

A Butcher by Any Other Name Is a . . . Carter:
The Reliability and Stability of Occupational Surnames
in King's Lynn c. 1400¹

Michael D. Myers

Several years ago, a man called the Medieval Institute at the University of Notre Dame requesting someone to help translate some wills in his family tree. Being a poor graduate student, I immediately took the job. I translated the wills—a combination of Latin and Middle English—and also provided extra commentary on some of the dynamics of medieval family history. About a week after sending off the material, I received an irate phone call at two a.m. — the fellow lived in Hawaii and had just returned from work and read my comments. Asking what the problem was, I discovered that although he appreciated my translations, he did not appreciate my commentary. It seems that when I explained the unreliability of occupational and place-name surnames as indicators of both occupation and residence by the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, I destroyed his family heritage as he had reconstructed it. For example, by 1493 one could not safely conclude that Adam York was necessarily from York, although an ancestor most certainly was; and I would hesitate to say that the occupation of John Carpenter, his will dated 1545, was indeed that of carpenter. After almost an hour of explaining further possibilities—he was paying for the call—I appeared to have calmed my client with my expertise on the subject. He thanked me very much, stated that he would be in touch with me because he had other material to translate, and said good-bye. That was about six years ago, and I have not heard from him since.

This story demonstrates that both the historian and the lay person must be aware of the difficulties encountered in reconstructing family histories and occupational structures. These difficulties arise from the paradoxical stability yet fluidity of surnames even in the fifteenth century.

The traditional time assigned to both the inheritance of surnames, and therefore their stability, and when occupational surnames no longer reliably reflected an individual's trade, is the

second half of the fourteenth century, from approximately the Black Death to c. 1400. This chronological framework applies to both rural peasants as well as urban tradesmen.²

The evidence from King's Lynn generally supports this chronological framework, but the evidence also argues that in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, and even after c. 1425, enough exceptions arise that the historian and lay person must be aware of both the inheritability and the instability of surnames.

The first part of this essay demonstrates that occupational surnames both could and could not accurately reflect an individual's trade. This really is no surprise: an individual may or may not practice the trade reflected in their inherited occupational surname. But more importantly, the evidence demonstrates that the scribes themselves were aware of the ambiguity of occupational surnames in identifying one's trade and took steps to clarify the confusion, particularly while inscribing freeman admissions and other records that required the accurate identification of an individual. The second part of the essay, however, shows that scribes sometimes contributed to the fluidity and ambiguity by assigning surnames based on a person's activity or crime. In other cases, a scribe's error or perhaps mischievousness added to the ambiguity. The third part of this essay examines women's surnames. The sources are mostly silent on this issue, and when they do speak, they generally have a male voice. Throughout the fourteenth century, women's surnames, whether occupational or not, generally derived from the male head-of-household, either from the father or the husband. Apart from relationships to males, women's surnames appear infrequently, if at all, and in this context often held pejorative connotations.

During the first two decades of the fifteenth century, scribes of Lynn recognized the ambiguity of occupational surnames as indicators of trade and often took steps to remove the confusion. An entry in the chamberlain record of 1411-12 contains a list of the 104 individuals who had become freemen that year.³ The recording clerk divided the twenty-six new freemen with clearly identifiable occupational surnames into two groups. One group had an occupation noted after each name: John Chandeller, barbour; John Clerk, candeller; and Richard Lok, smith. The other group, however, does not have a trade listed after the individual names: Nicholas Barbour; William Candeller; and Richard Loksmyth.⁴

Why did the recorders use two different sets of notation? The only reasonable explanation is the unreliability of occupational surnames as an indicator of one's trade. Charged with the record-

ing of the occupations of Lynn's new citizens, these scribes took steps to properly identify occupation. The occupational surnames of the first group failed to reflect the individual's trade. Therefore, indication of trade was necessary and was added. The surnames of the second group did reflect their occupation so no additional information was necessary.⁵ The occupational surnames of this latter group raises a question, but one that possibly cannot be answered. Did individuals of this second group originally inherit their surnames or were their names given to them on the basis of their occupation when they became freemen?⁶

