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An Edition of Lady Hester Pulter’s Book of ‘Emblemes’

Alice Eardley

Two Volumes: Volume One

Submitted for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English

University of Warwick
Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies
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Abstract

Lady Hester Pulter’s literary manuscript, comprising over one hundred poems and a prose romance, was uncovered in Leeds University Brotherton Library in 1996. Since then, there has been increasing scholarly interest in Pulter’s compositions but as yet no edition of her text has been produced. In response to this, the main focus of this thesis is an annotated edition of Pulter’s book of ‘Emblemes’ (c. 1650-60), a series of fifty-three un-illustrated emblem poems occupying a separately designated portion of the manuscript volume. The edition of Pulter’s ‘Emblemes’ is accompanied by a critical introduction to the text, comprising a biography of Pulter, a discussion of the manuscript, and two chapters of literary criticism. The biography (Chapter One) provides new evidence regarding Pulter’s date of birth and also her extended social circle, which included Archbishop James Ussher and a group of MPs involved in the peace negotiations with Charles I in 1648. The discussion of her text (Chapter Two) draws on this evidence to consider both the material and intellectual contexts within which Pulter was writing. The first of the two critical chapters (Chapter Three) responds to current studies of royalist writing and considers Pulter’s distinctively gendered, Stoic response to the English Civil Wars and Interregnum. The second critical chapter (Chapter Four) compares Pulter’s manuscript collection with George Wither’s printed edition of Emblemes (1635). It considers the way both writers support the political message of their text through the manipulation of the emblem’s formal elements and cultural associations. The central argument of this thesis is that Pulter’s manuscript volume, circulated within the confines of her home in rural Hertfordshire, was not simply a rhetorical intervention in political events but a mode of promoting and enacting a direct and practical engagement with the social and political circumstances of Interregnum England.
Introduction

For the last twenty years, scholars interested in the writing produced by early modern Englishwomen have been engaged in an extensive project of recovery and retrieval designed to bring surviving texts to light and to make them available for wider scholarly attention.¹ Throughout this period, increasing emphasis has been placed on the particular significance of manuscript, rather than print, for the production and dissemination of women’s writing.² One of the most striking figures to have emerged from this process of archival research is Lady Hester Pulter (1605-1678), whose substantial literary manuscript (MS Lt q 32) was uncovered by Mark Robson in Leeds University Brotherton library in 1996. The Brotherton purchased the volume in 1975 but it was miscataloged and, sharing a shelf-mark with another document, it remained forgotten and untouched for over twenty years. In recent years, Pulter’s manuscript has begun to attract significant scholarly attention but, with the exception of a few individual poems appearing as appendices in articles and in anthologies of women’s poetry, there is no edition of her text.³ This thesis, centred on a

¹ This new direction in the study of early modern women’s writing was formally announced in the introduction to Germaine Greer et al’s Kissing the Rod anthology, published in 1988, which, the editors stated, marked ‘the beginning of a long process of literary archaeology’, p. 31.
² See, for example, the Perdita Project database of all the manuscripts produced (i.e. written or compiled) by early modern Englishwomen (http://human.ntu.ac.uk/research/perdita/index.html) and Jill Seal Millman and Gillian Wright ed., Early Modern Women’s Manuscript Poetry (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).
scholarly edition of Pulter's emblem poetry, is intended to go some way towards addressing this issue.

A significant part of the project, presented in Chapter One, has been to uncover both Pulter's life history and the specific contexts, social, political, religious and literary, within which she wrote. Hester Ley was born in Ireland in 1605 and her life, which came to an end in 1678, spanned a large proportion of the seventeenth century. She was the daughter of Sir James Ley (1550-1628/9), later the 1st Earl of Marlborough and one of James I's privy councillors, and his first wife Mary Petty (or Pettie) (d. 1613). She was born into a family belonging to the wealthy elite of Jacobean England and it is likely that she was brought up in close proximity to the royal court. In her teens, Hester married Arthur Pulter, a gentleman from a prominent Hertfordshire family, and her manuscript suggests that she spent most of her ensuing life at his manor house, Broadfield in the parish of Cottered. Throughout her occasional and devotional verse Pulter frequently claims that she was isolated in the family home, but there is evidence to suggest that she was associating with a circle of learned and actively political

men, including her brother-in-law John Harington MP (1588/9-1654) and James Ussher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh. It is possible that these scholarly associates provided Pulter with the link to contemporary literary and intellectual culture so evident in her writing. She appears to have composed her poetry during, and often in response to, the periods of lying in associated with the births of several of her fifteen children, specifically those born during the civil upheaval of the 1640s. The manuscript volume itself was apparently compiled at various intervals between 1655 and 1661.

Comprising a sumptuously bound scribal volume and several loose sheets, Pulter’s manuscript contains over one hundred and twenty poems, including her series of fifty-three emblem poems, and an original prose romance, entitled ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’. A full physical description of the manuscript, its content and provenance, is presented in Chapter Two. Evidence provided both by the material volume and by internal textual references suggests Pulter composed her poetry and prose between the early years of the 1640s and 1665. Throughout her poetry she expresses a vehemently royalist reaction to the upheaval of the English Civil Wars and Interregnum and also documents her various physical and emotional responses to the births and deaths of several of her fifteen children. It is likely that this domestic context provided the original readership for Pulter’s manuscript, which during her lifetime may never have circulated beyond the confines of her immediate family. It would seem however that Pulter did intend her poetry to be read; she had it beautifully transcribed into a luxurious volume and she carefully checked through the transcription herself, correcting mistakes and making additions. Despite the suggestion that Pulter wanted to preserve her writing for a future audience, there is very little evidence
that, in the three hundred and fifty years between its compilation and its relatively recent rediscovery, the manuscript has actually been read.⁴

Ongoing scholarly interest in the recovery of manuscripts written or compiled by early modern women confirms that those who had their texts printed during their own lifetimes were unusual and that for women manuscript remained an especially important mode of publication.⁵ It has been argued that print publication was a particular problem for women because public exposure via the medium of print could be equated with sexual promiscuity.⁶ But, as Arthur Marotti and Harold Love have shown, manuscript circulation, with its attendant associations of elite culture and exclusive readership, continued to be an important and respectable form of textual transmission, for both men and women, throughout the seventeenth century.⁷ It was common practice for texts to be circulated among a discrete group of readers such as a coterie group, the court, the Inns of Court, a social or an extended (usually aristocratic) family setting. Within these circumstances a manuscript gained a potentially knowable, select audience far removed from the mass of socially and intellectually unsuitable readers associated with print publication. The arguments put forward by Love and Marotti have in turn been contested by recent studies, which suggest that it is not possible to equate a reluctance to publish in print with a general theory based

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⁴ At least two eighteenth-century readers have added their own annotations to the text but the generally pristine condition of the volume suggests it has been handled very little in the three and a half centuries since it was compiled. See Ross (2000) for a discussion of these annotations and the identities, pp. 161-71 and this thesis, Chapter Two.


⁶ Wendy Wall discusses and also challenges the so-called ‘stigma of print’ in *The Imprint of Gender: Authorship and Gender in the Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), especially pp. 279-81.

on gender or class. This does not entirely rule out the influence of either of these factors on the decisions made by individuals with regards to the publication of their texts, but it locates them within a more complex locus of interacting considerations. In keeping with this, Pulter’s manuscript indicates that a variety of highly specific factors, including her intended audience, the content of her writing, her social position and geographical location, each had some bearing on the way her poetry and prose came to be preserved.

There is no evidence to suggest that Pulter’s poetry was circulated, or even intended for circulation, among the kind of extended public or political network outlined by Love and Marotti. But neither can we conclude that the manuscript was, or was even intended to be, a strictly private document. As Jane Stevenson points out in her discussion of women’s manuscript writing from the sixteenth century ‘truly private writing ... normally stays private’; and, long before the present moment, has often been destroyed by its author or her descendents. In contrast, Pulter addresses several of the poems in her collection to her children, at least six of whom were still alive after the compilation of the presentation volume. It would appear therefore that the audience Pulter intended for the volume was her immediate family, and potentially their spouses and children. This albeit circumscribed context provides a significant public arena within which we can imagine Pulter’s poetry being read. In addition to this, the

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10 David Cressy has argued that in early modern England there was not the distinction between private and public that later emerged. He states for example that ‘all life was public in early modern England, or at least had public, social, or communal dimensions’, ‘Response: Private Lives, Public Performance, and Rites of Passage’ in Attending to Women in Early Modern England ed. by Betty S. Travitsky and Adele F. Seeff (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1994), pp. 187-197. For women’s experience of the porosity of public and private spheres see Lois G. Schwoerer, ‘Women’s Public Political Voice in England, 1640-1740’ in Women Writers
sumptuous nature of the physical manuscript and the evidence it provides of painstaking compilation suggest Pulter wanted to preserve her text for a potential future readership. At the very least, the volume seems intended to endure as a monument to her literary achievements.

The complex status of Pulter's manuscript with regards to its intended audience and its supposed publicity or privacy is reflected in the tone and content of the text. Pulter uses her poetry to articulate a voice and set of preoccupations, which we might suppose to be far removed from the private and domestic context in which it was written and in which she intended it to be read. Poems concerned with childbirth, those addressed to her children, and family elegies are juxtaposed with, and outnumbered by, poems concerned with politics and affairs of state. The content of these poems, specifically the concurrence of family concerns with partisan political comment, is addressed in Chapter Three. It is true that, with reference to the high political arena, the manuscript did not have the potential, as many printed or even widely circulated manuscript texts from the period had, to directly influence current affairs on the national stage.\textsuperscript{11} It did however provide a response to these affairs from a position of relative authority within a family and a community setting.

Pulter engages with the themes, preoccupations, fashions, rhetoric and forms of contemporary printed and manuscript literary culture and she presents her poetical response in a rich material volume designed to impress her authority on the reader. While the volume suggests that Pulter's immediate family provided a readily identifiable readership for her poetry, she uses individual

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\textsuperscript{11} Hero Chalmers has argued, for example, that Katherine Philips used her literary manuscripts to 'forge a "community" of royalists despite any literal geographical distance between them', in \textit{Royalist Women Writers 1650-1689} (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), p. 60.
poems to present a more general political and social message directed towards contemporary ‘gallants’, lite-ladies’, ‘country-gents’, ‘citizens-wives’, mothers, fathers, children, and more specifically the Protector and his daughters. While, during her lifetime, an extended audience may never have read her poetry, both her text and the physical volume in which it is preserved bear all the markers of a public document passing comment on and intervening in social and political affairs.

It is possible that the views Pulter expresses in her compositions may have been a significant factor in her decision not to widely circulate or to print her text. This would suggest that far from the negative restraints of gendered modesty, the motivation for Pulter’s decision to preserve her text in manuscript ‘resulted from a set of choices, made in positive terms for the most part’. This is not to suggest that this decision was entirely unaffected by gendered restrictions but that her choice enabled her to present an authorial persona and a model of her views that other media may not have allowed. One way in which manuscript seems to have been an advantage is that it enabled Pulter to be particularly forthright in her more controversial political, religious and social opinions. Politically, she is boldly outspoken in her admiration for the Stuart monarchy and also in her vehement hatred of Cromwell and his supporters. In one poem she calls for the execution of Cromwell and in another she describes him as an ibis or giant bird defecating on the nation with his ‘putred Filth’. It is possible that a body of work compiled or intended for wider publication would have been made far less inflammatory and slanderous. Instead of the voice of the decorous lady of letters put forward by Katherine Philips or that of the

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professional playwright and political commentator presented by Aphra Behn, Pulter asserts an angry but often also humorous response to contemporary social and political circumstances.

Royalist women have had a prominent role in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first century study of seventeenth-century women writers. In 1988 Catherine Gallagher noted the 'odd but indisputable fact that the seventeenth-century women whom we think of as the forerunners and founders of feminism were, almost without exception, Tories'. For Gallagher, a woman's decision to assert herself in writing was a feminist act at odds with the conservative foundations of royalist, and later Tory, ideology. It has since been demonstrated that many more Quaker and other non-conformist women than royalists published their texts, albeit in forms and genres far removed from traditional poetic models considered by Gallagher. But in the intervening years writers including Carol Barash have explored the ways in which women writers used royalist literary culture as a means of legitimising their self-expression. Barash presents a lineage of women influenced by Pulter's immediate royalist contemporary Katherine Philips, including Anne Killigrew and Jane Barker, the majority of whom had close connections with elite circles and who widely disseminated their work in manuscript and/or print. More recently, Hero

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Chalmers has explored the way in which those royalist women who printed their writing, including Philips, Margaret Cavendish and Aphra Behn, exploited royalist literary tropes, particularly those feminising the monarch’s supporters, in order to assert, legitimise and exert political influence. As Sarah Ross has demonstrated, throughout her manuscript Pulter similarly draws on popular royalist images and references in order to express a distinctively gendered response to the Civil Wars. But Pulter’s claim that she was writing within her manor house in Hertfordshire, indicates she did not have access to the elite circles considered by Barash; nor does she fit the profile of a writer with a ‘sustained public literary profile’ addressed by Chalmers. As a consequence, the way in which Pulter engages with royalist literary culture and seeks to promote her political views is very different from the practices of her analogous contemporaries. Unlike her contemporaries, Pulter derives her authoritative status, not from royalism, but from her position within her household and local community.

Research into royalist literary culture more generally has emphasised the affective and actively political nature of the printed text. Annabel Patterson, Lois Potter and the collected authors in a volume edited by Claude Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, have documented the literary codes embedded within texts

17 Ross (2005), pp. 1-14.
19 One contemporary text with which Pulter’s manuscript shares many similarities is Lady Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish’s manuscript volume ‘Poems, songs, a Pastorall and a Play’, Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. Poet. 16. This manuscript is, like Pulter’s, a handsome fair copy folio volume primarily addressed to members of the sisters’ family, including their father William, Duke of Newcastle, and responding to the hardships, including periods of confinement, associated with the Civil Wars. For a discussion of this volume see Margaret Ezell, “To Be Your Daughter in Your Pen”: The Social Functions of Literature in the Writings of Lady Elizabeth Brackley and Lady Jane Cavendish”, Huntington Library Quarterly 51 (1988), 281-296.
published by royalists during the Civil Wars and Interregnum. These texts enabled the covert expression of potentially controversial political views and played a significant part in forging and consolidating personal and political loyalties among the monarch's dispersed followers. Building on this, James Loxley has sought to counter the traditional view, put forward by Earl Miner and later Raymond Anselment, that royalist, specifically Cavalier verse, represented retirement and withdrawal from the political arena. He argues that royalist publications actively sought to assert and promote political and religious viewpoints associated with the monarch's supporters and that publication was itself 'the fulfilment of a political commitment'. More recently, scholars have begun to address, as Robert Wilcher states, the 'range and diversity of the partisan writing that was devised to meet the challenges to the authority of Charles I'. Wilcher investigates these responses within a chronological framework designed to highlight their shifting nature and to explore in detail the relationship between each text and a precise set of political circumstances. A similar approach is adopted by Timothy Raylor whose study of Sir John Mennes and James Smith highlights the potential importance of 'local studies' for our understanding of the royalist views. Moving away from attempts made to synthesize the totality of royalist literary culture, he draws attention to the need

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for a better understanding of ‘minor’ poets together with their use of neglected poetical genres. In keeping with this, Jason McElligott and David Smith have sought to further nuance our understanding of a wide range of royalist identities and to shift the focus of this research away from centralised circles of power and the political elite.25

Pulter’s text occupies a complex intermediary position in relation to this critical context; she draws on the poetical themes and modes explored by scholars such as Patterson, Potter, and Loxley but unlike her contemporaries, including Cavendish and Philips who circulated and or published their texts, Pulter uses her poetry to respond to the events of the Civil Wars and Interregnum from a circumscribed position within a manor house in rural Hertfordshire. Her manuscript, incorporating prose and poetry spanning the 1640s and 50s, therefore allows the exploration of the royalist response of a writer excluded from elite and centralised circles of political power. Where Pulter seeks to exert political influence it is not through a top-down intervention in a national public arena but from a position of relative authority within her own family, household and local community. She uses her text to educate her potential readers, specifically her children, in their social positions and responsibilities within the state. In her discussion of the early modern household and its relationship to the wider social and political environment, Erica Longfellow argues that ‘the reciprocal duties of the early modern household did not tend to confine women to a space that was devoid of political or economic significance’.26 Pulter therefore may have regarded her political activities within her family, home and local community as

having wider implications for the nation as a whole. In educating those directly within the sphere of her influence as a mother and gentlewoman Pulter is able to play her own small part in the restoration of social order. This practice is in itself in keeping with the model of social behaviour based on hierarchy, mutual care and responsibility, which she seeks to promote. While we cannot be certain that the manuscript was ever exposed to the audience implied in Pulter’s text, her poetry nonetheless performs, or presents the appearance of, didactic influence.

Throughout her manuscript Pulter encodes her social and political message within a wide range of literary allusions, many of which pertain directly to printed royalist texts of the period. But the scope of Pulter’s reference goes well beyond partisan material and her manuscript provides evidence of a sustained and sophisticated engagement with late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth literary culture in general. She draws on a diverse range of canonical and non-canonical texts ranging from contemporary favourites, such as Josuah Sylvester’s highly successful translation of Du Bartas’s Divine Days and Weekes (first published 1605), to more topical publications, including Francis Osborne’s highly controversial Advice to a Son (1656). The field of Pulter’s intellectual interest encompasses English translations of classical tomes including Pliny’s Natural History (translated by Philemon Holland, 1601) and Plutarch’s Lives (translated by Sir Thomas North, 1578); collections of sermons by authors including John Donne and Robert Sanderson; and travel writing, for example William Wood’s New England’s Prospect (1634). Pulter’s more directly political choices include John Ogilby’s royalist rewriting of Aesop’s Fables (1651) and

27 Hilda L. Smith makes a similar point about women in general in early modern England. She writes that ‘women during the seventeenth century had at once a broader and more inclusive understanding of politics than we possess today. They considered local office holding, political obligations of families among the working class, as well as voting and political rights, as constituting politics’; Smith (1998), p. 4.
the flurry of newsbook references and pamphlets associated with the controversial execution of Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle in 1648. In addition to her allusions to printed works, Pulter’s occasional poetry suggests she was engaging with trends in manuscript verse, specifically in her responses to texts such as Carew’s ‘Aske me no more’. Despite Pulter’s persistent claims of physical isolation, it is evident that her manuscript was not written in literary isolation. She engaged with the very public realm of printed discourse that commented on the political and social environment of Interregnum England and used her manuscript text as a mode of response.

Pulter’s knowledge of, and engagement with, seventeenth-century literary culture is evident not only in her interaction with the thematic and ideological content of contemporary texts but also in her adoption and manipulation of form and genre. This is particularly apparent in the separately designated book of ‘Emblemes’ (c. 1650-60), the main focus of this thesis, in which she displays a sophisticated knowledge of the form. Pulter specifically adopts the form of the spiritual emblem used by George Wither during the 1630s. A discussion of this form, its cultural connotations and its pertinence for the dissemination Pulter’s political message is provided in Chapter Four. Within the context of the manuscript as a whole, Pulter’s emblems represent nearly half of her poetical compositions; this apparently discrete collection therefore makes a significant contribution to our more general understanding of Pulter’s creative output. Her

28 For a discussion of Pulter’s poetic response to the execution of Lucas and Lisle with reference to contemporary pamphlet publications see Coussens (2006).
29 Scott Nixon explores the manuscript circulation and reception of this poem in “‘Aske me no more’ and the Manuscript Verse Miscellany”, English Literary Renaissance 29.1, (1999), 97-130. He provides a brief reference to Pulter’s poem ‘On the Same’ with its refrain ‘Tell mee noe more’ in a note on page 129.
30 Sarah Ross has noted the way in which Pulter’s emblems ‘elaborate on and codify’ many of the references in her occasional and devotional poems, (2000), p. 124.
series of fifty-three original emblem poems has its own title page and occupies folios 90r-130v of the manuscript volume. While not emblems in the strictest sense (they do not, for example, include mottoes or images) Pulter's poems adopt the conventional subject matter and structure of the form as it had developed in England by the middle of the seventeenth century. As the first known collection of original emblems to have been produced by an Englishwoman they provide a unique opportunity for the consideration of a gendered, specifically female, approach to the form.

While Pulter is the only known woman to have produced an original series of emblem poems she was not the only woman engaging with the form. Emblem books attracted a significant female readership, a factor highlighted by the printer R[oger] Daniel who in 1648 dedicated John Hall's collection to his patron's wife. Addressing Lady Dorothy Stanley he states that he is placing his emblems under her protection, adding 'Had they been high Discourses of the best Philosophy (whether Ancient or Moderne,) or choice pieces of Philologie, I should have offered them to your noble Husband Mr'. THOMAS STANLEY'. The suggestion is that a more learned and serious text would have been more appropriate for Dorothy Stanley's husband but the lighter, entertaining, and possibly also the religious nature of emblems makes them better suited to a woman. Several decades before this, towards the end of the previous century, Georgette de Montenay, a Frenchwoman, had produced *Les Emblemes ou Devises Chrestiennes* (Lyons, 1566/71), a collection she describes as either the

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31 That Pulter's emblems are extant in manuscript does not preclude them having visual images. See Sandra Sider and Barbara Obrist ed., *Bibliography of Emblematistic Manuscripts* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1997), which includes a series of photographs depicting the hand-drawn images found in many manuscript collections of emblems, p. 185 onwards (no pagination).

32 John Hall, *Emblems with Elegant Figures* (1648), 'To the most Honoured Vertuous Lady Mrs Dorothy Stanley'.

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‘first’ or the ‘most’, ie. the most pious, collection of Christian emblems.\(^{33}\) It seems that she had produced the first Calvinist edition of the devotional form.\(^{34}\) Prior to Pulter, other women in England had been engaging in their own forms of emblematic production. In 1624 the exiled Huguenot Esther Inglis produced in manuscript an English translation of de Montenay’s printed volume beautifully transcribed in a calligraphic hand together with illustrations, which she presented to Charles I.\(^{35}\) Peter Beal has suggested that ‘Esther Inglis’ calligraphic skills are basically an extension in the field of manuscripts of the traditional feminine handicraft of needlework’. She ‘literally exchanges the needle for the pen’.\(^{36}\) The form of applied, embroidered, emblematics to which Beal refers was one of the most significant ways in which women engaged with the emblem form.\(^{37}\)

In a paper circulated at the ‘Still Kissing the Rod?’ conference held in Oxford in September 2005, Peter Davidson called for greater attention to be paid to women’s engagement with forms such as the emblem.\(^{38}\) Emblematics

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\(^{33}\) In her dedicatory epistle de Montenay states:

Alciat feit des Emblemes exquis,
Lesquels voyant de plusieurs requis,
Desir me prit de commencer les miens
Lesquels je croy estre premier[s] chrestiens.

Which, literally translated states:

Alciat wrote exquisite Emblematic poetry
Which reading many times
Instilled in me the desire to write my own
That I believe to be most pious/in the Christian tradition.

I am grateful to Kerry Whitston for providing this translation. For a discussion of the date of publication for de Montenay’s text see C. N. Smith, Introductory ‘Note’ to *Georgette de Montenay, Emblemes ou Devises Chrestiennes 1571* (Menston: Scolar Press, 1973), n. p.

\(^{34}\) Smith (1973), p. 7.


\(^{38}\) Peter Davidson, ‘Still Kissing the Rod? Whither Next?’, paper circulated at the ‘Still Kissing the Rod?’ conference held in St Hilda’s College, Oxford, September 4th-8th, 2005.
saturated early modern culture and as such they represented a point of confluence between literary culture and crafts, including textiles, more conventionally associated with women. Davidson argues that the creation of emblems, both textual and textile, is ‘an activity which feeds literature and is fed by it’ and that it also ‘acts as a conduit between high and quotidian culture’. Emblems, particularly with regards to women, therefore occupy a significant place in early modern culture. As a form, they have a long tradition of association with ‘higher’ forms of artistic creativity but they also have an established and important association with female expression. As Davidson argues, there is significant evidence to suggest that women created emblematic textiles to further their own political agendas. In the volume she presented to Charles I, Esther Inglis uses emblematic representations as a means of directly communicating her political agenda to the king. Similarly, Mihoko Suzuki has demonstrated that many other women, specifically royalists, were integrating political, and frequently emblematic, motifs into their embroideries throughout the Civil War period.

