

**Workshop Title:** Locating the Hidden Figures of Early Modern Women

**Summary:**

This workshop focuses on locating the ordinary early modern woman then and now. We explore the ways that early modern women created and identified rhetorical spaces receptive to their voices and how they invited other women into those spaces, then consider the difficulty we face as scholars to find and study women who often leave few traces on the traditional historical records.

**Organizers:**

Ann Cerminaro-Costanzi, Ph.D.  
Marywood University  
Spanish and Italian  
acostanzi@marywood.edu

Christa Irwin, Ph.D.  
Marywood University  
Art History  
irwin@marywood.edu

Erin Sadlack, Ph.D.  
Marywood University  
English  
easadlack@marywood.edu

**Workshop Description**

In this workshop we will talk about finding ordinary early modern women and exploring their rhetorical choices and the devices used to represent them. By “ordinary,” we mean women who generally lack the financial resources, educational opportunities, and social capital of women of the higher classes, and therefore would normally lack the opportunity to effect their own representations in art and literature. Because women tend to fall through the gaps of traditional historical records by virtue of gender alone, we often have to find them by looking around corners, searching in different archives, considering the role not only of artist and patron, but also of viewer, reading between the lines of history and text, and expanding the boundaries of the “text” itself. This is all the more true when we think about women of color or women of the lowest economic classes, those who only rarely had the opportunity to influence directly the production of written word and visual art, but nonetheless whose lives were impacted by the material culture of text and image that surrounded them.

We are particularly interested in how images and text might have challenged the sociocultural emphasis on silence and modesty that hid women from view, sometimes through their own written voices and sometimes through word and image intended for their own personal engagement. Because these women became experts in coded language to evade the strictures placed on them, scholars are required to decipher such codes and look for women’s voices in different ways. While most ordinary women did not have the opportunity to take on the role of “writer” or “artist,” we can still find them as integral parts of the written and visual landscapes of the early modern world, albeit in less studied places. Sometimes we find them by reading images, such as paintings of the *Virgin lactans* that encouraged early modern European and Latin American mothers to nurse their own children and to use the Virgin Mary as their role model. Sometimes we find them in court and legal archives, such as reading sixteenth-century petition letters to England’s Queen Elizabeth and her Privy Council to see how individual women both used and defied the conventions of such documents to win support for their requests. Sometimes we read between the lines of texts by more prominent early modern women, such as Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, to see how they tried to open up spaces for other women’s voices by overtly challenging societal norms and religious doctrines used to deny women the right to intellectual pursuits. While many scholars analyze Sor Juana’s writings for what they say about her

intellectual gifts, it is equally important to draw out what they reveal about the educational experiences of ordinary women, and how these works uniquely prepare them for further, formal study. In the process of examining these texts through the lenses of our different disciplines, we can consider how early modern women found or created rhetorical spaces congenial to their voices and in so doing, invited other women into their conversations. From the perspective of the twenty-first century, a study like this also offers the opportunity to see and locate early modern women at a time when they were often not seen.

Presenters will take about 5-6 minutes each at the beginning of the workshop to introduce their materials and explain how they connect to the overall themes of the workshop. To play with geographical spaces within the workshop itself, we will then divide participants into three groups. Using a variation on a speed-dating format, each presenter will work with a different group each time we ask a new question from the list below. That will enable every group to have the ability to work in depth with each of the three subject areas and each presenter. This section will take roughly 30 minutes. The questions for the small groups include:

1. How do these women create, find, or modify spaces that are congenial to their voices and seek to open access to other women's voices?
2. How do these examples challenge or manipulate constraints that modesty places on their language and creativity, transforming their "hidden" status into a place of strength?
3. How do we as scholars locate and study the ordinary early modern woman, making hidden figures, particularly women of color or lower class status, more visible?

With the remaining time for the workshop, we will reassemble as one group to discuss further the questions and topics that arose in each smaller session. We plan to invite workshop attendees to bring texts and/or issues they face locating ordinary early modern women in their own scholarly projects into the conversation. Overall, in this part of the workshop, we will make connections between our different disciplines and geographical areas of study. We also intend to open up the conversation to consider practical strategies to include discussions of race and class into our work, making our scholarship and our pedagogy more intersectional.

Ultimately, we hope that our discussions will create a shared intellectual space that both acknowledges the challenges of finding these women and identifies ways to do so productively. In the process, we seek to open up conversations about the breadth and variety of early modern women's participation in cultural, political, intellectual, and religious spaces.

### **Reading List**

- Images of the *Virgin lactans* and excerpts from Fra Giovanni Dominici, *Regola del governo di cura familiare*, and sermons of San Bernardino da Siena about the use of devotional images for the instruction of women (4 pages, plus 5 images)
- Excerpt from translation of Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz, *Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ilustre sor Filotea de la Cruz – The Poet's Answer to the Illustrious Sor Filotea de la Cruz* (6 pages)
- Transcripts of manuscript Elizabethan petition letters (State Papers, UK National Archives) (6 pages)



Mateo Pérez de Alesio,  
*Virgin of Belén*,  
Collection of Leonor Velarde  
de Cisneros and Isabel Velarge,  
Lima, Peru, 1604



Unknown artist,  
*Virgin lactans*,  
Sanctuary of  
Santa Rosa, Lima, Peru,  
early seventeenth century



Unknown artist,  
*Virgin lactans*,  
Monastery of Santa Rosa,  
Lima, Peru,  
early seventeenth century



Unknown artist,  
*Virgin lactans*,  
Museo Pedro de Osma,  
Lima, Peru,  
mid-seventeenth century



Unknown artist,  
*Virgin lactans*,  
Museo de Arte, Lima, Peru,  
late seventeenth century

ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN  
*Regola del Governo di Cura Familiare Book IV*

CHAPTER I EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO GOD	I. EARLY TRAINING	{ 1. Home Training 2. Schools and Teachers 3. Studies
	II. PERSONALITY	{ 1. Dress 2. Character 3. Habits
	III. ENVIRONMENT	{ 1. Associates 2. Domestic Care
	IV. CORPORAL WELFARE	{ 1. Exercise 2. Recreation 3. Games
	V. PIETY	{ 1. Speech 2. Reverence 3. Happiness
CHAPTER II EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO PARENTS	I. PARENTAL AUTHORITY	{ 1. Discipline 2. Submission 3. Respectful Address 4. Duty and Justice
	II. TEMPORAL GOODS	{ 1. Dependence 2. Virtue, True Riches 3. Family Life
	III. CONDUCT	{ 1. Courtesy 2. Honor
	I. WORLDLINESS	{ 1. Slavery of Worldliness 2. Disordinate Affections
	II. LIBERTY AND SELF-CONTROL	{ 1. Circumstances 2. False Fear
CHAPTER III EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO THEMSELVES	III. INDEBTEDNESS	{ 1. Sin 2. Magnanimity 3. Subjection to Debtors
	IV. STATE IN LIFE	{ 1. Matrimony 2. Celibacy 3. Freedom of Choice
	I. SERVICE	{ 1. Impartiality 2. Public Welfare
	II. DEFENSE	{ 1. By the Sword 2. By Word 3. By Prayer
	III. VOCATIONAL	{ 1. Manual Training 2. Each an Art or Trade
CHAPTER IV EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO THE STATE	I. POVERTY	Self-reliance
	II. LOSS OF LIBERTY	Daily Hardships
	III. SICKNESS	{ 1. Attitude in Sickness 2. Preparation for Death 3. Heavenly Patrons

## ON THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

*Regola del Governo di Cura Familiare*

### PARTE QUARTA

#### PROLOGUE

I come to the fourth question, which concerns the proper guidance of your children to their intended destiny, not knowing what it may be, it being known only to God. As a matter of fact, the God of Glory has predestined each one of them to a certain end without taking away their free will, and it is His Will that the parents should be their directors during the years of childhood, and that afterwards they should remain under their own direction. You shall have five considerations according to the five ends that may legitimately be pursued. Firstly, to educate them with regard to God, secondly, with regard to their father and to you their mother; thirdly, with regard to themselves; fourthly, with regard to the state, and fifthly, with regard to adversity. To the first may be reduced the other four, without which no condition, action, speech or thought is praiseworthy.

