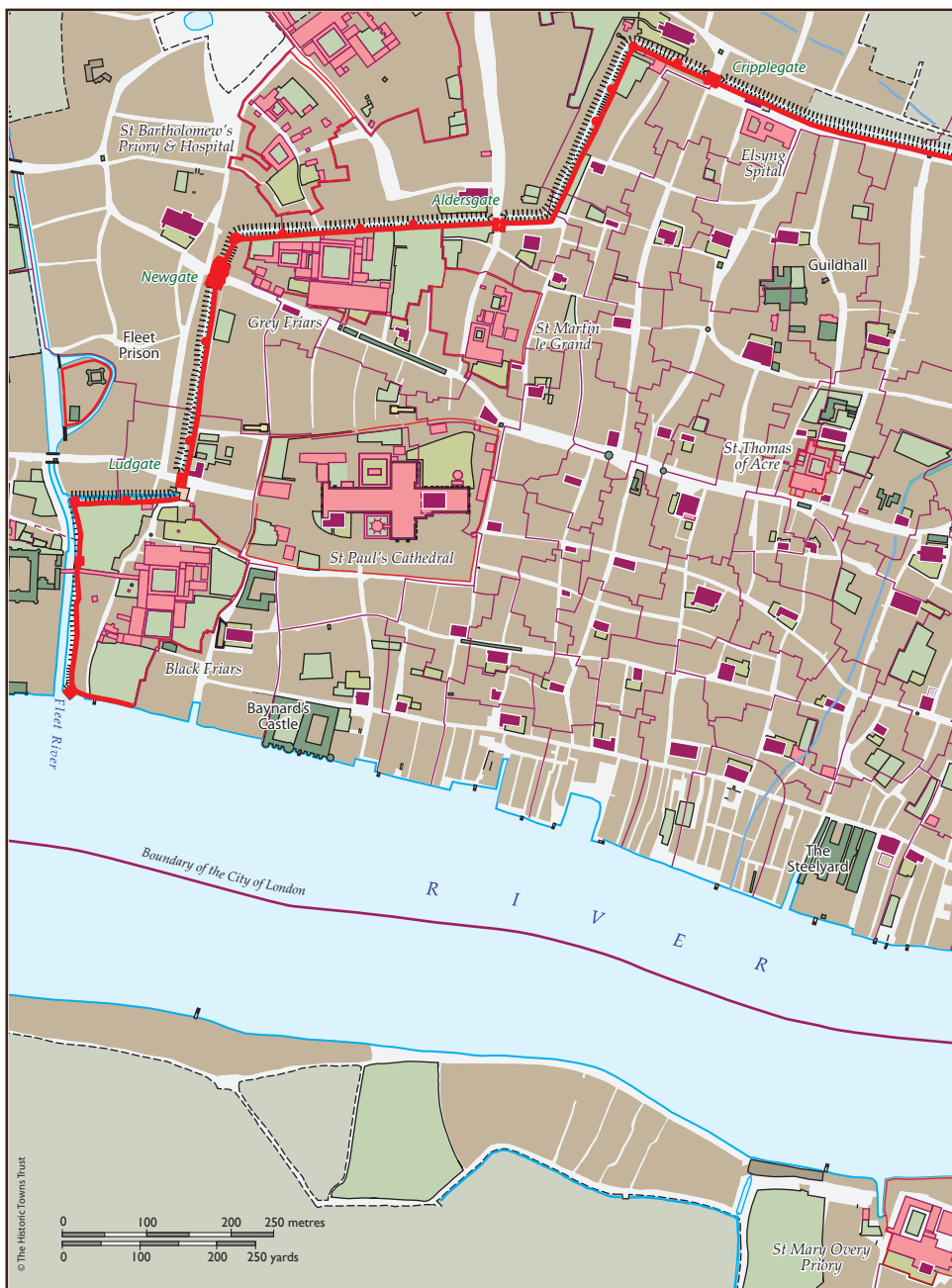
Acknowledgements

This special collection of essays has been produced to celebrate the eightieth birthday of Caroline M. Barron, emeritus professor of the history of London at Royal Holloway, University of London. There are many to whom our grateful thanks are due. First and foremost, we thank each of our contributors not only for their essays but also for dealing with our queries quickly, professionally and with good humour. We likewise owe a debt of gratitude to Clive Burgess, David Harry, Sue Powell and Joel Rosenthal, and our anonymous reader, for their comments, encouragement and specialist advice during the production of this volume; to Giles Darkes for providing the map of medieval London; to Richard Asquith for producing the index; and to each of the institutions cited here for reproduction permissions. We also thank Philip Carter and Julie Spraggon of the Institute of Historical Research, and Emily Morrell and Kerry Whitston of University of London Press, for their guidance during the publication process. This volume has been a well-kept secret from the birthday girl and we thank our fellow conspirators for their discretion, as we also thank the Barron family, Katie and Leo, Helen, Will and Seren, and David, with whom it has been a pleasure to plot. Finally, we thank Caroline Barron for all that she is, for her inspiration, friendship, boundless (and unstoppable) energy, encouragement, generosity and kindness. This volume is offered with gratitude and with love.

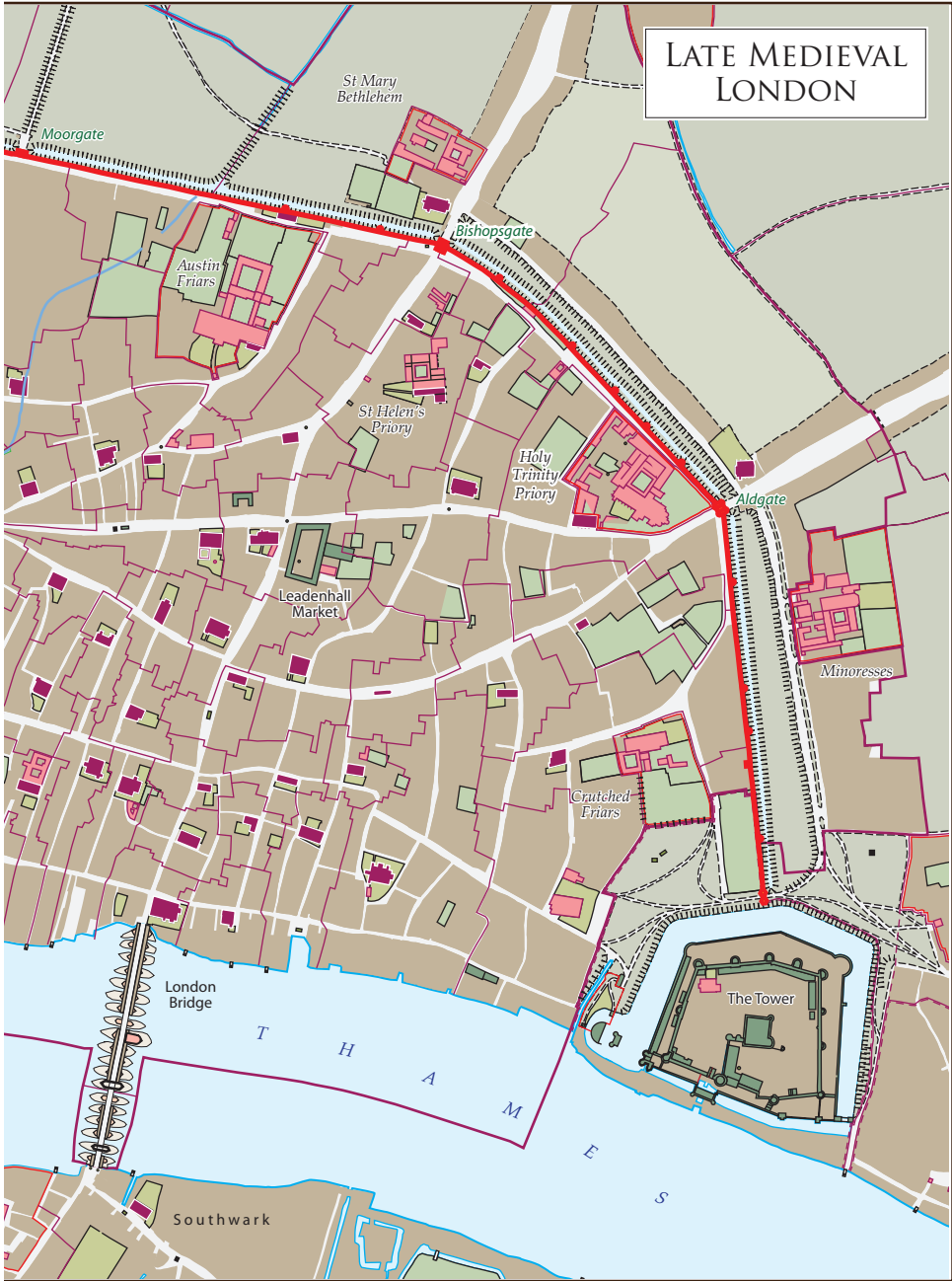
Elizabeth A. New
Aberystwyth University

Christian Steer
University of York

Feast of St Gilbert of Sempringham, 2019



London showing the parish churches, religious houses, old St. Paul's and major landmarks c.1520. Adapted from *A Map of Tudor London* published by the Historic Towns Trust, 2018.