This suggests that Pulter, who uses her emblems to express a vehemently royalist message, was adopting a form with a history of female political expression. Like those women reproducing and politicising emblematic representations within their textiles, Pulter adopts and rewrites the form within her literary compositions. This long association with female creativity indicates that Pulter’s use of the emblem is more than the ventriloquisation of a masculine literary tradition.

Throughout her manuscript Pulter reveals a particular sensitivity to the cultural, specifically political, associations of literary form. This is clearly

apparent, for example, in her use of the prose romance to explore issues of contract and political legitimacy in response to Cromwell’s Protectorate. During the 1650s, Pulter was not the only royalist using the romance for this purpose, suggesting she was well aware of contemporary literary fashions. Throughout her volume as a whole she adopts and responds both to the messages being put forward in printed texts and to the formal vehicles used to convey those messages. No general study of the emblem’s cultural and political connotations has yet been conducted but Pulter’s apparent interest in the appropriate use of form suggests she considered the emblem, specifically the devotional emblem, suitable for her immediate purpose. The emblem in general was traditionally associated with moral didacticism, a factor making it especially useful for the presentation of a politically nuanced social education to her children and to her readers in general. The spiritual emblem in particular had developed from the models of devotional meditation popularised by Joseph Hall during the early years of the seventeenth century. Hall developed his model of meditation as means of shoring up the individual’s spiritual integrity and virtue so that she would be equipped to fulfil her active duty within society. For Pulter, whose aim was to enact her own duty of responsibility while educating her children in theirs, the meditative form was particularly useful.

Pulter’s keen interest in and apparent desire to engage with contemporary social, religious and political dispute combined with her evidently sophisticated knowledge and understanding of mid-seventeenth-century literary, specifically


42 A discussion of Hall’s influence on the devotional emblem is provided by Bath (1994), pp. 162-65.
emblematic, culture provides the basis for the central themes and methodology of this thesis. This is in part a response to ongoing observations made by scholars working within the field of early modern women’s writing that in critical terms ‘men inhabit literature-land; women inhabit history-land’. Similarly, Susanne Woods and Margaret P. Hannay relate two familiar, generalised, assumptions made writing by early modern women: the first is that ‘women’s writings are not literary; they are "merely" historical, domestic or religious’ and the second is that ‘even literary writing by women is aesthetically inferior to comparable writing by men’. There is much to suggest that these assumptions are a product of the way in which these texts have been studied, rather than a reflection of the texts themselves. As Woods and Hannay point out ‘We still do not know enough either to make or to answer accusations like these’. They suggest that we cannot make such generalised assertions about the nature and literary quality of texts by women because, as yet, the kind of research that would make such comments possible has not yet been undertaken. Traditionally, and justifiably, texts by early modern women have been mined for the information they can provide about the lives and identities of the women who produced them. Less attention has been paid to the way in which they engage with, and potentially subvert, literary convention and form. While Pulter’s literary manuscript potentially provides the most substantial evidence both of her life and of her responses to the social

46 These concerns, expressed with regards to methodology applied to the writing produced by early modern women, have also been applied to the study of early modern texts in general; see, for example, Mark David Rasmussen, Renaissance Literature and Its Formal Engagements (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).
and political environment of Interregnum England, it is also highly significant that she chose to engage with and write in the literary genres that she did. Rather than treat her emblems as uncomplicated biographical or historical narrative this thesis primarily addresses her choice and manipulation of literary themes, images and form.

The unifying principle of this study is the notion that Pulter’s manuscript is both a historically specific and a highly complex literary document, produced by a knowing and self-conscious author. This approach guides and colours each part of the ensuing study, including Pulter’s biography; the consideration of the material text; the two discursive chapters of textual analysis; and finally but significantly the annotation of Pulter’s poetry. While Pulter’s literary manuscript provides, to date, the most substantial source of biographical information, the text has been approached with an awareness of the demands and pressures that literary genre and form place on self-presentation. This becomes particularly apparent when the manuscript evidence for Pulter’s life, explored in Chapter One, is compared with the available extraneous evidence. In itself, the physical manuscript, discussed in Chapter Two, including the sumptuous binding and the marginal annotations, suggests that Pulter was concerned with the preservation and transmission of a highly literate persona. Pulter’s apparent interest in contemporary literary culture and her evident desire to promote this persona through her text can be combined with the wider recognition that early modern women’s writing can and should be studied for its literary inheritance and innovation. More specifically, the emblem form, which provides the main focus of this thesis, is itself premised on intertextual allusion. This is explored in Chapter Three where the central themes of Pulter’s text, specifically royalist
political engagement and the family, are considered in light of contemporary analogues and literary preoccupations. Chapter Four builds on this discussion of the context of Pulter’s text to consider the ways in which she both manipulates the formal characteristics of the emblem and draws on the more general cultural significance of form in order to reinforce her social and political message. The foundation of this study is provided by the ensuing edition of Pulter’s emblems in which her textual and cultural allusions and analogues are identified and presented in detail.
Chapter One
Biography of Lady Hester Pulter (1605-1678)

Lady Hester Pulter (1605-1678) was the eighth child and six daughter of Sir James Ley, the first Earl of Marlborough (1550-1628/9) and his first wife Mary née Petty of Stoke Talmage in Oxfordshire (d. 1613).¹ Her father was descended from the Ley family of Teffont Evias in Wiltshire. He was educated at Balliol and Brasenose Colleges, Oxford, and entered, apparently on the death of his father, first New Inn and then, in February 1574, Lincoln’s Inn, where he was appointed Lent Reader in 1602.² For several years he was a member of the Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries, which flourished until about 1604.³ In December of that year he was appointed Chief Justice of the King’s Bench in Ireland returning to England, apparently at the king’s

² The Declaracion of Ley’ or ‘Ley: His Pedigree’, Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office, 366/1, f. 9r From now on referred to as the ‘Declaracion of Ley’. The foliation numbers given are my own. The manuscript is reproduced (with some transcription errors) in Raymond J. Skinner, ‘The Ley Family of Teffont Evias and Westbury and the Earldom of Marlborough’, Wiltseshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine 91 (1998), 103-112. The last birth listed is that of Ley’s daughter Phoebe who was born in May 1611; William, who was born in January 1612/13 is not listed; and the death of Pulter’s mother Mary which occurred in 1613 is added in a different hand. This suggests the manuscript was composed between May 1611 and January 1612/13. I am grateful to Dr. Lorna Haycock, Sandell Librarian and Archivist at the Wiltshire Heritage Museum, for drawing this article to my attention.
³ Sarah Ross discusses the impact Ley’s intellectual activities may have had on his daughters (2000), pp. 104-106. His published works, all posthumous, include: A Learned Treatise Concerning Wards (1642); Reports of Divers Resolutions in Law (1659); and Thomas Hearne, A Collection of Curious Discourses Written by Eminent Antiquaries, 2nd ed., 2 vols (London: W. and J. Richardson, 1771), 1, pp. 15-18, 112-123, 209-211. His works relating to Ireland can be found in James Ware, The Whole Works of Sir James Ware Concerning Ireland. Revised and Improved [by Walter Harris], vol. 2. The Antiquities of Ireland and the Writers of Ireland (Dublin: for the author, 1745), p. 336.
command, in 1608. Between 1609 and 1622 he served as governor of Lincoln’s Inn, was raised to a baronetcy in July 1619, and appointed Lord Chief Justice of England in January 1621. In December 1624, shortly before the death of James I, he was made Lord High Treasurer and appointed as a privy councillor, and in February 1626 he was made Earl of Marlborough. He was not, however, so successful with Charles I as he had been with his father and it is possible that his resistance to the more extreme courses being urged by some royal counsellors during the forced loans crisis of 1626–7 may have contributed to the king dispensing with his services in 1628. Following the death of his first wife, Pulter’s mother, James Ley married Mary (b. 1618), widow of Sir William Bower (or Bowyer), and then, on the 4th of July 1621, Jane Boteler (or Butler) (d. 1672), the daughter of John, Lord Boteler and Elizabeth, the sister of the royal favourite George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.

4 CSPI 1603-1606, p. 114.
5 CSPD 1619-1623, pp. 61, 217.
6 CSPD 1623-1625, pp. 412, 423.
8 Elizabeth Richardson dedicates her advice manual A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters (1645) to her ‘dearly beloved Daughters (of which number, I account my two sons wives, my daughters in law, the Countesse of Marlborough, and Mrs Francis Ashburnham, to be mine also)’, f. A1r. Following Ley’s death Jane married Richardson’s second son William Ashburnham, see Colin Brooks, ‘Ashburnham, William (1604/5–1679)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/739, accessed 6 May 2008]. Bingham and Couzens speculate that Ley’s marriage to Jane Boteler may have been the occasion of a family argument between Ley and his daughter Anne, but I have found no evidence of this, see Rev. P. Bingham, ‘James Ley, Earl of Marlborough’, Wiltshire Archaeological Magazine 25 (1890), pp. 86-99 (p. 97) (I am grateful to Tim Couzens for drawing my attention to this article) and Tim Couzens, Hand of Fate: The History of the Longs, Wellesleys and the Draycot Estate in Wiltshire, (Bradford on Avon: ELSP, 2001), p. 56. Ley’s will does however suggest some financial tensions between himself and his young wife; he adds a postscript to his will stipulating: ‘my will is That I my heires Executors Administrors or assignes shall not bee lyable to or chargable with any debts or incumbrances which have beene taken up or occasioned by my wife Jane Countess of Marlburgh. But that they shalbe by her discharged satisfied and paid’. PRO: Prob/11/155.
In the four centuries since James Ley’s death there has been some debate about both his character and his integrity as a statesman. Most famously, John Milton’s ‘Sonnet X. To the Lady Margaret Ley’, addressed to the earl’s daughter and Pulter’s sister, states that he maintained his office ‘unstained with gold or fee’. Composing his sonnet c. 1643, Milton asserts that ‘the sad breaking of that Parliament/Broke’ James Ley and he goes on to compare him with Isocrates ‘that old man eloquent’. Ley had died just four days after the forcible dissolution of Parliament in 1629, an event that Milton equates with the death of the Athenian orator, who starved himself to death after hearing that Philip of Macedon had defeated the coalition of Athens and Thebes at the battle of Chaeronea (338 B.C.). According to Eric Nelson, Milton ‘styles Isocrates as a defender of liberty whose love of freedom was so powerful that he refused to continue living in its absence’. Similarly, Milton suggests that James Ley was killed by the loss of liberty occasioned by Charles I’s dissolution of parliament as he embarked on what would eventually become over a decade of personal rule.

Eric Nelson goes on to argue that the seventeenth century view of Isocrates and his ‘republican’ oration Areopagiticus (the influence for Milton’s own pamphlet composed in 1643, approximately a year after this sonnet) was that he represented an ‘ideal form of republican government ... in which the wisest men ruled’. Milton styles James Ley as a wise and judicious statesman whose contribution to the

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10 All references to Milton’s text are taken from John Carey ed., John Milton: Complete Shorter Poems 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 2007). Carey notes that the poem was most probably composed in 1642.
government of the nation helped ensure a degree of collective leadership and liberty
in sharp contrast to the later rule of Charles I. His actions during the Forced Loan
crisis, when he refused to support Charles’s attempts to force judges to penalise
those who resisted making payments, provide some indication of the evidence on
which Milton’s presentation of his character may have been based.\textsuperscript{13} Central to the
Forced Loan crisis, which is considered by many historians to have been an early
factor that contributed to the eventual out break of civil war, were issues of the
monarch’s prerogative and of the relationship between crown and subject.\textsuperscript{14} In his
defence of the law and the interests of the subject against Charles’s increasing
emphasis on his own authority it is possible to see how Ley could be perceived as a
champion of liberty. Not everyone saw Ley in this way however and there were
those among his contemporaries, including the judge James Whitelocke and barrister
Henry Sherfield, who considered him to have been, particularly towards the end of
his life, both corrupt and inept.\textsuperscript{15}

Pulter refers to her father just once, in her 48\textsuperscript{th} emblem and while in many
ways her depiction of him is similar to that put forward by Milton she constructs his
political position very differently.\textsuperscript{16} Pulter’s poem is based on an emblem of a mouse
and an oyster, which had previously appeared in Geoffrey Whitney’s popular
collection \textit{A Choice of Emblems and Other Devices} (1586).\textsuperscript{17} In Whitney’s poem,
the seaside provides a naturalistic setting for the confrontation between the two
creatures but in Pulter’s poem their struggle takes place on James Ley’s dinner table

\textsuperscript{13} Cust (1985), p. 225.
\textsuperscript{14} Cust (1985), p. 208.
\textsuperscript{15} Prest (2004).
\textsuperscript{16} MS Lt q. 32, ff. 124v-25r.
\textsuperscript{17} Geoffrey Whitney, \textit{A Choice of Emblems and Other Devises} (1586), p. 128.
when ‘Royall Fergus Line did rule this Realm’ and her ‘Father had the Third place at
the Helme’. She turns Whitney’s emblem into a royalist fable with the oyster
representing Cromwell who from the ‘vulgar’ rose ‘to Raign’. The oyster, or
Cromwell, then traps the ‘noble’, ‘Spritely Mous’, or Charles I, while it scavenges
for crumbs on the dinner table. As Lord High Treasurer under James I, James Ley
was the third of the Great Officers of State, after Lord High Chancellor and Lord
President of the Council.18 In placing the actions of her poem on her father’s dinner
table, Pulter draws attention to the Stuart endorsement of a rule of hospitality
initiated by James I. During his reign, James had issued a series of pamphlets
encouraging the nobility to exercise their authority in the localities on behalf of the
king.19 Pulter presents James’s rule as a golden age of monarchical and aristocratic
partnership and this serves as a backdrop for the battle between Cromwell and
Charles I. For Pulter, James Ley was not, as he was for Milton, a model of
republican liberty, but was instead a reminder of a time when the monarch ruled the
nation with the aid of the nobility. Throughout her poetry, Pulter criticises those
nobles who have abandoned their social duties but in this poem she suggests a
degree of criticism of Charles I, whose actions unsettled his own influence amongst
the ruling classes.20 In Whitney’s poem the mouse, which is in fact killed by the
oyster, serves as a warning against greed. In contrast to the actions of Charles I and
the dissolute behaviour of the contemporary ruling classes, Pulter associates

18 As an earl he held the third highest social rank in the kingdom, behind the monarch and dukes.
19 See, for example: By the King a proclamation Commanding Noblemen, Knights and Gentlemen of
Qualitie, to Repaire to their Mansion Houses in the Countrey, to Attend their Services, and Keepe
Hospitality According to the Ancient and Laudable Custome of England (1622).
20 Again, the Forced Loan crisis provides a good example of this.
monarchical and therefore social stability with the reign of James I and with her father’s most successful time in government.

In 1590 James Ley married his first wife Mary Petty, Pulter’s mother, who was the daughter of John Petty and his wife Elizabeth of Stoke Talmage in Oxfordshire. The Pettys (or Petties) were a prominent Oxfordshire family and Pulter’s mother was the niece of George Pettie (c.1548–1589), the writer of romances. Pettie’s best-known work *A Petite Pallace of Pettie his Pleasure* (c. 1576) was reprinted several times during the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries. Mary Petty was also an aunt of Anthony à Wood (1632–1695), the well-known Oxford antiquary. There is no evidence of direct communication between Pulter and Wood but it is possible that one of Pulter’s Oxfordshire family members provided her with the anecdote forming the basis of her occasional poem ‘Of a Young lady at Oxford 1646’. James Ley and his wife had a total of eleven children: Elizabeth (b. 1590/91); Anne (b. 1593); Mary (b. 1594); Henry (1595–1638), later the second Earl of Marlborough; Dionysia (1597–1674); James (1599–1617–8), who died aged eighteen fighting for the king in the Dutch Wars; Margaret (1602/3–1652); Hester (1605–1678); Martha (1610–1610); Phoebe (b. 1611) and William (1612/3–1680), the fourth Earl of Marlborough following the death of

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21 The ‘Declaracion of Ley’ states the marriage occurred ‘upon Twosdaie, beinge the second daie of March the xxxiiith yeare of the raigne of Quene Elizabeth, Anno dni 1590’, f. 2r. But in *Wiltshire Visitation Pedigrees, 1623* their marriage is dated ‘2 of June 1590’, St. George and Lennard (1954), p. 115.
23 For the link between Mary Petty and Wood see A. Clark ed., *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, 5 vols (1891-1900), I, pp. 32-37. I have not found any evidence of a direct or personal link between Pulter and Wood.
24 MS Lt q 32, ff. 62v-64r. The poem describes the suicide of a young woman whose suitor was killed fighting for the king in the Civil Wars. I have found no other references to this story.
Henry's son James. Following William's death in 1679 both the baronetage and the earldom became extinct.

To date, internal evidence from Pulter's manuscript has been used to deduce her date of birth, but a manuscript that has recently come to light in the Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office entitled 'The Declaracion of Ley, or Ley: His Pedigree', provides a more reliable source for this information. Before considering the information provided by this document it is worth briefly reviewing the contradictory evidence supplied by Pulter's literary manuscript. On a loose sheet accompanying the manuscript volume, a poem appearing in the hand of an eighteenth-century annotator bears the title: 'Made when my spirits were sunk very low with sickness and sorrow. may 1667. I being seventy one years old'. This information is repeated in a second eighteenth-century annotator's hand on the title page of the manuscript. The inscription suggests Pulter was born in 1595 and it provides the basis for her date of birth as it appears in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. There are however several problems with this date, and the manuscript provides evidence of several alternative possibilities. One poem indicating 1595 may not be an accurate date for Pulter's birth is 'Universall dissolution, made when I was with Child of my 15th Child \my sonne John/ I being

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25 Burke and Burke (1844), p. 313. Birth dates supplied by the 'Declaracion of Ley', ff. 2r-v. William, whose birth is not recorded in the 'Declaracion of Ley' was baptised in Westbury during March 1612/3, see Westbury Parish register, reproduced in Rev. Francis J. Poynton, Memoranda, Historical and Genealogical Relating to The Parish of Kelston, In the County of Somerset (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1885), part IV, p. 35.


27 MS Lt q 32, f. 81v.

28 For a discussion of these hands see Chapter Two.

29 Robson (2004).
as every one thought in a Consumption 1648'. 30 This title, which appears in the scribal hand, suggests that, if Pulter had been born in 1595, she was aged 53 when she gave birth to her youngest son and it seems unlikely that this was the case. The manuscript also provides some positive evidence for an alternative date of birth. Mourning the Irish Rebellion in 1641, and possibly also thinking of Cromwell's military action their in the aftermath of the Civil Wars, Pulter remembers 'sweete Hibernie where \\ first had life'. 31 James Ley took up his official appointment in Ireland in December 1604 and he returned to England by October 1608. This suggests Pulter was born in or around Dublin during this time. More specific information is provided by a poem entitled 'Made when I was sick 1647' in which Pulter mourns her soul's 'forty years acquaintance' with her flesh. This implies, as Sarah Ross has noted, that she was born in 1607. 32

The 'Declaracion of Ley' composed, or commissioned, by Pulter's father, James Ley (c.1611) confirms Sarah Ross's estimate that Pulter was born in Ireland between 1604 and 1608. Ley's statement, worth quoting in full, is:

Hester, the daughter of the said Sir James Ley and the Lady Mary, his wief, was borne at St. Thomas Court, neere Dublin, in the realme of Ireland, uppon Saturdaie beinge the [viii]th daie of June in the yeare of the raigne of King James of England and Ireland the third, and of Scotland the xxxviiith Anno dmi. 1605, betwene the houres of six and seven of the clock in the morninge, and was baptised in the parish church of St. Katherins in Thomas Streete, neare Dublin, uppon Sondaie beinge the [xix] daie of June then next followinge. The godfather Sir William Usher, Kt. Clerk of the Counsell there. The godmothers Hester, the wief of Sir Oliver Lambert, Kt., one of the Privye Counsell there, and Ann the wief of Sir Henry Ffolliot, Kt., Govnor of Ballishanon. Baptized by Edward East parson of the parish of St. Katherins. 33

30 MS Lt q 32, f. 10v.
31 MS Lt q 32, f. 12v.
32 MS Lt q 32, f. 48r. Sarah Ross discusses the manuscript evidence for Pulter's birth concluding she was most probably born in 1607, Ross (2000), pp. 102-03.
Section of Wiltsire and Swindon Record Office 366/1 'The Declaration of Ley, or Ley: His Pedigree' showing date of birth for Lady Hester Puller.
Again, the evidence is a little unclear; Raymond Skinner, in his transcription of the manuscript, presents the numerical year of Pulter's birth as '1608 [?]’ suggesting an alternative to my reading of the date as 1605.\(^{34}\) Comparisons with other numbers appearing elsewhere in the manuscript, in the same scribal hand, lend weight to a reading of the date as 1605.\(^{35}\) This interpretation is also supported by the years given in relation to James's reign as king in both Scotland and England, which both point to 1605 rather than 1608. The third year of James's rule in England and Ireland, begun in March 1603, was 1605-6 and the 38\(^{th}\) year of James's rule in Scotland, begun in July 1567, was 1604-5. Pulter's birthday in June falls towards the beginning of the third year of James's reign in England and near to end of his 38\(^{th}\) year of rule in Scotland. In addition to the year, the precise day of Pulter's birth is also a little unclear. My reading of the manuscript suggests she was born on Saturday the 8\(^{th}\) June. However, a comparison with a contemporary calendar reveals that in 1605, the 8\(^{th}\) of June did not fall on a Saturday. Both Raymond Skinner and I have read the day of her baptism as Sunday 19\(^{th}\) June. The statement that Pulter was baptized on the Sunday 'the next following' suggests, according to the OED, that she was baptized the day immediately after her birth. A comparison with a contemporary calendar reveals that June the 19\(^{th}\) did in fact fall on a Sunday that year. This raises the possibility that the '8\(^{th}\) of June' is a misreading or transcription error and that it should in fact be the '18\(^{th}\)'. This gives us the 18\(^{th}\) June 1605 as Pulter's date of birth.


\(^{35}\) The number 8 occurs with a distinctive flat top. The apparent diagonal cross-bars suggesting that 5 is an 8 may have been made by the scribe not lifting his pen a sufficient distance from the page in making the transition from the preceding number. See top left hand corner of illustration for an example.
The ‘Declaracion of Ley’, apparently compiled at the behest of Pulter’s father, provides a far more reliable indication of her date of birth than the note in the hand of the eighteenth century annotator and raises further questions about the dates provided in the manuscript. It is possible that in the title ‘Made when my spirits were sunk very low with sickness and sorrow. may 1667. I being seventy one years old’ either the year of the poem’s composition or Pulter’s age is given incorrectly. Pulter may have composed the poem in 1676-7 when she would have been 71 years old or, and this seems more likely given the dates of the other poems, she composed the poem in May 1667 when approaching her sixty-second birthday. It is possible that ‘seventy one’ is an error on the part of the annotator. The apparent discrepancy between the date given in the ‘Declaracion of Ley’ and that provided by Pulter’s poem ‘Made when I was sick 1647’, which implies she was born in 1607, can perhaps be explained by the demands of poetical scansion: ‘forty’ which provides a rough approximation for the length of her life reads much better than ‘forty-one’ or ‘forty two’, which would have provided a more accurate reading of the year of her birth.