### CHAPTER I

#### EDUCATION WITH REGARD TO GOD

With regard to the first consideration, since true love joins one to God and false love causes a dangerous separation, in as much as tender age will be capable of it, strive to make them lovers of the Sovereign Good; and you will observe five directions. If you desire others more perfect you may read the epistles of St. Jerome, especially the one, *To Electa on the Education of Her Daughter*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ad Laetam de institutione filiae; Cf. Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers, vol. VI, p. 195; *Patrologia Latina*, Migne, vol. 22, St. Jerome, vol. I. *Electa*, but not *Electa*, is read in some of the ancient MSS. Dominici gave out an Italian translation of this letter.

## I

1. *Home Training.* The first regulation is to have pictures of saintly children or young virgins in the home, in which your child, still in swaddling clothes, may take delight and thereby may be gladdened by acts and signs pleasing to childhood. And what I say of pictures applies also to statues. It is well to have the Virgin Mary with the Child in arms, with a little bird or apple in His hand. There should be a good representation of Jesus nursing, sleeping in His Mother's lap or standing courteously before Her while they look at each other. So let the child see himself mirrored in the Holy Baptist clothed in camel's skin, a little child who enters the desert, plays with the birds, sucks the honeyed flowers and sleeps on the ground. It will not be amiss if he should see Jesus and the Baptist, Jesus and the boy Evangelist pictured together; the slaughtered Innocents, so that he may learn the fear of weapons and of armed men. Thus it is desirable to bring up little girls in the contemplation of the eleven thousand Virgins as they discourse, pray and suffer.<sup>1</sup> I should like them to see Agnes with her little fat lamb, Cecilia crowned with roses, Elizabeth with roses in her cloak, Catherine and her wheel with other such representations as may give them with their milk love of virginity, a longing for Christ, a hatred of sin; make them despise vanity, avoid bad company and begin through the consideration of the saints the contemplation of the Supreme Saint of Saints. For this reason you should know that representations of the angels and saints are permitted and intended for the instruction of the unlearned. Creatures are books of revelation, the understanding and contemplation of which lead to a knowledge of the Supreme Good. But the revealed Scriptures are principally for the more advanced, in which is found all truth, uncreated and created, of which the mind is capable, wholly relishing food for the present life.

In this first mirror let your children be reflected as they open their eyes; in the second as they learn to speak and in the third, when they are able to read. And if you do not wish, or cannot make of such pictures a sort of temple in the house, having a nurse, let the children be brought together frequently in the church, at a time when there is no crowd, nor the Office being said, so that their minds may not be distracted by the crowd of

<sup>1</sup>St. Ursula and her companions; Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia*, article, "Ursula."

people nor their chatter disturb the Divine Office. I advise you if you have paintings made in the house for this purpose to refrain from having gold and silver decorations so as not to make them idolators rather than Christians; since, seeing that more candles are lighted, more heads uncovered and more reverences made before the gilded figures and those adorned with precious stones than before those blackened with age, they may only understand that honor is being given to the gold and jewels, and not to the figures or, more properly, to the personages represented by the same.

2. *Schools and Teachers.* Since I have already made mention of writings it should be seen to without fail that boys be taught to read as righteously as possible. The world being as it is, you will place a boy in great danger if you send him to learn with religious or clerics. They are such that little will be learned among them. Formerly good children grew up with them and they became good men. Now everything is earth producing forage for horses, fire and other things. If you send a boy to the common school where a multitude of wicked, dissolute persons assemble, facile in evil or difficult to control, I fear lest he lose in one year the accomplishment of seven. And as for having a tutor there are very many doubts and difficulties. Be solicitous in either case to fortify the child when he returns home should he have wrongly imitated the tutor or others so that through you he may remain free from the poison placed before him, to which he is inclined by corrupt nature, prone to evil because of the stain of inherited original sin. Do not be too gentle in chastising him when he offends God, whatever age he may be, nor yet so severe that you make him avoid you. And be in the habit of rewarding him when he does well so that he may be incited to do better through love of new shoes, a new inkstand, a slate or other things of which he may have need or that please him. All labor desires to be rewarded and a child loves gifts and presents.

3. *Studies.* I am mindful that our forefathers saw the light in the teaching of youth, but moderns have become blind, letting children grow up outside the Faith. The first thing they taught was the Psalter and Christian Doctrine and, if they brought the child still further, they gave him the morality of Cato, the Fables of Aesop, the principles of Boethius, the real science of Prospero taken from St. Augustine, the philosophy of "Eva

# Language and “Mothers’ Milk”: Maternal Roles and the Nurturing Body in Early Modern Spanish Texts

Emilie L. Bergmann

## Pure Blood, Pure Milk, Pure Language

In 1615, an Andean chronicler, Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, wrote to his monarch to protest the corruption and abuses of Spanish colonial administration in Peru. Central to his critique was the disruption of Andean community life resulting from the practices of immoral clergy and colonial officials. Throughout his 1200-page manuscript Guaman Poma repeats the lament, “y los yndios se acaban,” a simple phrase that reflects a complex historical process: “the Indians are finished / it’s finished for the Indians.” In addition to the slaughter of individual Indians in the Spaniards’ military campaigns, their economic, political, religious and social policies were wiping out indigenous culture, lineage and population through forced labor in the mines and sexual exploitation of indigenous women. The mixture of races, or *mestizaje* that resulted was not only that of Europeans with indigenous Andeans but also Africans and mulattoes with Indian “blood.” Almost negligible in comparison with the catalogue of Spanish sexual abuses of Indian women is a brief passage in which Guaman Poma attributes the bad character of Peruvian-born Spaniards to their wetnursing by women of other races:

... los dichos criollos que se crían con la leche de las yndias o de negras o los dichos mestizos, mulatos, son bravos y soberbios, haraganes, mentirosos, jugadores, auariantos, de poca caridad, miserable, tranposos, enemigo de los pobres yndios y de españoles. Y ancí son los criollos como mestizos, peor que mestizos ... (566)

(the said *criollos* (Peruvian-born Spaniards) who are raised on the milk of Indian or African women or the said *mestizos* [and] mulattoes, are aggressive and arrogant, lazy, lying, gambling, greedy, uncharitable, stingy, swindlers, enemies

of the poor Indians and Spaniards. Thus the *criollos* are like *mestizos*, or worse than *mestizos* ...) [translation mine]

This aspect of Guaman Poma's critique of the abuses of colonial administration dominated largely by *criollos* is constructed upon the early modern concept of milk as a form of blood, and the ethnicity and character of the nurse as transmissible through her milk to the upper-class infants she nurtures.