Foreword

It is an honour to write this foreword to a volume dedicated to Caroline Barron. She is best known for her prolific scholarship on late medieval British history, especially the history of London and the history of women. Indeed, a search of the *Bibliography of British and Irish History Online* reveals eighty-five publications, ranging from 1968 to 2017. As testament to the enduring importance of her work, a selection of these papers has recently been gathered together.¹ Perhaps more important still has been Caroline's legacy through doctoral supervision and her generosity to early career historians. She has supervised thirty-three doctoral students to completion; and she has offered hospitality and accommodation in London to countless others needing to use the city's libraries and archives. In a clear demonstration of care for the well-being and educational experience of sometimes vulnerable doctoral students, Caroline often offered her expertise freely to ensure that postgraduate study was right for the individual: 'My policy was that when I wasn't certain that someone would be able to do it, or whether they had the funding, or domestic issues or other problems, what I would say would be: let me supervise you informally for a year – don't register – let's see how it goes. And if it's working out well – then register'. Her concern for the future of the discipline has seen Caroline direct her enormous energies into countless societies, institutes and projects, such as the British Association for Local History, the Harlaxton Medieval Symposium and the London Record Society. It is only fitting that this volume is to be published by the Institute of Historical Research. Caroline has given so much of her valuable time to the IHR: she has studied and lectured here; she is a driving force in the Friends of the IHR, which has offered so many opportunities to young scholars pursuing historical research; she serves on the IHR Trust; and she co-organizes one of the longest-running seminars at the IHR, the Medieval and Tudor London seminar. The IHR, and the discipline, owe her a great debt of gratitude.

Jo Fox
Director, Institute of Historical Research

¹ *Medieval London: Collected Papers of Caroline M. Barron*, ed. M. Carlin and J. T. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo, Mich., 2017).

12. The testament of Joan FitzLewes: a source for the history of the abbey of Franciscan nuns without Aldgate*

Julian Luxford

This chapter selectively analyses a testament (to be called a ‘will’ for the sake of convenience) made by a widow named Joan FitzLewes in December 1511. Joan was a friend of the abbey of Franciscan nuns outside Aldgate (that is, the Minories) and intended to become a nun herself.¹ Thus, her will represents a form of ritual oblation, a shedding of worldly affairs and persona as a precondition of taking the habit. It foreshadowed worldly rather than bodily death: in this regard it is exceptional.² The fact that it survives in its original form, signed and sealed, heightens one’s sense of its significance for its maker. This is an important point to emphasize. To ignore its status as an object and use it only for what its text communicates, which is the normal lot of medieval wills, would be a shame and also rather short-sighted in light of the developing scholarly tendency to treat the physical substance of documentation as data.³ Regarded simply as a record of things planned and done, the will is shorter and less remarkable than many others of its time. Its main textual interest lies in what it reveals of the Minories: all fresh information, as it happens, for Joan’s will has managed to dodge scholarship

* I am very grateful to Clive Burgess for reading a draft of this chapter and offering numerous helpful suggestions; and to Christian Steer for references, advice and encouragement. I cheerfully acknowledge the usefulness to this chapter of the unpublished work by Martha Carlin and Catherine Paxton cited below.

¹ FitzLewes may be spelled FitzLowes in the sources; Lewes is an alternative spelling, though not, to my knowledge, in relation to Joan.

² It is sometimes assumed that propertied laypeople who became monks or nuns made wills as a preliminary step, but the process was unnecessary and evidence is rare. Another example is a will made by Dorothy Slight in 1535 (TNA, PROB 11/25, fo. 226), discussed by V. Bainbridge, ‘Syon abbey: women and learning c.1415–1600’, in *Syon Abbey and Its Books: Reading, Writing and Religion, c.1400–1700*, ed. E. A. Jones and A. Walsham (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 82–103, at p. 85.

³ A tendency that proceeds largely from M. T. Clanchy’s extraordinary book *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307* (3rd edn., Chichester, 2013).

J. Luxford, ‘The testament of Joan FitzLewes: a source for the history of the abbey of Franciscan nuns without Aldgate’, in *Medieval Londoners: essays to mark the eightieth birthday of Caroline M. Barron*, ed. E. A. New and C. Steer (London, 2019), pp. 275–95. License: CC-BY-NC-ND 4.0.

on the abbey until now. Yet the unusual circumstances of its composition and its rough-edged materiality combine with what it says to make a claim on the attention of those who study late medieval London. If this is true of Caroline Barron, at least, then the choice of a subject involving several of the areas that have nourished and profited by her work will, it is hoped, seem less forced than it could.

Joan FitzLewes's will is in The National Archives, filed by itself as a land revenue deed (Figure 12.1).⁴ This means that it is not among the bulk of surviving documentation to do with the abbey, which is largely comprised of conventual leases (filed as exchequer documents) and scattered references in late medieval probate registers and court rolls.⁵ Perhaps its classification explains why it has been overlooked in the past: it is not, anyway, obvious how a document of this type, which does not mention real property, should be classified. The text, written in English, is a little over 1,000 words long and occupies one side of a single, unindented sheet of parchment 12.5 in. high by 18.5 in. wide. This sheet was originally folded into six for archiving and there is an endorsement stating what the document is and who witnessed the ritual of signing and sealing that activated it. The document's formality is marked by an elaborate penwork initial at the beginning; larger and bolder lettering at the start of many of its clauses; the signature of the testatrix; the name plus *signetum manuale* of the scrivener (one John Worsopp); and the impression of a seal in red wax which hangs from a parchment tag.⁶ This impression is damaged and was not very clear to begin with, as some sort of rough-weave fabric was pressed onto it when the wax was still pliable. As a result, the seal's inscription is illegible, although a cross at its centre is clear enough.

The endorsement makes it plain that Joan impressed a seal in her own right. Indeed, it was normal for testators both to sign their wills and to seal them as a double insurance against impropriety. Although relatively few original wills of this type seem to exist, a clause that mentions signing and sealing occurs in many probate copies.⁷ There is a typical specimen

⁴ TNA, LR 15/2.

⁵ An important, underworked seam of documents is TNA, E 303/9/181–203.

⁶ Worsopp (d. 1538) was evidently a preferred scrivener of the nuns. He signed another document of the abbey (TNA, E 303/9/201; made 1514) and his name also appears on the parchment seal-tag of Joan's will, made of an earlier, cut-up document. Elizabeth New has told me he was an active member of the Jesus guild in St. Paul's Cathedral during the 2nd and 3rd decades of the 16th century. His own will is TNA, PROB 11/27, fos. 177v–178.