The ‘Declaration of Ley’ also states that Pulter was baptized in St Katherine’s parish church near Dublin on Sunday the week after her birth. Her three Godparents, Sir William Usher, Hester Lambert and Ann Folliot, were all prominent members of the Protestant ruling elite in Dublin. Sir William Usher of Donnybrook, Clerk of the Council (b. 1568) was knighted by Sir George Cary on the 25th July 1603.36 Sir William Usher and Archbishop James Ussher, whom Pulter met in 1652,

were distant cousins. Sir William and the husbands of both Pulter’s Godmothers, Sir Oliver Lambert Kt. and Sir Henry Folliott Kt, all worked closely with James Ley during his time in Ireland. Pulter’s Godmother Hester Lambert was the daughter of Sir William Fleetwood and Jane, daughter of William Clifton of Brimpton Somerset, of Cranford in Middlesex. She died on the 12th March 1639 and was buried at St. Patrick’s in Dublin. Pulter’s second Godmother, Anne Folliot was the daughter of Sir William Strode, of Stoke-Under-Hampden in Somerset. Sir Henry Folliott died on the 10th November 1622 and before 1627 his widow married Robert (Dillon) 2nd earl of Roscommon. The earl died on the 27th August 1642 and the Countess of Roscommon lived as a widow until c.1652.

The Ley family left Ireland in 1608 and returned to England where, in October of that year, James Ley was appointed attorney general of wards. It seems likely that at this point the family were resident at Heywood in Wiltshire. Pulter’s sister Elizabeth married Maurice Carent of Toomer, Somerset in Westbury parish church, Wiltshire in January 1608/9. That same year, George Webbe (b. 1581, d. in or before 1642), vicar of the nearby Church of Steeple Ashton, published a

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40 C[ockayne], (1913), III, p. 543.

41 Bingham (1890), p. 92. Between 1590 and 1621 Ley acquired extensive lands in Westbury, Wiltshire and at some point he built a new residence at Heywood, see Elizabeth Crittall ed., The Victoria County History of Wiltshire, (London: Oxford University Press for The Institute of Historical Research, 1965), VIII, p. 162. The manor house has now been converted into a luxury office block.

42 ‘Declaracion of Ley’, f.3v.
sermon entitled *God's Controversy with England* (1609) dedicated to 'the Right worshipful Sir James Ley knight, Atturnie of his Majesties Court of Wards and Liveries. And to the vertuous and truly religious ladie his wife'. He states that Ley 'is lately seased with the patronage of that church to which as Pastor, though unworthy I owe my self and only service'. This suggests that as a young child Pulter had some connection with Webbe, who was later promoted by William Laud. He also kept a grammar school at Steeple Ashton and it is possible that Pulter's brothers received their education there. In his dedication Webbe goes on to address Mary Ley in particular thanking her for 'that great encouragement which you have given me and many others my fellow brethren in our Ministrie heere in this part of our country' and stating that she has made her self and her family 'a worthie paterne and example of all Christian duties'. He presents Pulter's mother as a particularly pious woman, both active and influential in the area's religious community.

By 1610 it seems the family were either living in London or dividing their time between Westbury and London. During this time James Ley was serving a term as treasurer of Lincoln's Inn (1609-10) and he also sat as MP for Westbury (1609-10). It was during this period that Pulter's mother Mary gave birth to Pulter's sister Martha who was born at St Brydes near London on the 5th May, 1610. She died just five months later on the 12th of October and was buried in the parish church of

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45 Webbe, (1609), ff. A5v-A6r.
47 'Declaracion of Ley'.
St. Mary Overheyes in Southwark. The family were still resident in London on the 5th May 1611 when Mary Ley gave birth to Pulte’s sister Phoebe at Grayfriars called Christ Church in London. By October 1613, the family had moved to Beckington in Somerset where Mary Ley died. She was buried in the Parish Church in Westbury Wiltshire where there now stands an impressive monument both to her and to James Ley.

A Greek and Latin ‘Epicede to Mary Ley’, composed in response to her death, is extant in the British Library. The author is listed as ‘P Kynninmond’ about whom very little is known except that James Ley purchased property from him in Beckington, Somerset during the early years of the seventeenth century. His elegy is in the form of an epicede or epicedium, which traditionally has a tripartite, dialogic structure praising the dead, lamenting their loss and offering consolation to their loved ones. These compositions were often read over the deceased before burial and while we cannot be certain that this actually occurred, the poem enacts this process. It opens with the statement that ‘In this grave rests the excellent mistress Marta’ and goes on to describe her as ‘prosperous when alive’ and ‘happy in her descendents’. She is then compared with ‘Dorcas’, ‘Lydia’, ‘Priscilla’, and ‘Lois’, all biblical women associated respectively with ‘alms’, ‘piety’, ‘intellect’ and

48 Her death is recorded on a loose sheet accompanying the ‘Declaracion of Ley’, in a different hand from the main text. These details are confirmed by the Beckington Parish Registers.
49 ‘Declaracion of Ley’.
50 BL Add 46376 B, f.1. I am very grateful to Dr Demmy Verbeke for providing a translation of this text. For the full text and translation see Alice Eardley and Demmy Verbeke, ‘Epicede for Lady Mary Ley’, Lias:Sources and Documents Relating to the Early Modern History of Ideas (Forthcoming 2008).
51 Wiltshire and Swindon Record Office 967/4.
‘faith’. More generally they are all women credited with communicating their faith to those around them, specifically their families. Lydia was renowned for being a the first Christian convert in Europe who also had her entire family baptised; Priscilla is credited with spreading the news of Christ to those in Ephesus; and Lois is commended for her faith as it is evident in the actions of her grandson Timothy. Dorcas is similarly invoked for the good works and charity she brought to her neighbours. More specifically, after she died she was so badly mourned by the people she had helped that she was brought back to life. These allusions reinforce the picture presented of Mary Ley in Webbe’s sermon in which her piety is demonstrated by her actions in relation to those around her.

The significance of Mary’s role within her family and community is reinforced in the section of the elegy enacting her address to those assembled in the church for her funeral. Firstly she addresses her husband whom she commands not to cry because ‘He who took me away from you shall lead me to be his wife in justice and faith and pious judgment’ then she turns to her children and tells them ‘I am still in your midst’. She then addresses her kinsmen telling them not to grieve because now ‘Christ will be a friend to me’ and finally she speaks to the priest and people reminding them that she has ‘joined the people of God’. Mary’s comforting words are extended to her family but also to those in the wider community amongst whom, while alive, she held an actively pious social position. While in many ways these sentiments are highly conventional they provide some sense of the general character of Pulter’s mother, who died when Pulter was only eight years old. They

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54 See Acts 16.14-40; Acts 18. 26; and 2 Timothy 1. 5
55 See Acts 9.36-41.
suggest that she was particularly careful to observe her social responsibilities as a member of the aristocratic elite in providing both physical and spiritual assistance to those in need within the local community. She also fulfilled her responsibilities as a good Protestant mother in providing a spiritual example and education.

Following Mary Ley’s death, Pulter’s sisters Anne and Mary were married, in 1614 and 1615 respectively, in the parish church of Beckington. They would both have been seventeen years old when they married. Pulter’s brother Henry was married in 1616 and it is possible that following the death of their mother James Ley wanted to ensure that his children, especially his daughters, were settled and provided for. It is possible that Pulter’s own marriage took place sometime between June 1618 and June 1619. In ‘Alitheas Pearl’, a poem presenting a loosely biographical narrative, she states that of the total number of years she has been alive she has spent ‘Thirteen a Mayd, and Thirtie three a Wife’. As Pulter was born in 1605, this would suggest that she was married after her thirteenth birthday in June 1618 and before her fourteenth birthday in June 1619. She then adds that she was married ‘To a most Lovly Youth and Noblely Born’ and that ‘Vertue and Beuty did

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56 ‘Declaration of Ley’, on loose sheet accompanying the manuscript, in a different hand from the main text. These details are confirmed by the Beckington Parish Registers, which also state that Anne was married in January 1614, while Mary married on Christmas Day 1615.

57 The DNB states that the Pulters married in 1623 but I have found no evidence for this, Mark Robson, ‘Pulter, Lady Hester (1595/6–1678)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68094, accessed 6 May 2008]. The marriage is however listed in Wiltshire Visitation Pedigrees, 1623 confirming it had taken place prior to 1623, St. George and Lennard (1954).

58 MS Lt q 32, f. 51r.

59 Given the poetical license Pulter apparently took when referring to her age in a previously mentioned poem, some caution has to be adopted with regards to this date.
his youth adorn'.\textsuperscript{60} Her husband was Arthur Pulter (1603-1689), son of Lytton Pulter (1575–1626) and Penelope Capel (1581–1611) of Hadham Hall, Hertfordshire.\textsuperscript{61}

Given Pulter's young age at the time of her marriage it is not surprising that the couple's first child was not born until 1625. In her manuscript she states that between 1625 and 1648 she had a total of fifteen children but the extraneous evidence does not support this.\textsuperscript{62} The births of only ten children are recorded in the Cottered and Great Wymondley parish registers: Jane (1625-45), James (1627-59), Margaret (1629-86), Hester (1630-32), Penelope (1633-55), William (1634-39), Ann (1635-66), Arthur (1636-80), Edward (1638-65) and Elizabeth (1641-42).\textsuperscript{63} A daughter called Mary, possibly born before Jane, was buried in 1631 and there is also evidence of a Mary (bu. 1674) who married William Capel in 1668 suggesting the Pulters had two children with that name.\textsuperscript{64} The burial of another son Charles is recorded in the Cottered parish register in January 1640 and in two of her poems

\textsuperscript{60} MS Lt q 32, f. 65r.  
\textsuperscript{61} Arthur was born at Hadham Hall and baptised at Little Hadham on the 21\textsuperscript{st} August 1603, see Robert Clutterbuck, \textit{The History and Antiquities of the County of Hertford}, 3 vols (London: Nichols, Son, and Bentley, 1815-1827), III, p. 518.  
\textsuperscript{62} Pulter refers to her son John as her 15th child in 'Universall dissolution, made when I was with Child of my 15th Child 'my sonne John' I being as every one thought in a Consumption 1648', f. 10v, and also 'This was written 1648, when I Lay Inn, with my Son John, beeing my 15 Child', MS Lt q 32, ff 67v.  
\textsuperscript{63} Dates of death supplied by Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 518. Except for Penelope, whose death is recorded in Pulter's manuscript, and Ann, whose burial is recorded in the Cottered Parish register. The majority of Pulter's children were baptised at Cottered church except for Ann (1635), Arthur (1636), and Edward (1638), who were baptised at Great Wymondley. Great Wymondley church is some distance from Broadfield suggesting Pulter was living away from home when these children were born. Several children of Richard Biggs, possibly the husband of Pulter's sister Phoebe, were baptised around the same time suggesting that they were also living nearby. Pulter may have staying with them during her pregnancies.  
\textsuperscript{64} It is possible that the second Mary, who married in 1668, was born during the seven-year gap between Elizabeth's birth in 1641 and John's birth in 1648. This would mean that she was married while in her twenties. The first Mary is listed as the Pulters' oldest child in \textit{Visitations of Hertfordshire 1634} (1886), p. 85. Henry Chauncy includes a reference to the second Mary who 'mar. William Capel of Stanton in Suffolk, Esq.', \textit{The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire} 2 vols (Dorking: Kohler and Coombes, 1975), I, p. 146. Her death listed in Cottered parish register. The date of her marriage is recorded in Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 518. Chauncy lists twelve children; he excludes Jane and refers to only one Mary, (1975), I, p. 146.
Pulter describes herself as being confined with her son John who was born in 1648 and buried in 1677.\textsuperscript{65} Clutterbuck lists an additional son Jacob (b. 1627), who would have been James's twin, but it seems likely that this is a mistake and is in fact a reference to the same child.\textsuperscript{66} Excluding Jacob, this gives a total of fourteen children and it is possible, as Sarah Ross notes, that either the parish registers are incomplete, that the children were baptized elsewhere, or that Pulter included miscarriages in her tally.\textsuperscript{67}

Of the Pulters' numerous children only one son went on to marry. This was Arthur who married Amy daughter to William Gumbleton, but they both died without having any children.\textsuperscript{68} Of the Pulters' daughters, Penelope married Sir Thomas Longville (possibly Longueville) Kt; of Hertfordshire; Ann married Thomas Fairclough of Western in Hertfordshire and Mary married William Capel esq., of Stanton in County Suffolk.\textsuperscript{69} Chauncy notes that the majority of Pulter's children, including Arthur and Penelope who both married, died without having offspring of their own. No information is provided for Ann and Mary suggesting they may have gone on to have children. The Pulters' daughter Margaret (1629-1686) who married John Forester, a London merchant, had a son named James (1660-1696). He married Martha, the third daughter of Sir Henry Chauncy of Yardley Bury, whose \textit{The}

\textsuperscript{65} For a full discussion of the evidence relating to the births and deaths of Pulter children see Ross (2000), pp. 106-7.

\textsuperscript{66} Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 518. Clutterbuck lists fifteen children including Jacob, Jane and both Marys. Jacob and James are both in the Cottered register but the two entries have been entered by different people. The entry for Jacob is in Latin while the entry for James is in English suggesting that they are in fact the same person. A later annotator has added the note 'the same person as last entered' underneath the entry for James.


\textsuperscript{68} See Chauncy (1975), I, p. 146; Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 518.

\textsuperscript{69} Recorded as 'Fair-Sough', in Chauncy (1975), I, p. 146; also Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 518. Recorded as 'Langvill', in Chauncy (1975), I, p. 146; Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 518.
Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire (1700) provides substantial evidence about
the Pulter family, and was the sole heir the to family estate.\textsuperscript{70}

Pulter’s husband Arthur came from a prominent Hertfordshire family of
landed gentry who had lived in the country for several centuries and who had close
ties with other important families in the area, including the Capels of Hadham Hall.
Twenty-two-year-old Arthur is the first named benefactor of his grandfather’s
Edward’s will.\textsuperscript{71} He does not receive the glowing endearments liberally bestowed on
his dead brother Henry who Edward describes as ‘my most towardly, wittie, and
well featured \and/ favoured and entirely beloved grandsoone’ but neither does he
suffer the damnation afforded his uncle Edward who by some unspecified ‘foolish
mad and fantastick practises’ has ‘disabled and disinherited’ his own son ‘Violent
also known as Perregrine’ ‘of his birth right of the kingdome of England and soe
made [him] a poore beggerly Orphant in the said kingdome’.\textsuperscript{72} Instead, Edward
Pulter writes:

\begin{quote}
I give first all my bookes and [Noates] and written papers of learning and
Accompts whatsoever and wheresoever to Arthur Pulter my Grandsone and
heire Together withall Tymber workes wherein they doe lye and be, and my
great Chest Barred with Iron Hoopes.
\end{quote}

That they are the first named item in his will, suggests Edward Pulter valued his
‘bookes and Noates and written papers of learning’ highly. He apparently considered
Arthur the most suitable heir for such material implying that Pulter’s husband had a
particular interest in or aptitude for learning.

\textsuperscript{70} Forester’s marriage to Martha Chauncey is listed in the \textit{VCH}, III, p. 211.
\textsuperscript{71} PRO: prob/11/149 (1625).
\textsuperscript{72} This is possibly the ‘Unkle Edw P’ to whom Pulter refers in her 20\textsuperscript{th} emblem where she suggests he
was living near Amsterdam.
Arthur matriculated at Queen's College Cambridge in 1619, entered Lincoln's Inn on May 15, 1620 and went on to become sheriff of Hertfordshire in 1641. Chauncy states:

This Arthur was for some time a Justice of the Peace, a Captain in the Militia, and High Sheriff for this County; but shortly after the breaking forth of the late civil War, [he] declin'd all publick Imployment, liv'd a retir'd Life, and thro' the Importunity of his Wife, began to build a very fair House of Brick upon this Manner, but dying, he never finish'd it.

Chauncy suggests that at the onset of civil war Arthur retired from public duty and lived in seclusion in the country. But the Quarter Sessions Minute Book for 1642 indicates that Arthur was still holding his position in May. An entry for the 25th of that month states:

Robert Parker and Henry Parker, both of Bushey, yeomen, arrested Jeremiah Mawdy, of the same, yeoman, under the warrant of Arthur Pulter, esquire, sheriff.

This event was recorded at the sessions meeting in Hertford held on the 3rd October that year when it would seem Arthur was still sheriff. A later entry referring to the same incident but recorded on July 10th 1643 refers to ‘Arthur Pulter, esquire, then sheriff’ (my italics). This suggests Arthur stopped being sheriff between October 1642 and July 1643. In her study of the role of the sheriff within the early modern community, Irene Gladwin states that when civil war became inevitable ‘sheriffs in

74 Chauncy (1975), I, p. 145.
76 Chauncy (1975), I, p. 49. Chauncy lists Arthur as sheriff of Hertfordshire, 1641 The entry next to 1642 reads ‘No Sheriff because of the Wars’, Chauncy (1975), I, p. 49. Irene Gladwin states that Charles I chose a new set of Sheriffs for 1642 shortly after the Grand Remonstrance in 1641 and later adds that the fact there is no official record of sheriffs being appointed in 1642 is not a reliable indication that there were none; *The Sheriff: The Man and his Office* (London: Gollanz, 1974), pp. 324-5.
office in the summer of 1642 were among the very first who had to declare their allegiance'. 77 It is possible therefore that Arthur’s retirement was a signal of his refusal to provide active allegiance to Parliament. However, local gentlemen generally held the unwelcome position of sheriff for a year a time and there is no concrete evidence to suggest that Arthur did not fulfil this duty. 78

In 1645/6 Arthur was once again recommended for public office. The records cite a ‘great want of Justices within the County’ and Arthur is listed among the ‘fitting gentlemen to be put into the commission of peace for the County’. The counsel then calls upon

the Knights and Burgesses of Parliament chosen for this County to be a means to the High Court of Parliament for the procuring of the said gentlemen to be put into commission accordingly. 79

There is no record to indicate that this bid was successful and it is possible that it was at this point that Arthur ‘declin’d all publick Imployment’. Drawing his conclusions from Chauncy, the Hertfordshire historian Reginald Hine attributes Arthur’s actions to the resolution that ‘what his forefathers had slowly and thriftily acquired should not be seized or sequestrated, nor should his silver or plate of pewter be melted down for the king’. 80 Both writers suggest Arthur maintained a neutral position during the Civil Wars, and this would explain how he managed to hold on to his estates, but there is evidence to suggest otherwise. During the 1650s

79 Le Hardy (1928), p. 326.
80 Reginald L. Hine, ‘Portrait of an English Country Squire Based on the Household Account Book of James Forester of Broadfield Hall 1689-96’ in Relics of an Un-Common Attorney (London: Dent, 1951) p. 3. If this was Arthur’s intention then it proved successful; his estates were not compounded, see Mary Anne Everett Green ed., Calendar for the Proceedings of the Committee of Compounding, 1643-1660 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1889-1892).
Arthur Pulter was patron to the Cottered parish rector Thomas Gardiner who was eventually ejected from his position in 1662 for refusing to read the common prayer.\(^8^1\) In 1646 he had signed the Petition of Hertfordshire Ministers, which criticised the current climate of religious disorder and called for government according to the Solemn League and Covenant.\(^8^2\) This provides some indication that he was a Presbyterian and potentially more radical in his religious views than Pulter. As Sarah Ross has argued, this may be an indicator of some religious and political differences between Arthur and his wife.\(^8^3\)

Both Pulter’s occasional devotional poems, produced during the 1640s, and her emblem poems, written during the 1650s, provide some indication of her adherence to, and mourning for, Charles I’s Church of England. In a poem entitled ‘On the Same’ (in reference to the previous poem in the manuscript entitled ‘On the Horrid Murther of that incomparable Prince, King Charles the First’), she writes:

\begin{quote}
Just as our martyrd king his spirit fled  
The spouse of Christ hung down her Virgin head  
And sighing said my Faiths defender's Dead\(^8^4\)
\end{quote}

Christ’s spouse, the church, mourns the loss of the king, the leader of the Protestant church in England. Pulter’s poem suggests that Charles, God’s representative on earth, is the only true leader of the church. Writing later in her emblem poems Pulter attacks Cromwell for seizing both the ‘crown and the mitre’. This suggests that a significant part of her critique is the control Cromwell supposedly seized over both

\(^8^2\) Matthews (1934), pp. 217, lxxii.  
\(^8^3\) See Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 520; Ross (2000), p. 145; and Hine (1951), p. 35.  
\(^8^4\) MS Lt q 32, f. 34r.
the state and religion. While Cromwell was of course an Independent who promoted religious autonomy it is possible that from Pulter’s perspective he, and those he represented, appeared to have wrested religious authority away from the king, thereby seizing some measure of control in determining its future. The controversial religious climate of the period suggests that Pulter views Charles to be the specific defender of a very specific kind of church and that she supported the Caroline church of the 1630s. Her poem concludes with lines in which the church receives a response. Pulter writes:

At which a voice from Heaven said weep noe more
Nor my Heroick Champions Death Deplore
A second Charles shall all thy Joyes restore

In her anticipation of the restoration of Charles II, Pulter also hopes for the restoration of the model of devotion she associates with his father. It is possible that she preferred the Laudian style of religious devotion set out by Robert Sanderson in the introduction to Twenty Sermons Formerly Preached (1656), a text that Pulter specifically states she was reading.85

In keeping with her likely conformity to the Laudian Church of England, in her emblem poems Pulter is highly critical of the sacrilege she attributes to the Puritan army. Her 36th emblem opens with a comparison of ‘innocent Doves’ and ‘swine’. She argues that some people are like doves in that they embrace ‘sacred truths’ in the same way that these birds ‘swallow Orient Pearls like Peas’. In contrast she advises her readers to

85 In his Preface, Sanderson spends several pages defending ceremony and episcopacy and criticising those ‘Anti-ceremonians’ whose insistence on strictly adhering to the word of the Bible is the ‘root of bitternesse, whose stem in processe of time hath brought forth all these numerous branches of Sects and Heresies, wherewith this sinful Nation is now so much pestered’, Twenty Sermons Formerly Preached (1656), sig. A4v.
...shun those people which are like those swine
Which at Gods word and Ministers repine
Throw them the choicest Orient Pearls you have
They'll trample'm in the dirt and Ramp and Rave

She contrasts those who accept these pearls with atheists who don’t. This comparison develops into a consideration of ‘our Janiazaries’ which ‘Po'les prophan’d/Making the Church a stable and a stews’. She is referring to the Puritan army who, during the Civil Wars, desecrated churches, including St Paul’s in London, which was then used as a market place.  

Pulter notes that:

The greatest Mirackle our saviour wrought
Was when hee scourg'd out those which Sould and bought.

In opposition to the prevailing Puritanism of the 1650s, she holds the church building sacred and suggests that Christ’s actions, as they are recounted in the Bible, in scripture support this view. In her reference to the army she is making a specifically political statement about the changes being brought about within the English church.

Hester Pulter died in 1678 but Arthur did not spend the remaining eleven years of his life living alone. When she composed her will in 1686, Arthur’s sister Margaret Newman, who had married Richard Newman, reverend of Datchworth, was living at Broadfield.  

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86 In his elegy to Charles I, Henry King bemoans that ‘Pauls and Lincoln are to Stables turn’d’ and that ‘at God’s Table you might Horses see/By (those more Beasts) their Riders manger’d be’ (EEBO: 1640; ESTC: 1660?), p. 10. Similarly, Henry Foulis notes that the fact that ‘St. Pauls, by the wicked reformers was converted into a stable is not unknown to its Neighbours, which iniquities and such like occasioned the Saying, That we had now a thorough Reformation in England, since our horses also went to Church’, The History of the Wicked Plots and Conspiracies of our Pretended Saints (1662) p. 138. He goes on to state that in Westminster Abbey soldiers were ‘keeping their whores in the Church, and lying with them upon the very Altar it self’, p. 138.

87 Chauncy (1975), 1, p. 146. Margaret Newman’s will: PRO: prob/11/387. Richard Newman was driven from his living at Datchworth by the Civil Wars. He went to Oxford to be near the king and was restored 1660-3, A.G. Matthews, Walker Revised: Being a Revision of John Walker’s Sufferings
Broadfield and is possible that she was there before Hester's death. Margaret’s will suggests that several of the Pulters’ relatives were living nearby; she names her goddaughter Mary Capell, who was possibly the daughter of the Pulters’ daughter Mary who had married William Capell. Newman also mentions her ‘deare Margaret Forester’, who is likely to be the Pulters’ daughter Margaret who married James Forester, and who died sometime during that year. It is conceivable that as the direct heirs to Arthur’s estate, Margaret and her husband James Forester were also living at Broadfield with him. This would apparently be confirmed by the inscription in the manuscript referring to a wet nurse needed for their son James, who later inherited the estate from his grandfather. Finally, Margaret Newman names her ‘very loving good brother Arthur Pulter’ as the principle heir to her estate.