There is, however, another socially disruptive process to which Guaman Poma does not refer directly, the changes in gender relations resulting from Indian women serving in the homes of the *criollos*. Irene Silverblatt argues that in pre-Inca Andean societies, the agricultural, textile and childrearing labor of women was valued equally with that of men as an essential contribution to the wellbeing of her *allyu* (community) (Silverblatt, 8–9). Before Spanish colonization, the Inca empire had already imposed gender hierarchies, and Spanish rule brought new categories and disruptions of traditional Andean social structures. In her study of domestic labor in colonial Peru, Elinor Burkett found that the labor of Indian women caring for the first generations of Peruvian-born Spanish infants in colonial households had a significant impact on traditional social structures (111). Women domestic servants had access to information about their colonizers that was unavailable to their male counterparts, and these women's earning power gave them another significant advantage over the men in their families. Guaman Poma's reference to contamination by the nurturing female body deploys a figure familiar to his monarch and his ministers in order to protest the destruction of a body politic so different from the Spanish model that his monarch and his ministers might well not recognize it as such without the familiar figure of milk as blood.

The most disruptive intersections of colonization and the maternal body were related not to the practice of wet-nursing but rather to the alienation of women from their communities through the violence of rape, the exploitation of concubinage, or the betrayal by men desperate enough to try to buy their freedom from forced labor in *mitayas* by offering the women in their families to colonial officials. The brief passage regarding wetnursing, however, connects sixteenth and seventeenth-century Spanish colonial society with the multicultural medieval history of the peninsula. Among his discussions of *mestizaje* elsewhere in the *Nueva crónica*, involving indigenous mothers and European, African, or mulatto fathers, Guaman Poma makes specific mention of the "mancha" or taint inherited by the children of a Jewish father. By this he means a father of Jewish descent, or rather a descendant of Spanish "new Christians," Jews who converted to Christianity before 1492. He disregards the Jewish perspective on this question. Instead of tracing Jewish identity through the mother's line, Guaman Poma's concern is with the Jewishness of *mestizo* children of Indian mothers.

The preoccupation with maintaining ethnic communities through purity of

"blood" has a long history in Hispanic cultures. The medieval phenomenon of a multi-ethnic and trilingual culture in much of the Iberian peninsula left its mark on discourses of the maternal. Although advice literature regarding wet-nursing in early modern Spain shares many characteristics with other didactic texts addressed to mothers in English and Italian, there are significant differences arising from the eight-centuries of transculturation among Christians, Muslims and Jews. Throughout Europe, medical and moral discourse of wet-nursing can be traced to their common Greek, Latin and Italian sources: among them Galen, Soranus, Alberti and Juan Luis Vives. The most obvious of these shared characteristics is the contradiction between the moral and medical admonitions against wet-nursing and the practical advice on choosing wet nurses that almost invariably follows them.<sup>1</sup> Perhaps less contradictory, because it is based upon practice rather than theory, is the advice that the nurse be well-spoken, acknowledging that the earliest linguistic influences on infants come from the women who nurture them.<sup>2</sup> This advice dates back to Greek and Latin sources, but it takes on a particularly problematic aspect for Spanish-born parents in Peru or Mexico, where despite advice to the contrary, infants were likely to have nurses whose mother tongue was Nahuatl, Quechua, or Yoruba.

The eight centuries of transculturation among Muslims, Christians and Jews in Spain did not end in 1492 with the expulsion of Jews and Muslims; rather, the culturally and genetically internalized others became focal points of Christian culture, haunting presences in the language and in everyday cultural practices. The preoccupation with ethnic purity, imagined culturally as purity of blood, was common to all three groups in the medieval period, and the milk-as-blood model placed wet-nursing in a contested position. Heath Dillard in her study *Daughters of the Reconquest* observes a new, "harsher climate of intolerance" evident in thirteenth-century laws that separated women of the dominant Christian group from their Jewish and Muslim counterparts by prohibiting cross-cultural wet-nursing, among regulations regarding domestic activities (206–207). Iberian conduct manuals and misogynistic satire lent the image of Jewish and Muslim otherness to the potential dangers of negligent or unhealthy wet nurses.

Despite the awareness that virtually all the children of the literate and political, economically and culturally dominant groups were nurtured by women other than those who gave birth to them, the metaphor of maternal breastfeeding was commonplace in discussions of the vernacular as "mother tongue." This metaphor is deployed as an authorizing discourse by two Hispanic humanists whose positions with regard to Castilian ethnic, religious and territorial hegemony were significantly problematic. Juan de Valdés's *Diálogo de la lengua* (c. 1535) is an affirmation of his native Castilian as the language of empire. The self-taught *mestizo* humanist Inca Garcilaso de la Vega wrote his *Comentarios reales* (1609) as a chronicle of the Inca empire,

Answer by the poet to the most illustrious Sister Filotea de la Cruz<sup>1</sup>

by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (1691)

Translated by William Little (2008)©

Very Exalted Madam, my Lady:

(1) I have not delayed my answer<sup>2</sup> for so many days due to my will, my poor heath, and my justified fear. Is it any wonder that at my first step my clumsy pen encountered and tripped on two obstacles? The first—and for me the hardest—is knowing how to answer your totally learned, very prudent, extremely holy, and immensely loving letter. And if I, seeing how, when the Angelic Scholastic Doctor, St. Thomas,<sup>3</sup> was asked about his silence concerning his master Albertus Magnus,<sup>4</sup> the pupil answered that he kept quiet because he was unable to say anything worthy of Albertus, then how much reasonable is it for me to be quiet, not like the Saint out of modesty, but actually because I know nothing worthwhile for you to hear. The second obstacle is to know how to thank you for such the excessive yet unexpected favor you did me in sending my rough papers to the printers. It is a favor so beyond measure that it far exceeds the most ambitious hopes and the most fantastic desires, and, as a rational being my mind cannot even grasp it. In short, your favor is of such a magnitude that not only can it not be confined within the limits of speech, but it even exceeds all my capacity for gratitude on the one hand because it was so huge and on the other hand because it was so unexpected. As Quintilian said: *Minorem spei, maiorem benefaci glorian pereunt.*<sup>5</sup> And to such a degree that they silence the recipient of them.