⁷ E.g., TNA, PROB 11/8, fos. 144v–146v (will of John Alfegh; made 1489); PROB 11/12, fos. 105v–106 (will of Sir Thomas Bryan; made 1500); PROB 11/12/, fos. 106r–v (will of Roger Reyff; made 1500); PROB 11/21, fos. 168–169v (will of Sir Robert Wotton; made 1523); PROB 11/27, fos. 177v–178 (will of John Worsopp; made 1538). That few original

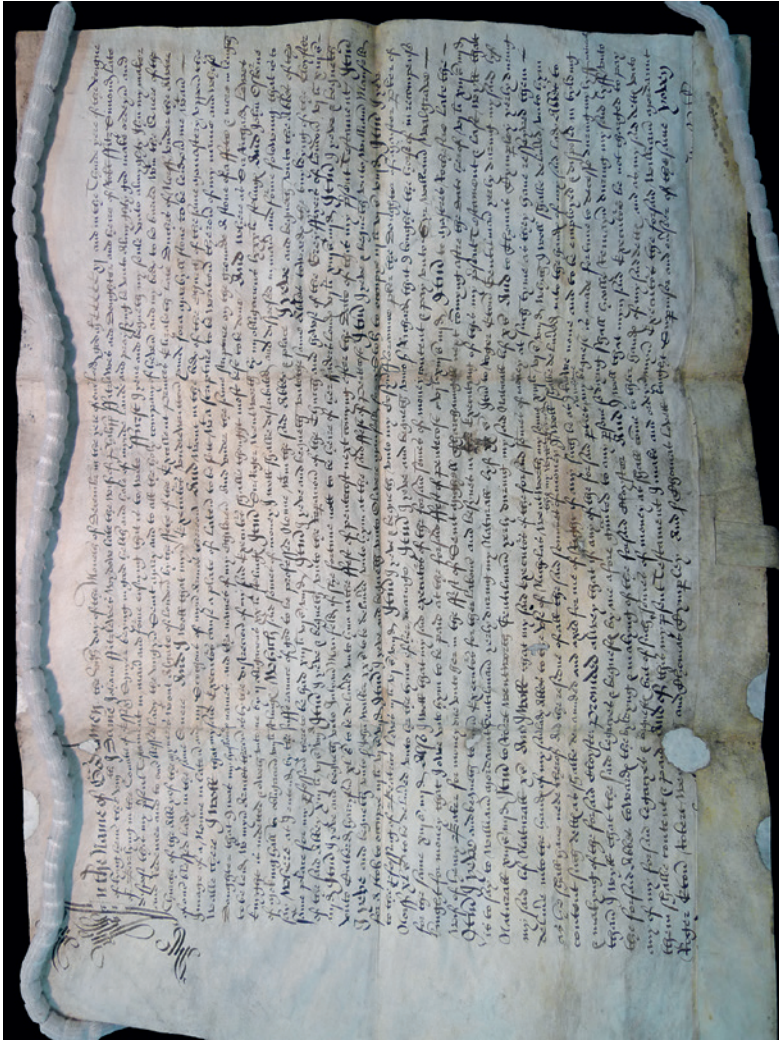


Figure 12.1. London, TNA, LR 15/2. The testament of Joan FitzLewes. Reproduced by permission of The National Archives.

in the will of Sir Robert Rede, a chief justice of the common pleas (d. 1519): 'In wisse wherof to this my testament I haue putt my sealle and subscribed my name with myne owne hande'.⁸ Margaret, Lady Hungerford (d. 1478), for whom three original wills survive, went one better than this by having the bishop of Salisbury sign and seal her second and third wills, 'forasmuch as my seal and subscription is not to meny men knowen'.⁹ While supernumerary insurance of this sort was unnecessary (and presumably unavailable) to Joan FitzLewes, its use by Margaret illustrates with special clarity the importance of manifest personal intervention (extending to the exercise of social leverage) to the forensic validity of a will. As on a charter, the phenomenal evidence of such intervention supplied the ultimate validation of the text.

Understandably, scholars are not accustomed to thinking about this because they routinely deal with depersonalized transcripts which encourage the view that a will is only as useful as what it says. This has caused, or at least nurtured, the roundly unjustified notion that medieval wills are too formulaic in structure and content to reveal anything much of personal identity and misleading to the point of deceit.¹⁰ In the case of Joan's will, as must originally have been the case with many others, nothing militates more directly against this than the signature at the bottom (Figure 12.2). Joan's signature – 'Jone Fyzlowyes' in a careful but unkempt hand that

wills survive was noted by M. L. Zell, 'Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century wills as historical sources', *Archives*, lxii (1979), 67–74, at p. 67, n. 1. Probably, however, very little inquiry has been made for them: they are not a commonly recognized class of document.

⁸ TNA, PROB 11/19, fos. 97–100, at fo. 98v.

⁹ M. A. Hicks, 'The piety of Margaret, Lady Hungerford (d. 1478)', *Jour. Eccles. Hist.*, xxxviii (1987), 19–38, at p. 22.

¹⁰ This notion arose partly as a corrective to a too-enthusiastic embrace of wills as autobiography, epitomized by W. K. Jordan's now sneered-at statement that wills are 'mirrors of men's souls' (W. K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England 1480–1630: a Study of the Changing Pattern of English Social Aspirations* (London, 1959), p. 16). This statement is often cited dismissively: see, e.g., C. Marsh, 'In the name of God? Will-making and faith in early modern England', in *The Records of the Nation*, ed. G. H. Martin and P. Spufford (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 215–49, at p. 215; A. D. Brown, *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England: the Diocese of Salisbury 1250–1550* (Oxford, 1995), p. 21; R. Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (Stroud, 2004), p. 8. More generally, it was a reaction to a common, uncritical assumption that wills provide comprehensive summaries of testators' property and intentions, a scholarly blind spot noted by Clive Burgess, 'Late medieval wills and pious convention: testamentary evidence reconsidered', in *Profit, Piety and Possessions in Later Medieval England*, ed. M. Hicks (Gloucester, 1990), pp. 14–33. Caroline Barron for one has demonstrated how tractable a will can be when approached as an object of study in its own right (C. M. Barron, 'The will as autobiography: the case of Thomas Salter, priest, died November 1558', in *Recording Medieval Lives*, ed. J. Boffey and V. Davis (Harlaxton Medieval Studies, n.s., xvii, Donington, 2009), pp. 141–81).

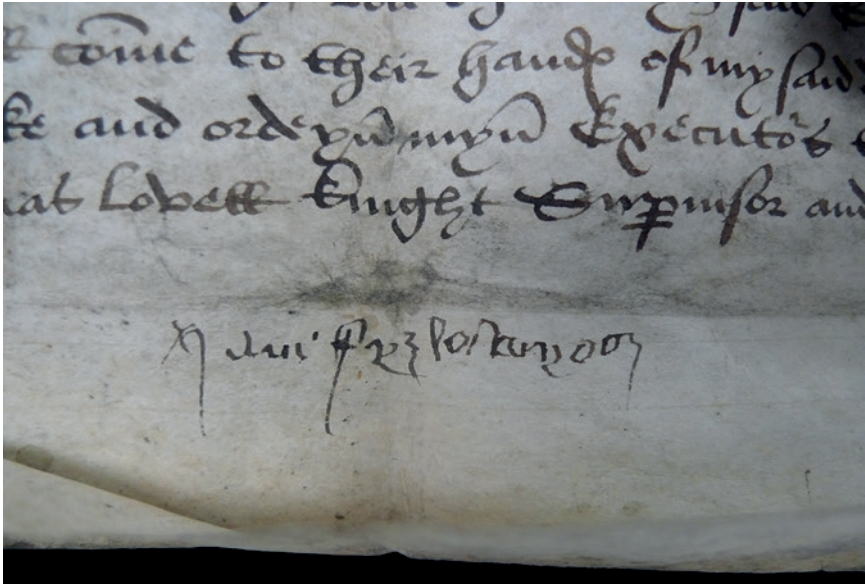


Figure 12.2. Detail of Figure 12.1, showing Joan FitzLewes's signature.

implies something like lack of writing practice, arthritis or simply a cold day – places an effective emphasis on her personal investment in the will's provisions. Here, through the still-manifest proxy of her own hand, is the 'I' who floats in the voice of the text: 'I woll', 'I make', 'I bought', 'I yeve', 'I owe', 'I know', 'I entend', 'I bequeth', 'I was'.¹¹ The signature also invites one to think about the circumstances of the will's ratification, which involved, as the endorsement says, the application of seal and signature under the eyes of nine men, followed by a little ceremony when the signatories and their witnesses handed the document over to the nuns. These formalities were presumably important and affecting to Joan. To say this is not, of course, to claim that the signature can reveal anything the text does not, but rather that it has the ability to sensitize a receptive mind to the personal circumstances and context of the will's making in a way potentially fruitful to study of the document. Comparison of Joan's autograph with the inert-looking copies of testators' signatures sometimes included in probate transcripts provides the best support for this claim.¹²

¹¹ A thoughtful review of the forensic and symbolic status of signatures on medieval documents is B. Fraenkel, *La signature: genèse d'un signe* (Paris, 1994). In the context of this chapter, see particularly pp. 17–25, 98–112.