In his own will, Arthur pays particular attention to his servants ensuring that three of them are well taken care of after his death. He mentions only one friend stating ‘Then I give unto my loving Friend John [Sykes] of Cottered aforesaid Clerke the summe of Twenty pounds’. John Sykes was appointed Cottered parish rector in February 1681, and Arthur Pulter was his patron. The suggestion this provides of a valued friendship between Arthur and the minister may be an indication of the former’s religiosities. Arthur’s will concludes with the statement:

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*of the Clergy during the Grand Rebellion 1642-60* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), p. 201. His religious sympathies may therefore have been more in keeping with Pulter’s than those of her husband and the Presbyterian minister of her nearest church.

88 Chauncy does not list any children for this couple but this does not mean they did not have any (1975), I, p. 146. However, Clutterbuck notes that they both died ‘s.p.’, (1815-1827), III, p. 518.

89 MS Lt q 32, f. 2r (reversed).

90 PRO: prob/I 1/398. He also left £40 to the county for apprenticing children, which in 1912 was worth £43 1s. 4d. yearly, *VCH*, III, p. 232.

finally all the rest and residue of my moneys moveables goods and chattels whatsoever I doe hereby give devise and bequeath unto my Grandson James Forester Gent.

This apparent lack of external friends and associates could be attributed to his extreme old age (he was 91 when he died) and to the sad fact that he out-lived the majority of his immediate family, including his wife and all fifteen of their children.

Hine provides an account of the expenses James Forester incurred so that he might bury his grandfather 'seemlie and decentlie'.\(^\text{92}\) As a lasting memorial to his ancestors Forester then had a clock erected in the belfry of Cottered church.\(^\text{93}\)

The original house to which, according to Chauncy, Arthur devoted so much of his time and attention, and within which Pulter apparently composed so much of her poetry, no longer exists but surviving pictures of Broadfield manor reveal an impressively grand four-story mansion with a sweeping drive and expansive gardens.\(^\text{94}\) J.T Smith describes the house as 'the only manor in the parish of that name' and notes that:

> the superior status of Broadfield, Cottered, as the house of one of the richer gentlemen of the county, is expressed externally by virtue of the first-floor windows being larger than the ground-floor ones. They must denote and upstairs dining room, a suite of important rooms to go with it and a staircase of appropriate grandeur'.\(^\text{95}\)

Broadfield was evidently an imposing presence in the Hertfordshire landscape impressing on passers-by the wealth and status of its occupants. In keeping with its

\(^\text{92}\) Hine (1951), p. 4.
external appearance, the inside of the manor would have provided suitable accommodation for the daughter of an earl. Smith and also Paul Hunneyball suggest Arthur was engaged in his building work ‘not much before 1650, but hardly much after, to judge by the style’.\textsuperscript{96} This would correspond with the period after Pulter had given birth to her last child John during which time was she composing her emblem poems. Drawing on Chauncy’s comments, Hine states Arthur built the house ‘only to please’ his wife and that ‘the moment the grand lady departed to the heavenly mansions the squire stopped building’.\textsuperscript{97} Hunneyball suggests however that building work may have stopped due to the financial pressures of the ambitious project Arthur Pulter had undertaken.\textsuperscript{98} It should also be remembered that at the time of his wife’s death Arthur, certainly by the standards of the time, was a very old man and may not have been capable of continuing to oversee such a project. Hine notes that around 1670 Arthur began work on a manuscript entitled ‘Abstract to the Title of the Mannor of Broadfield alias Bradfeld’ which was continued by his grandson James Forester and completed by Chauncy.\textsuperscript{99} His interest in the family estate apparently extended beyond the over-seeing of its renovation, indicating that Arthur had more of an investment in the development of the house than Chauncy and Hine imply.

Smith and Hunneyball provide contrasting accounts of the nature of the work undertaken by Arthur Pulter. Smith states that ‘some of it, especially the windows, are in a rather old-fashioned idiom when compared with the advanced style of Balls


\textsuperscript{97} Hine (1951), p. 4. For an account of the money Forester spent on his grandfather’s funeral and the clock he had erected in his memory in Cottered Church, see Hine (1951), p. 5.

\textsuperscript{98} Hunneyball (2004), p. 71.

\textsuperscript{99} Hine notes that this was in the possession of H. E. Dudley of Windmill Farm, Steeple Clayton Bucks, whose wife, together with her sister Mrs. H. W. Smith of Ware, was the owner of the mansion at the time of its sale in 1938 (1951), p. 8.
Park a few years earlier.\textsuperscript{100} Hunneyball however states that ‘Arthur Pulter attempted an ambitious and progressive design’.\textsuperscript{101} He adds that Arthur’s building work was ‘one of the clearest responses by a local squire’ to the social pressures of an influx of ‘newcomer families with London connections’. He then notes that northern Hertfordshire in general exhibited a level of ‘architectural competition’ and ‘stylistic display’ not seen in the south of the county.\textsuperscript{102} This suggests that through the renovation of their house, the Pulters were responding to external pressures to maintain their social status within the county. This would certainly correlate with the class-consciousness evident in Pulter’s poetry in which she chastises the ruling nobility for not retaining their social standing.\textsuperscript{103} It would also lend some weight to Chauncy’s remark that she was the principle motivation for Arthur Pulter’s building work. Hine certainly interprets the evidence in this way stating that Hester was ‘an imperious and ambitious lady, and wished to have a mansion befitting her rank, and to cut more of a figure in the country’.\textsuperscript{104} Given Arthur’s apparent personal interest in the house however it would seem his wife was not the only one susceptible to class pressure and, as a member of one of the few established gentry families of the county, there may have been alternative pressures exerted on him to maintain his social standing.\textsuperscript{105}

\textsuperscript{100} Smith (1992), p. 81.
\textsuperscript{101} Hunneyball (2004), p. 71.
\textsuperscript{102} Hunneyball (2004), p. 71.
\textsuperscript{103} See, for example, emblem 19 in which Pulter states: ‘For had not Lords in Noble breeding faild/Tinkers and Coblers never had prevaild’.
\textsuperscript{104} Hine (1951), p. 3.
At the time of Arthur's death much of the work he begun on Broadfield manor remained incomplete. Basing his argument on Chauncy's account, Smith observes:

it sounds as if the one aspect of the house the original builder, Arthur Pulter, had not thought worth finishing was guest accommodation. This may have had something to do with the anomalous social position of someone who opted out of the Civil War, because grand hospitality (if that is what the duality of suites implies) continued throughout the Commonwealth’. 106

There is contrary evidence demonstrating the Pulters did receive and accommodate guests during the Interregnum, although it remains possible that these close family members were the exception rather than the rule. 107 Today, only remnants of Broadfield manor house remain; Hine documents that as late as 1950, the door, complete with original seventeenth-century doorknocker, was still in existence. 108

Several other features from the house, including the staircase and the chimneypiece, were transferred to nearby Coles Park manor. 109 The house currently standing on the Broadfield site was erected by A.W. Harston during the 1930s. 110

It was in the house and garden at Broadfield that Pulter claims to have composed most of her poetry. Several of her poems, including 'To my Deare, J[ane]. P[ulter]., M[ary or Margaret]. P[ulter]., P[enelope]. P[ulter]. they beeing at London, I at Bradfield' suggest she was living in her country home while her children were residing in London. 111 In addition to the house, the garden at

59-61.

106 Smith (1992), p. 94.
107 Pulter's sister Dionysia and her husband John Harington MP visited Broadfield during April 1647, Stieg (1977), p. 47. See below for a more detailed account of this visit.
108 Smith remarks that the original architect for the stables may have been Hawksmoor, (1993), p. 51.
111 MS Lt q 32, f. 56r. See also: 'The invitation into the Countrey to my D:D: MP: PP 164[7] when his sacred Majestie was at unhappy ho[me]', MS Lt q 32, f. 4v. Only three of Pulter's daughters are
Broadfield provides a significant backdrop for several of Pulter’s poems. Her lengthy poem ‘The Garden, or The Contention of Flowers, To my Deare Daughter Mistris Anne Pulter, at her desire written’ opens with the line, ‘Once in my Garden as a lone I lay’. Similarly, in emblem 53, the actions of the bee extracting ‘mel’ or honey from the flowers takes place in Pulter’s own garden. Hine suggests the garden was in a state of neglect when Arthur died, he writes:

> Let us now leave the mansion by the door...and descend into the garden. Here the visitor is bound to be disappointed, for at Arthur Pulter’s death the long-neglected garden was a howling wilderness, and more than James Forester’s brief life was needed to reclaim it.

Hine may have drawn these conclusions from references to the renovation Forester needed to do after he inherited the estate. He notes several entries in Forester’s account book pertaining to the renovation and improvement of the garden. But it has unfortunately not been possible to ascertain exactly how Hine reached such a dramatic conclusion. The fact that he has sketched a fairly lengthy account of Pulter’s character from a single line in Chauncy’s text means that this is possibly an exaggeration. It may be that the general upkeep of the garden required Forester’s attention (and money). It is possible however that the garden had been in the specific care of Hester Pulter and that after she had died (or even before due to illness or old age) it had been allowed to fall into decline and had been left untouched for over a decade.

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112 MS Lt q 32, ff. 19r-32v.
113 Pulter refers to the bee ‘takeing of my Garden in her way’, MS Lt q 32, f. 128r.
115 Hine (1951), pp. 22-23.
In contrast to her husband's voluntary seclusion within the Broadfield estate, Pulter's was apparently not voluntary. In one poem she complains that, although much more dangerous creatures are allowed to roam freely, she is 'shut up in a Countrey Grange' and confined to solitude 'The cruelst Curb unto a Noble Mind'. The mental oppression Pulter claims to have been experiencing seems to have been a particularly troubling aspect of her confinement. She also asks 'Why must I thus forever bee confin'd/Against the noble Freedome of my Mind'. At the time Pulter was composing this poem, her children were apparently still absent because she complains that to 'comfort them [she] cannot remove'. But Pulter does not provide any explanation for her sense of mental and physical confinement. The poem concludes with a list of possible reasons which she then dismisses, including political or religious affiliation; love; her children; sin; a minor offence; or debt. Frustratingly, when she seems to be about to reveal the true reason for her oppression she exclaims 'But tis, Oh my sad soul, I'le say noe more'.

It is possible that Arthur had some role in her confinement. Her chosen pseudonym 'Haddassah' refers to the Biblical queen Esther whose husband Ahasuerus kept her in confinement both prior to and following their marriage. In this poem Pulter compares herself with the dove, a symbol of marital fidelity but, she says,

... I that am more constant then this Dove
Unto my First and last and onely Love

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116 MS Lt q 32, f. 79r; the poem is untitled but has the first line 'Why must I thus forever bee confin'd'.
117 Later evidence suggests that Pulter's solitude and confinement may not have been as absolute as she claims; see below for John Harington's accounts of his visits to Broadfield and of Pulter's to London.
118 Esther's imprisonment was a key feature of the story as it was understood during the seventeenth-century. For a discussion of the implications of Pulter's chosen pseudonym see Chapter Three.
Cannot from this sad place (ay mee) remove

This would seem to contradict her earlier assertions of a marriage premised on ‘Constant Loves’. It is possible that Arthur, during the turbulent period of the Civil Wars, was trying to protect his staunchly royalist wife from exposure to the predominantly Parliamentarian government of the surrounding area. Alternatively, given the apparent contradictions in her text, it is possible that the state of isolation and confinement Pulter’s presents may have as much to do with literary convention as with the precise details of her own biography. As Sarah Ross has explored in detail, Pulter’s poetry presents a feminised version of conventional royalist protestations of isolation and confinement following defeat in the Civil Wars. While in many cases this was literally true, many royalists were imprisoned or banished after the wars, it was also a means of representing a more abstract and emotional response to immediate political and social circumstances.

Another explanation for Pulter’s periods of confinement could be the apparent bouts of emotional and physical illness to which she refers throughout her poems. Again, her presentation of these afflictions is mediated through contemporary social and literary convention. Pulter attributes her own melancholic nature to being born under the planet Saturn stating that the planet is her ‘assendent’; that ‘Saturns heavie eye, / Frowns on [her] with Malignancie’ and that it is Saturn ‘whose aspects soe sads [her] soul’. Born on a Saturday, Pulter was supposedly subject to the influence of a planet renowned for spreading melancholic moods.

119 For the dove functioning as symbol of marital fidelity see emblem 20.
120 Emblem 36, line 1.
122 Ross (2005), especially p. 1.
123 MS Lt q 32, f. 57r.
Pulter’s contemporary, Elizabeth Isham, notes in her autobiography that her mother says she has a melancholic character because she “was borne on a Saturday and that the planet after which the day was called, had dominion over me”. According to Robert Burton, gentlewomen such as Pulter who generally ‘are solitary and idle’, and who ‘live at ease’, ‘lead a life out of action and imployment’, and ‘fare well in great houses’ are particularly susceptible to melancholy.

In her poetry, Pulter describes a condition identified by Burton as a specific type of melancholy associated with childbirth. While she finds occasional respite from her black moods, she complains:

But yet (alas) what comfort’s in this Light
That is alternately pursued by Night
Instead of bringing of my soul relief
It doth successively renew my griefe

Pulter’s symptoms, according to Burton, coincide with those experienced by women who ‘lie in child-bed’ which causes ‘much solitariness, weeping, distraction, etc., from which they are sometimes suddenly delivered, because it comes and goes by fits’. It is plausible that Pulter, who had given birth to fifteen children, many of whom died before her, endured frequent periods of emotional and physical illness associated with an almost continual cycle of childbirth and mourning. At least one of her poems, ‘This was written 1648, when I Lay Inn, with my Son John, beeing my 15 Child’, was written during the period of lying-in that traditionally followed each

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of a woman’s pregnancies. It is plausible that Pulter also used the periods of lying-in following the births of her other fourteen children for literary composition.

Despite Pulter’s claims frequent claims of confinement and isolation within her own home and garden, there is evidence from various points during her life indicating she had contact with members of her family. During the 1630s, prior to the composition of the poetry in her manuscript, at least two of Pulter’s siblings were living nearby. Her brother William, later the fourth Earl of Marlborough, paid a visit to Hertfordshire in 1633 and he addressed the following letter to his, and also Pulter’s, sister Dionysia, who was married to John Harington M.P. of Kelston in Somerset:

Dear Sister, - My best love being remembered unto you hoping that you are in good health. My three sisters in Hartfordshire and my brother Boulter (Bulter) doe remember their best love unto you. My sister the Countesse, because I have been in Hartfordshire, my brother being absent, did put mee out of doore one Friday past was Seaven night, and so I have sent unto you all my things, desiring you to have them put into some Roome or other, and I would desire you to entayne (sic) [entertain = take in] the Carrier, and if it please God I will see you very shortly, and so I com’end you to the Almighty’s protection and Rest.

Your loving brother,
William Ley.

June 3, 1633.

[P.S.] – There is sent unto you one Trunke, one Deske, one Cabinet, and one Banbox. As for the rest of my things they are at Tefont.

127 MS Lt q 32, ff. 67v. A period of lying-in usually lasted a month; for up to two weeks the woman would remain in her bed in a darkened room, she would then spend a further week in her room but not confined to her bed, and for the final week she would be allowed to move around the house, Adrian Wilson, ‘The Ceremony of Childbirth and its Interpretation’, in Women as Mothers in Pre-Industrial England ed. by Valerie Fildes (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 75. Pulter would therefore have spent more than a year of her life in close confinement first within her room and then within her home.

128 Reproduced in Poynton (1885), IV, p. 35. I have not been able to locate the original letter. A couple of months after sending this Sir William wrote a letter of recommendation to his brother-in-law John Harington M.P. on behalf of a man wanting a ‘licence to keepe a victuallling house att Weston’, BL Add. 46376 B., f. 3.
William’s letter suggests he was living with his brother Henry, at that time the second earl of Marlborough, and his wife Mary, the second daughter of Sir Arthur Capel of Hadham Hall Hertfordshire. Henry had inherited Teffont Evias so it is possible that William was living with him there. One of the three sisters to whom he refers is most likely to be Pulter and I suspect that the brother ‘Boulter’ referred to is Arthur Pulter. This confirms that there was some contact between Pulter and her brother. The other two ‘sisters’ to whom William refers are most likely to be his two sisters-in-law; the above mentioned Mary, married to his brother Henry, and Arthur Pulter’s sister Margaret, married to Richard Newman. The evidence points to a circle of Pulter’s relatives living in Hertfordshire during the 1630s who had at least some contact with one another.

William Ley was apparently the archetypal younger son and black sheep of his family. In his will, William’s brother Henry writes: ‘I beseech my brother to forsake his most ungodly and most [riotous] life and to remember his Creator in the dayes of his youth’. William Ley was married to Margaret, later countess dowager of Marlborough, who later acted as executor for the will of Royal Society member Sir Paul Neile (bap. 1613-1682x6), courtier and patron of science. Her husband refers to her in less than complimentary terms a letter addressed to his nephew John Harington (1627-1700) of Corston, he writes:

Yesterday I received a letter from Mistress Twitty, wherein amongst other things shee writes, that your good Aunt is uppon coming downe to Rath and

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withall wishes mee to be carefull. This news so bad, puts mee into a great Anxiety, so that I know not what to doe. for Gods sake send mee your coach this afternoone. that I may come over to you. to have your advice, in this confusion I am in. I vow rather I would meete this devellish Aunt, I would hange my selfe. or run away into Ireland. So I rest
Your poore unfortunate
Uncle and servant
Marleburgh.\(^\text{130}\)

William Ley was apparently in frequent contact with his nephew, the son of his sister Dionysia and her husband John Harington M.P. of Kelston. There are several other letters in the British Library in which he begs his nephew for money.\(^\text{131}\) On May the 8th 1680, another of William's nephews, James Long wrote to Harington saying that he was 'extreamely sorry to hear that my Lord is so ill and that hee is not like to recover when I heard hee dranck much Brandy I expected no other but not so soone'.\(^\text{132}\) By May the 22\(^{\text{nd}}\) that year, Harington and Sir William's wife Margaret were exchanging letters about his death and the settling of his estate.\(^\text{133}\) Throughout her emblem poems Pulter criticises the dissolute behaviour of contemporary 'gallants' and in one poem she echoes her brother Henry's words to William with her instruction to her reader to 'Remember thy Creator in thy Youth'. Given the connection between the two siblings, it is possible she had her brother William in mind.\(^\text{134}\)

Judging by the comments made in his will, Pulter's eldest brother Henry Ley,
second earl of Marlborough seems to have taken his role in society much more seriously. He married Mary, the second daughter of Sir Arthur Capel of Hadham Hall Hertfordshire and they had two children: a daughter Elizabeth and a son James who became the third earl of Marlborough. Henry Ley and his wife were apparently not on good terms when he composed his will. He writes:

God forgive her those wrongs shee hath done mee as I doe from my hart forgive her, and God forgive me those wrongs that I have done her, And I desire her for Gods sake to forgive me them likewise.

He does not give any indication of what exactly had occurred between the couple but William’s letter to his sister Dionysia suggests Mary, who in her husband’s absence ejected her brother-in-law from her home, was not afraid to act according to her own inclinations. Following Henry’s death, she remarried his steward Colonel Thomas Wancklyn and Anthony Wood notes that:

1670. 2nd June. The Countess of Marlborough, mother to that Earl which was killed in the sea fight, 1665, died. Buried by her second husband (Thomas Wancklyn, son of a smith) in his garden between two boards, under a turnip plot, because Mr. Ash, who was to enter upon her joynter, should not know it. About Michaelmas following she was taken up and buried by her husband at Westbury on the Plaine, Wiltshire.

Wood does not acknowledge his connection to the family or provide any indication of a source for this anecdote and, although it happened during her lifetime, there is no reference to the incident in Pulter’s manuscript (probably because it was

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135 *Wiltshire Visitation Pedigrees*, 1623 states: ‘Henricus Ley de Westberie in Com Wilts mil: filius et heres supstes 1623; aged 32+ at his father’s death; d. 1 Apr. 1638; Inq. p.m. 27 Sept. 1638. mar. Henry Ley and Mary Capel were married at Little Hadham, Hertford on the 5th of November 1616. ‘Jacobus Ley filius heres aetatis 6 annorum 1623; aged 19 on 28 Jan. 1637/8’, St George and Lennard (1954), p. 115.

136 PRO: prob/11/177 (1636).

137 Clark (1891-1900), II p. 194. Wood recounts this anecdote without referring to his connection to the family. See Goddard (1905-6), pp. 103-108. I have not been able to trace a precise date for Mary’s second marriage but in his diary John Harington notes, on Friday 23rd April, 1651, ‘The Countes tel me she was married to Colonel Wainklin’, Stieg (1977), p. 72.
composed much earlier). Following her husband’s death, Mary had inherited Teffont Evias so it is possible that she was initially buried there.

In addition to the contact Pulter may have had with her numerous brothers and sisters there is evidence that she remained in communication with her children, several of whom lived nearby. It is possible that Pulter’s daughter Anne, married to Thomas Fairclough, heir to the Fairclough estate, was living near Broadfield at the time Pulter was composing her poetry. Certainly one poem ‘The Garden, or The Contention of Flowers, To my Deare Daughter Mistris Anne Pulter’, at her desire written is dedicated specifically to Ann having apparently been written at her request.\(^{138}\) Although, as Ann is addressed as ‘Anne Pulter’ it is possible that this was composed before she married.\(^{139}\) In an article published in 1910, E.E.Squires and W.B. Gerish state ‘it is a much debated question where the Fairclough’s lived, who played no inconsiderable part in the village life of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’ but that they have ‘brought to light a deed of the seventeenth century’ which suggests a place ‘situate about a mile from the village [Weston, Hertfordshire] and [currently] known as Halls Green, is but an abbreviation of Fairclough Hall Green, as it was known in the seventeenth century’.\(^{140}\) This place was about four miles from the Pulters’ home, Broadfield and it is possible that Thomas Fairclough, as direct male heir, inherited this property.

Of the Pulters’ sons, only the youngest John who was born in 1648, is registered as a student at one of the universities. Following his father, he was


\(^{139}\) I have not been able to find a date for Ann’s marriage but as she was born in 1635 it is unlikely that, even if she married as young as her mother, it had taken place before 1648.

admitted to Queen's College Cambridge on the 4th of January 1664/5.\textsuperscript{141} None of their other sons appear in the admission registers for Oxford, Cambridge or the Inns of Court and it is possible they were sent away for their education. James (1627–1659) was, during the later years of the 1640s, apparently living in or around London and interacting with the family of his aunt Dionysia, wife of John Harington M.P.. Harington notes on one occasion that James brought him his son William, a son who later visited Pulter during her own visit to London.\textsuperscript{142} It is however possible that at least one of the Pulters' sons remained, or returned to live with them, in Hertfordshire. In his account of Broadfield manor house J. T. Smith states that the layout of the house implies a double household containing two suites of significant rooms.\textsuperscript{143} He interprets this to mean that the house 'may have been occupied by two households' adding that 'Arthur Pulter and his son seem to have occupied Broadfield, Cottered, jointly'.\textsuperscript{144} The Pulters had several sons but only three lived into adulthood: James, the youngest; John, who died in 1677; and Arthur, who died in 1680. Of the three, only Arthur married and as the elder he would have been the obvious choice to be his father's heir. Or, as I have suggested above, it is possible that their daughter Margaret and her husband James Forester were at one time resident at Broadfield.