(2) When the Baptist's mother,<sup>6</sup> who was happily barren before becoming miraculously fertile, welcomed to her house such a overwhelming a guest as the Mother of the Word, her understanding was confused and speech failed her. Hence, instead of thanks she burst out with doubts and questions: *Et unde hoc mihi?*<sup>7</sup> From where does such a thing come to me? The same thing happened to Saul when he was chosen and anointed king of Israel: *Numquid non filius*

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*Iemini ego sum de minima tribu Israel, et cognatio mea novissima inter omnes de tribu Beniamin? Quare igitur locutus es mihi sermonen istum?*<sup>8</sup> I shall say the same: From where, venerable Lady, from where such a favor for me? By chance am I more than a poor nun, the lowest creature in the world and the most unworthy to draw your attention? Well, then, *quare locutus es mihi sermonem istum? Et unde hoc mihi?*<sup>9</sup>

(6.<sup>27</sup>) My writing has never arisen from my own decision, but rather from outside sources. Truthfully, I could say to them: *Vos me cægisti.*<sup>28</sup> What is really true—and I will not deny it (on the one hand because it's well known to everyone, and on the other hand because, even though it might count against me, God graced me with of a gift of an immense love for the truth)—is that since the first light of reason dawned on me my inclination toward letters was so intense and powerful that neither reprimands by others, of which I have had many, nor self-reflection, of which I have done not a little, have been sufficient for me to stop pursuing this natural impulse that God put in me. God Almighty knows why and for what purpose. And he knows I've asked him to snuff out the light of my mind and leave only what's necessary to keep his commandments. Some would say that any more is too much in a woman, and some even say that it is harmful. The Almighty also knows that, since my request failed, I have tried to bury my intellect along with my name and to sacrifice all this only to the one who gave it to me. For no other reason I entered a religious order even though its duties and fellowship were anathema to the unhindered quietude required by my studious intent. Afterwards, once there, the Lord knows (and outside its walls the single person who ought to have known it knows so) what I undertook to conceal my name. But he forbade me to do so because he said it was a sinful temptation, and it surely was. If I could repay some part of the debt I owe you, my Lady, I think just telling you this fact would be sufficient, for never has a word of this left my mouth except for the ears of the person who had a right to hear it.<sup>29</sup> Having just opened wide the doors to my heart and shared its most buried secrets, I now want you to know that trusting you with this information does not contradict what I owe to both your venerable person and your immense favor.

7.<sup>10</sup> Continuing the narration of my inclination, about which I want to give you complete information, I hereby state that before I was three years old my mother sent me and one of my sisters, who was older than I, to one of those schools called Amigas,<sup>31</sup> where we could learn to read. I followed her with affection and mischief. When I saw she was receiving lessons the desire to learn to read caught fire in me so much that I tried to trick the teacher (so I thought) by telling her that my mother had instructed her to give me lessons too. She did not believe it because it

wasn't believable; yet, to reward my clever charm, she gave them to me. I continued going and she continued teaching me, no longer as a jest, because the experiment changed her mind. And I learned to read so quickly that I already knew how to by the time my mother found out; for the teacher had kept her in the dark about it in order to delight her completely and to get a reward all together. I kept quiet thinking that I would be whipped for having done this without her leave. The woman who taught me (God bless her) is still alive, and she can vouch for what I say.

(8) I remember that in those days, because I had the sweet-tooth that is normal at that age, I would abstain from eating cheese because I had heard that it turned people into dunces. The desire to acquire knowledge was stronger in me than the desire to eat, even though the latter desire is so strong in children. Later on, when I was six or seven years old, and already knowing how to read and write along with all the other skills that women learn such as embroidery and sewing, I heard that in Mexico City there was a University and there were Schools where people studied the sciences. As soon as I heard this I began to kill my mother by constantly and naggingly begging her to dress me in boy's clothes and to send me to live with some relatives of hers in Mexico City so that I could study by enrolling in the University.<sup>32</sup> She refused, and she was quite right, but I assuaged my desire by reading many kinds of books belonging to my grandfather,<sup>33</sup> notwithstanding the punishment and scolding intended to stop me. So, when I came to Mexico people were amazed, not so much by my intelligence as by my memory and the facts that I had acquired at an age that seemed hardly enough just to be able to learn to speak.

(9) I began to study Latin grammar, and I think I did not have even twenty lessons. I applied myself so intensely that—since this is true about women, and even more so in the bloom of my youth, that we value so highly the natural look of our hair—I would cut off four to six finger lengths of it, measuring up to where it reached before and imposing a rule on myself that, if I did not know whatever I had planned to learn while it was growing back to its original length, I had to cut it off again to punish my dimwittedness. It happened again and again that it would grow and I would not know whatever I had set as my goal, because my hair grew rapidly and I was learning slowly. So I would cut it off as a penalty for my dimwittedness, for it did not seem reasonable to me that a head so denuded of knowledge—which is a more desirable adornment—should be clothed in long hair. I entered a religious order because, although I was aware that that lifestyle had certain things (I'm talking about incidental not official ones), or rather, many things that were abhorrent to my character—given my total rejection of marriage—it was the least objectionable and the most respectable one I could choose with regard to my desire to safeguard my salvation. In the face of this primary concern (surely it is the most important one) all the stubborn little impertinences of my nature gave way and bowed: that is, wanting to live alone; wanting not to have any obligatory duties that would hinder my freedom to study; being free from community noises that would interrupt the peace and quiet of my books. These needs made

me hesitate somewhat before deciding, until learned people shed light on them as temptations, which I conquered with divine help, and I took the veil that I now so unworthily wear. I thought I was fleeing myself, but—wretch that I am!—I brought my self with me, and I brought my greatest enemy into this disposition of mine, about which I am unable to figure out if it is a gift or a punishment from Heaven. When all the pious ceremonies involved in a religious lifestyle were extinguishing or blocking my studious nature, it exploded like gunpowder, and I proved the truth of the saying *privatio est causa appetitus.*<sup>34</sup>

(10) I returned to my studious task (I misspeak, for I never stopped); nay, I mean, I continued reading and reading more, studying and studying more, with only books themselves for a teacher. For me studying was a restful break during the moments left over from my duties. It is well known that studying those lifeless letters is hard, that they lack a teacher's lively voice and explanations; yet I suffered all that difficulty very gladly for the love of reading. Oh, if it had only been for the love of God—which was the correct choice—how deserving I would have been! Even so, I strived with all my might to raise my sights and to direct them toward his service, because the goal I sought was to study theology; for it seemed to me, Catholic that I am, a pitiful incapacity on my part not to know in this lifetime everything that can be learned by natural methods about the divine mysteries. Being a nun and not a laywoman, I thought it my duty—given my religious status—to profess letters. This is especially true since I was a daughter of the likes of St. Jerome and St. Paula.<sup>35</sup> How degenerate it would be for an idiot daughter to descend from such learned parents! I argued with myself about this, and I thought I was right. Unless I was flattering and applauding my own propensity (and that's most likely) by relying on the logical proposition that my own pleasure was obligatory.

(11) I proceeded in this way, as I've said, always directing the path of my studies toward the summit of holy Theology. In order to reach it, it seemed to me necessary to ascend the ladder of the sciences and the humanities, for how can one who does not first know the ancillary fields possibly understand the queen of the sciences? Without logic, how could I possibly know the general and specific methods by which the Holy Scriptures are written? Without rhetoric, how could I possibly understand its figures, tropes, and phrasing? Without the natural sciences, what about so many questions pertaining to the multiple natures the animals used in biblical sacrifices, in which so many symbols have already been explained, with many more unexplained? If Saul was cured by the sound of David's harp, was it by virtue of the natural power of music, or the supernatural power God chose to infuse in David?<sup>36</sup> Without arithmetic could one possibly comprehend the computation of so many years, days, months, hours, and the mysterious seventy

weeks like those found in Daniel,<sup>37</sup> and still more, the understanding of which requires knowing the natures, concordances, and properties of numbers? Without geometry, how could one possibly measure the Holy Ark of the Covenant and the holy city of Jerusalem, whose mysterious measurements form a cube in all its dimensions, and in which the proportional distribution of all its parts is so marvelous? Without architecture, what about Salomon's great temple, wherein God himself was the draftsman who gave the designs and the plans, and where that wise king was nothing more than the foreman who oversaw the project?<sup>38</sup> In this construction there was no foundation without its mystery, no column without its symbol, no cornice without its allusion, no architrave without its meaning, and so forth, in such a way that the tiniest listel served not only to complement art itself but also to symbolize greater things.