¹² For a probate copy of a signature, see TNA, PROB 11/17, fos. 56–57v (will of William Maryner of 1512).

As it happens, the will is easily the fullest source of information we have about Joan. It contains the only clear indications of her character and ambitions. But other sources are important for understanding her attachment to the Minories and it is worth glancing at these before turning to the will and its contents. It would be possible to build up a more detailed picture of her life before 1511 than the one that follows, but as the focus of this chapter is on Joan as an aspiring nun rather than a laywoman with husband, children and other responsibilities, the following remarks will be confined to an economical sketch.

Joan was born into the FitzSimond family in 1452 or 1453. At an inquisition held on the death of her father Robert in 1474 or 1475 her age was given as twenty-two. The FitzSimond seat was the manor of Mocking Hall at Barling in south-east Essex, but her inheritance included two manors in each of Norfolk and Oxfordshire plus the moiety of another in Northamptonshire.¹³ She acquired the surname with which she signed her will from Philip FitzLewes (d. 1492), whom she married in or after 1483.¹⁴ The FitzLewes family, though a recent creation, were highly prosperous and also had their seat in southern Essex.¹⁵ Joan had been a bride twice before she married Philip: to Robert Tymperley and Henry Wentworth.¹⁶ Tymperley was named as her husband in the inquisition mentioned above and another document named both him and Joan as vendors of a messuage and garden in Fenchurch Street, London, in 1476.¹⁷ He probably died soon after, as Henry Wentworth, the second husband, died in 1483.¹⁸ Joan was also a mother. Through her will she asked that one of her two intended monuments display 'my name and whose daughter that I was, my husband's names and the names of my children'. As two of her executors were called

¹³ F. Blomefield and C. Parkin, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk* (2nd edn., 11 vols., 1805–10), ix, 100.

¹⁴ H. L. Elliot, 'Fitz Lewes, of West Horndon, and the brasses at Ingrave', *Trans. Essex Archaeol. Soc.*, n.s., vi (1898), 28–59, at p. 38; J. C. Wedgwood, *History of Parliament: Biographies of Members of the Commons House 1439–1509* (2 vols., London, 1936–8), i, 539 (on Richard FitzLewes); C. Paxton, 'The nunneries of London and its environs in the later middle ages' (unpublished University of Oxford DPhil thesis, 1992), p. 24.

¹⁵ For the basis and extent of FitzLewes prosperity, see A. D. Carr, 'Sir Lewis John, a medieval London Welshman', *Bull. Board of Celtic Stud.*, xxii (1967), 260–70.

¹⁶ Her husbands are named in a will of William Maryner (d. 1512), with whom Joan collaborated to arrange commemoration (discussed below) (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/236 (14)). I thank Christian Steer for sending me images of all the documents from this archive cited in this essay.

¹⁷ Society of Antiquaries of London, SAL/MS/650/35.

¹⁸ See <http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/Probate/PROB_11-12-265.pdf> (p. 2), compiled as part of the Oxford authorship project: <<http://www.oxford-shakespeare.com/documents.html>> [both accessed 28 Aug. 2018].

Thomas Tymperley and Robert Wentworth, it might be assumed that they were sons rather than relations by marriage. However, the Thomas in question is probably the same man who served as a rent-collector for the abbey in the period 1514–6 and his father was named John, not Robert.¹⁹ And Joan's only known child by her second husband was named Nicholas, rather than Robert, Wentworth. This Nicholas Wentworth was the only child named in Joan's will, suggesting that the other child or children to be commemorated on her monument predeceased her.²⁰

By her marriage to Philip FitzLewes Joan entered a family with close links to the Minories. A nun named Alice FitzLewes was abbess between 1494 and 1501 (the precise duration of her leadership is unknown), shortly before which Philip was acting as the abbey's steward (he is documented in the post between 1487 and 1490).²¹ The steward was the senior lay officer in a Franciscan nunnery.²² This coincidence and the fact that FitzLewes is a distinctive name imply that Alice and Philip belonged to the same family. Indeed, Alice may have been Philip's niece. It is known that Philip had a niece who was a nun at the Minories; he also had a granddaughter who was professed there.²³ As steward, Philip was entitled to reside within the abbey. There were houses for the lay officials on the north side of the precinct, away from the nuns' cloister, one of which Philip was renting in 1487/8 for £2 per annum.²⁴ It is impossible to say how long or often he resided there, for he had other important offices which took him elsewhere.²⁵ The point to emphasize here is that if one assumes that Joan lived with him, as it is reasonable to do, then her experience of this solemn and feminine environment was a probable catalyst for her decision to become a nun. Other

¹⁹ A. F. C. Bourdillon, *The Order of Minoreesses in England* (Manchester, 1926), p. 35; M. Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London before the Great Fire. St. Botolph Aldgate: Minories, East Side; the abbey of St. Clare; Holy Trinity Minories' (unpublished typescript, University of London, Institute of Historical Research, 1987), p. 4.

²⁰ Nicholas is also the only child named in the anniversary Joan arranged through William Maryner (see n. 16 above).

²¹ Paxton, 'The nunneries of London and its environs', p. 25 and n. 58; Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', p. 4; *The Religious Houses of London and Middlesex*, ed. C. M. Barron and M. Davies (London, 2007), p. 148 (Alice as abbess); Paxton, 'The nunneries of London and its environs', pp. 24, 87 (Philip as steward).

²² The office of steward has been characterized as 'practically a sinecure' and typically invested in someone capable of influence on the nuns' behalf (Bourdillon, *Order of Minoreesses*, p. 33 (quotation); also E. Power, *Medieval English Nunneries c.1275–1535* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 146–7).

²³ Paxton, 'The nunneries of London and its environs', pp. 24, 25.

²⁴ Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', pp. 31, 32, 34, 35. In 1539 there were two stewards, each paid £2 13s 4d (Bourdillon, *Order of Minoreesses*, p. 33).

²⁵ See Wedgwood, *Biographies of the Members of the Commons*, i. 539, for these roles.

influences were no doubt active. For example, she had an independent link to the abbey by virtue of the fact that a great-niece of hers, Anne Tyrell of Beeches in Essex, was a nun there.²⁶ Her religious kinswomen set her an example and she probably envied them their status. It is easy to see why, under such circumstances, she decided to have Christ for her fourth spouse and the title 'Dame' used in her will may suggest that she became a vowess after Philip FitzLewes died.²⁷

If Joan's decision is intelligible, its chronology is unclear before 1509. In theory she was free to become a nun after Philip died in 1492, but she evidently preferred to wait. While it is likely that she maintained an active interest in the abbey during the intervening years, there is little evidence for this. Joan may have resided in the precinct for much of this period, or visited the abbey only occasionally. However, by 1509, when she was in her late fifties, she was making preparations for entering the order by arranging anniversaries for herself and those she was obliged to help. This, of course, was something she could not do once professed. She set up two anniversaries, to be observed 'solempny by note' in the abbey church, respectively on 26 March and 26 November.²⁸ Additionally, she funded a light in the monastery and another in a parish church near the FitzLewes' seat at Barling. In each case, she channelled the means to pay the nuns through a London citizen named William Maryner (d. 1512). Maryner made several deeds and at least two wills, one of them entirely devoted to the commemoration of Joan and her family. The prayers and pittances it specified were to be funded out of the rents and property she had granted him.²⁹ Conceivably, this expedient was intended to ensure maintenance of the anniversaries in the period after Joan had relinquished control over her affairs to the abbess. It certainly created a paper trail.³⁰ Perhaps she felt obliged to ensure the spiritual succour of her family. In any case, her own will places no commemorative obligations on her executors.

This brings us to the content of Joan's will. As far as is known, it is the last significant piece of evidence about her.³¹ There is nothing particularly

²⁶ Paxton, 'The nunneries of London and its environs', p. 25.

²⁷ I am grateful to Clive Burgess for advocating this possibility.

²⁸ Paxton, 'Historical gazetteer of London', pp. 25, 127, 138–9; see also the documents cited in n. 30 below.