Arthur (1636-1680), the only one of the Pulters’ sons to marry, married Amy (b.1682), daughter of William Gumbleton, in 1672 and it is possible that they were

\textsuperscript{143} Drawing his conclusions from Buckler’s illustration of the house, he states that the ‘two great chimney-stacks which bulk so largely in the Buckler drawing point to its having had important rooms at both ends. A plan with two staircases is likely’ (Smith, 1992), p. 75.
\textsuperscript{144} Smith (1992), p. 94. I have not found any evidence that this was actually the case.
both resident at Broadfield. In 1680 however, while her husband was still alive, Amy, posing as a man named James Howard, married the celebrity lutenist and soprano Arabella Hunt (1662-1705). In a case described by Valerie Traub as ‘the only known case of female-female marriage brought before an English court in the seventeenth century’, the marriage was annulled after six months of cohabitation. Patricia Crawford and Sara Mendelson speculate that the case may have inspired Aphra Behn’s dialogue in The False Court (1682) when an elderly husband says of his wife’s relationship to her sister and maid: ‘I have known as much danger hid under a Petticoat, as a pair of Breeches. I have heard of two Women that married each other – oh abominable, as if there were so prodigious a scarcity of Christian Man’s Flesh’. The libel documents pertaining to the case state that ‘Arthur Poulter and Amy Poulter ... after such their intermarriage did live together ... in Wimly [Wymodly] Hertfordshire, and other places’. This suggests they were living near to Arthur and Hester Pulter but does not confirm that they were at any time resident at Broadfield. Amy died just five weeks after the sentence of the case was

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145 Their marriage date is provided by the papers pertaining to the libel case brought against Amy Poulter by Arabella Hunt, 1682: Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B 378, ff. 260r-262v.
149 Bodleian, MS Rawlinson B 378, ff. 260r-262v.
announced leading Crawford and Mendelson to suggest she committed suicide.\footnote{150}{Crawford and Mendelson (1995), p. 365.}

She was buried in Cottered on the 23\textsuperscript{rd} of January, 1682.\footnote{151}{Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 518.}

In addition to those relatives living nearby, there is also evidence to suggest that Pulter was in contact with those living in London and that it was not unusual for her to visit them in the city. Prior to 1623, Pulter’s sister Dionysia (d. 1674) married the M.P. and diarist John Harington of Kelston (1588/9–1654) and they had two sons, John \textit{(bap. 19 May 1627)} and William \textit{(bap. 15 June 1631)}, and two daughters, Mary and Phoebe.\footnote{152}{J. H. Bettey, ‘Harington, John (1588/9–1654)’, \textit{Oxford Dictionary of National Biography}, online edn, Oxford University Press, May 2005; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/74680, accessed 6 May 2008]. The DNB entry states that John Harington and Dionysia were married in 1623 but I have found no evidence of this. They were however married prior to 1623 because they’re listed in the \textit{Wiltshire Visitation Pedigrees, 1623}: ‘Dionisia 4 filia nupta Jo: Harrington in Com Som iuxta Bathon’, St. George and Lennard (1954), p. 115.} A nineteenth-century genealogist, Francis Poynton, notes of Harington that:

\begin{quote}
Indeed it is said (and the tradition may be true?) that he had a rigid ruler in Dionysia his wife, one of the daughters of James Ley, first Earl of Marlborough.
\end{quote}

He provides no source for this anecdote but his comments lend further weight to the impression that Pulter and her sisters were formidable women. Poynton goes on to add that following John Harington’s death in 1654 Dionysia inherited Kelston house and estate but that ‘It is not considered that the Dowager Lady Harington kept very close residence at Kelston, but lived chiefly in Bath and London’.\footnote{153}{A letter in the British Library, dated September 1669, suggests that Dionysia Harington did spend some of her time at Kelston. She addresses her granddaughter ‘Betty’, who was staying with her Aunts at ‘Eford [these?]’ in the ‘Countrey’, Add. 46376 B, f. 4.} It is John Harington’s diary that, outside of her literary manuscript, provides the most substantial information about Pulter’s life. Portions of the diary are extant for 1646–
1653 and they reveal she belonged to a close-knit family whose kinship ties apparently transcended the political divisions of the Civil Wars.\footnote{154 British Library Add. 10114. There is also a bound volume of newsbooks and pictures of prominent political figures, including Elizabeth I, Charles I, Sir Bevil Greenvil, and Henry Ireton, apparently collected by Harrington, Add. 46375 A. There is however some problem with this provenance because several of the newsbooks have dates in the 1660s and 70s, after Harrington’s death.}

In the introduction to her edition of his diary Margaret Stieg notes that John Harington’s marriage ‘brought him relatively unproductive court connections and numerous relations, often referred to in his diary’\footnote{155 Stieg (1977), p. 2.} Harrington was the son of Sir John Harington (1561-1612), queen Elizabeth’s godson and translator of Ariosto’s \textit{Orlando Furioso} (1591), and his wife Mary, the daughter of Sir George Rogers of Cannington.\footnote{156 Pulter’s poem ‘To Sir William D. Upon the unspeakable Loss of the most conspicuous and chief Ornament of his Frontispiece’ (MS Lt q 32, f. 83r.) provides some indication that she was familiar with Harrington’s translation; for a discussion of the evidence see Chapter Two.} He was also related to the James Harrington who wrote the republican satire \textit{The Common-Wealth of Oceana} (1656), and the diary records some contact between the two.\footnote{157 Stieg (1977), p. 63.} The younger John Harington matriculated at Oxford in 1604 and was admitted to Lincoln’s Inn in 1608, to the Bar in 1615, and became a Bencher in 1633, having succeeded to the family estates upon the death of his father in 1612. His diary covers a period from 1646-53 and, in addition to providing substantial evidence of the interaction between his, and therefore Pulter’s, ‘numerous relations’, he includes several significant references to Pulter herself. The diary records two principle episodes relating to Pulter; in 1647 Harington and his wife paid a visit to Broadfield and then in 1652 Pulter herself spent three weeks in London. This visit centres on the death of Pulter’s sister Margaret Hobson who died that year. In addition to these specific references the diary paints a picture of a close-
knit family comprising many of Pulter’s sisters and their husbands. It therefore enables us to locate Pulter within a very specific social sphere, which in many ways conflicts with the vehement royalism expressed in her manuscript.

On Friday 16th April 1647, Harington notes that he did ‘ride with my wife to Bradfield’, the Pulters’ manor house in Hertfordshire.\textsuperscript{158} The following entry in his diary is dated Sunday the 18th of April, Easter day, when he heard ‘Mr Garner in the afternoon’.\textsuperscript{159} This is probably Thomas Gardiner, the Presbyterian rector of Cottered of whom Arthur Pulter was patron.\textsuperscript{160} On Monday 19th of April Harington left his wife at Broadfield and returned to London but he does not record the length of her stay. This entry, which confirms the Pulter’s were receiving visitors at Broadfield, provides some indication that Pulter may not have been as isolated as her poetry suggests. The majority of Pulter’s occasional poems seem to have been composed during the latter years of the 1640s and this entry would apparently contradict her protestations of isolation during this period. Margaret Stieg has noted that portions of Harington’s diary are missing for the period between September 1647 and May 1650, and it is possible that more information would have been recorded there.\textsuperscript{161}

With no further evidence however, we cannot be certain that this was not the only visit to have occurred during this time. It does however seem likely that the record of one visit points to the unrecorded occurrence of several others, possibly by other members of her extended family.

\textsuperscript{158} Add. 10114, f. 22v. Stieg (1977), p. 47.  
\textsuperscript{159} Add. 10144, f. 22v. Stieg (1977), p. 47.  
\textsuperscript{160} Chauncy (1975), l. p. 138; Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 520; and also Ross (2000), p. 145.  
\textsuperscript{161} Stieg (1977), p. 8.
The second significant episode recounted in Harington’s diary is a three-week visit Pulter made to London in May and June 1652. On Saturday the 29th of May, Harington makes the slightly peevish remark that he did 'hear Lady Hester in town since Munday last'. The following day he first records that he did 'Visit Lady H[ester]' before adding that he had received a 'sad letter from brother Hobson'. This is a reference to Captain James Hobson the husband of Pulter’s sister Margaret and therefore Harington’s brother-in-law. The punctuation and syntax of Harington’s diary entries mean that, on occasions, it is difficult to determine exactly what he is saying. In this particular entry, immediately after referring to Hobson’s letter, he states ‘Mr Dugard, a printer and schoolmaster preach and sup with us’. It is not entirely clear to whom the ‘us’ refers but it is entirely possible that he is referring to himself and Pulter. During the 1640s William Dugard (1606-62) was a vehement royalist responsible for printing, among other things, the \textit{Eikon Basilike} (1649). He spent a month in prison in 1650 until the intervention of his friends Sir James Harington (bap. 1607-1680) and John Milton secured his release. Dugard then switched his political allegiances and was later responsible for printing Milton’s \textit{Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio} (1651) and also, in 1652, his Latin translation of the council of state’s declaration of war against the states of Holland. It seems that her sister Margaret, to whom Milton addressed his tenth sonnet, was not Pulter’s only connection with the poet.

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{162} Add. 10114, f. 31r. Stieg (1977), p. 75.
\item \textsuperscript{163} Add. 10114, f. 31r.
\end{itemize}
The next entry in Harington’s diary sheds light on the ‘sad letter’ from Captain Hobson. Referring to Pulter, Harington writes ‘Afterward hear from her that her sister, Lady Margaret was dead’.

In December 1641 Pulter’s sister, Lady Margaret (1602/3-1652) married James Hobson a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Westminster regiment of the parliamentarian army. During the early years of the 1640s the couple, then living in Aldersgate St in London, were close neighbours and friends of John Milton and it was during this time that he composed his sonnet addressed ‘To the Lady Margaret Ley’. Milton’s nephew Edward Phillips comments that the poet liked to spend time in the company of Ley and her husband and he describes Lady Margaret as ‘a Woman of great Wit and Ingenuity’, who ‘had a particular Honour for him [Milton], and took much delight in his company, as likewise her Husband, Captain Hobson, a very Accomplish’d Gentleman’.

In his poem Milton, likens Margaret to her father stating:

...yet by you
Madam, methinks I see him living yet;
So well your words his noble virtues praise
That all both judge you to relate them true
And to possess them, honoured Margaret.

Having compared James Ley with Isocrates, the Athenian orator who, during the seventeenth century, acquired a reputation for defending republican liberty. He presents Lady Margaret as an eloquent and virtuous woman whose own integrity lends weight to her account of her father. Milton also implies that Lady Margaret

165 Add. 10114, f. 31r. Stieg (1977), p. 75.
168 Darbishire (1932), p. 64.
was aligned with his own political ideals, something that seems plausible given the pleasure he apparently took in her company.

A few days after his account of Lady Margaret’s death, on the 1st of June Harington adds that he:

Could not finde brother Hobson; he finde me and tel me his wife died Thursday was 3 weaks and was buried the Wensday after at Godalmin. He in Ile of Wight at her deth and under arrest in Portsmouth when shee was buried in the Chancel, her wil being to be buried in the Churchyard. I Acquaint Lady H[ester] herewith. She shew his letter to her like that to me and that her deceased sister had the whole dispose of her own portoin, being £2,000 and £500 per annum of her husb[and]s land and that she had perswaded her to convey al back to her husbands estate and kindred.

Hobson was apparently at home in the Isle of Wight when his wife died, while she was resident at Godalming in Surrey. The suggestion that Pulter ‘perswaded’ Margaret to assign her money back to her husband suggests they were in contact before she died. In keeping with Chauncey’s reference to Pulter’s ‘importunity’ of her husband Pulter is once more exercising her will and authority over another member of her family. These brief entries demonstrate that despite the apparent difference in their political allegiances Pulter maintained contact with her sister and her husband. Mysteriously, Harington’s entry for the 3rd of May states: ‘Brother Hobson visit, tel me the Lady Hesters man asked £60 of him’. It is possible that, as Hunneyball suggested in reference to Broadfield, the Pulters were experiencing financial difficulties or it may be that Pulter was requesting money owed to her from her sister’s estate.

In addition to several references to Margaret Hobson’s death, Harington’s diary entry for Monday 31st May, also includes the information that he did: ‘Visit

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169 I have not been able to ascertain why Hobson was under arrest at this time.
Sergeant Brown. Lady Ester with the Bishop in his library'. The 'Bishop' Harington refers to is James Ussher (1581-1656), Church of Ireland archbishop of Armagh and scholar, who was a distant cousin of Pulter's godfather Sir William. During this time, James Ussher was living in semi-retirement London, in one of the houses his friend the countess of Peterborough had put at his disposal, and he was frequently in Harington's company. In 1650 he had published Annales Veteris Testamenti and it was this, together with its continuation, Annalium Pars Posterior (1654), addressing the significant theological question concerning the date of the foundation of the world, which secured him international recognition for his learning. Harington also refers to 'Sergeant Brown', Sir Samuel Browne (b. in or before 1598 – d. 1668), politician and judge, and another of his most frequent associates. Like Harington and Ussher, during the early years of the 1650s, Browne, following the failure of the Newport negotiations with the king in 1648, was living in retirement. Once again, the syntax of Harington's entry is unclear suggesting Pulter was conversing with Ussher either in Samual Browne's library or in Ussher's own. It could be the latter; Ussher's literary collection, now in Trinity College Library, Dublin, is well known and Harington frequently refers to books he has borrowed from the Archbishop. However, Harington apparently attributes his knowledge of this meeting to his own visit to Browne, suggesting both Pulter and

170 Add 10114, f. 31v.
Ussher were in fact in his library. This would indicate that Pulter’s interactions with Browne were not solely dependent on her brother-in-law.

A significant point to note about the men with whom Pulter was associating during her time in London is that they were all renowned for their exceptional learning. Harington, in addition to his religious studies, had an interest in mathematics, geometry, medicine and languages, which included Greek, Arabic and Hebrew. Throughout his diary he records the many books he borrowed from Ussher, who was himself a prominent and well-respected scholar. Samuel Browne was similarly well regarded during his lifetime for his intelligence and learning. Through these men, Pulter may have access to the wealth of books and information that inform her literary compositions. Harington’s diary entries include several other references to Pulter during the three-week period she was in London. On Sunday 6th June he reports that ‘Lady Hester was at our Chapell’.

On Thursday 10th June he admits that he did ‘Mis of supper with Lady Hest[er]’ while the following day he notes ‘My son Wil with Lady Hester’. On Saturday the 12th of June, shortly before Pulter’s birthday, Harington remarks that ‘She return home’.

Harington was in contact with several other members of Pulter’s family, many of them her sisters and their husbands. Two of Pulter’s sisters who feature most regularly are Phoebe, who married Richard Biggs of Haines Hill in Hurst, Berks and Mary, who married to Richard Erisey after the death of her first husband, John Tristram. Between April 1647 and November 1651, Harington paid several

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174 Add. 10114, f. 31v.  
175 Phoebe’s marriage had not taken place before 1623, Wiltshire Visitation Pedigrees, 1623, St. George and Lennard (1954), p. 115. Mary married first John Tristram of Banton in Devon and secondly Richard Erisey in Grade, Cornwall. ‘mar. lic. Sarum’ 12 Dec. 1619. The Visitation of
visits to Lady Phoebe, on one occasion in 1647 he notes ‘She tel me her danger of
the plague’. In November 1651 he visits her twice, on two days running; he notes:
‘Wensday 19. Visit Lady Phebe and the Bishop’ and then ‘Thursday 20. Visit the
Bishop and Lady Phebe again’. The ‘Bishop’ is James Ussher with whom
Harington notes Pulter conversing the following year. Again, the syntax is not clear
but his comments suggest he may have been visiting Lady Phoebe and Ussher
together indicating a more general connection between the Archbishop and Pulter’s
family. This may be attributed to the family’s connection with Dublin; between 1604
and 1608, while James Ley was serving in the Irish capital, Ussher was made
chancellor of St Patrick’s Cathedral (1605) and appointed Professor of Theological
Controversies at Trinity College (1607).

In addition to Lady Phoebe, Harington was in regular contact with Pulter’s
sister Lady Mary, although they seem to have interacted mostly by letter. Of
particular interest are his notes on a letter he sent to her during June 1650. He writes:

Mu[n]day 10 Te[w]sday 11. Write to Lady M[ary] Erisey the godly should
acquaint one another with what they prove most profitable, thankfulnes to
God and prayer for grace of knowing and doing. Faith, her work is to get
holines.

Harington was a strict Calvinist and in his notes for his speeches he sets out his
religious views stating, for example, that ‘Every man living is either godly or
wicked’. Stieg notes that ‘most of his speeches seem to have been on
ecclesiastical or religious subjects’ and ‘theological points were a frequent topic of

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Cornwall, 1620. Note ‘Richard 2 sonne atate 5 weekes’, 1620, p. 68.
176 Add. 10114, f. 23r.
177 Add. 10114, f. 30r.
178 Ford (2004); and Stieg (1977), pp. 61-81, 84-5.
conversation in Harington’s circle at Lincoln’s Inn’.\textsuperscript{181} His diary reveals a life inflected throughout with his Calvinist worldview; even his dreams are saturated with spiritual concerns and he notes on one occasion that he did ‘Dream of being shy of ful holines’.\textsuperscript{182} His letter to Lady Mary, therefore, suggests he regarded her as a spiritual confident with whom he could correspond on religious matters. She is apparently his godly equal implying she shared his strong Calvinist convictions. This would have set her at odds with Pulter’s own religious convictions, which were apparently more moderate.\textsuperscript{183}

Another member of Pulter’s extended family to make regular appearances in Harington’s diary is Thomas Juxon (1614-72). He frequently refers to his ‘cousin Juxon’ the radical Puritan and Parliamentarian, who on March 2\textsuperscript{nd} 1647 had married Elizabeth, the daughter of Pulter’s sister Elizabeth, the wife of Maurice Carent of Toomer Park, Somerset in 1608. Juxon’s will stipulates that he gives ‘the sum of twenty pounds to be laid out in erecting a monument in the rememberance of Maurice Carent, esquire, and the Lady Elizabeth, his wife, the father and mother of my dear wife deceased, in the church of Henstridge by Woodyates in the county of Dorset’. The next item in his will states ‘I will that there be erected in the church of Islington a marble in the wall near where my dear wife lies buried with this inscription:

\begin{quote}
Here lies buried the body of Elizabeth Juxon late the wife of Thomas Juxon esquire, and the Lady Elizabeth his wife, the eldest daughter of James, earl of Marlborough, lord Treasurer of England etc. which said Elizabeth Juxon died
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
[\textsuperscript{181} Stieg (1977), p. 4.  \\
\textsuperscript{182} Stieg (1977), p. 61.  \\
\textsuperscript{183} Ross (2000), pp. 145-49.]
\end{flushright}
the [blank] of September 1669 leaving two children, William and Elizabeth'. 184

Lindley and Scott note Juxon's pride in late wife's family lineage and the respectability this connection conferred. 185 This also provides some clue as to where Pulter's eldest sister Elizabeth was living at the time of her death and also possibly for a time before this. As Harington's diary indicates, she was apparently not the only one of Pulter's sisters living in London during the decades in which she was composing her poetry, and it is possible that the daughters that in her poetry she implores to return from the city were living with their one of their aunts. 186

Pulter's interactions with Harington and his associates highlight the complexity of political and familial allegiances during the English Civil Wars and Interregnum. Pulter's poetry, apparently composed between 1645 and 1665, is vehemently royalist and she condemns Puritan attacks on the established church. Many of the people with whom she was associating however were, at some point, supporters of the king's opponents. Pulter's brother-in-law, John Harington was a strong Puritan, sharing his vigorous anti-Catholicism with his associate James Ussher. In 1642, following the outbreak of civil war, Harington had supported the Parliamentarian cause but in December 1648 he withdrew from Parliament in protest against Thomas Pride's violent ejection or 'purge' of moderates. The portion of his diary covering the period between September 1647 and May 1650 has been removed.

185 Lindley and Scott (1999), p. 3.
so his actions during this period are uncertain. It seems likely however that in 1648, he was among those, including Samuel Browne, involved in the Newport peace negotiations with the king. Despite being associated with Parliamentary radicals, Harington, Browne and their associates, described by Valerie Pearl as ‘Royal Independents’, were committed to the preservation of England’s constitutional monarchy. James Harington died in 1654 but following the Restoration Charles II knighted Samuel Browne for his loyalty during the Interregnum. During the same period James Ussher occupied a similarly moderate position; although generally considered to have been a supporter of the Stuart monarchy, he was widely respected for his learning, amongst both the king’s supporters and their opponents. Following his death in 1656 Cromwell permitted Ussher’s body to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

Despite the ardent royalism expressed in her poetry, Pulter was evidently associating with those members of her family, and their circle, who during the Civil Wars had at various stages in their political careers held political views very different from her own. This perhaps explains why her poetry, certainly that composed during the 1640s, was apparently not circulated beyond the confines of her immediate family. Despite their support for constitutional monarchy, Harington and Browne had still been prepared to engage in direct military action against

187 Stieg suggests either that Harington did this himself to ward against recriminations from his Parliamentarian associates or that his actively Parliamentarian son John did it to protect himself following his father’s death (1977), pp. 8-9.
Charles I. Pulter's poems however, while her 48th emblem may imply some dissatisfaction with Charles as monarch, generally refers to him specifically when mourning the death and absence of the king. Pulter's family did include several prominent royalists but there is no evidence she was in direct contact with them. They included her nephew James, later the third Earl of Marlborough who, despite being made the ward of the future regicide Sir John Danvers, fought for the king during the first civil war and who later died at the battle of Lowestoft on 3 June 1665. In contrast to Pulter and her husband who were apparently lying low during this period, his estates were sequestered in 1646. In 1680 a copy of the 3rd earl's supposed deathbed repentance, in which he provides an account of his religious views, was published alongside that of the notorious libertine John Wilmot, 2nd Earl of Rochester (1647–1680). In addition to James Ley, perhaps, the most well known of Pulter's royalist relatives was Sir Arthur Capel (her husband's first cousin) who had been opposed to Charles' personal rule but, following his elevation to peerage in 1641, had opted to fight for the king. Capel was captured and then

190 See Everett Green (1889-92), I, p. 77. In 1647 James Ley's mother, Mary, Countess Dowager of Marlborough, 'begged' to compound for the estate, III, p. 1783. Another relative to have their estate sequestered in 1647 was Pulter's stepmother Jane who, after the death of the 1st earl of Marlborough, had married William Ashburnham, Everett Green (1889-92), I, p. 77. Jane later petitioned the Protector claiming poverty while Ashburnham was in prison in 1656, Everett Green (1889-92), II, p. 1282.
191 See Everett Green (1889-92), II, p. 1282. The text was first published in 1665 under the title A Copy of the Earle of Marleborough's Letter to Sir Hugh P. Dated Aboard the Old James, April 24 (1665) and later as The Two Noble Converts; or The Earl of Marlborough and the Earl of Rochester their Dying Requests and Remonstrance, to the Atheists and Debauchees of this Age (1680). A poem on marriage and attributed to 'James Ley E of Marlborough' is extant the British Library, Add. 46376B, f. 2.
executed by the parliament shortly after the regicide in 1649. Pulter remembers her 'Heroick Kinsman' in a poem mourning the death of Charles I, in which she states that the family's personal grief has been overwhelmed by their sorrow at the loss of the king.\textsuperscript{193}

While the majority of Pulter's poems were composed during the second half of the 1640s and the 1650s, her literary manuscript was apparently not compiled until the early years of the 1660s.\textsuperscript{194} It is possible that it was more expedient for her to wait for the Restoration before conserving such vehemently royalist works for posterity. On the loose sheets accompanying the manuscript volume are several poems dated 1665 and 1667 suggesting she continued to write after the volume had been compiled. Pulter appears to have spent the remainder of her life at Broadfield and she was buried on the 9\textsuperscript{th} April 1678 in Cottered parish church.\textsuperscript{195}

\textsuperscript{193} MS Lt q 32, f. 34v.
\textsuperscript{194} For a full discussion of the manuscript, including dates of compilation, see Chapter Two.
\textsuperscript{195} Cottered parish register. Also Clutterbuck (1815-1827), III, p. 518.
Chapter Two

Manuscript, Text, and Contexts:

Leeds Brotherton MS Lt q 32

The extant body of Pulter’s known literary work was uncovered by Mark Robson in the University of Leeds Brotherton library in 1996. The library purchased the manuscript (MS Lt q 32) in 1975 but, sharing a shelf mark with another document, it remained untouched and forgotten for over twenty years. The manuscript comprises a handsome 168-folio bound volume and several loose sheets. Bound in reversed calf and embossed with gold lettering the main volume is, except for some damage to the front cover, in excellent condition. This chapter considers the evidence provided by the physical manuscript and outlines two broad contexts, one material and one literary or intellectual, within which Pulter’s emblem poetry can be read. Part One details the contents of the manuscript as a whole, considering likely composition dates for Pulter’s poetry and prose, and also for the compilation of the main fair-copy volume. It also explores the manuscript’s provenance and considers what later annotations and additions reveal about the ways in which early owners and readers received Pulter’s work. Part Two of this chapter examines the evidence, specifically marginal annotations and references within the main body of the text, providing some indication of the literary context, including sources, models and analogues, within which Pulter was writing. While the physical evidence suggests the volume was composed, compiled and initially read within or near to the Pulters’

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1 An additional unfoliated leaf at the back of the manuscript has at one point served as a pastedown for the back cover, the inside card of which is now exposed.
manor house, Broadfield, in Hertfordshire, the text provides substantial evidence that Pulter was engaging with much broader social, political, religious and literary contexts.