Without a thorough understanding of the laws and periods by which history is made up, how can the bible's historical books<sup>39</sup> be understood? I refer to those summaries in which what in fact happened first often is placed later in the narrative. Without a firm command of both branches of the law, how can one comprehend the books of the Law?<sup>40</sup> Without vast erudition, what about so many things in secular history as mentioned in Holy Scripture; so many customs of the gentiles, so many rituals, so many ways of speaking? Without many precepts and much reading in the holy Fathers, how can one understand the concealed sayings of the Prophets? Well then, if one is not an expert in music, how do we understand those musical intervals and their beauty that abound in many passages, especially in those petitions Abraham made to God on behalf of the cities, asking if he would spare them if there were fifty just men in them?<sup>41</sup> He reduced this number to forty-five, which is sesquinonal (that is, the interval between re to mi); from here to thirty, a sesquitertia, which is that of a diatessaron; from here to twenty, which is the interval the sesquialtera (that is, the diapente); from here to ten, which is the duple (that is, the diapason). And because there are no more intervals, he went no further.<sup>42</sup> Well then, how can we understand this without music? Back there in the Book of Job, God says to him: *Numquid coniungere valebis micantes stellas Pleiadas, aut gyrum Arcturi poteris dissipare? Numquid producis Luciferum in tempore suo, et Vesperum super filios terrae consurgere facis?*<sup>43</sup> which terms are impossible to comprehend without knowledge of astronomy. And not only these noble sciences; nor is there any of the mechanical arts that is not mentioned. In sum, this Book encompasses all books, and this science includes all sciences (all of which are used to fathom the one Book); and, after all of which are mastered (obviously, to do so is neither easy nor, indeed, possible), the great science requires another condition beyond everything I have said above, namely, continual prayer and purity of life to beseech God for the kind of purging of the spirit and illumination of

the mind that are necessary for understanding such high matters. For, if this is lacking, then everything else is useless.

(26) Once they achieved this with a very saintly and unassuming mother superior who thought that study was a matter for the Inquisition, and she ordered me not to study. I obeyed her (for the three months that her authority lasted) regarding not picking up a book; but as far as not studying absolutely anything at all—which is not in my power to do—I failed completely. That is because, even though I did not study with books, I would study with everything else God created by using all of it as my texts, and for a book I used the entire machine of this universe. I saw nothing uncritically; I heard nothing inattentively, even in the tiniest and minutest things. There is no creature no matter how lowly in which we cannot discover the idea of *me fecit Deus*.<sup>80</sup> There is no one at all who is not stunned by intelligent discovery, provided one reflects as one ought to. Hence, I repeat, I looked at and I marveled at all things in such a way that from the very people with whom I was speaking and from the things they were saying I was deriving a thousand ideas. Where could that diversity of cleverness and acumen<sup>81</sup> spring from, since they all come from the same species? What might be the temperaments and hidden qualities that produced this fact? When I would see a shape, I would spend time combining the proportion of its lines and measuring it with my mind and transforming it in different ways. Sometimes I

would stroll along the main façade of our dormitory—which is a very spacious room—and I would be observing that, although the lines of its two sides were parallel and the ceiling was flat, my sight imagined that the two lines were approaching each other and that the ceiling was lower in the distance than close by. From this I inferred that the sight lines run straight but not parallel; rather they stretch out forming a pyramidal shape. And I would hazard a conjecture that this might be why the ancients were forced to wonder if the world was a sphere or not. Because, even though it seems so, it might be a trick of the eye by showing concavities where there were none.

(27) This kind of questioning happened to me about everything and it continues happening even though I have no control over it; on the contrary, usually I get angry because it tires my head. And I used to think that everyone experienced the same thing including versifying until experience showed me otherwise. This habit or bent of mine is of such a nature that I never look at anything without giving it a second thought. Two little girls were in front of me playing with a top, and, given this proclivity of mine, no sooner had I seen its movement and shape than I began studying its easy spinning and spherical shape, and I saw how long the impulse of its momentum lasted independent of its cause, for, separated from the girl's hand, which was its motive cause, the little top went on dancing. Not content with this, I ordered someone to bring me some flour and to spread it around it so that, when the top was dancing in it, it could be discerned whether or not the circles it was making with its movement were perfect or not. I found that they were but spiral lines that gradually lost circularity as the momentum decreased. Others were playing jackstraws<sup>82</sup> (which is the most frivolous game played during childhood), and I would come close to observe the figures made by the sticks. Seeing three of them making a triangle by chance, I would begin linking them up, and this made me recall that that shape is said to have been the same as Solomon's mysterious ring,<sup>83</sup> in which there were distant reflections and

representations of the Holy Trinity, by virtue of which he was able to work so many marvels and wonders. It is also said that David's harp was the same, and that is how he healed Saul with its sound. And harps in our days retain almost the same virtue.

(28) Well, then, my Lady, what can I tell you, about nature's secrets as I've discovered them while cooking? I see that an egg becomes solid and fries in lard or oil, while, on the other hand, it dissolves in syrup. I see that in order to keep sugar in a liquid state it suffices to add to it a very small part of water mixed with quince or another sour fruit. I see that an egg's yoke and white have such opposite characteristics that when one or the other of them is mixed with sugar each one separately works well, but when they are combined they do not. Because I don't want to bore you with which cold facts I'm mentioning them only to give you a full account of my nature—and I think this probably has made you laugh. Nevertheless, my Lady, what can we women possibly know other than kitchen philosophies? Lupercio Leonardo<sup>84</sup> said it quite well: one can philosophize well while preparing dinner. When I see these trivialities I often say this: if Aristotle had cooked stews he would have written a lot more. So, continuing with my mode of cogitation, I tell you that this is constant in me that I have no need for books. On one occasion, when I had a severe stomach disorder, the doctors ordered me not to study. I followed their prohibition for a few days, but then I suggested to them that allowing me access to books was less harmful, because my cogitations and were so strong and feverish that they consumed more of my energy in a quarter hour than book study would in four days. And so they were brought around to letting me read. Furthermore, my Lady, not even my sleep was free from the endless movement of my imagination. Rather, my thoughts are accustomed to operating more freely and more unrestrainedly during sleep, thereby reasoning, composing poetry, and classifying the species of observations made throughout the day with more clarity and tranquility. From all this I could compile for you an immense catalogue including some very fine logical arguments I have made better while asleep than while awake—but I shall leave them aside so as not to tire you. Let the foregoing suffice so that your transcendent judgment may perfectly discern and form an idea about both my complete disposition and the origins, methods, and state of my studies.