²⁹ LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/236 (14) (dated 20 Jan. 1512). John Worsopp wrote the original will from which this copy was taken. Maryner's other will (TNA, PROB 11/17, fos. 56–7; dated 31 March 1512) does not mention Joan or the Minorities.

³⁰ TNA, LR 14/299; LR 14/550; LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/236 (64) (dated 17 Aug. 1509; a copy of TNA, LR 14/550); CLA/023/DW/01/236 (32) (dated 26 Nov. 1511, only 11 days before Joan made her will).

³¹ She is mentioned in a deed made on 4 June 1520 by her son Nicholas Wentworth as

unusual about the structure of the text. After a preamble mentioning Joan's third husband and father come instructions about burial, a tomb and a second monument. Then there is a reckoning of what she was owed by three debtors, totalling £108, and, at greatest length, the things she wanted done with this money. Among these were gifts to named individuals for specified purposes, including annuities payable to her four executors during her lifetime, an arrangement which emphasizes the fact that her will was made in anticipation of imminent social rather than bodily death. Any residue was to be put into the hands of the abbess for building works. If the text's structure is conventional, however, the content, as conditioned by Joan's intention to become a nun, is not. Thus, she commissioned no prayers or masses for her soul or those of her family and friends and disposed of no real property. Neither did she dispose of any personal effects, although like any woman of her social quality she presumably had her share, of which the 'litill englissh booke like a prymer' left to her by a nephew, John Tyrell of Beeches (d. 1493), was a representative.³² Appropriately, she placed much at the discretion of the abbess. Nearly everything she asked for was to be funded out of the debts owing to her. The real and movable property she owned by inheritance and marriage is invisible and must have been disposed of by separate preliminary arrangements. Perhaps, like her friend William Maryner, she made more than one will.³³

A detailed picture of the will's contents can be had from the transcription at the end of this chapter. What follows is a selective account, starting with the initial clauses after the preamble. Here Joan directed that she be buried in the choir of the abbey church 'by the ffete of the excellent Princess Elizabeth, late duches of Norffolk, under the awter of our blessed Lady'; and outlined the monuments she wanted set up in the church to commemorate herself and others.³⁴ These monuments were evidently important to her, for the directions in respect of them occupy about one sixth of the whole text and they are the only things in her will whose funding did not rely on repayment of debt. She wanted two monuments, one a 'marbyll' stone' over her grave 'with an image of a nonne in laten' and four shields of her

olim et perantea uxor Henrici Wentworth (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/236 (93)). The deed calls Wentworth her heir. As Joan became a nun, this may not prove her dead.

³² TNA, PROB 11/10, fos. 146–7, at fo. 146 (noticed in Paxton, 'The nunneries of London and its environs', p. 25).

³³ Again, I thank Clive Burgess for advice on this point. Such a will would have contained details of real property, personal effects and a wider range of beneficiaries (e.g., servants).

³⁴ It is unclear why Joan referred to Elizabeth Talbot as 'princess'. It could have been out of simple respect, or due to the representation of a ducal coronet on Elizabeth's tomb, or because of some confusion by Joan of Elizabeth with her daughter Anne Mowbray, who was married to one of Edward IV's sons and also buried in the Minories (see below).

arms; the other, destined for the nave, of two components, a latten plate in the wall with her name and those of her parents, husbands and children inscribed on it and a stone in the pavement beneath with her arms on it. This stone was to be 'a ffote & more in length'.

The request for two monuments is curious and each one is unusual in its way, at least in relation to surviving evidence. England can show very few surviving brasses and incised slabs to nuns and what there is gives little basis for reimagining Joan's effigy.³⁵ Further, it is impossible to know whether the heraldry was to represent only the FitzLewes and FitzSimond families, or to include Tymperley and Wentworth as well.³⁶ Margaret FitzLewes (d. 1466), a sister of Joan's third husband, had a brass with four different shields, apparently to signify her three marriages (this survives at Ingrave in Essex).³⁷ It appears that the commemorative inscription that would ordinarily have appeared on the gravestone was in this case transposed to the nave, where the abbey's servants and visitors could read it. If so, then this may have been because biographical information conveyed through words, as opposed to the symbolism of heraldry, was deemed to compromise a Franciscan nun's anonymity too frankly. Certainly, an image of a nun accompanied by statements of her individuality would have embodied an unifying (if not unparalleled) contradiction, particularly in the enclosure of the choir. As for the nave memorial, the coupling of a slab in the pavement with a wall-mounted inscription was evidently a way of alerting readers that Joan was actually buried in the church, if not directly at their feet. The stone slab was a diminutive gravestone by proxy. If not, then it is difficult to guess its purpose. Wall-mounted memorials, or memorial windows, were and are usually considered in relation to tombs covering or adjacent to actual graves: the will of Robert Fabyan (d. 1511) includes a contemporary London example of such juxtaposition.³⁸ Many existed independently of tombs, of course, but not demonstrably in the sort of combination Joan wanted.³⁹

³⁵ M. Norris, *Monumental Brasses: the Memorials* (2 vols., London, 1977), i. 63, 88, 147, 169; ii, figs. 85, 173, 199; J. Page-Phillips, *Palimpsests: the Backs of Monumental Brasses* (2 vols., London, 1980), i. 47; ii, pl. 40; F. A. Greenhill, *Incised Effigial Slabs: a Study of Engraved Stone Memorials in Latin Christendom, c.1100–c.1700* (2 vols., London, 1976), i. 103–4.

³⁶ FitzSymond bore *Gules, 3 escutcheons Argent*; FitzLewes bore *Sable, a chevron between 3 trefoils slipped Argent*.

³⁷ Elliot, 'Fitz Lewes, of West Horndon', pp. 39–43 and pl. 1.

³⁸ See, e.g., D. Brine, *Pious Memories: the Wall-Mounted Memorial in the Burgundian Netherlands* (Leiden, 2015), p. 25 and *passim*; *Testamenta Vetusta: Being Illustrations from Wills of Manners, Customs, etc.*, ed. N. H. Nicolas (2 vols., London, 1826), ii. 510 (Fabyan).

³⁹ Cf. J. Bertram, *Icon and Epigraphy: the Meaning of European Brasses and Slabs* (2 vols., [n.p.], 2015), i. 321. Two lost Oxfordshire monuments which included nothing but brass shields, called 'curious' by Bertram (i. 196), were possibly relics of the sort of pairing discussed here.

However, this probably reflects only a loss of evidence. Joan's grasp of the advantages of such a monument was probably based on her acquaintance with other examples, quite possibly in the nave at the Minories.

The complete eradication of the church above ground level means that the setting of both monuments is impossible to reconstruct accurately. Indeed, it is hardly worth speculating about the nave at all. A pre-Reformation list of fourteen people of aristocratic blood buried in the Minories indicates that Edmund de la Pole, eighth earl of Suffolk (executed 1513), and his wife Margaret (d. 1515) were buried in the nave.⁴⁰ It states that they were buried 'in the church', as opposed to the choir or chapter house, which are the other two locations it specifies. There were also some requests in wills for burial in the church, as opposed to the choir, as well as at least one for burial in the 'churchyard'.⁴¹ But this gives no real imaginative purchase and it only seems safe to say that the nave was commonly used for lay burials and, if so, that it probably had its share of sepulchral monuments. The list is more helpful with respect to the choir. Seven of the names in it were located either at the high altar or in the choir generally. Of these, the heart of the abbey's founder, Edmund of Lancaster (d. 1296), and the body of Margaret, countess of Shrewsbury (d. 1467), were respectively located at the north and south ends of the high altar. As the east end of the church (like the nave) lacked aisles, this suggests burials either up against or recessed into walls. Of the others, Isabel, a daughter of Thomas of Woodstock, duke of Gloucester, was located in the middle of the choir: she had been a nun in the late fourteenth century and is documented as abbess between 1413 and 1424.⁴² The burials of three others – Agnes, countess of Pembroke (d. 1368); Anne Mowbray, the child duchess of Norfolk and York (d. 1481); and Anne's mother Elizabeth Talbot, duchess of Norfolk (d. 1506) – were assigned to the 'quere', while the latest, of Mary Reading (d. 1531), was in the 'crosse quere'. The word 'crosse' here indicates a customary, gendered division of

⁴⁰ BL, Lansdowne MS. 205, fo. 19: printed (with redundant folio number) in E. M. Tomlinson, *A History of the Minories*, London (London, 1907), pp. 68–9. On internal evidence, the list was made between 1515 and 1531. A final entry about Mary Reading (d. 1531) was added in a different and apparently later hand. The list is assumed to have been compiled from inscriptions on monuments in situ (B. Watson and W. White, 'Anne Mowbray: a 15th-century child burial from the abbey of St. Clare, in the London borough of Tower Hamlets', *Trans. London and Middlesex Archaeol. Soc.*, lxxvii (2016), 227–60, at p. 231) but this may be wrong: e.g., a martyrology or oral report may underlie it.