Material Contexts

i. Contents of the Manuscript

Pulter’s manuscript volume is divided into two main sections: the front portion of the bound volume comprises sixty-two of Pulter’s devotional and occasional poems (ff. 3r-88v) together with her series of fifty-three emblem poems (ff. 90r-130r) and running in reverse from the back of the bound volume is a prose romance entitled ‘The Unfortunte Florinda’ (ff. 2v-36v reversed). The majority of Pulter’s poems together with the first part of the romance are in the hand of a single scribe and, immediately after the main series of occasional and devotional poems (ff. 3r-84r), are two poems in a hand that has been identified as Pulter’s own. One of these poems is entitled ‘The weepeinge wishe’ (f. 84v) and the other ‘The Hope’ (f. 88r); both are dated January 1665. Between these two poems, several others have been tipped into the bound volume. These include a third poem in Pulter’s own hand with no title but the first line ‘And must the sword this controverce deside’ (f. 87r). Two additional poems, almost certainly by Pulter appear in a hand of a later annotator that Sarah Ross refers to as ‘The

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2 The composition of the manuscript volume does not indicate that one text had priority over the other. While the romance is transcribed from the back of the volume there is nothing to suggest that it was considered any less important. It has its own title page and as it has been transcribed upside down and in reverse it functions as book in its own right. To reflect this I will be using the foliation as it appears in the manuscript and to distinguish it from the foliation attributed to the poems I will note that it is reversed, i.e. the title page to ‘The Unfortunte Florinda’ is on f.1r (reversed) while the title page to the occasional and devotional poems, bearing the inscription ‘Poems Breathed forth By the Nobel Hadassas, is on f.1r.

3 Both Mark Robson and Sarah Ross have made this identification; see Robson (2000), p.239; and Ross (2000), p. 152. For images of this hand together with the, Grand Rebel hand, and the main scribal hand see Robson (2000), pp. 240-42; and Seal Millman and Wright, (2005), p. 110.
Grand Rebel'. These are: ‘On the Fall of that Grand Rebel the Earl of Essex’ (f. 85r) and an untitled poem with the first line ‘Dear God from thy high Throne look down’ (f. 86r). The Grand Rebel has added one additional poem to the volume, again almost certainly by Pulter, entitled ‘Made when my spirits were sunk very low with sickness and sorrow May 1667. I being seventy one years old’ (f. 88v), which is copied onto the verso of ‘The Hope’. Also in this hand are two versions of a stanza from Thomas D’Urfey’s play The Banditti, Or, A Ladies Distress (1686) and part two of the romance. A second annotator, who Ross calls the ‘antiquarian’ has added one further poem, this time not by Pulter, called ‘A Pastorall on the Death of a young lady Mrs Ann Everett’ (f. 89r-v). This is dated 1708 and appears in the manuscript immediately after ‘Made when my spirits were sunk very low’.

The loose sheets accompanying the bound volume contain a draft version of the second half of ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’ and an untitled poem opening ‘Somnus why art thou still to mee unkinde’. Both of these texts are in the hand identified as Pulter’s. The ‘antiquarian’ is also responsible for a series of entries on loose sheets accompanying the manuscript volume, specifically a copy of a stanza opening ‘this black and sullen hour’; an outline of James Ley’s (Pulter’s father) career; Ley and Pulter family trees; and a list of the characters in ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’. In the ‘Grand Rebel’ hand there is a third version of D’Urfey’s stanza. There is also an incomplete copy of Judith Madan’s eighteenth-century poem ‘Abelard to Eloisa’ (c. 1720) transcribed by a third

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5 MS Lt q 32, ff. 84r and ir (reversed).
6 For a full tabulation of the manuscript see Ross (2000), Appendix I, pp. 252-4.
annotator in a later round italic hand.\textsuperscript{8} Sarah Ross has put forward a convincing argument regarding the identity of both ‘the antiquarian’ and the ‘Grand Rebel’. She suggests that the annotations are in variations of the same hand belonging to Angel Chauncy, grandson of the Hertfordshire antiquarian Henry Chauncy.\textsuperscript{9} His annotations were apparently added during the mid eighteenth century providing evidence of a later, albeit circumscribed, audience for Pulter’s manuscript.\textsuperscript{10}

Within the main manuscript volume, Pulter’s devotional, occasional and emblematic poems, together with the first half of the prose romance have been presented in a decorative scribal hand. No formal identification of this hand has been made but several individuals can be considered as possible scribes. The hand is italic not secretary, which could mean it was produced by a female rather than a male scribe.\textsuperscript{11} Evidence that women learnt this type of hand and were engaged in the calligraphic composition of literary manuscripts is provided by Jane Cavendish’s presentation volume of Civil War poetry, which she apparently compiled herself.\textsuperscript{12} Cavendish’s formal hand bears a superficial resemblance to that used by the compiler of Pulter’s volume, suggesting a similar educational background and lending weight to the supposition that it is a woman’s formal script. The compilation of Pulter’s manuscript apparently took place at several

\textsuperscript{8} Identified by Ross (2000), p. 153.
\textsuperscript{9} Ross (2000), p. 163.
\textsuperscript{10} For the dating of these additions see Ross (2000), p. 172.
\textsuperscript{11} Martin Billingsley noted in 1618 that the italic had ‘is conceived to be the easiest hand that is written with Pen, and to be taught in the shortest time: Therefore it is usually taught to women’, \textit{The Pens Excellencie} (1618), sig. C4r. Giles E. Dawson and Laetitia Kennedy-Skipton note that ‘Billingsley was right in saying women usually learned to write the italic hand (which he called Roman) rather than the secretary; of the autograph letters written by women that survive from the sixteenth century and the first decades of the seventeenth, most are in italic’, \textit{Elizabethan Handwriting 1500-1650} (Chichester: Phillimore & Co., 1981), p. 10. Dawson and Kennedy-Skipton do note however that many men also learnt italic hand alongside secretary and that it particularly ‘attracted calligraphers’ (1981), p. 9.
\textsuperscript{12} Ms Rawl Poet 16. For a discussion of this manuscript and an attribution of the hand see Marion Wynne-Davies, ‘’My Fine Delitive Tomb’: Liberating ‘Sisterly’ Voices during the Civil Wars’, in \textit{Female Communities 1600-1800: Literary Visions and Cultural Realities} ed. by Rebecca D’Monté and Nicole Pohl (London: Macmillan, 2000), pp. 113, 127 n. 8.
intervals between 1655 and the early years of the 1660s meaning that among
Pulter's female relatives there are several possible candidates for the role of
scribe. 13 These include three of her daughters: Anne, who lived until 1666, Mary,
who lived until 1677 and Margaret, who lived until 1686. 14 All of Pulter's other
daughters had died before the composition of the volume could have taken place.

Of the three of the Pulter's daughters alive between 1655/6 and 1665
Mary is the least likely to have been scribe. We have no record of her birth but,
as she did not marry until 1668, it is likely that was one of Pulter's youngest
children and may have been born between Elizabeth in 1641 and James in 1648.
Even if she were born at the earliest end of this scale, in 1655/6 it unlikely that,
aged thirteen or fourteen, she would have been capable of producing the
beautifully neat and consistent script in which Pulter's text is preserved. Pulter's
daughter Margaret, who was born in 1629 and who was therefore much older
than Mary, is a more likely candidate. Together with her husband, James
Forester, and son, Margaret appears to have been resident at (or at least very near
to) the family home during the later period at which the manuscript was
compiled. A note in the back of the volume refers to money 'delivered unto my
daughter Forster for goodwife Jacob for nursing James Dec. 6th 1662'. It is
possible to imagine a scenario in which the volume was present when Margaret
received the payment from her father (possibly because she was working on it)
and that, conveniently close to hand, it was used to record the transaction. Given
that the emblems and the romance appear to have been transcribed c. 1661, it is
possible that Margaret worked on the volume during the period of confinement

13 Possible dating for the manuscript's compilation are discussed in Part Two of this chapter.
14 I have found no samples of Mary Capel's, Anne Fairclough's or Margaret Forester's writing
with which to confirm or reject these suppositions. For further information about all three women
see Chapter One.
following James’s birth, a practice that would have been in keeping with Pulter’s own apparent habit of composing her poetry following the births of her own children.

Of Pulter’s three daughters, Anne emerges as the most likely candidate for the scribe. She appears to have taken a particular interest in her mother’s poetry as attested by the statement that Pulter’s poem ‘The Garden, or The Contention of Flowers’ was ‘at her desire written’.

She also features as a speaker in a second poem entitled ‘A Dialogue between two sisters Virgins bewailing their solitary life P[enelope] P[ulter]. A[nn]e P[ulter]’. In 1655, the year Penelope died, Anne would have been twenty and was possibly still unmarried. While still living at Broadfield, she may have undertaken the task of preserving for posterity the poetry she enjoyed. Following her marriage to Thomas Fairclough, Anne lived at Fairclough Halls Green, just a few miles from her parents’ home. Even if her marriage had taken place before 1661 she would therefore have been on hand to continue the transcription she had started.

Sarah Ross has suggested that one reason Pulter may have added the two poems dated 1665 to the volume herself is that the original scribe had died. The Cottered parish register records Anne’s death in April 1666 just a week after the birth of a son, suggesting she died from complications arising from childbirth. Pulter’s poems are dated January 1665 which, if she was using the Julian calendar, would have been just three months before Anne’s death.

Although we cannot be

15 MS Lt q 32, f. 19r.
16 MS Lt q 32, f. 77r.
17 For a discussion of where Anne was living at this time see Chapter One.
19 Anne’s brother Edward died in 1665 but it seems unlikely that he was the scribe. Born in 1638, he would have been seventeen or eighteen years old in 1655/6 and twenty-three in 1661. Although I have found no indication of where he received his education it is likely that he had been sent away by then. His brother John matriculated at Queen’s College Cambridge in 1664/5 when he was seventeen.
certain of the scribe’s identity, the transcription was evidently carried out under Pulter’s supervision; throughout the volume she has made minor corrections and additions to the scribal text, suggesting she was particularly concerned with the detail and quality of the final volume.20

Pulter’s separately designated series of emblem poems, the main focus of this thesis, opens on f. 92r with a title page bearing the scribal inscription ‘Emblemes’. The series, transcribed in the main scribal hand, follows the collection of occasional and devotional poems (ff. 1r-88v) and the several additional poems apparently added at a later date in various hands. The emblems are numbered in sequence but there is no emblem 18. A number ‘18’ has been added to the first line on f. 102r apparently in the mistaken belief that this was the start of a new poem; it is in fact the continuation of emblem 17 from the previous page. This suggests that the numbers (in the scribal hand) were added after the series had been transcribed. The final two emblem poems in the collection are not numbered as part of the emblem series, suggesting they may have been added to the manuscript (again, in the scribal hand) after the initial series had been transcribed. The first one, ‘When fair Aurora’, does not conform to the usual pattern of appearing immediately after the conclusion of the previous poem and a substantial gap remains on a page.21 There is a blank page (f. 129v) between this emblem and the next, which opens ‘An Old Man’.22 The unnumbered emblem ‘An Old Man’ is immediately followed by a blank folio (f. 131) and then (in reverse from the back of the manuscript) by Pulter’s prose romance; there are no subsequent poems in the volume. Due to their structural and thematic similarities with the rest of the emblems in the collection, I have

20 See ‘Note on the Text’ for a discussion of these additions and corrections.
21 MS Lt q 32, f. 128r.
22 MS Lt q 32, f. 130r.
decided to include these poems as part of the series reproduced here. The final numbered poem in the sequence is '52' but as there is no emblem 18 this leaves fifty-one emblems plus the two additional unnumbered poems meaning there are fifty-three emblem poems in total.23

ii. Dates

The main series of Pulter's occasional and devotional poems was apparently composed during the late 1640s and early 1650s, while the few additional poems, added to the volume in Pulter's hand or surviving on loose sheets, are dated 1665 and 1667.24 A significant proportion of Pulter's poems address the political events that occurred during some of the most turbulent years of the Civil Wars. The earliest datable poem in the collection is 'On the Kinge most excelent magisty' in which Pulter refers to the king as though he were still alive.25 While the reference to the 'Kinge' may be an allusion to Charles II, a central theme of the poem is the monarch's marriage, a key facet of the mythology of the Caroline court of the 1630s.26 In tandem with the royal marriage, the poem celebrates Charles's martial prowess, raising the possibly that it was composed in 1644. In military terms, 1644 was a triumphant one for the royalist forces after several years of defeat following the outbreak of war in 1642 and several more unsuccessful years before Charles was put under house arrest in 1646/7. In July 1644 Charles and Henrietta Maria, who then sailed for France, saw each other for

24 Some poems are dated while possible dates for others can be ascertained from references to specific personal and political events.
25 MS Lt q 32, f. 44r.
the last time. It is possible that the poem was composed prior to, or shortly after this event, and before it would have become clear that the royal display of marital unity had been undermined, in physical terms at least, by ensuing political events.

As the 1640s progressed, the Scots’ imprisonment of Charles I in February 1646/7 was apparently a particularly disturbing event for Pulter who, in one of her emblem poems, refers back to the actions of the ‘Perfidious’ Scots, the king’s traitorous ‘native side’. Charles was then handed over to the Parliamentarians who kept him under house arrest at Holdenbury House in Northamptonshire until June of that year. This event is recorded in three of Pulter’s poems: ‘The invitation into the Countrey to my D.[ear] D.[aughters] M.[argaret] P.[ulter] P.[enelope] P.[ulter] 1647 when his sacred Majestie was at unhappy [hour]’; ‘The complaint of the Thames 1647 when the best of Kings was imprisoned by the worst of Rebels at Holmbie’; and ‘Upon the imprisonment of his Sacred Majestie that unparaleld Prince King Charles the First’. In August the following year, the king’s supporters experienced a major, high profile defeat at the siege of Colchester. In direct contravention of the terms of their surrender, several royalist army leaders were executed, including Arthur Pulter’s cousin Arthur Capel. Pulter responds to this event with a poem ‘On those two unparraleld friends, Sir G.[eorge] Lisle and Sir C.[harles] Lucas’ (Angel Chauncy has added ‘who were shott to death at Colchester’), addressing the

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27 Emblem 25, 11, 20, 21.
28 MS Lt q 32, ff. 4v, 8v, 33r.
29 Pulter refers to Arthur Capel’s death in ‘On the same’, an elegy on the death of Charles I, f. 34r. She states: And noble Capell let it bee thy Glory / Though dead to live in his [i.e. Charles I’s] unparrild story
controversial execution of the two other royalist army officers. This event is also mentioned in ‘Of a young Lady at Oxford 1646’, which records the suicide of a young woman whose lover was killed fighting for the king. Less than six months after the siege at Colchester, in January 1648/9, Charles I himself was executed, prompting Pulter to compose three elegies mourning ‘such an unparreld loss’.

While the poems listed above address political events, many others reference significant events or periods in Pulter’s personal life. A poem addressed ‘To My Deare J. [ane] P. [uler] M. [argaret] P. [uler] P. [enelope] P. [uler] they beeing at London, I at Bradfield’ must have been composed before Jane’s death in October 1645, which would correspond with the composition of ‘On the Kinge most excelent magisty’ c. 1644. Jane’s death is remembered in two poems apparently composed two years later in 1647, ‘Upon the death of my deare and lovely daughter J. [ane] P. [uler]’ and ‘On the Same’, the same year in which Pulter records a fit of her own illness in ‘Made when I was sick 1647’. A further two poems, ‘Universall dissolution’ and ‘This was written’, record her

30 MS Lt q 32, f. 13v. Andrea Brady discusses this poem with reference to other contemporary texts relating to the siege, (2006), pp. 9-30.
31 This episode may be fictional; I have found no other contemporary references.
32 MS Lt q 32, f. 34r. Pulter’s three elegies are: ‘On that Unparraleld Prince Charles the first. his Horrid Murther’, f. 15r; ‘On the Horrid Murther of that incomparable Prince King Charles the First’, f. 34v; and ‘On the Same’, f. 34v.
33 The ‘M. P.’ listed in Pulter’s title is more likely to be her daughter Margaret than her daughter Mary. Margaret was born in 1629 and would have therefore have been fifteen years old if this poem was composed in 1644. Mary is likely to have been much younger; we do not know her date of birth but she did not marry until 1668. Even if she had married at the relatively advanced age of thirty she would only have been six years old in 1644. It seems more likely that she was born in the seven-year gap between the birth of Pulter’s daughter Elizabeth in 1641 and her son John in 1648.
34 MS Lt q 32, ff. 16v, 17v, 48r. Pulter notes that ‘Twice hath the Earth Thrown Cloris Mantle by’ and ‘twice hath seemd to mourn unto our sight/Like Jewes, or Chinesses in snowey white’. She suggests that two springs and two winter’s have passed since Janes death. While in ‘Upon the death’ Pulter explicitly states that she was writing two years after Jane’s death we can only suppose ‘On the Same’ has the same dating.
pregnancy with and the birth of her son John in 1648. Now that we have a more accurate date for Pulter’s birth it is possible to determine the date of ‘Alithea’s Pearl’ in which she states that she has lived ‘thirteen’ years as a ‘Mayd’ and ‘Thirtie three a Wife’. Pulter was born in 1605 so this poem was probably composed c. 1651. Following this, two poems, ‘The invocation of the Elements the longest Night in the year 1655’ and ‘Made when I was not well’, are dated, or were apparently composed in, 1655. In addition to the poems included in the bound volume by the main scribe, among the loose sheets and poems transcribed into the manuscript at a later date, two are dated 1665 and one 1667. A further undated poem ‘On the Grand rebel’, which refers to Charles II, was almost certainly composed after the Restoration.

The themes and content of Pulter’s occasional poems suggest they were transcribed into the bound manuscript prior to the Restoration; the only allusion to Charles II as king appears among the loose sheets. The latest dateable poems

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35 The full titles of these poems are: ‘Universall dissolution, made when I was with Child of my 15th Child my sonne John/ I being as every one thought in a Consumption 1648’, f. 10v; and ‘This was written 1648 when I Lay Inn with my Son John beeing my 15 Child. I being soe weak that in Ten dayes and Nights I never moved my Head one Jot from my Pillow, out of which great weakness, my gracious God restored me, that I still Live to magnifie his Mercie 1655’, f. 67r.

36 ‘Alithea’s Pearl’, f. 48v.

37 MS Lt q 32, ff. 59v, f. 73v. Penelope’s death in April 1655 is referenced in ‘Made when I was not well’, suggesting it may have been composed shortly after Pulter lost her daughter. Angel Chauncy has added ‘April 20. 1655’ to the title. The longest night of the year, or the winter solstice, always occurs on either the 21st or the 22nd of December.

38 ‘The Weepeinge Wishe January 1665’, f. 84v and ‘The Hope January 1665’, f. 88r. In keeping with the other elegies on her children, these may represent Pulter’s response to the death of her son Edward, which occurred in 1665. If Pulter was following the Julian calendar, January would have occurred towards the end of the year, rather than at the beginning. Alternatively, Pulter may have been thinking of those killed by the plague, which at the peak of the outbreak in 1665 had killed 7,000 people a week. By 1666 it had spread out to the localities, including Hertfordshire where a ‘pesthouse’ for nursing the sick was constructed at the heart of the county, see A. Lloyd Moote and Dorothy C. Moote, The Great Plague (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 294, 201.

39 ‘On the Fall of that Grand Rebel the Earl of Essex his Effigies in Henry the 7th’s Chappel in Westminster Abby’, f. 85r.

40 In ‘On the Fall of that Grand Rebel’ Pulter describes the destruction of the Earl of Essex’s tomb at Westminster. Royalists defaced the statue in 1646 by removing its head and hands but it was not completely destroyed until after the Restoration. This dating is strengthened by Pulter’s
in the collection, both apparently composed in 1655, are not the last to appear in the collection, which as a whole is not presented in a chronological order. This suggests that the poems were composed over a number of years and then arranged prior to, or during, the process of transcription. As the latest available dates for any of these poems is December 1655, this presents the strong possibility that the main series of occasional and devotional poems were compiled shortly after this date. The title of Pulter’s poem ‘This was written’ concludes with the statement: ‘that I so live to magnify his mercy 1655’. This statement implies that Pulter revisited her poems in 1655 possibly while preparing them for compilation. It is plausible that transcription of the poems began around this time, during late 1655 or early 1656. The paper on which the poetry has been transcribed, which bears a watermark dated 1655, supports this internal dating.

The first half of Pulter’s romance, ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’ was apparently composed between c.1656 and 1661, after the composition and possibly also the compilation of her occasional and devotional poetry. Her use of the romance genre, which was particularly popular with royalists during the 1650s, supports a composition date during that decade. Evidence of a more specific date is provided on ff.25v-26v (reversed) where Pulter paraphrases Francis Osborne’s Advice to a Son, which was first published in 1656. This reference to ‘our Augustus’, which is almost certainly an allusion to Charles II, rather than his father.

41 The scribe originally wrote ‘1665’ but changed the second ‘6’ to a ‘5’. Angel Chauncy has added ‘1655’ immediately after the scribe’s date.
44 Pulter’s borrowings from Osborne’s text, which form the basis of a misogynist speech spoken by the villainous Don Alphonso and contested by the heroine Fidelia, are numerous. A few examples are: Pulter’s rewriting of Osborne’s statement that woman is ‘in a far inferior Class of
occurs several pages into the narrative so it may have been written, or inserted, some time after she first began writing the romance. But it is plausible that Pulter completed the first part of the narrative within a relatively compact space of time and therefore that the text as a whole was written c. 1656. This would have coincided with the compilation of the occasional and devotional poetry into the manuscript volume. Another possibility however is that Pulter was using the 1658 reprint of Osborne’s text, suggesting that composition of the romance was begun slightly later. This suggestion is supported by Pulter’s reference to Osborne as the ‘learned Atheist’. In July 1658, the Oxford Antiquarian Anthony Wood, Pulter’s first cousin, recorded several complaints from local ministers to the vice-chancellor of Oxford University that Osborne’s text did ‘instil principles of Atheism into young Gentlemen’. Pulter may have been responding to the controversy the reprint of the text had generated in that year.