The practice of noting an individual's trade when their surname did not reflect their occupation can be seen in another document. In this case, the added occupational notation also serves to identify two different individuals. Two John Shermans appear in the hall rolls during the 1410s, but neither had anything to do with the shearing of sheep. But in noting the respective occupations of the two John Shermans, the scribes identified two different individuals: John Sherman the brewer and John Sherman the vintner.⁷

These examples demonstrate that the borough clerks were aware of both the reliability and unreliability of occupational surnames as designators of trade. Again, this is to be expected because once surnames became inherited, an individual might or might not practice the trade indicated by his inherited occupational surname. And in these examples, we see the steps Lynn recorders took to identify an individual's occupation not reflected in their surname.

A prominent person, with or without an occupational surname, rarely if ever had their occupation stated. Nowhere, for example, is the occupation of John Belleyetere stated in the Lynn documents. He was not a bellmaker as his name implies. From customs records, we discover that John Belleyetere was a merchant.⁸ His notoriety explains why his occupation was never noted: he was mayor three times (1390, 1394, and 1399) and one of the most prominent men of King's Lynn. Nor is the occupation of John Spycer, another prominent citizen, and also mayor three times (1420-22), ever listed.⁹ Perhaps with John Spycer, however, there is a correspondence between occupational surname and trade, but it may be a stretch. His name implies that he dealt with spices, but actually he was an importer of wine—perhaps "spiced wine."¹⁰

The omission of the occupations of prominent citizens in Lynn, as well as in other towns throughout medieval England, was a common practice. For example, John Brunham was mayor of Lynn

five times (1370, 1377, 1378, 1385, and 1391), and one of the town's most influential merchants (and father of Margery Kempe),¹¹ but his occupation is never stated. The occupation of his son Robert, very likely Margery's brother¹² never appears either, but, like his father, Robert was a prominent figure in the political and merchant communities of King's Lynn.¹³ Neither are the occupations of William Hallyate and John Tylneye ever mentioned—both were prominent merchants and Members of Parliament for Lynn.¹⁴

The first part of this essay demonstrates that surnames had stabilized by the late fourteenth century and that occupational surnames no longer were accurate indicators of one's trade—a fact recognized by scribal practice. In the event of possible confusion between occupational surname and the individual's actual trade, scribes added the individual's trade. When no conflict between name and occupation occurred, the scribes merely stated the name. In the case of a prominent citizen, the person was known throughout the community and required no additional identification.

The second part of this essay examines an underlying theme suggested by the above examples. Surnames, whether occupational or not, were still fluid, and while medieval clerks were scrupulous in identifying the trade of individuals, some of the fluidity and instability of surnames came from the clerks themselves. By conscious fiat or unintended mistake they could end or begin a family's lineage, change the occupational structure of the town, or relegate an individual to surname purgatory.

Two scribal practices contributed to surname instability during the first two decades of the fifteenth century: scribes assigned surnames to individuals and these surnames usually reflected the individual's trade or activity. Several examples come from the leet court roll of 1404-13. A Robert Sawying was fined 8*d.* because "he sawed trees and boards in the community street of Purfleet to the grave nuisance of the victuallers and people."¹⁵ To cause such a commotion and incur such a relatively large fine, Mr. Sawying must have been cutting up a storm to disturb the sellers and shoppers so. Although the occupation of the individual cannot be determined in this case, the incident illustrates a tendency to assign a surname based on activity.