⁴¹ E.g., Tomlinson, *History of the Minories*, p. 75; Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', p. 16; *Testamenta Eboracensia or Wills Registered at York*, iv, ed. J. Raine (Surtees Soc., liii, Durham, 1869), p. 233; TNA, PROB 11/2B, fo. 127v (will of Elizabeth Kyriell of 1419 mentions two burials); PROB 11/15, fos. 273–4 (will of Laurence Harris of 1508).

⁴² See Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', for documentary references to Isabel (p. 8).

the presbyteries of Franciscan nuns' churches according to which the nuns were separated during the *opus Dei* from the resident friars who served them as priests.⁴³

The specification about the closed choir in this one instance might lead to an assumption that the burials assigned by the list's compiler simply to the choir were located in the friars' division of the presbytery. This would extend to Joan FitzLewes, who, as noted, requested burial 'by the ffete' of Elizabeth Talbot. However, testamentary evidence shows otherwise and also helps to clarify Joan's intentions. In her will Elizabeth Talbot asked to be buried not just in the choir, as the list states, but 'in the nonnes quere'. Presumably she achieved what she wanted. Elizabeth also specified that her grave be 'nyghe unto' that of one Anne Montgomery (d. 1498).⁴⁴ This Anne Montgomery, widow of Sir John Montgomery (executed 1462), was sister-in-law of John Clopton (as such, she is represented in the stained glass of Long Melford church (Suffolk)).⁴⁵ Mary Tyrell, a niece of hers, was a nun at the abbey.⁴⁶ Elizabeth Talbot's sister-in-law Jane, the widow of Sir Humphrey Talbot (d. 1505), also requested burial 'within the inner choer' and 'nyghe the place and sepulture where the body of maistres Anne Mon[t]gomery [...] restith'. Like Joan FitzLewes, she wanted a flat tombstone laid on her grave, but with 'the picture of a dede corse in his wynding shete', plus the heraldry of her husband and herself and inscriptions soliciting prayers for both of them.⁴⁷ Jane's own tomb was cited in the will of Joyce Lee (d. 1507), one of whose daughters was a nun of the abbey. Joyce wished to lie 'in the wheer [*sic*] ... also nygh to the buriall of my lady Talbott as convenyently may be'.⁴⁸

This pleasingly reciprocal evidence helps one to appreciate Joan's thinking. It indicates a mausoleum defined by aristocratic and gentry women buried

⁴³ Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', p. 15. According to the will of Laurence Harris, there were five friars at the Minories in 1508 (TNA, PROB 11/15, fos. 273–4, at fo. 273v).

⁴⁴ TNA, PROB 11/15, fos. 196v–197. Her will is printed in J. Ashdown-Hill, 'Norfolk requiem: the passing of the house of Mowbray', *Ricardian*, xii (2001), 198–217, at pp. 212–5.

⁴⁵ Anne was of the Darcy family. No will can be found for her. The image at Long Melford is now in the seventh window on the north side of the nave. (An image of Elizabeth Talbot is in the first window.) On the Long Melford image, see A. Eavis, "'*Urbs in rure*": a metropolitan elite at Holy Trinity, Long Melford, Suffolk', in *The Urban Church in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Clive Burgess*, ed. D. Harry and C. Steer (Harlaxton Medieval Studies, n.s., xxix, Donington, 2019), pp. 82–106.

⁴⁶ Paxton, 'The nunneries of London and its environs', p. 23.

⁴⁷ TNA, PROB 11/14, fos. 302v–303.

⁴⁸ TNA, PROB 11/15, fos. 173v–174. P. Tudor-Craig stated that Joyce 'took the veil' at the Minories herself (*Richard III* (London, 1973), p. 53), but there is no apparent evidence that she was a nun and her will was made and proved within a month.

independently of men in a way that, effectively, conformed to the ideal of female religious enclosure. In this sense, the centrally located burial of the abbess Isabel of Woodstock was emblematic.⁴⁹ These women's links to the abbey during life, which included the professed status of relatives and periods of personal residence within its walls (Elizabeth Talbot lived at the Minorities, on and off, for twenty years or more), inevitably brought them into contact with one another. This in turn suggests why they may have wanted burial together in the same part of the church, in a sort of 'sorority of death'.⁵⁰ A blunter way of putting the matter is that a shared desire for burial as close as possible to the abbey's high altar created the effect of a largely female mausoleum and that this may have encouraged further women to seek burial there.

Beyond observing that the high altar and its associated burials lay towards the east end of the church, it is difficult to pinpoint the location of Joan's tomb.⁵¹ Even its position relative to other graves is indistinct. If Joan's request for burial at Elizabeth Talbot's feet had been an expression of devotion, then one might imagine two contiguous monuments, but there is little to show that these women were friends. More obviously, and like her peers, Joan cited an existing tomb in order to make her preferred area of burial as clear as possible.⁵² 'Area' is a better word to use here than 'site', for none of the sources mentioned above gives the modern historian a positive sense of place. The locational expressions relating to burial found in medieval wills and other documents (for example, '*juxta*', '*coram*', '*sub*', '*super*', '*in medio*' and their vernacular equivalents) are routinely ambiguous unless fixed by material evidence and there is no such evidence for the Minorities.⁵³ A request to be buried east (that is, 'at the feet') of someone else

⁴⁹ Assuming she was buried in the nuns' division of the choir.

⁵⁰ On their residence and contact, see, e.g., Ashdown-Hill, 'Norfolk requiem', pp. 209–11; W. E. Hampton, 'The ladies of the Minorities', in *Richard III: Crown and People*, ed. J. Petre (Gloucester, 1985), pp. 195–202, at pp. 197–201.

⁵¹ That the friars' division of the choir lay west of that of the nuns is shown by Jane Talbot's request for burial in the 'inner choir', which certainly pertained to the nuns. The church was about 130 ft long internally (Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', gives a total length including the walls of 141 ft (p. 14)) and there is no obvious reason to suppose that much space was reserved between the high altar and the eastern wall.

⁵² This effectively substitutes a utilitarian consideration for the attractive idea (for which, see Tudor-Craig, *Richard III*, p. 53; and Hampton, 'The ladies of the Minorities', p. 98) that Anne Montgomery and Elizabeth Talbot were considered charismatic and that this is why their graves were cited in other women's wills. However, this idea should not be dismissed entirely.

⁵³ The only known dimension germane to this chapter is that the generality of the choir (friars' and nuns') extended west by at least 58 ft. The grave of Anne Mowbray (Elizabeth Talbot's daughter), which the early 16th-century list locates in the choir, was found by

need not imply immediate proximity or even axial orientation. Joan's other stipulation, 'under the awter of our blessed Lady', is no more precise. It is hardly likely that a grave was burrowed in beneath the high altar; and if it was, then her monument with its image and heraldry cannot have rested directly over it, as her will required. In this context, 'under' was almost certainly supposed to mean 'in front of', as its Latin equivalent '*sub*' often did.⁵⁴ At most, the phrasing shows that Elizabeth Talbot's grave, Joan's tomb and the high altar existed near one another in an uninterrupted (but possibly meandering) west-east sequence.