The latest possible date of composition for the first half of Pulter’s romance is 1661/2. Sarah Ross has argued that between 1661 and 1662 it was transcribed into the volume by the main scribe. She states that:

Household accounts in Pulter’s own hand, dating from 1660 and 1661, occur on the title page’s verso, and these are not inverted; that is, they are oriented according to the direction of the poem series. These accounts would appear to have been entered before The Unfortunate Florinda was transcribed, but one further — and later — account on the verso of a

perfection to that which makes it his business to worship and adore it’ (p. 49) as the assertion that men ‘spoyl that prowed Sex, with adoreing and Courting them, calling them our Mistresses, who as one Learnedly sais are in Clasis of the creatures many degrees below Man’ (f. 25v (reversed)); her reference to Osborne’s argument that ‘if it happen that your wife be impotent or infected (as not a few are) with one or more of those loathsom Diseases incident to weake feminine nature, which render her unsociable you are posted off, both by lawyers and Divines, to the same patience’ (p. 53) with the statement that ‘as that Elegant pen expresses it she hath one or more of those diseases, which that sex are too too apt to have then the suffring husband, is both by Lawyers and Divines posted of that beggerly vertue Patience’ (f. 25v (reversed)); and her appropriation of Osbome’s description of marriage as ‘padlock’ hung ‘upon the liberty of men’ (p. 57), a point echoed in the statement that man should not have to suffer that ‘Padlock Mariage, to bee hung upon his liberty’ (f. 25v (reversed)).

second title page seems to have been entered after the transcription. It is in a new hand, which does not occur elsewhere in the manuscript, is not inverted, and records a payment made by Pulter for the wetnursing of her grandson in December 1662.46

More specifically the 1661 entry is dated the 25th March suggesting that Pulter was using the Julian calendar and that she was settling her accounts at the end of the year. The entry in the ‘new hand’ is December 1662, suggesting that the transcription of the first part of the romance took place between March and December that year, during a period of approximately eight or nine months. The continuation of the romance, ‘The second part of the Unfortunate Florinda’ is extant in Pulter’s own hand on loose sheets accompanying the manuscript volume. It appears to be a working draft complete with deletions and insertions and supplying evidence of Pulter’s writing practices.47 Angel Chauncy has made a fair copy of text in the manuscript volume immediately following on from ‘The first part’, which is in the hand of the main scribe. It is possible that Pulter composed the second half of the romance during or after the first part was transcribed into the volume. If the main scribe was no longer available after 1665 this might explain why the text was not added to the final volume.

It seems likely that Pulter composed her emblem poems, together with the romance, after the execution of Charles I on January 30th 1648/9 and before the Restoration of his son in May 1660. This supposition is based on the fact that in her emblems Pulter anticipates Charles’s return but never refers to it actually taking place. Given that Pulter was an ardent royalist we might expect her have composed Restoration poems. The absence of such poems in the manuscript, while it may suggest she did not, may alternatively indicate that they were

47 The evidence provided by these notes in considered in the Note on the Text.
written after the manuscript had been compiled. In contrast to the occasional and devotional poems, none of the emblems have dates so we have to rely on evidence supplied by the poems. The general picture provided by these poems is that they were composed over a period of several years, spanning the 1650s. Five poems refer to the regicide: emblem 4, for example, refers to the ‘king kild at this Isle’; emblem 19 blames the nobility’s failure for the death of ‘our brave King’; emblem 25 encodes the death of the ‘Best of Kings’ within the familiar royalist narratives of the stag hunt and the betrayal of Christ; emblem 50 describes the decapitation of ‘His sacred Head which wore our Brittish Crown’; and emblem 51 bemoans ‘C. C. kild and Bannished wee with sad hearts deplore’. 48 It is not stated who exactly ‘C.C.’ is, or are, but we can be fairly certain that Pulter is referring to Charles I and his son, respectively killed and banished from the kingdom.

Throughout her emblems, Pulter calls for the restoration of the younger Charles to the throne following the death of his father. In emblem 4 she says that the nation will never again have such a good king as Charles I ‘Unles our God his princely Son restore’ and emblem 51 ends with the prayer: ‘Oh let a C. come and our Joys restore/For C. his sake dear God I thee implore’. 49 It would appear therefore that these poems were composed prior to the Restoration in May 1660. The latest date indicated by the poems is Pulter’s second emblem in which she addresses her surviving children with the statement: ‘Eight of your number finished have their story’. The seventh of the Pulter’s children to die was Penelope, who was buried on April 20th 1655, while the eighth may have been

48 Emblem 4, l. 25; emblem 19, l. 28; emblem 25, l. 15; emblem 50, l. 18 emblem 51, l. 13.
49 Emblem 4, l. 27, emblem 51, l. 14-15.
James who was buried on August 17th 1659. The date of death for one of the Pulters’ children has not been recorded but if no other child died between 1655 and 1659, this would suggest that the poem was composed no earlier than 1659 and no later than 1665 when another of the Pulters’ sons, Edward, died. Given the lack of references to anything that occurred after 1660, it seems plausible that Pulter’s second emblem was one of the last to have been written and that this took place either prior to or relatively soon after James’s death in August 1659.

The possibility that the series was composed during the 1650s is strengthened by the many allusions it contains to events that occurred during that decade: in emblem 20 Pulter refers to the second marriage of Cromwell’s daughter Bridget, which took place in June 1652; within the margin of emblem 10 she refers to the appearance of a ‘canibal’ at Baldock fair in 1653; and in emblem 50 she refers to Jamaica, which Cromwell seized from Spain in 1655. In addition to these events, Pulter includes allusions and references to texts published during the 1650s. These include an allusion in emblem 48 to John Ogilby’s rewriting of the fable of the mice and frogs, published in his edition of Aesop’s Fables (1651), and a marginal note accompanying emblem 11, which refers to Robert Sanderson’s text Twenty Sermons Formerly Preached (1656).

Pulter occasionally refers to events that took place during the 1640s including,
for example, the imprisonment of 4,500 royalist soldiers in the royal mews
following the battle of Naseby in 1645, but there is no mention of anything that
took place during the 1660s. The high number of references to the 1650s
suggests that while Pulter may have occasionally been thinking back to the
1640s, those events taking place during the 50s were more immediate and
therefore foremost in her mind.

While the emblems were almost certainly composed during the broad
period of the 1650s it is possible, although with less certainty, to estimate a more
precise period during which the majority of them were produced. Throughout her
series of emblems Pulter focuses on Cromwell, specifically while he was
occupying the position of Protector. In emblem 48 she describes how Cromwell
has risen from the ranks of the ‘vulgar’ in order to ‘reign’ and in emblem 37
describes ‘hee that hath three Kingdoms in his power’. Drawing on a
contemporary trend for scatological attacks on the monarch’s opposition, Pulter
goes on to characterise Cromwell as Ibis, a giant bird ultimately destroying both
the Presbyterians and the Independent party with his own filth. For Pulter,
Cromwell’s rise to power has made him personally responsible for the regicide
and she asks ‘Why did not Oliver that Pulley trie’; in a vision of revenge she
images Cromwell testing the gallows lever on his own neck. In emblem 20
Pulter refers to the remarriage of the ‘Protectors daughter’ confirming that she
was thinking of Cromwell specifically in his role as Protector and not his earlier

53 This incident is recorded in emblem 36, l. 24. For a contemporary account see the anonymous
pamphlet The Manner How the Prisoners Are to Be Brought Into the City of London (1645)
54 Emblem 48, l. 31; emblem 37, l. 21.
55 Emblem 52, l. 11. Jerome de Groot discusses similar attacks in Royalist Identities
(Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), p. 95. They include John Taylor’s The Devil Turn’d Round-Head
(1642) that shows ‘the Devil literally defecating Roundheads’ and Stop Your Noses (1648)
depicting the nation on a ‘Close stoole’ attempting to ‘empty itself of the excrement of the
Parliament’.
56 Emblem 50, l. 20.
roles. Calling for the restoration of Charles, later Charles II, in emblem 51 she says that if they are not saved they will remain ‘slaves to C.[romwell] for evermore’. The evidence raises the significant possibility that the majority of Pulter’s emblems were composed over a period of approximately five years, between December 1653, when Cromwell became Lord High Protector, and September 1658, when he died.

The emblem series as a whole is likely to have been added to the bound volume after August 1659, when James Pulter died, and prior to 1665, when the main scribe appears to have stopped working. More specifically, it may have transcribed during 1660/61, when the first half of the romance was added to the manuscript. As with the occasional poems, there is no sense that Pulter’s emblem series is presented in chronological order and it is possible that that series was arranged either during or just prior to the process of transcription. With regard to any meaningful arrangement of the emblems, Sarah Ross has suggested that the first two poems were added retrospectively as a means of framing the collection. She describes them as ‘companion prefatory pieces to Pulter’s emblem series’ in which ‘political circumstances are a constant backdrop over which Christian love – its nature and practice – is established as the series’ transcendent theme’. Given the vehemently royalist and specifically anti-Cromwell message of the poems, it is possible that Pulter waited until after his death, or even until the Restoration, before committing them to the volume.

57 Emblem 37, l. 36.
58 Emblem 51, l. 16.
iii. Provenance and Publication

The Brotherton Library purchased Pulter’s manuscript (MS Lt q 32) from Christie’s on Wednesday October 8th, 1975 after Sir Gilbert Inglefield, collector, and one time Mayor of London, put it up for sale. The only other item put up for sale by Sir Gilbert at that time was an apparently unrelated manuscript entitled ‘House of Lords. Transactions, petitions, judgements, etc. delivered in the House of Lords, including evidence given by Titus Oates relating to the trial of Edward Coleman between June 5 and December 28, 1678’ bound together with ‘2 printed Popish Plot trials [Wing T.2185 and T.2268]’. There are no extant records of Sir Gilbert’s collection so I have not been able to ascertain how he originally acquired the manuscript. Prior to this, the ownership history of the manuscript remains uncertain.

Ross suggests that Pulter’s manuscript may have passed through the hands of the Hertfordshire antiquarian Henry Chauncy, author of The Historical Antiquities of Hertfordshire (1700), although it is not clear whether he would have owned the text or just had temporary access to it. Chauncy was connected to the Pulter family through the marriage of his daughter Martha to Arthur and Hester Pulter’s grandson and sole heir James Forester. In his own text Chauncy includes some information derived from an ‘Original Roll in the Possession of Arthur Pulter, Esq. lately deceased’, implying either that there was some personal connection between the two men or that Chauncy had access to the Pulter family

60 I am grateful to Marijke Booth, Archives Assistant, Christie’s Archives, for supplying this information.
61 David Inglefield, the late Sir Gilbert’s son, has no recollection of the manuscript and no record of its purchase. It has therefore not been possible to trace from where Sir Gilbert originally purchased the manuscript. Personal correspondence with Mr. Inglefield 23 February 2007. I am grateful to W. Bro. Peter Burnage from the Gilbert Inglefield Lodge for assisting me in this matter.
63 Pulter family tree, MS Lt q 32, loose sheets, f. iiir.
papers between the time of Arthur's death in 1689 and the publication of his own
text in 1700. The twentieth-century historian Reginald Hine, who refers to a
manuscript 'begun by Arthur Pulter about 1670, continued by James Forester,
and ended by Sir Henry Chauncy', confirms the trajectory of documents from
Arthur Pulter to James Forester to Henry Chauncy. Of the four different
annotators to have added to Pulter's original text Ross identifies two, which she
labels the 'antiquarian' and the 'Grand Rebel', as Henry Chauncy's grandson
(and Martha Forester's nephew) Angel. Angel inherited his grandfather's
extensive library so he may have acquired the manuscript along with Chauncy's
other books and papers. Alternatively, Angel Chauncy had a personal connection
with the Pulter's descendents who may have allowed him to access the
manuscript. Between 1728 and 1762, he was rector of Cottered parish church,
having been preferred to the living by his cousin, Hester Pulter's great-grandson
and the heir of Broadfield, Pulter Forester. He may have had access to the
papers as a consequence of this connection.

While the manuscript may have passed into the Chauncy family, there is
still the possibility that it remained within Broadfield house and was inherited by
subsequent descendents of the Pulter family. When Hine published his article in
1951 the manuscript composed by Arthur Pulter, James Forester and Henry
Chauncy, together with other papers previously owned by the Pulters were 'in
the safe keeping of H.E.Dudley' whose wife was the owner of the manor when it

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64 Ross suggests Chauncy may have had access to them following the death of his son-in-law in
1696, Ross (2000), p. 164. Chauncy himself states that he has been referring to an 'Original Roll
in the Possession of Arthur Pulter, Esq. lately deceased', (1975), 1, p. 32.
65 Hine (1951), p. 17.
collection of materials in Angel Chauncy's hand (HALS D/ECyF8) has convinced me that Ross
is correct in her identification of both the 'antiquarian' and 'The Grand Rebel'.
68 Memorial inscription, Cottered Church.
was sold in 1938.\textsuperscript{69} This suggests that papers to which Henry Chauncy had access were returned to the house after he had perused and in this example added to them. It is possible therefore that, together with these papers, Pulter's literary manuscript remained at the house until the Dudleys removed it, along with other manuscript papers, either on inheritance in 1906 or some time between then and the 1930s.\textsuperscript{70} This would mean that prior to this point all later owners of the house might have had access to Pulter's text.\textsuperscript{71} Alternatively, it is possible that any of these inhabitants may have removed or sold the manuscript during their time of residence or when leaving the house.

Pulter’s text was not printed in her lifetime and although transcribed into a handsome presentation volume there is no evidence of an intended readership beyond her immediate family. Several of her poems are addressed directly to her children, including emblem 2, which opens with the line ‘Come my Dear Children come and Happy bee’, and Pulter’s husband Arthur may possibly be responsible for the inscription at the back of the volume.\textsuperscript{72} The note clearly states that money for a wetnurse has been delivered to ‘\textit{my daughter} Forster for goodwife Jacob for nursing James Dec. 6\textsuperscript{th} 1662’ (my italics). James, who was

\textsuperscript{69} Hine (1951), p. 17, n.2, p.8.

\textsuperscript{70} The \textit{VCH} notes that in 1906 Broadfield was inherited by Mrs H.E. Dudley of Stanstead, Essex and her sister Mrs H. W. Smith of Ware.

\textsuperscript{71} When Pulter Forester and his wife Agnes nee Harvey died (in 1753 and 1762 respectively) the house passed to their eldest son William and his wife Anne nee Mundy. They died without issue (in 1768 and 1779) and Broadfield was left to Anne’s niece Millicent Mundy who later married Captain Richard French. After their deaths the house went to their eldest son Richard Forrester French (who was living in Devon) and, when he died without children in 1843, the house was sold by his executors in 1852 to Robert Bird Wilkins. Wilkins died in 1868 and Broadfield passed to Robert Usborn Wilkins who devised it to Nathan Humphrey. Humphrey died in 1906 and the house passed to Mrs H.W Smith and Mrs H.E. Dudley. The Dudleys sold the house in 1938 but in 1951 Mr H.E. Dudley was still in possession of manuscripts relating to the Pulter family suggesting that they had remained in the house as it descended from person to person; H.C. Andrews, ‘Sidelights on Brasses in Hertfordshire Churches, Codicote, Cottered’, \textit{East Herts Archaeological Society: Transactions} 12.2 (1947-49), pp. 85-96 (p. 94).

\textsuperscript{72} A letter in the British Library from Arthur Pulter to William Hale (Add. 33572, f. 99) and dated July 1636 is unfortunately not in Arthur’s hand. His signature, while not sufficient evidence for a concrete identification to be made, is however in a small, neat hand in keeping with that in Pulter’s manuscript.
born in 1660, was the son of the Pulters’ daughter Margaret and her husband James Forrester. It is possible that Pulter had a third party add the note to the manuscript or that her husband Arthur made the annotation on his own behalf.

The text is in a secretary script suggesting it was added by a man and the most likely candidate would be Arthur. This would suggest that Pulter’s husband had some access to the volume and may even have read its contents. The manuscript itself is in extremely good condition suggesting it has not been subjected to much handling over the last four centuries. It is possible that the manuscript was compiled as an object destined to be kept and treasured rather than to be frequently read, even within the narrow confines of the family. The physical quality of the manuscript volume may in part be responsible for the attention Pulter’s text received and for its subsequent preservation and survival when many other texts, particularly those by women have apparently not endured. 73

Later additions made to the manuscript provide some indication of the way in which the volume has been received by its, albeit apparently quite small, readership. At some point a child called James has practiced his handwriting and it is possible that this is Pulter’s grandson James Forrester. 74 This suggests that the manuscript was exposed to the young domestic readership for which Pulter apparently intended it. More specifically, the notes indicate that, in keeping with the didactic emphasis of the emblem poems, the volume was being used with an educational context. In addition to James’ contributions, Angel Chauncy has

73 We know of one time existence of these documents because as Margaret Ezell states ‘one finds numerous anecdotal traces of handwritten texts by women when reading contemporary and later printed sources’, (2008), p. 334. One such ‘anecdotal trace’ can be found in Elizabeth Isham’s manuscript autobiography where she notes that ‘I can no better express my mothers troubles then out of the nots of her owne hand-writing, which she keept (carring then about her) as rememberance and instructions to her selfe’, Princeton University Library, Robert H. Taylor Collection RTC01 no.62, f. 11r.

made several additions to the volume. These include two copies of a verse stanza from Thomas D’Urfey’s play The Banditti, Or, A Ladies Distress (1686); and a poem by a ‘Mr. T.’ entitled ‘A Pastorall on the Death of a young lady Mrs Ann Everett’ and dated 1708. A further copy of D’Urfey’s stanza, genealogical information, including family trees, of the Pulter and Ley families, a list of the characters in ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’ are included among the loose sheets accompanying the manuscript. These additions provide some indication of Angel Chauncy’s own interests in genealogy, local history and poetry, which are also evident in the collection of his papers held at the Hertfordshire Record Office. If Chauncy did not inherit the manuscript from his grandfather, it is possible that Pulter Forester knew of his interest in locally produced poetry and brought the volume to his attention.

The additional poetical texts accompanying the manuscript shed some light on later readers’ understanding of the manuscript and of their author. The stanza Angel Chauncy reproduced from D’Urfey’s popular song is in keeping with the prevailing tone of Pulter’s poetry collection:

There is one black and sullen hour
Fate has decreed our Life shall know
Else wee should slight Almighty Pow’r
Bewitch’t by Ioyes wee finde below.  

This stanza points to a theme running through Pulter’s poetry in which, afflicted by melancholy, she seeks to transcend earthly affliction through the

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75 MS Lt q 32, ff. 84r, 89r, ir (reversed). I think the author is a ‘Mr. T.’ and not a ‘Mr. P.’ as Ross has it (2000), p. 153.
77 MS Lt q 32, f. 84r. A variation appears on the frontispiece to ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’, which states:

There is one [black] (and sullen hower
which Fate has decreed our life shall know
Else we should slight Almighty power
and rape with the Joyes we finde below

MS Lt q 32, f. ir (reversed). A third version (concluding ‘and rape with the joyees wee finde below’) has been preserved in a small slip of paper accompanying the main manuscript volume.
remembrance of God. A second poem accompanying the manuscript, but apparently added by someone later than Chauncy, is Judith Madan’s ‘Abelard to Eloisa’ (1720), which she wrote in response to Alexander Pope’s poem of the same name. The poem was first published in William Pattison’s Poetical Works (1728) and attributed to him but was published several times under Madan’s own name from 1755. Significantly, Madan was the granddaughter and niece of Sarah and Mary Cowper, the well-known Hertfordshire diarists. It is possible that the unknown scribe brought the works of Pulter and Madan together as examples of the poetry produced by women with local connections. The notes by James Forrester, Angel Chauncy, and the later unidentified scribe firmly locate Pulter’s manuscript within a Hertfordshire setting either close to or within her family home, where it seems to have remained for several centuries after its author’s death.

Sources and Models

The later readers’ additions to Pulter’s literary manuscript, specifically the three copies of the stanza from D’Urfey’s song, the pastoral by ‘Mr. T.’ and Madan’s poem, suggest these readers took a particular interest in identifying her text with significant literary contexts. In recent years this interest has been revived in the scholarly articles primarily concerned with Pulter’s occasional and devotional

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verse, from which two broad literary contexts have emerged. In keeping with the connection Angel Chauncy makes between the sentiments of Pulter’s poetry and that of the royalist, later Tory, writer Thomas D’Urfey, the royalist literary culture of the 1640s and 50s has so far emerged as a particularly significant context for Pulter’s verse. Another important category, this time in keeping with that implied by the anonymous scribe’s engagement with the volume, is that of contemporary women writers. This emerges in the reproduction of several poems and an extract of her prose romance in anthologies of early modern women’s writing.81 A detailed exploration of Pulter’s emblem series, together with its marginalia, indicates that while Pulter may have been consciously engaging with royalist literary culture and while her verse has much in common with that produced by contemporary women, the field of her interests and influences was much wider and much more diverse than these contexts imply.

The first article to address the issue of Pulter’s literary influences was published by Peter Davidson in the Times Literary Supplement in 1999.82 Davidson points to affinities between Pulter’s elegy ‘Upon the Death of my deare and lovely Daughter J. [ane] P. [ulter]’ and Marvell’s ‘The Nymph Complaining of the Death of her Fawn’.83 He argues that ‘Her lines follow a run of imagery which moves too closely to that of the second half of Marvell’s poem for the similarity to be attributed to coincidence’. He specifically identifies shared allusions to a ‘location of a place of flowers’; ‘the wounded dear’; ‘images of

81 Selections of Pulter’s poetry can be found in Seal-Millman and Wright (2005), pp. 111-27; and Stevenson and Davidson (2001), pp. 187-94. A section of Pulter’s prose romance ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’ together with the second half of emblem 20 appears in Ostovich and Sauer, (2003), pp. 302-3, 389-91. Margaret Ezell uses Pulter’s manuscript as a case study in her reconsideration of the field of early women’s writing now that we have a better knowledge of women’s manuscript production, (2008), pp. 331-355.
cold whiteness'; 'roses and lillies'; and 'the image of the surviving mourner turning, like Niobe, to a weeping stone'. In support of these poetical details Davidson notes circumstantial evidence supporting the possibility that Pulter may have had access to Marvell's text. He refers to 'two Marvell letters ... found among family papers in a solicitor's office in Hitchin, Hertfordshire', which may have been sent to Thomas Rolt, Marvell's Hertfordshire friend and it is possible that his poetry reached the area by these means. Davidson also notes that another Hertfordshire women, Sarah Cowper, entered a poem possibly by Marvell into her commonplace book, potentially confirming that his poetry was circulating in the area. Finally Davidson suggests that Pulter may have acquired Marvell's poem through her associates in London. 84

As Sarah Ross has demonstrated, the connection between Pulter's poem and Marvell's is complicated by Davidson's misdating of Pulter's poem. He states that it was written in 1648, when it was most probably begun in 1647. 85 Marvell's text is thought to be an allusion to Fanshawe's translation of Guarini's Il Pastor Fido, which was published in 1647. 86 This means that the process of transition from Fanshawe's text to Pulter's, via Marvell's, would have had to have occurred in a very short space of time. 87 A possible alternative to this trajectory is that the similarities between Marvell and Pulter's poem can be attributed to their shared use of common literary conventions and sources. In her second poem on Jane's death, entitled 'On the Same', Pulter, in keeping with the

85 Pulter states that 'Twice hath the Earth Thrown Cloris Mantle by' indicating that two springs or years have passed since Jane's death in 1645.
87 Ross (2005), p. 3. The section of the poem on which Davidson primarily bases his argument has been inserted into the text at a later date. It is not part of the poem that appears on ff. 16v-17v and instead has been transcribed (by the main scribe) onto f. 16r. Manicules point to the first line of this section and to the place where the section should appear in the main poem.
imagery of ‘Upon the Death’, uses repeated images of red and white, contrasting ‘Ruddy Aurora’ with Jane’s ‘snowey hand’ and her ‘white even nose’ with her ‘Ruby Lipps’. She also alludes to the rose and the lily, identified by Davidson as a key point of similarity with Marvell’s text. As Pulter herself says in another poem, ‘red and white’ represent ‘perfect love’ and are frequently used in early modern poetry, most strikingly in Shakespeare’s version of the myth of Venus and Adonis.88 Similarly, roses and lilies, another literary staple, are associated with the heightened, spiritual, eroticism of the biblical Song of Songs.89 The death of a hart or stag, or in Marvell’s case a fawn, was a common emblematic motif used to portray the death of an innocent or noble person.90 While these connections do not entirely rule out Marvell’s influence on Pulter, they point to a much broader literary tradition within which she was writing.