Other examples from the leet rolls also demonstrate a "fill in the blank" practice with a name indicating the individual's activity or crime. Richard Bocher was fined 16*d.* for killing animals and tethering his horses in the community street.¹⁶ Galfrid Bocher was fined 12*d.* because his various animals were defecating on the

street.¹⁷ (Seems anyone associated with livestock was given the surname butcher.) In Purfleet Isabella Miller was fined 12*d.* for winnowing flour and oats which caused so much dust that it blew into the faces of the people and the victuallers.¹⁸ And Bartholomew Beerbrewer was fined on two occasions, presumably for selling beer illegally.¹⁹

Rental accounts from the early fifteenth century demonstrate the characteristics that contributed to the instability of surnames at the time: assignment of an occupational or descriptive surname by "filling in the blank," truncation, or transposition of names. But sometimes plain error or laxness due to over-familiarity with the individuals or repetitious copying of documents also offers an explanation. In 1405 Hamone Bocher rented a stall in Bocherrowe (another link between name and occupation) in the Saturday Market for 10*s.* In the next extant account, 1410-11, Hamone Carteller (carter), bocher, rents the same stall at the same price.²⁰ Because Hamone is such an unusual name for fifteenth-century Lynn, the only one I can find, it is more than probable that Hamone Bocher and Hamone Carteller the butcher are one and the same person. Both surnames designate a trade. But what was Hamone, a butcher or a carter?²¹ Apparently both, but then what was his name? A butcher by any other name is a . . . carter?

The following example illustrates the exchange of an occupational surname for a familial surname. Hugo Sporyour rented a tenement in Gresmarket at 24*s.* per year from 1410-17. But after that Hugo Aleynison, spurrier, rents the same tenement at the same price.²² Like Hamone, Hugo is an extremely rare name in Lynn at the time, and because the rent and the location are the same, Hugo Sporyour and Hugo Aleynison, spurrier, most likely identify the same person. What we have here is initial surname assignment by "filling in the blank" and only over time (seven years) does Hugo's familial surname appear in the record.

An opposite dynamic appears in the next example: a familial surname disappears over time and is replaced by a descriptive (occupational?) surname. John Leruine rented a cottage by St. James Chapel beginning in 1411 and continued to do so until 1419.²³ In the settlement pattern of King's Lynn in the early fifteenth century, St. James Chapel, although within borough limits, was isolated by fields and woods. And reflecting this isolation, after 1411 the renter of the cottage was no longer John Leruine, but John the Hermit. I have little doubt, however, that they were one and the same person.

The following example demonstrates truncation of a name or perhaps a mere mistake. William Cardmaker appears in the chamberlain account of 1412-13, which contains a list of those freemen who had paid their fees that year. This account repeats the freemen's list found in the chamberlain account of the previous year that contains William Coupman, cardmaker.²⁴ Because the occupation of cardmaker is so unusual in the port of Lynn (although probably not so in a textile community like Coventry or York), it is probable that whoever compiled the later list abbreviated the earlier entry "William Coupman cardmaker" to William Cardmaker. Although the Christian name William is not uncommon in fifteenth-century England, the shared first name of Mr. Coupman cardmaker and Mr. Cardmaker and the identical purpose of the two accounts supports the conclusion that the scribe truncated Mr. Coupman the cardmaker to Mr. Cardmaker.

Plain laziness seems to be at work in the following examples. The chamberlain account of 1411-12 notes the entry of Thomas Gooche, tailor, and John Gooche, draper, into the freedom of the borough.²⁵ A royal court record from the same period, however, identifies Thomas Gooche not as a tailor but as a glover.²⁶ A year later Thomas Gooche becomes John Gooche, no longer glover but again a tailor. In the next year things have settled down as Thomas-now-John Gooche tailor once glover and tailor again is now just John Gooche, tailor. Of course this John Gooche, tailor, must be differentiated from John Gooche, draper, who by 1413 is now John Gooche, hosyer. Thankfully, by 1413 John-once-Thomas Gooche is still a tailor and the other John Gooche remained a hosyer.²⁷

So far, this essay has largely supported the position that surnames had become hereditary by the late fourteenth century. Surnames, occupational or otherwise, were neither completely inaccurate nor necessarily misleading indicators of occupation. The scribes of Lynn realized this ambiguity and took appropriate steps to properly identify an individual's trade. But this essay has also demonstrated that surnames were still fluid at this time. New surnames could result from an individual's occupation or activity as well as from name truncation or just plain error.