(36) Oh, how much damage would be avoided in our nation if old women were as educated as Leta and if they knew how to teach as St. Paul and my father St. Jerome command! On the contrary, in lieu of this approach and due to the extreme carelessness with which men have chosen to deal with our poor women, if some parents want to have their daughters educated beyond the basic catechism, necessity and the absence of trained older women force them to turn them over to male teachers to teach them reading, writing, arithmetic, music, and other skills. Not a little damage results from this. Every day we hear lamentable examples of such unevenly-matched pairings. Given close physical proximity and contact over time what was thought to be impossible frequently happens with ease. It follows that many parents choose to keep their daughters uncouth and uneducated rather than expose them to such a notoriously perilous familiarity with men. But all this would be avoided if there were educated elderly women, as St. Paul desires, and if the teaching profession were passed from one generation of women to the next just as what happens with sewing and all other customary skills.

### **Transcriptions of Elizabethan MS Petitions**

The following are transcripts of petitions to Elizabeth I, members of her Privy Council, and others (State Papers, Elizabeth, National Archives, London). I have modernized the language, changed Roman numerals to Arabic, added punctuation where necessary to clarify, and modernized capitalization. I have also numbered the letters for our convenience in discussing them. Last, this is draft material; please do not reproduce or circulate without permission. Thanks! ~Erin Sadlack, easadlack@marywood.edu

#### **1a. SP 12/131/50      Annies Actton to the Privy Council      7/7/1579**

To the right honorables the Lords of the Queen's Majesty's most honorable Privy Council

In most humble and no less lamentable wise with weeping tears and bowing knees, beseeching your honors, Annies Actton, widow. That whereas your poor oratrix[']s son Barnebe Actton now prisoner in the Marshalsea at your honors' commandment for being in company upon ye water with one Thomas Appelltre, (he shooting a piece rashly and unadvisedly) for the which causes she beseecheth your honors for God's cause, the premises tenderly considered, to vouchsafe your poor oratrix[']s son his enlargement out of prison, for the which gracious good deed she shall daily pray unto the Almighty God for the prosperous estate of your good honors long to endure.

your honors' most humble oratrix,  
Annes Actton widow

#### **1b. SP 12/131/51      Thomas Appletree to the Earl of Leicester      7/7/1579**

To the Right honorable Earl of Leicester knight of the most honorable order of the Garter and one of the Queen's Majesty's most honorable Privy Council

In most humble and no less lamentable wise with weeping tears and bowing knees, beseecheth your honor your poor and daily orator, Thomas Appeltrie, now prisoner in ye Marshalsea, for shooting a piece rashly and unadvisedly upon the water to my utter undoing forever; for the which offence it pleased ye Queen's most excellent Majesty [hole in original] clemency, & merciful goodness to give me pardon for ye same, for the which god preser[ve he]r highness long to reign over us her poor subjects even Nestor's years, I trust in Jesus Christ this to be a good warning unto me to lead a new life with better advisement then her to fore [heretofore] I have done, beseeching your good honor the premises tenderly Considered to vouchsafe his enlargement out of prison, a poor young man the which loseth his time, having consumed and spent all that ever he hath or cane make to relieve himself therewith her in prison, having now nothing at all Left to help himself with all at this present, beseeching your honor for God's cause to take pity upon him your poor orator, for the which gracious good deed, I am bound daily to pray unto ye Almighty God for your honor's health in prosperity long to endure.

your honors' suppliant and poor orator to command  
Th[omas] Appeltrie

#### **2. SP 12/285/26 Anne Countess of Warwick to Master of Requests      10/3/1602**

After my hearty commendations, this distressed gentlewomen Eleanor Sampson hath informed me that on Thursday next she hath a cause of hearing before you in the Court of Requests which concerneth her whole estate of living, her only desire is to have a careful and deliberate hearing that the cause may be judicially decreed without any further protraction or delay, her poverty being so great that she is not able to attend deferred relief, nor yet to contend any longer with her powerful adversary. And albeit I make no doubt of your careful endeavors in hearing of such causes, yet the misery of the poor woman, and her humble suite hath moved me to pray your lawful favor towards her, Wherein you shall assuredly do a very charitable deed, and bind her with her poor child to pray for you And even so I commit you to God's holy protection.

From the Court at Richmount this 3 of October 1602

Your very loving friend,  
Anne Warwyck

To my very loving friends Mr Doctor Caesar & Mr Wilbraham, Masters of the Requests to her Majesty

**3. SP 12/146/132. Jane Gouldwyar to Francis Walsingham 1580?**

To the Right honorable Sir Francis Walsingham, Chief Secretary and one of her Majesty's Privy Council

Humbly sheweth unto your honor your pore and daily oratrix Jane Gouldwyar, a poor afflicted creator, and one that hath lived prisoner in the Clink this twelvemonth for her conscience, having five small children driven to seek their hard adventure in this wicked age by reason of the troubles of me their poor mother. Who is and ever will be a loving and dutiful subject to her Majesty, not committing any offence by instructing any others of her Majesty's subjects but desire to live according to my conscience till such time as it may please god that I may confer with such as shall persuade me that I stand in error. In tender consideration whereof the premises considered may it please your honor to grant your warrant to release your poor oratrix, putting in to sufficient bail to answer to what shall be objected against her, by the honorable of her Majesty's Privy Council within 2 months warning, & then to yield her body to the Marshalsea during her Majesty's pleasure, and your poor suppliant as especially bound shall offer up to God her daily prayers for the long and prosperous estate of her Majesty with increase of virtue.

your honors humble oratrix  
Jane Gouldwyar

**4. SP 12/184 /46 Margaret Blackwell to the Privy Council 11/26/1585**

To the right honorable the lords of her Majesty's most honorable Privy Council

In most humble wise, sheweth unto your good lordships, Margaret Blackwell of London widow: that whereas of late she hath been charged in London as a recusant, and for that she was not resident in London, your lordships directed your honorable letters, to Mr Bishop esquire sheriff of the county of Sussex to demand of her, as of a recusant, five and twenty pounds for the furnishing of a light horse for her Majesty's service in the Low Countries: The truth is, that she never refused, since the beginning of her Majesty's reign, to come to the church. Howbeit true it is (an it like your good lordships) that when her neighbors dwelling within the precinct of the late Blackfriars of London, moved her of late, to be of their parish: she utterly refused it, because she and her husband have frequented for the space of these thirty years, St Andrew's Church in Castle Baynard ward, as their parish church. Whereupon they of the Blackfriars, have sundry times presented her for not coming to church, but how unjustly, your lordships may understand by the certificate herein enclosed. In tender consideration whereof may it please your good lordships to release her of the said charge, and that she may have from your honors, some discharge to the sheriff of Sussex.

**5. SP 12/146/122 Anne Alen to the Queen 1580?**

To the Queen's most royal majesty

In her most humble wise sheweth unto your highness your poor and daily oratrice Anne Alen, wife of Martin Alen, citizen and clothworker of London. That where of late it pleased your highness of your abundant clemency to pardon the said Martin for the heinous offence committed against your Majesty, remitting and pardoning his pains of death and so banished and exiled him out of this your realm of England, by occasion of which exile, the said Martin is now remaining in Caen in Normandy by reason of whose offence & absence your said oratrice is brought to extreme poverty and necessity like to perish for lack of relief. In tender consideration whereof your said oratrice most humbly beseecheth your highness for the tender mercy of God to be so good and generous to her said husband as to grant to him your gracious pardon. Whereby he may be remitted of his said judgment of exile, and so restored to repair into this realm of England there to continue the rest of his life to labor and travail in his vocation for the relief of him of your said oratrice & their family in the way of honesty and truth. And thus the said Martin & also your oratrice shall during their lives according to their bounden duties daily pray unto Almighty God for the preservation of your highness, long in most royal magnificence to endure and reign over us.