At this point, it is worth briefly restating the basis for thinking that Joan's tomb lay before the high altar. Simply put, the high altar in an abbey dedicated to the Virgin Mary will have carried the same dedication and this is the dedication stated in Joan's will. We know this altar was in the nuns' division of the choir because Elizabeth Talbot asked for burial in that division and Joan requested a grave near hers. It makes sense to think that the high altar occupied the nuns' enclosure, that is, the 'inner choir' of Jane Talbot's will. A devil's advocate might propose that the nuns' choir contained a secondary altar dedicated to the Virgin, but there is no reason to believe it did. The only whiff of evidence for a distinct Lady altar arises from the mention of the burial of Henry le Waleys in 1302 in a chapel dedicated to the Virgin, but if this chapel was different from the abbey church, then there is anyway no basis for thinking that the nuns' choir stood in it.⁵⁵ Martha Carlin associated both the Henry le Waleys Lady chapel and a 'parissh chapell' mentioned in a will of 1508 with the collateral structure that lay on the north side of the abbey church and became the parish church of Holy Trinity after the Reformation.⁵⁶ This is the most likely interpretation of the evidence.

Joan's burial in a location of prestige equal to or greater than that of the founder and numerous women of greater social quality, where priests trod and the nuns in choir constantly bent their attention, was at least remarkable. It was perhaps the more remarkable for a nun and, what is more, one represented on her tomb as a nun. While nuns could normally expect

archaeologists at that distance from the east end of the church (Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', pp. 14, 17; Watson and White, 'Anne Mowbray', pp. 232–6).

⁵⁴ Just as '*super*' often has the sense of 'behind' (or, in churches, 'east of').

⁵⁵ *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London, A.D. 1258–A.D. 1688*, ed. R. R. Sharpe (2 vols., 1889–90), ii. 96–7; *Lateinische Schriftquellen zur Kunst in England, Wales und Schottland vom Jahre 901 bis zum Jahre 1307*, ed. O. Lehmann-Brockhaus (5 vols., Munich, 1955–60), ii. 222 (no. 2965).

⁵⁶ Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', p. 18; TNA, PROB 11/15, fos. 273–4, at fo. 273v (quotation).

burial outside the church, Joan sought a grave better situated than that of any abbess. Her ability to obtain it was very probably due to a combination of material gifts and goodwill built up through long association. The same combination of gifts and friendship may account for the nuns' willingness to admit her at the age of about sixty. According to the Rule for Franciscan nuns, whose surviving English witness is a fifteenth-century manuscript that probably belonged to the abbey, 'None woman schal be resseyuyd, woche for age ... be nat couenable & suffisaunt for to kepe þe maner of life'.⁵⁷ Whatever her physical state in 1511, adoption of someone of Joan's maturity represented a financial risk against which any religious institution would require insurance. At least part of this insurance came in the form of a profession fee sufficient to cover the cost of basic maintenance for several years. Thus, by her will, Joan assigned £13 6s 8d to the abbess for her profession. Although little comparative evidence survives, there is reason to think this reflected a standard fee that was required regardless of age. Joan also bequeathed £13 6s 8d 'towards the buyldyng of the cloyster of the said Abbey'; the two sums add up to £26 13s 4d, which is precisely what Henry VIII paid for the profession of the much younger Elizabeth de la Pole in 1510.⁵⁸

This bequest to the cloister was echoed twice at the end of the will, where Joan stated that any financial residue and any legacy unpayable by reason of the intended beneficiary's death should be given to the abbess 'towards the byldyng & making of the forsayd cloyster'. The cloister and its building are thus mentioned thrice. Taken together, this suggests that the abbey's cloister was indeed being renovated or rebuilt in the years around 1511. Of course, 'cloister' can be a synonym for 'monastery' and 'making' and 'building', singly or in combination, for the routine upkeep of buildings. However, the iteration in this case invites a literal reading, especially in light of the fact that Joan used a different expression in leaving money to the Grey Friars of London ('I yeve & bequeth unto the reparacion of the church and howse of the Greyffryers' etc.). If this surmise is acceptable, then the references are the only known documentary evidence for work on the abbey's cloister

⁵⁷ *A Fifteenth-Century Courtesy Book and Two Fifteenth-Century Franciscan Rules*, ed. R. W. Chambers and W. W. Seton (Early English Text Soc., o.s., cxlviii, 1914), p. 83. The manuscript is now Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 585, fos 48–104.

⁵⁸ The list of aristocratic burials mentions Elizabeth's burial in the abbey, but not in a specific place, implying a grave in the nuns' cemetery rather than the church. She was probably dead by 1515 (G. E. Cokayne, *The Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain* (8 vols., London, 1887–98), vii. 307, n. g). For other known profession fees, including Elizabeth de la Pole's, see Bourdillon, *Order of Minoreesses*, p. 38; Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', p. 6.

in any period. More gifts towards building are recorded after a fire caused extensive damage to the precinct in 1518, but the cloister at the heart of the complex is apparently not mentioned again.⁵⁹

The will's other clauses have little immediate bearing on Joan's religious vocation. She left money to eleven individuals, including four women. One of these, Beatrice Lewes, was probably an affine, although there is no mention of a relationship. Joan left £3 6s 8d 'to [her] professing', but whether Beatrice was destined for the Minories or some other nunnery is not revealed. Another, Florence Parker, called 'cosyn', was to have 40s upon her marriage. These consecutive bequests made a pair that, whether by accident or design, expressed the two possible sorts of marriage. Three creditors were reimbursed: a woman named Julyan Manfeld was given £6 13s 4d of insurance against her failure to inherit; and two men, Oliver and William Manfeld, were given £3 6s 8d each for a 'stok', a word which usually referred to a tree-trunk or a receptacle of some sort, but probably meant something else here (Manfeld was a gentry family).⁶⁰ Joan left £13 6s 8d in the safekeeping of the abbess for the use of her son, Nicholas Wentworth, when he required it, a clause which evokes both the minutiae of the abbatial brief in general and the detailed arrangements and relationships which teem beneath the surface of this particular document. At the end she ordained as her executors the aforementioned Thomas Tymperley and Robert Wentworth, William Mordaunt and Roger Eton and named Sir Thomas Lovell as their overseer. It was, perhaps, germane to her choice that Lovell was a great benefactor to another London nunnery, the Augustinian priory of Holywell at Shoreditch, where he was buried in 1524.⁶¹

The fact that performance of almost all the actions specified in the will was dependent on the collection of debt may seem to place the satisfaction of Joan's wishes in doubt. This doubt cannot be entirely removed, but the three debtors were probably good for the money. For one thing, the will expresses confidence that they would pay up on request. There is no conditional phrasing: at the end it is stated that the executors should pay the beneficiaries out of the debts as they were received, with no allowance made for default. It seems unlikely that Joan would have staked something as important as her profession fee upon a doubtful source of income. The names of the debtors also inspire optimism. Sir Richard Lewes (d. 1528) and

⁵⁹ For the fire and subsequent gifts, see Bourdillon, *Order of Minoresses*, pp. 47 and n. 2, 65, 73; Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', pp. 4, 22, 23. The cloister's site has been traced (Carlin, 'Historical gazetteer of London', p. 25).

⁶⁰ William Manfeld is called 'gentilman' (and one Thomas Manfeld '*armigero*') in LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/236 (32).

⁶¹ *A Survey of London by John Stow*, ed. C. L. Kingsford (2 vols., Oxford, 1908), ii. 73.

Sir Roger Wentworth (d. 1539), who between them owed almost all of the money, were relatives by marriage.⁶² With the third debtor, John Osborne, who evidently owned or had a stake in Joan's ancestral manor of Mocking Hall in 1511, they belonged to the coterie of southern Essex gentry from which Joan herself sprang. This does not prove them reliable, but it seems a better indication of reliability than might have been had from debtors outside Joan's circle. For his part, Richard Lewes was one of those helping Joan to put her affairs in order as late as November 1511.⁶³

These comments lead to a general (and concluding) caveat about the use of medieval wills as evidence. It is axiomatic that, by itself, no prescriptive document can demonstrate the effects it was intended to have. Corroborative evidence is required and for Joan FitzLewes this is in short supply. It is conceivable that she never became a nun, that her monuments were never made and that nothing else was achieved by her will. In light of this, it is perhaps best not to attempt a summary of what the will tells us about the Minorities for, just possibly, it is deceptive. Yet if one cares about economy of hypothesis, one will be comfortable in assuming that most or all of its requests were met. Joan was wealthy and prudent and she planned things out in advance. The abbey was stable and of good character at the time and Joan was familiar to its residents. No material evidence can be expected of a site so thoroughly destroyed as the Minorities and no further documentation expected for a woman who surrendered herself to religious enclosure. The 'plague of pestilence' that struck the abbey in 1515, killing twenty-seven nuns, deepened the silence of the period.⁶⁴ From the historian's point of view, Joan FitzLewes disappears behind the records into what the poet called 'the darkness of the darkness forever'.⁶⁵ What remains of her is a voice of ink on parchment at the bottom of which is a small waxen symbol and a scratchy signature from which her hand will never quite be absent.