And so far the first two parts of this essay have examined only the surnames of men. This exclusion has not been by choice but rather because of the nature of medieval law. Common law assumed the head-of-household to be the man. Furthermore, because the law limited the contractual capabilities of women, the sources

generally either omitted "any reference to women (who were assumed to be represented by their husbands or fathers) or push[ed] them into anonymity."²⁸ Thus the references to women in the sources are infrequent, and when found these references are usually in relation to the husband or father. This trend became even more pronounced in the second half of the fourteenth century as women became defined more and more in terms of the male head-of-household.

Women adopted their husband's surnames throughout the fourteenth century.²⁹ Evidence indicates, however, that women chose a wide variety of options during the first half of the century. Women sometimes took their husband's or father's Christian name as their surname and retained that name even after marriage or remarriage. Isabella Estmar took her husband's Christian name Estmar as her surname (his full name was Estmar le Bouler). And their daughter Katherine retained the surname Estmar even when married to John de Aulton. Further examples show other options practiced by women in adopting a surname. Johanna, a daughter of Amyel de Honesden, chandeller, assumed the surname Amyel, but another daughter, Christina, adopted her father's occupation (chandeller) as her surname. The young Juliana Cross assumed her husband's surname Box when they married in the late 1200s, and she kept the surname Box even after remarriage to John de Luda in 1309 (Henry Box having died in 1298). But Constance, the daughter of Juliana and John, took the surname of her father, de Luda.³⁰

The variety, however, tended to disappear in the second half of the fourteenth century as surnames stabilized and as women became more legally defined in terms of either their husband or father. Married women, as before, adopted the surnames of their husbands. Increasingly, however, women became more anonymous as they became legally identified through relationships dominated by either their husbands or fathers. The account of the Great Guild of the Holy Trinity in King's Lynn for 1416-17 notes that *Alice uxor Willelmi Waterden* and *Margeret nuper uxor Roberti Brandon* had paid their entry fines into the guild.³¹ Sometimes the women's Christian names are omitted altogether as in *relicta Johannis Palmer* and *Henricus Pere et uxor eius*.³² Similarly, records usually identify daughters through their fathers. The King's Lynn poll tax of 1379 fails to list independently the surnames of Alicia and Helena but only states they are the *filie eius* of Galfrid Sheyere, *artifex*.³³ Another document demonstrates the legal dependency of women by listing the debts of the wives of John

Lecchour, Henry Crosse, and John Brandon under their husbands' names.³⁴ Thus women in a familial relation appear in the sources through the father or husband without an independent identity.

The evidence from King's Lynn indicates the surnames of singular women, i.e., women recorded alone who are not identified or defined in relation to husband or father but who are not necessarily "single" (unmarried), tend to be either occupational or place-name.³⁵ The poll tax of 1379 lists Emma Draper, Matilda Barbour, and Agneta Spynnere as well as Johanna de Wysbech, Emma de Wysbech (both spinners) and Cecilia de Marham.³⁶ Whether these surnames were inherited or assigned, as with the "fill in the blank" practice discussed above with men, is difficult to determine without further detailed information on these women's kin or family trees. Given the preponderance of occupational- or place-name surnames among these women, any argument for the inheritability of these surnames would be tenuous.³⁷

A woman unencumbered by and independent of a husband or father, except a widow, was generally looked upon with suspicion by the male-dominated society. The term "singlewoman" generally implied a prostitute, and the occupations of spinners and laundresses (and often singular females with these surnames) were usually associated with prostitution.³⁸ A singular woman without a recorded surname or an occupation was also often assumed to be a prostitute. In some cases this was true. The leet court records of King's Lynn contain the case of one Agnes, with no surname or listed occupation, who, in addition to selling two barrels of beer contra assize, "maintained a brothel in the house of Bartholomew Petypas and at night induced men [to visit her] so that men did not dare to walk by nor leave their houses."³⁹ In Southwark, Martha Carlin has demonstrated that almost half of the women householders with unstated occupations can be identified as prostitutes.⁴⁰