6. SP 12/187/63.

Mariners' Wives to the Privy Council

3/27/1586

To the Right honorables the Lords and others of the Queen's Majesty's most honorable Privy Council

Your honors poor and daily oratrixes the wives of the Masters and others of the companies of the late good English ships the Emmanuel and Julian of London most lamentably complaining do shew to your honors: That whereas their poor husbands went forth to Spain on merchants' affaires when all things (to their knowledge went in quiet, and hoping of a good voyage left your poor oratrixes with very little at home, and yet more did take upon credit; so it is right honorables that they themselves for no offence by them done or pretended are stayed, lying in prison almost starved, their ships and goods made confiscate and are spoiled to their great loss and utter impoverishment, the which your poor oratrixes have by petition have advertised her Majesty craving her highness tender consideration of the premises, and cannot have answer of the right worshipful Mr Doctor Dale, Maye it therefore please your honor for God sake, To be a means for them to her Majesty that your poor oratrixes may not only receive some comfort in this their distressed case for their better relief during their poor husbands' captivity, who have sustained greater loss than the merchants [di]d, [n]ow are like to perish for mere want as their said husbands. But also for the more speedier release of their poor husbands out of their extreme misery. And your hono[rs (obscured) Or]atrixes and all theirs shall (as nevertheless they will) daily pray for your honors in much health and felicity long to continue.

[addressed] 27 March 1586 The Petition of the Masters and Companies' Wives of the late good English ships the Emmanuel and Julian of London to your honors

7. SP 12/157/70

Jane Bolding to the Queen

1582?

To the Queen's most excellent Majesty

In most humble and pitiful manner beseecheth your excellency your poor and true subject Jane Bolding the wife of Edward Bolding of the parish of St. George the martyr in your highness's county of Surrey shoemaker daughter unto William Pater late one of yeomen of your Majesty's [illegible] deceased, and cousin unto Dorothie Priffen late one of your highness maids of honor also deceased. That whereas my said poor husband serving your Majesty in Ireland under Mr Walter Rawlyn [Raleigh] was there maimed of one of his arms which (to cure, hath cost him and I all that ever we were able to borrow or di[lost, hole in original]) And yet notwithstanding he hath utterly lost the use thereof, whereby he is in no wise able to follow his faculty to the utter undoing and impoverishment of us and three small comfortless children forever unless your Majesty's mercy be towards us extended it will therefore please your highness (if your abundant grace and clemency our pitiful estate graciously considered ) To grant unto us somewhat to maintain and relieve us and our said poor children withal, even what it shall please your Majesty to vouchsafe. And (upon our knees) we, as we are bounden, shall daily pray unto the Almighty for the most happy and prosperous preservation of your most royal highness in health and tranquility long to rule and reign over us.

The humble petition of  
Jane Bolding

Her husband having lately served in Ireland under Mr Rawley was maimed in one of his arms, which notwithstanding it hath cost him all that ever he had to cure all the same yet hath he utterly lost the use thereof forever whereby he is not able to use his faculty of shoemaker to the utter undoing of him his wife & 3 poor children. In consideration whereof she desireth her Majesty to extend her gracious compassion towards their relief

**8. SP 12/67/49 Margaret Palms to Lady Stafford April 8, 1570**

My singular good Lady I must crave pardon at your ladyship's hands that I trouble your ladyship so often with letters, but occasion doth so move me: for since my last letters there is one Henry Johnson attainted of high treason who had the manor of Farnley to him and to th'heirs males of his body lawfully begotten and for default of such issue to their males of Sir Thomas Johnson begotten of the body of Dame Isabel his wife and for default of such issue of remain to Francis Palms and his heirs which is now your Ladyship's ward. And if it be so that my son do not receive any commodity by this entail & attainer I most heartily desire your Ladyship to foresee that the said manor of Farnley be not granted to any in lease for I hold certain cliffs for the provision of my house which if they be taken away by any mean, my son shall not know where to feed any beefs or muttons for his house. And I know well that Mrs. Johnson will sue to the Queen's Majesty for a lease of her husband's lands which if the manor of Farnley be not excepted in her grant, I will not look for any favor at her hands for she did the best she could to have me forth of the cliffs lying in Farnley long ago. And also I have made Mr Webster the Master Cook a large offer for his lease of the parsonage of Otley: if it will take place I shall strain myself sore for my son's sake; if not, I can do no more but be mindful and careful for him in anything that may do the poor boy good, as knoweth God who preserve your Ladyship in good health, from Lyndley the 8 of April 1570.

your Ladyship's to command,  
Margaret Palms

**9. SP 12/269/72 Margery Lennard to the Queen**

**1598?**

To the Queen's most excellent Majesty,

In most humble wise sheweth unto your sacred Majesty, your loyal subject & lowly suppliant and servant Margaret sister and sole heir to Gregory, late Lord Dacre, deceased & wife unto Sampson Leonard, Esquire. That whereas heretofore in the time of King Henry VI your Majesty's most noble progenitor, one Thomas, Lord Dacre, ancestor unto your highness' suppliant, dying; Joan, sole daughter and heir of Sir Thomas Dacre, knight, eldest son of the said L. Thomas was then found to be his heir at the common law, and thereupon both she and her eldest issue by one Sir Richard Fines, knight, her husband enjoyed the name and title of the Barony of Dacre and the place thereof in the high Court of Parliament as barons and peers of this realm (in their posterity) continued & possessed with all other privileges and pre-eminentances to such a dignity belonging from the bodies of which Sir Richard and Dame Joan, his wife, your highness' said suppliant, is lineally descended and (by the late decease of her said Lord and brother without issue; the only heir now surviving. It may please your most excellent Majesty of your accustomed clemency and favor to regard and consider the humble suite and petition of your said suppliant and servant not proceeding of any ambitions or aspiring mind, but only for the discharge of her duty to God and her posterity, in the orderly care and preservation of her own birthright and just interest to the name style and honor of the aforesaid barony of Dacre agreeing with the most ancient rule and custom of this realm of England by the which the daughters and heirs of barons have always been holden both capable in themselves and likewise wont to convey unto their offspring and issues the names, styles, and dignities of their fathers' baronies. That as the titles & dignities of all the political nobility of this your highness' kingdom & flowing from your royal throne as from the first spring and fountain by the special prerogative that God hath inseparably annexed thereunto are also to be upholden and preferred thereby to their true and right full heirs upon lawful claim and intimation of their just titles. Even so your sacred Majesty would now be pleased to commit the hearing, examining and relation of all due circumstances concerning the title to the name, stile, and dignity of the foresaid Barony of Dacre, unto the wisdoms and judgments of the Lord High Treasurer of England together with the rest of their honorable lordships, your Majesty's special Commissioners for such causes already appointed and therein for the behoof of your most humble suppliant (now capable thereof by the common laws and heroical customs of your kingdom) to signify your gracious mind and princely pleasure: Whereunto your said suppliant and servant in all humility and obedience doth most willingly submit both herself and the whole cause who with her husband and many children (sons and daughters) according to their bounden duties do daily pray to God Almighty for the long and happy preservation of your royal estate and most sacred person.