⁶² On these men, see Wedgwood, *Biographies of the Members of the Commons*, i. 334, 935.

⁶³ LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/236 (32).

⁶⁴ Stow, *Survey of London*, i. 126 (quotation).

⁶⁵ As imagined by Captain Cat in Dylan Thomas's play *Under Milk Wood* (D. Thomas, *Under Milk Wood* (London, 1968), p. 71). See also n. 31.

Appendix

The testament of Joan FitzLewes dated 7 December 1511

This testament is held by The National Archives at Kew, filed by itself as a land revenue deed (LR 15/2). There is no date of probate and there is no trace of the registered will in the courts of London, Lambeth or Canterbury. In the transcription which follows paragraph numbers have been inserted for ease of reference.⁶⁶

1. **In the name of God amen**, the vijth day of the moneth of December in the yere of our lord God M^lCCCCC^{xj} and in the thurde yere of the reigne of Kyng Henry the viiith. **I, Dame** Johane ffitzlewes, widow, late the wife of Philipp ffitzlewes and doughtor and heire of Robert ffitz Simond late of Barlyng in the countie of Essex, squyer, being in good helth and hole of mynde (laude and praysyng be unto almighty God) make, ordeyn and dispose this my present testament in manner and forme ensuing, that is to wite:
2. **ffurst** I yeve and and bequeth my soule unto almighty Iesu my maker and redemer and to our blessed Lady the Virgyn Seint Mary and to all the holy company of heven, and my body to be buried within the quere of the churche of the abbey of the Myneres without Algate of London by the ffete of the excellent princes Elizabeth, late duches of Norffolk, under the awter of our blessed Lady in the same quere.
3. **And I** woll that myn executors underwritten prouide for a marbyll stone to be leid ouer me with an image of a nonne in laten and iiij scochons of myn armes thereon. **And** without, in the body of the church of the same monastery, upon the walle there, **I woll** that my said executors cause a plate of laten to be sett with a scripture to be writen theron of my name and whose doughter that I was, my husbonds names and the names of my children. And under the same scripture, on the grounde, a stone of a ffote & more in length to be leid with myn armes theron as by the discrecion of my said executors shalbe thought most best to be done.
4. **And** where as Sir Richard Lewes, knight, is indetted & oweth unto me by ij obligacions xx^{li} sterling; **Item** Sir Roger Wentworth by my obligacions lxxx^{li} sterling, **And** John Osborne of Moking Hall by

⁶⁶ Contractions have been expanded, capitalization and punctuation modernized and parentheses inserted in two places. Interlineation is indicated by ‘/’. The bold headings are those of the scribe.

obligacion viii^{li} sterling, **Which** said somes of money I woll shalbe distributed and disposed in manner and forme folowing, that is to say:

5. **Where** as I entend by the sufferance of God to be professed nonne within the said abbey & place, **I yeve** and bequeth unto the abbes of the same place for my profession thereto be had xiiij^{li} vj^s viij^d. **Item** I yeve & bequeth unto the same abbes towards the buyldyng of the cloyster of the said abbey xiiij^{li} vj^s viij^d. **Item** I yeve & bequeth unto the reparacion of the church and howse of the Greyffryers of London vj^{li} xii^s iiij^d.
6. **Item** I yeve and bequeth unto Iulyan Manfeld if she fortune nott to be heire of her faders londs vj^{li} xiiij^s iiij^d. **Item** I yeve & bequeth unto Cuthberd Harryson xl^s to be deliuered unto him in the ffest of Pentecost next coming after the date of this my present testament. **Item** I yeve & bequeth unto sir John Walker xx^s to be deliuered unto him at the said ffest of Pentecost. **Item** I yeve & bequeth unto William Manfeld for a stok to occupye iiij^{li} vj^s vij^d. **Item** I yeve & bequeth unto Oliverre Manfeld for a stok to occupye iiij^{li} vj^s viij^d.⁶⁷ **Item** I yeve to the professing of Beatrice Lewes iiij^{li} vj^s viij^d. **Item** I yeve & bequeth unto my cosyn ffloraunce Parker, the doughter of maister Parker of Norffolk, xls, to be deliuered unto her the tyme of her marriage. **Item** I yeve & bequeth unto sir Richard that I bought the horse of, in recompense for the same, xiiij^s iiij^d. **Also** I woll that my said executors of the forsaid somes of money content & pay unto Syr William Walgrave, knight, for money that I owe unto hym, to be paid at the forsaid ffest of Pentecost, cvj^{li} [or vj^{li}] xiiij^s iiij^d.⁶⁸ **Item** to mastres Rochestre late the wif of Henry Baker, for money due unto her in the ffest of Seint Mighell Tharchaungell next coming after the date herof vj^{li} xiiij^s iiij^d.

⁶⁷ Despite the difference of a penny, the same sum was presumably intended for both men.

⁶⁸ The character preceding 'vj' can only be read as 'c' and is redundant if not part of the sum. If it is redundant, then one wonders at the carelessness of it (compare the suggestion of scribal error in n. 67 above). However, the sums Joan was owed came to only £108, which would not have been enough to cover such a large debt plus her other bequests.

When Waldgrave (d. 1528), a Suffolk man, made his will, he left 20s to the Minoresses for an obit (TNA, PROB 11/22, fos. 227–8). This indicates a special interest and an avenue of connection to Joan, because all his other religious bequests were local.

7. **Item** I yeve & bequeth to myn executors for ther labour and besynes in the executing of this my present Testament & last wyll, that is to say, to William Mordaunt, gentilman, yerly during my naturall lyf xx. **Item** to Roger Eton, gentilman, yerly during my said lyf naturall, xiiij^s iiiij^d. **Item** to Robert Wentworth, gentilman, yerly during my said naturall lif x^s. **And** to Thomas Tymperley yerly during my said lif naturall x^s.
8. **And I woll** that my said executors of the forsaid somes of money, at such tyme as they haue resseyved them, deliuer into the hands of my said lady abbes to the use of Nicholas Wentworth my sonne xiiij^{li} vj^s viij^d, which I woll shalbe deliuered unto hym as he shall haue need therof. And the residue of all the said sommes of money \this my wyll performed/ I woll shalbe deliuered into the hands of my said lady abbes to content such detts as shalbe demanded and axed for me of right, if any such be (as I know none), and to be employed & disposed in byldyng & making of the forsaid cloyster.
9. **Provided** alwey that if any of the forsaid parties \to whome/ my bequest is made fortune to decesse during my lyff natural, than I wyll that the said legacyes & bequests by me afor graunted to any persone so dyng shall hoolly remayn during my said lyff unto the forsaid abbes towards the byldyng & making of the forsaid cloyster.
10. **And I woll** that myn said executors be not charged to pay any of my forsaid legacyes & bequests but of such somes of money as shall come to their hands of my said detts, and as my said detts unto them shalbe content & paid.
11. **And of** this my present testament I make and ordeyn myn executors the forsaid William Mordaunt, Roger Eton, Robert Wentworth and Thomas Tymperley, and Sir Thomas Lovell,⁶⁹ knight, superuisor and ouerseer of the same. **Yoven** the day and yere abouesaid.

Jone Fyzlowyes

J. Worsopp

[On the dorse, in a somewhat different hand but almost certainly by the same scribe.]

This present testament was sealed, subscribed and deliuered by the wythynnamed dame Johane ffitzlewes the day and yere withinwriten, in the

⁶⁹ Lovell, along with Richard FitzLewes, Cuthbert Harrison, John Walker (called 'capellanus') and William Manfeld are also cited in the agreement with William Maryner which Joan sealed on 26 Nov. 1511 (LMA, CLA/023/DW/01/236 (32)). See n. 30 above.

The testament of Joan FitzLewes

presence of William Mordaunt, Roger Eton, Gentilmen, John Worsopp, notary, Robert Wentworth, Thomas Tymperley, William Mansfeld, Olyvere Manfeld, John Osborne of Mokynghall and John Higham.