Regardless of the particular decade or generation, analysis of women's surnames throughout the fourteenth century must be filtered through the cultural assumptions of the male-dominated society. This conclusion becomes inescapable by the end of the century when women were increasingly defined legally in terms of the male head-of-household. As such, the lives of women became more anonymous and the ability to trace their surnames becomes more difficult. Even for singular women heads-of-household, the origin and stability of their surnames were obscure. Were their occupational- or place-name surnames inherited or assigned? As stated above, the preponderance of such names among singular women

suggests assignment of surname.⁴¹ And for the singular woman with a single name or with no listed employment, society often assumed the oldest occupation—but this says more about the male-dominated culture of the time than about the actual occupations of these women.

The evidence from King's Lynn and other places largely supports the position that surnames had become hereditary and therefore stable by the late fourteenth century. In this context, occupational surnames were neither completely inaccurate nor necessarily misleading indicators of occupation. The scribes of Lynn were aware of the ambiguity and took appropriate steps to properly identify an individual's trade. But this essay has also demonstrated that surnames were still fluid at this time. New surnames sometimes derived from an individual's occupation or activity, in the case of Robert Sawying. New surnames could originate from a scribe's truncation as with William Cardmaker, familiarity with the individual as with John the Hermit, or just plain error as with John Gooche, glover. The sparse evidence available for women makes any conclusion on the stability and inheritance of surnames hazardous especially after the mid-fourteenth century when women became increasingly identified through the male head-of-household. Like men's surnames, women's surnames often reflected place of origin or occupation. But whether these women's surnames were inherited, assigned, or assumed cannot be determined with any certainty. The singular woman (indeed the term "singlewoman"), unlike the singular man, without a surname or even with an occupational surname such as Spinner, was often deemed morally suspect.

Both the historian examining occupational structures and the layman reconstructing family histories must be aware of the scribal practices that recognized the fluidity of surnames and insured the proper identification of individuals and their trades. Historians must also keep in mind the cultural assumptions regarding singular women and their occupations by the late fourteenth century. And finally, historians and laymen must also be aware that although surnames were perhaps hereditary, they were not necessarily stable. The power of the clerk's quill could change a bocher to a carteller. It could also, by conscious "filling in the blank" or unintended error, cut down one family tree and plant another.

University of Notre Dame

¹ I would like to thank the Department of History at the University of Notre Dame for providing funds to attend the Twelfth Annual Conference of the Medieval Association of the Midwest in the presentation of this paper. Please note that names and occupations have been left in the original spelling and have only been changed to modern English in the instance of possible ambiguity. Also note that King's Lynn was known as Bishop's Lynn until the English Reformation.

² Zvi Razi, *Life Marriage and Death in a Medieval Parish: Economy, Society and Demography in Halesowen 1270-1400* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 3-4; and Richard McKinley, *Norfolk and Suffolk Surnames in the Middle Ages* (London: Phillimore, 1975) 16. McKinley also notes that occupational surnames began to be inherited c. 1250. P. H. Reaney notes that even in the eleventh century a few examples of hereditary surnames can be found among the Anglo-Norman aristocracy (*The Origin of English Surnames* [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967] 303). Reaney also remarks that the stabilization and inheritability of surnames generally occurred earlier in the south of England, especially London, than in the north (312-14). East Anglia conforms more to southern rather than northern practices.

³ K[ing's] L[yann] C[orporation Archives] 39/48. The list contains the names of eight master artisans, but there is no way to distinguish these eight masters from the other new burgesses.

⁴ Other names could be added to this list that also reflect occupational surnames, but I have left them out because of their greater ambiguity. For example, the surname "Perche" may indicate a fisherman, but it may also indicate a land measurement (a rod) and therefore a farmer.