**10. SP 12/245/135 Abstract of Lady Elizabeth Russell's petition to the Privy Council 10/7/1593**

My Lady Russell craveth your lordships' favors most humbly for the punishment of foul riots committed against her by Mr Lovelace, her neighbor, to whom she hath shewed, these 26 years, all the friendship she could. On Monday the first of October he came to her house about two of the clock in the afternoon, with 16 or 20 men of his servants and bargemen with halberds & long poles, broke open her porter's lodge door & lock, and the lock of her stocks, and took out two of his men, that had behaved themselves lewdly to her. If she had offered him or his any wrong the law had been open, and not himself, a Justice sworn to keep peace, by so foul a riot to break his oath. She most humbly desireth therefore, to the example of other hereafter, to offer the like, that he may be put out of the Commission of Peace. Again the Thursday after, sending to her for the key of the Tower in Windsor, where she had lain all the year, she denying to avoid upon so sudden warning all her stuff being there; unless my Lord Admiral put her out, but offered him as much rent in money as it was worth & more, as she had sent him before. Then his men answering that he cared not for money. She said then she had paid for it with her friendship & purse already to him & his, and therefore would not remove upon so sudden warning, her stuff there. Upon Saturday after he & his men came bravely, took off the lock of her lodging, and clapped on another lock her stuff there, and commanded that none should undo the lock. She craveth that this spiteful injury may be punished, & her goods answered, or else it is better to be a mean Justice of Peace than a Noblewoman, that dependeth only upon God and her Majesty, her most gracious sovereign.

**11. SP 15/24/80 Anne Lanesdale to the Queen 5/27/1576**

To the Queen's most excellent Majesty

Most lamentably complaining sheweth unto your grace your poor and daily oratrix Anne Lansdale of Hackney in the County of Middlesex, widow late wife of Christopher Lansdale, deceased, late one of your Majesty's guard who died seized of certain copyhold lands to the value of fifty pounds by year within the said manor of Hackney and before the death of the said Christopher, he the said Christopher did according to the custom of the said manor, that is to say about seven years last past, surrender the said copyhold lands to the use of your said oratrix for the term of her natural life, the remainder thereof to two children of the said Christopher's, sithence which time, most dread sovereign lady, so it is that your said oratrix committed her faithful trust unto one Sir George Bowes, knight, and thereupon did deliver unto the said Sir George as well her copies for the said lands as also diverse other bills obligatory and bills of debt after which delivery the said Sir George Bowes, forgetting his duty towards God and practicing his own private gain with the assent and consent of one Hugh Stuckley, being then steward of the said manor, did most ungodly throw great gifts & sums of money given unto the said Stuckley and others cause the records of the said copies to be kept from your said oratrix and also the copies to him delivered by your said oratrix detaineth and yet doth detain to the utter disinherison and undoing of your said oratrix and children forever. In tender consideration whereof may it please your highness of your abundant grace and for very pity's sake to call before your Majesty as well the said Sir George Bowes and the said Stuckley and that such direction may be taken therein as your poor oratrix and the same children may enjoy their rights and that such manifest and apparent wrongs and practices may be punished for example's sake. And that your highness' gracious letters may be directed to the occupiers of the said lands in variance, commanding them that the profits thereof may be stayed upon the said lands until the truth of the matter may be duly tried as they or any of them will answer to the contrary at their perils And your said Oratrix shall daily pray to god for the prosperous reign of your highness over us long to endure.

**12. SP 12/230/36 Margaret Harper to Council 1/23/1590**

To the right honorable the Lords of her Majesty's most honorable Privy Council

Most humbly sheweth & beseecheth your honors, your poor distressed suppliant Margaret Harper late wife of Sir William Harper of the City of London knight, deceased, & now wife of Edward Maxey, gent. That whereas about the 23<sup>rd</sup> year of the reign of our sovereign lady the Queen's Majesty that now is, by petition made, by your said suppliant unto her Majesty's high Commissioners, viz: the right Reverend Father in God, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, his grace, the right worshipful the Dean of Westminster, Mr Doctor Aubrey, Mr Dr. Lewyn, & Mr Dr. Cosyn, it was ordered that the said Edward Maxey (for that he refused to cohabit & dwell with your said suppliant) should allow unto your said poor suppliant a certain revenue by the year, (out of certain lands lying in Bristol) for her maintenance, & that he should put in sureties to some of the friends of your said suppliant for the payment thereof which to do, he utterly refuseth of an obstinate mind, without the fear of God, or regard of law or authority. And for that the said Edward Maxey is a fugitive person, leading his life in obscure places, frequenting lewd & vicious company, & most willfully wasting & spending his goods & substance, not only to the great impoverishing of himself, but also to the utter undoing of your said suppliant, being now destitute of all means & help, for her succor & relief; (having nothing from her husband wherewith to maintain herself) unless your honors of your accustomed goodness extend your favors unto her herein. In tender consideration whereof, may it please your honors to compel the said Edward Maxey, husband to your said suppliant, to suffer her to receive the profits of the said lands, being only nine pounds yearly, and that further, (if it stand with your honors' good liking) he may be enjoined to put in sureties for the safety of your said suppliant's person, for that she goeth daily in danger & hazard of her life, by him. And your poor suppliant shall according to her bounden duty continually pray to God for the prosperous estate of your honors in health & felicity long to continue.

**13. SP 12/208/12 Bridget Carre to Thomas Wilkes 1/16/1588**

My good friend (and servant for so I will not forget to call you) you shall understand that I have delivered that which you sent to me unto her Majesty. And at the first she wished me not to meddle in it for she would not look upon it. But then I told her Majesty that you were an old acquaintance of mine for which cause I did beseech her highness to read it, and then you should find friends more than I, for to speak unto her Majesty, whereupon her Majesty hath promised me to peruse it, and then will I certify you of her answer And so for this present I end with my commendations from her Majesty, written at Greenwich, the 16<sup>th</sup> of Jan, 1588.

your assured  
friend, Bridget Carre

**14. SP 12/273/65 Margaret Powell to Robert Cecil 1599?**

To the right honorable Sir Robert Cecil, knight, principal secretary to the Queen's most excellent Majesty and one of her highness' most honorable Privy Council

May it please your good honor to be advertised that this poor woman Margaret Powell first a long time served your late honor's mother, the Lady Burghley, and afterwards your right worshipful uncle Justice Cooke, deceased; also her first husband Thomas Powell served your honor's late honorable father the Lord Burghley & afterwards was employed in her Majesty's wars both by sea & land & therein spent his blood, and lost his life to the great discomfort of this poor woman and her woeful children. Now so it is (right honorable) since the death of her said husband, she married another honest man, whom it hath pleased God to visit with long and grievous sickness, whereby they have spent all that ever they had, and are like now miserably to perish. Humbly therefore she beseecheth your good honor of your godly compassion to the poor and grieved, and in regard of her husband's and hers long service as aforesaid to vouchsafe to bestow upon her your honor's charity in what measure it shall please god to move you. And she, her sick husband, and five poor children shall continually pray to God for your honor's good estate in all health and honor.