⁵ Martha Carlin utilizes this rationale in her analyses of the poll tax return of 1381 in Southwark (*Medieval Southwark* [London: Hambleton Press, 1996] 171). Reaney argues that a surname followed by a occupational designation probably indicates an inherited surname; see *Origin of English Surnames* 303. His argument reinforces the thesis that surnames had to a great extent stabilized by the late fourteenth century and also supports my position that

an inherited occupational surname did not necessarily reflect the individual's occupation and therefore required further clarification. Inconsistent scribal practices, of course, could explain the difference in recording the names. However, I do not believe sloppiness is a consistently viable explanation as scribes and clerks were "in some ways the only 'professional' civic officer" in borough administrations (see R.B. Dobson, "The Risings in York, Beverly and Scarborough, 1380-1381," *The English Rising of 1381*, R.H. Hilton and T.H. Aston, eds. [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984] 113).

⁶ Reaney's argument that a surname followed by an occupation indicates an inherited surname would suggest that the occupational surnames of the new citizens were assigned on the basis of the new citizen's occupation.

⁷ John Sherman, brewer, KL C6/5; and John Sherman, vintner, KL C6/4.

⁸ P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice] E. 122 series: 93/31, 94/9, 94/12, and 95/8.

⁹ The mayoralties of both John Belleyetere and John Spycer are found in Hamon Le Strange, *Norfolk Official Lists from the Earliest Period to the Present Day* (Norwich, 1890) 190-91.

¹⁰ PRO E. 122/93/31.

¹¹ Le Strange, *Norfolk Lists*, 190; and PRO E. 122 series: 93/31 and 94/10.

¹² The relationship between Robert Brunham and Margery is unclear. The preponderance of evidence strongly suggests that Robert and Margery are brother and sister. Robert Brunham's entrance into the freedom of King's Lynn, i.e., citizenship, is not recorded. This may be due to scribal error, but this is unlikely because proper identification of burgesses formed an essential part of a clerk's function. The *non-recording*, however, of the entrance of the eldest sons of prominent burgesses through patrimony was a very common practice not only in Lynn but in many late medieval towns in England. Therefore the lack of Robert's entry into the freedom of Lynn is easily explained by Robert being the eldest son of John and thus Margery's brother. It is also possible that Robert is John

Brunham's brother and therefore Margery's uncle. However, the lack of Robert's admission into the freedom of King's Lynn as a burgess of King's Lynn would be very difficult to explain if this were the case. It is also possible that Robert is only distantly related or completely unrelated to John Brunham and Margery, but again the absence of his entry into the freedom of Lynn would need to be explained.

¹³ Robert Brunham was mayor of King's Lynn in 1406 and 1408; see *Le Strange, Norfolk Lists*, 190. His occupation as merchant (ship owner) can only be determined by the chance arrest of shipmaster Richard Pilton in 1407 for evading customs and transporting undocumented ("uncocketed") cargo in a ship owned by Robert Brunham, PRO E. 122/181/39: "cuiusdam Rici Pylton de communitati Legr (Legrcestria: Leicester] quam nuper virtute officii sui arestati pro se quod in navi Roberti Brunham inventur fuit non custimatur nec cokectatur ut dicitur."

¹⁴ See KL C6/3 for the parliamentary elections of both Hallyate and Tylneye. For Hallyate's merchant career, see PRO 356/17; for Tylneye's, see PRO E. 122/93/31.

¹⁵ KL C17/16 (expanded from the highly abbreviated entry): "Sarravit arborem & bordes in communiam viam Purflete ad gravem nocimentum vitellarum & populi."

¹⁶ KL C17/16, "pro occidente animalibus in communiam viam & tenente equis."

¹⁷ KL C17/16, "pro fimo diversarum animalum."

¹⁸ KL C17/16, "ventulavit farinam & avenam in communiam viam Purfletelane unde pallua eiusdem farinae flavit in facies hominum & vitellarum."

¹⁹ KL C17/16, "braciet iij quateria cervisiam . . . et i barell cervisiam." The exact charge is not stated, but most likely the charge is selling "contra assizam," the usual charge regarding offenses involving ale and beer. The fine of 7s. in relation to the 3 quarters of beer is very high and may present punitive efforts to intimidate a repeat offender.

- 20 KL C39/45 for 1405-06; and KL C39/47 for 1410-11.
- 21 Of course it is possible that Hamone was both a butcher and a carter. An occupation usually has many facets, most of which may not be reflected in an occupational surname. Hamone may have butchered livestock and also have carted off the hides, bones, offal, etc., for disposal. Or he may only have been a butcher during certain times of the year and worked as a carter at other times. The debate over how accurately an occupational surname reflects an individual's primary occupation is extensive, but outside the scope of this paper. A short but useful bibliography should include John Patten, "Urban Occupations in Pre-industrial England," *Institute of British Geographers* ns 2 (1977): 296-311; P. J. P. Goldberg, "Female Labour, Service and Marriage in the Late Medieval Urban North," *Northern History* 22 (1986): 18-38; Heather Swanson, "The Illusion of Economic Structure: Craft Guilds in Late Medieval English Towns," *Past and Present* 121 (1988): 29-48; and *Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989) 4-8; and Margaret Bonney, *Lordship and the Urban Community. Durham and Its Overlords 1250-1540* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990) 149-52.
- 22 KL C39/47-51 for 1410-17.
- 23 KL C39/47 for 1410-11; KL C39/48-52 for 1411-19.
- 24 KL C39/49 for 1412-13; and KL C39/48 for 1411-12.
- 25 KL C39/48.
- 26 KL C2/27.
- 27 KL C39/49.
- 28 Judith M. Bennett, *Women in the Medieval English Countryside: Gender and Household in Brigstock Before the Plague* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1987) 21; and R.H. Hilton, *The English Peasantry in the Later Middle Ages* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1975) 95.
- 29 Bennett 202 and Reaney 85.
- 30 Reaney 85.

³¹ KL C38/10. The terms *vidua* (widow), *relicta* (widow), and *quondam uxor* (formerly, or once, the wife) appear to have been used indiscriminately even with an occupational surname. Martha Carlin makes the case that, at least in Southwark, the term “widow” not only meant that the wife survived the husband, but also that the woman was of high status and wealth and did not need to work. A widow who still needed to work would have her occupation stated (176).

³² Palmer from Reaney 83 and Pere from PRO E. 179/149/49.

³³ PRO E. 179 240/308/156. This is another example of an occupational surname not reflecting the actual occupation of the individual and thus requiring additional occupational notation.

³⁴ KL C38/13 (1422-23): “Johannes Lecchour pro uxor sui”; “Henricus Crosse pro uxor sui”; and “Johannes Brandon pro uxor sui.”

³⁵ The historian cannot assume that singular women were necessarily single, but the status of these women is impossible to determine without further evidence. Widows, as stated above, generally kept the names of their husbands. It must be noted that servants whether male or female were almost always identified by first name only. For example, *Willelmus & Margareta servientes sui [Johannes Goldbetere]* (PRO E. 179 240/308/156).

³⁶ PRO E. 179 240/308/156. Cecilia de Marham may have been a spinner, but the document is badly damaged. An “s” appears after her name which may have been the beginning of “spynner” or perhaps just of “solvit”, i.e., she had paid her poll tax.

³⁷ Judith Bennett notes that surnames usually disappeared because of emigration (209), an observation that would support my conclusion.

³⁸ Ruth Mazo Karras, *Common Women, Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1996) 54-56.

³⁹ KL C17/16: “que manet in domus Bartholomewi Petypas et tenet meretrisias & ducet homines in noctibus ita quod homines non audeant transire ibidem nec exire a dominibus suis.” It is nec-

Myers

essary to note that Petypas was a prominent merchant and citizen of the town as well as mayor.

⁴⁰ Carlin 175 and 178.

⁴¹ This problem applies to both singular women and men.