Elsewhere in her poetry, Pulter uses the motif of the wounded stag to portray the death of Charles I, a royalist image in keeping with her more general interest in royalist verse. Both Sarah Ross and Catherine Coussens have noted the similarities between Pulter’s occasional and devotional verse and that of prominent royalist authors of the 1640s and 50s. They both point to affinities between Pulter’s devotional lyrics and those published by Herrick, Vaughan, and

88 ‘The Garden, or The Contention of Flowers, To my Deare Daughter Mistris Anne Pulter, at her desire written’, MS Lt q 32, f. 31v. Pulter’s reference to ‘perfect love’ is spoken by the Adonis flower who, recounting his affair with Venus, expresses his regret that had he ‘not bin soe coy’ he would now be ‘faire Aprodite her Joy’.
90 A key analogue for this motif is the death of Silvia’s pet deer at the hands of Ascanius in book 7 of Virgil’s Aeneid, ll. 475-509. For Pulter’s knowledge of Virgil’s text see emblem 43, note to lines 1-10. For a more detailed discussion of the stag motif in contemporary literary see emblem 22, note to lines 1-12 and emblem 25, note to lines 11-14.

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More specifically, Ross suggests that Pulter may have been directly drawing on the work Francis Quarles, in particular his emblem on the biblical book of Esther 7.3, from *Emblemes* (1635), which bears a striking resemblance to Pulter's own poem 'The weeping wishe'. Pulter's interest in emblems, evidenced by her own lengthy series of emblematic poems, together with Quarles's popularity throughout much of the seventeenth century, lend some weight to this suggestion. Similarly, Coussens moves on from her identification of Pulter's verse with royalist literary culture in general to suggest that her elegy 'On the Horrid Murder of that incomparable Prince, King Charles the First' might be a response to Henry King's 'Elegy upon the most Incomparable King Charles the First'. Before King's poem was published in 1659 it had circulated extensively in manuscript, suggesting that Pulter may have been engaging with royalist verse in manuscript as well as print.

Pulter's occasional and devotional poetry reveals further correspondences with Henry King's verse. Similar political preoccupations can be seen, for example, in her poem addressed to Lucas and Lisle, which evokes King's on the same subject. Moving away from her explicitly political verse, Pulter's elegy 'On the Same', with its refrain 'Tell mee noe more', evokes King's 'Sonnet: Tell

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92 Ross (2005), p. 6. There is evidence to suggest that Pulter, and other members of her family, had some connection with Archbishop James Ussher who had employed Quarles as his secretary between 1625 and 1630. See Chapter One.
93 Arthur Nethercot discusses the highs and lows of Quarles' seventeenth-century reputation in 'The Literary Legend of Francis Quarles', *Modern Philology* 20.3 (1923), 225-40. He states that 'During his life, and for two or three decades after his death [which occurred in 1644], Quarles achieved a considerable popularity ... Within about thirty years of his death, however, there was the complete reversal of the former opinion', p. 225.
96 Pulter's 'On those two unparaleld friends, Sir G Lisle and Sir C Lucas' (MS Lt q 32, f. 13v.) can be compared with King's 'An Elegy on Sir Charls Lucas, and Sir George Lisle' (Crum (1965), p. 101).
mee no more how faire shee is'. Both poems express sentiments of lost love, grief and a compulsion to dwell on the cause of emotional pain. In a poem bemoaning the imprisonment of Charles I in 1647, Pulter uses the similar refrain 'ask mee noe more'. While these similarities may signal that Pulter took a specific interest in King's verse, they provide a stronger indication of Pulter's more general engagement with trends in Caroline manuscript culture. As Scott Nixon demonstrates, the refrain 'Aske me no more' with variations including 'Tell mee noe more' occur in over forty surviving manuscript sources. He begins his exploration with a poem bearing the refrain 'Aske me no more' that is traditionally attributed to Thomas Carew. This connection is not supported by the manuscript evidence, which only rarely provides any indication of authorship and when it does, supplies several possibilities. Nixon concludes that the early-seventeenth-century reader was not particularly interested in authorship and that within the context of the manuscript verse miscellany, 'the successful poem is arguably one which both responds to other contemporary verse concerning similar subjects, and which in turn provokes responses'. Pulter, rather than turning to named authors, is likely to have been reading and responding to a much broader culture of manuscript poetical exchange.

In addition to literary trends, Pulter's poetry reveals a more general engagement with the contemporary intellectual and cultural environment. She reveals, for example, a keen interest in contemporary scientific developments,
specifically within the fields of astronomy and alchemy.\textsuperscript{101} Jayne Archer has pointed to a literary tradition of alchemical allusion in which poets including John Donne, Margaret Cavendish, George Herbert, Jane Lead, Andrew Marvell and Katherine Philips all refer to alchemical images and processes.\textsuperscript{102} But Archer suggests that despite the precedent set by these high-profile contemporary poets, Pulter was not relying on them for imagery and she goes on to demonstrate that Pulter's poetry indicates a 'thorough knowledge of alchemical literature and experimental work' that would not have been unusual among women of her social standing during the period.\textsuperscript{103} Archer draws attention to a much wider arena in which Pulter's work can be read, one which encompasses not only prominent literary traditions of the period but also on more diverse and esoteric textual and practical sources. Further evidence for Pulter's interest in areas of intellectual exploration beyond the sphere of literary works is provided by marginal and textual references to the specific books she was using.

The references in the margins of Pulter's emblems provide a helpful starting point for the exploration of her sources. She references a wide-range of texts with publication dates spanning several decades. They include Thomas Lodge's translation of Simon Goulart's \textit{A Learned Summary Upon the Famous Poeme of William of Saluste Lord of Bartas} (1621) and it is likely that if Pulter was reading Goulart's commentary, she was also familiar with Du Bartas's highly read volume, possibly through Josuah Sylvester's popular translation (1621).\textsuperscript{104} In addition to Goulart, Pulter references Pliny's \textit{Natural History},

\textsuperscript{101} For examples of astronomical poems 'The Center' (f. 46v) and 'This was written 1648, when I Lay Inn' (f. 129r) and for alchemical poems see 'The Circle' (f. 40v) and emblem 40.
\textsuperscript{102} Archer (2005), p. 1.
\textsuperscript{103} Archer (2005), p. 8.
\textsuperscript{104} Susan Snyder discusses the immense popularity of Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas' text, particularly during the first half of the seventeenth century, in \textit{The Divine Weeks and Works of}
translated by Philemon Holland (1601). She also refers directly to Robert Johnson’s translation of Botero Giovanni’s travel narrative *The Travellers Breviat* (1601) (which went into five editions by 1626), although this appears to be the only use of this source. She was also reading history books including Francis Bacon’s *The Historie of the Raigne of King Henry VII* (1622); Richard Verstegan’s *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (Antwerp, 1605); and Thomas North’s translation of Plutarch’s *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romaines* (1579) together with his treatise on ‘Isis and Osiris’, reproduced in Holland’s translation of *The Morals* (1603). Sermons also had a significant influence on Pulter’s compositions and she lists John Donne’s *LXXX Sermons* (1640) and Robert Sanderson’s *Twenty Sermons Formerly Preached* (1656). Her Biblical references suggest she was using the Authorised Version, commissioned by King James I in 1611.

In addition to the texts specifically listed in the margins to her emblem poems there are several other places in the volume where Pulter refers to specific books. Her prose romance, ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’ includes a direct reference to Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621). Pulter apparently composed the romance around the same time as her emblems and it
seems likely that Burton’s volume, with its proliferation of esoteric knowledge, had some bearing on their content. Literary texts referenced directly include John Ogilby’s edition of *Aesop’s Fables* (1651) and *Orlando Furioso* (1591), which was first published in English translation by Sir John Harington, to whom Pulter was related through her sister’s marriage to his son, also called John.\(^{110}\) There is also evidence that Pulter took an interest in contemporary pamphlet debates; as we have seen, her prose romance includes a passage derived from Francis Osborne’s *Advice to a Son* (1656), a pamphlet that caused considerable controversy when it was republished in 1658.\(^{111}\)

My attempts to trace any books to have emerged from the Pulters’ library have so far proved unsuccessful.\(^{112}\) However, Reginald Hine refers to a manuscript composed by the Pulters’ grandson James Forester and detailing the books present in Broadfield between 1689 and 1696, after Arthur’s death.\(^{113}\)

While these books may have been brought to the house in the sixteen years between Pulter’s death and that of her husband it is possible that many of them were there before. Hine notes several texts, which may have some significance for Pulter’s compositions including several commentaries on the Bible, specifically Fuller’s *History of the Old and New Testament* (1650); Henry

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\(^{110}\) For a discussion of the evidence that suggests Pulter was using Ogilby’s edition of Aesop’s fables see emblem 48, note to lines 17-20. In her poem ‘To Sir W.D. Upon the unspeakable Loss of the most conspicuous and chief Ornament of his Frontispiece’ (f. 83r), Pulter refers to ‘Some Coy young Lass’ who ‘would prefer some base Medore’. This is a reference to Angelica who in *Orlando Furioso* chooses the pagan page Medoro as her lover over all the heroes in the Christian army, including Orlando (canto 19). Pulter then goes on to state that she will ‘Astolpho like to Heaven ascend’ a reference to Astolphe’s journey to the moon to recover Orlando’s lost wits (canto 34), see Seal-Millman and Wright (2005), p. 252. For a discussion of Pulter’s association with John Harington see Chapter One.


\(^{112}\) Email correspondence with the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the British Library, Cambridge University library and the Bodleian Library has not uncovered any books inscribed by Pulter or any members of her family.

\(^{113}\) Hine (1951), pp. 16-17. I have not been able to locate this manuscript.
Ainsworth, *Annotations Upon the Book of Moses* (1623); and a commentary on the Book of Moses.\textsuperscript{114} Davenant’s *Works* (1673) are included on the list but this edition was published a long time after Pulter apparently produced her poem addressed to the famous courtier and poet ‘To Sir William D. Upon the unspeakable Loss of the most conspicuous and chief Ornament of his Frontispiece’.\textsuperscript{115} Edward Pulter, Arthur’s grandfather from whom he inherited the house, is known to have had a collection of books that he bequeathed to Arthur in 1625.\textsuperscript{116} This may have included several of the earlier volumes to which Pulter refers.

After his death, James Forester’s son Pulter Forester inherited Broadfield and his son was also called Pulter Forester. The Rev. Pulter Forester, chancellor of the diocese of London, was born on the 30\textsuperscript{th} March 1690 and died in 1775.\textsuperscript{117} His library was put up for sale on the 1\textsuperscript{st} February 1779 by Benjamin White, Horace’s Head, Fleet Street.\textsuperscript{118} The catalogue is however of limited use when it comes to determining which books were in the possession of Hester Pulter and her husband. The sale catalogue, which lists over 5,000 books, the majority of which were published in the eighteenth century, includes the libraries of several people in addition to Forester’s but does not identify which books belonged to whom.\textsuperscript{119} At the time of his death Forester was living in Nottinghamshire and we cannot be certain that his collection includes any he inherited along with Broadfield manor. The list does include some titles referenced by Pulter,

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Hine (1951), p. 8.
\item MS Lt q 32, f. 83r.
\item Edward Pulter’s will: PRO: prob/11/149 (1625).
\item Andrews (1945-49), p. 93.
\item *A Catalogue of a Large and Valuable Collection of Books, ... including ... the Entire Library of the Rev. Dr. Pulter Forester ... to be Sold on Monday the 1\textsuperscript{st} of February, 1779. By Benjamin White* (1779).
\item Michael Suarez refers to the practice of selling additional books under the name of a well-known owner as ‘salting’ in ‘English Book Sale Catalogues as Bibliographical Evidence’ in *The Library: Transactions of the Bibliographical Society* 21.4 (1999), pp. 321-60.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
including Bacon's *Historie of the Reigne of King Henry the Seventh* (1629), and Burton's *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), but these were popular books and the list does not include perhaps more significant titles such as Holland's translation of Pliny's *Natural History* or Simon Goulart's *Commentary on Du Bartas*.

While many of the texts from which Pulter derives her material may have been already present in Broadfield when she arrived others must have been acquired during her lifetime. In particular, those such as Sanderson's sermons and Francis Osborne's pamphlet, which were both published in 1656. As the surviving biographical evidence for Pulter suggests, she was in contact with several learned men, including Archbishop James Ussher famous for his impressive library, from whom she may have acquired or borrowed books. We have evidence that Pulter made one three-week visit to London, which may indicate many others, when she would have had the opportunity to purchase new publications. Even if she did not manage to make the journey very often she had several relatives living in the city, including her sisters, her daughters and her son James. We also have evidence of Pulter's London relatives, specifically her sister Dionysia and her husband John Harington visiting her

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120 T.C. Barnard notes that 'Ussher's collection followed its owner to England after 1641. Eventually following hazardous adventures, the library came to rest at Lincoln's Inn in London', 'The Purchase of Archbishop Ussher's library in 1657', *Long Room* 4 (Winter, 1971), p. 9. Hugh Jackson Lawlor provides a list of books owned by Ussher prior to 1641; not surprisingly the list is dominated by theological works in Latin and Greek. There is nothing corresponding with what Pulter is known to have been reading; 'Primate Ussher's Library Before 1641', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 34th Ser. 6 (1900-02), pp. 216-64. Elizabethtanne Boran discusses the evidence of people who borrowed books from Ussher prior to 1608, 'The Libraries of Luke Challoner and James Ussher, 1595-1608', in *European Universities in the Age of Reformation and Counter Reformation* ed. by Helga Robinson-Hammerstein (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), pp. 75-116. As Harington's diary confirms, Ussher was in the habit of lending his books to a wide range of people including politicians, the clergy and students. See also Richard Parr, *The Life of the Most Reverend Father in God, James Usher, Late Lord Arch-Bishop of Armagh* (1686), p. 47.

121 For an account of this visit see Chapter One.

122 See Chapter One.
during the 1640s. The direct coach link between Hertfordshire and the capital during this period makes it conceivable that texts were easily exported from the capital.

The scant evidence of women's book ownership during the seventeenth century indicates Pulter's choice of reading material was not unusual for a woman of comparable social status. Studies have been conducted of the catalogues of the personal libraries of Frances Egerton the Countess of Bridgewater (1585-1636), Lady Anne Clifford (1590-1676) and Lady Anne Southwell (bap. 1574-1636) Not surprisingly, all three women were, like Pulter, reading theological works. They all owned various editions of the Bible and Egerton and Southwell were reading Donne's sermons. Like Pulter Egerton and Clifford were reading Du Bartas's Divine Days and Weeks. History, especially recommended to women for educational as well as recreational purposes, was also popular; all three women were reading Classical history Egerton and Clifford in the Plutarch's accounts and Southwell in The Histories of all the Romane Emporers, 1604, or the imperall historie: continued by E. Grimestone (Grimston), 1623. British history was also common with Egerton, like Pulter, reading Bacon's History of the Reign of Henry the Seventh and

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123 See Chapter One for an account of this visit.
124 During the 1630s, the only regular coach service in the country ran through Hertfordshire between London and Cambridge and the only three 'wagon-cum-coach services' in the country ran between London and three towns in the county, including Pulter's nearby town of St Albans; see Stone and Stone, (1972), p. 59.

In general, the evidence amounts to a portrait of a group of educated women engaging with, and frequently responding to, a wide range of contemporary religious and secular texts. It would appear that this was quite common for women during the period; Hackel remarks that Egerton’s ‘very conventionality...that makes her library collection so striking, for its existence does not seem to have been considered worthy of remark’ and similarly, writing of Southwell, Cavanaugh comments that her books represented ‘a library that was quite typical’ and that they ‘offer an invaluable study of seventeenth-century reading tastes’.

The texts listed here were not just popular with women but provided significant reference materials for male writers. Shakespeare famously drew extensively on Ovid’s Metamorphoses and North’s translation of Plutarch’s Lives and may also have been using Holland’s translation of Pliny’s Natural History. Du Bartas’s Divine Dayes and Weekes had a significant influence on many writers including Milton, whose interest in the text is evident in Paradise Lost. The evidence is beginning to indicate a more general

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128 Discussing Egerton’s library Hackel notes that ‘Though the Countess’s library is not a prescriptively feminine collection, it is unlike the libraries amassed by her most bookish male peers in its preponderance of English books’ (2005), p. 250. She goes onto add that ‘Roughly 15 percent of the Countess’s books were translations into English from Latin, Greek, Italian, Spanish, and French. This proportion is unsurprising given that a fifth of all books printed in Elizabeth England were translations, and women were one of the targeted audiences for vernacular texts’ (2005), p. 251.
130 Snyder provides a list of writers who praised Du Bartas, which includes ‘Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, and Campion as well as lesser figures Barnes, Browne, Drummond, Hall, Harington,
crossover in the reading matter of men and women than is generally supposed. This suggests that Pulter’s engagement with contemporary literary culture is based on a shared set of textual reference points. Rather than deriving her material from contemporary poetical works, she returns to the raw reference material from which many other writers were deriving their material.

Illustrative examples of the way in which Pulter made use of her sources are provided by those places where she directly cites her source material, specifically in the margins to her emblem poems. Accompanying emblem 20 is a marginal note stating:

St. Jerome remembers (with a holy scorn) that he saw a couple married in Room the Man had had 20 Wives the Woman 22 Husbands It was in the days of Pope Damascus Doct. Duns sermon on easter day fol. 287

This is a reference to John Donne, LXXX Sermons Preached by that Reverend and Learned Doctor John Donne (1640), although the page reference should read 217 not 287 (this may be a scribal error). In his sermon, Donne states:

But yet S. Jerome himselfe, though he remember with a holy scorn, that when he was at Rome in the assistance of Pope Damasus ... he saw a man that had buried twenty wives, marry a wife, that buried twenty two husbands

Pulter reproduces the precise details of the anecdote related by Donne: she includes the location; the number of spouses each of the parties had formerly had; St Jerome’s allusion to Pope Damasus; and even his ‘holy scorn’. As the notes accompanying this edition demonstrate, this practice of reproducing her

Harvey, Lodge, Marston, Nash, Wither, and Taylor the Water Poet, and obscure ones like Robert Aylett, Charles Butler, Anthony Chute, George Daniel of Beswick, Stephen Jerome, Thomas Moffett, and Thomas Tuke’ (1979), p. 73. As the brief survey of women’s libraries shows, Du Bartas was also a firm favourite with them. In addition, the poet Anne Bradstreet was herself described as ‘a right Du Bartas Girle’ by Nathaniel Ward in his prefatory poem to her printed collection The Tenth Muse (1650), sig. A4r. Du Bartas influence is further attested by Bradstreet’s elegy on the poet in which she states that her ‘dazled sight of late, review’d thy lines’ (1650), sig. O2v.
sources word for word is evident throughout Pulter’s emblem poetry, both in the
marginalia and the main body of the text.

Pulter’s habit of reproducing her source material word for word means
that it becomes particularly apparent when she chooses to deviate from the
original text. In his sermon, Donne goes on to state that St Jerome:

says plainly enough ... I condemne no man for marrying two, or three, or
if he have a minde to it, eight wives ... but yet, sayes that blessed Father
... Let me have leave to perswade them who have been married, and are at
liberty, to continency, now at last. 131

St Jerome’s words, as they are repeated by Donne, pertain to those of St Paul in I
Corinthians where he also recommends widowhood above remarriage. 132 While
both St Paul and St Jerome emphasise their preference for a single life, neither
goes so far as to condemn those who do decide to remarry. This is in direct
contrast to the moral Pulter presents in emblem 20 in which, referring to women
who choose to remarry, she states:

A bitter Thraldome shee deserves to have
Who beeing Freed soe Oft, would bee a slave

Overlooking the message provided by Donne, and supported by St Jerome and St
Paul that women may remarry with impunity, Pulter equates marriage with
imprisonment and says that women deserve to suffer if they choose it over
freedom. It is not clear whether Pulter composed her poetry with the original text
in front of her, and was therefore very deliberately restructuring its contents to fit
her specific purpose, or whether she reproduced the material from memory, and
was therefore recalling those aspects best fitting with her agenda. The capacity to

132 In I Corinthians 7.39-40 St Paul states that ‘the wife is bound by the law as long as her
husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is liberty to be married to whom she will; only in
the Lord’. He permits remarriage but then adds that a widow ‘is happier if she so abide after my
judgement’, a reference to an earlier statement that ‘I say to the unmarried and widows, It is good
for them if they abide even as I’, i.e. unmarried (7.8).
remember passages of material word for word would not have been unusual for a woman brought up in a culture that prized, particularly in women, the ability to memorise large sections of text, specifically sermons.\textsuperscript{133}

Pulter’s habit of drawing heavily on her sources, combined with an exploration of the other texts listed in the libraries of her contemporaries, has enabled me to identify several other texts from which it seems likely she derived material for her emblems. These include Charles Butler’s \textit{The Feminine Monarchie or a Treatise Concerning Bees, and the Due Ordering of Them} (1609); Edward Grimeston’s translation \textit{A General Inventorie of the History of France} (1607); Philemon Holland’s translation of Suetonius’s \textit{De Vita Caesarum} (1606); George Sandys’s translation of Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses} (1632); Edward Topsell’s \textit{Historie of Foure-Footed Beastes} (1607), \textit{The Historie of Serpents} (1608), and the combined \textit{The History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents} (1658); and William Wood’s \textit{New Englands Prospect} (1634). In keeping with the majority of texts to which Pulter refers directly in her manuscript and with those associated with the libraries of her contemporaries, these are predominantly factual texts including travel narrative, natural history and human history.

Frances Egerton’s library included Butler’s apian text while Anne Southwell’s includes Suetonius.\textsuperscript{134} Pulter extracts material from these non-literary texts and rewrites it, usually for the purpose of providing entertainment and for conveying a moral or spiritual message.

In addition to engaging with significant body of reference and literary works, Pulter used her emblem poetry to document and respond to more immediate and topical references and to ephemeral texts. She includes references

to anecdotes and eye-witness accounts, including an account of a ‘canibal’ apparently seen at Baldock Fair in 1653, and a story of woman in Amsterdam with twenty husbands apparently told to her by her uncle ‘Edward P.’. Pulter also invokes several proverbs including the phrase that ‘London Bridge was built on woolpacks’ a saying thought to have originated in Wiltshire where she grew up. It is also possible that she was drawing on contemporary newsbooks and many of her poems exploit the vocabulary of popular royalism found in these texts. The body of material on which she draws is vast and varied suggesting an active intellectual engagement with the world around her. For the purposes of composing her emblems, Pulter apparently did not distinguish between religious literature (including the Bible), literary works, reference texts, or contemporary news and gossip. The interesting, entertaining, and bizarre could be mined from any of these sources and reproduced side by side.

The way in which Pulter uses her source texts may have had much to do with the demands of the genre in which she was writing. As a form, the emblem is premised in a humanist culture of commonplaces within which it was expected that the author would draw on a range of references derived from his or her reading and manipulated them to convey new, but justifiable, interpretations.

135 MS Lt q 32, ff. 97r, 103v.

136 During the reign of Henry II the new bridge over the Thames was paid for by a tax on wool, a detail that became proverbial. In his Memoires of Naturall Remarques in the County of Wilts in the natural History of Wiltshire, Aubrey notes that ‘there was a saying also that London-Bridge was built upon Woolpacks’, (1847) ii iv, p. 98; referenced in Tilley, A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1950) p. 390, L416.

137 See for example emblem 19, which states: ‘For had not Lords in Noble breeding faile/d/Tin/c/kers and Coblers never had prevaild (ll. 30-31). Lines echoing the class-based attacks on the monarch’s opposition found in royalist newsbooks such as Mercurius Rusticus which on one occasion reported that the town of Chelmsford ‘is governed by a Tinker, two Coblers, two Taylors, two Pedlers etc’ who are sharing power ‘wrested out of the King’s hand’ (June 3. 1643, republished 1646), p. 21.

138 Michael Bath notes that ‘Among the most important of the textual sources which influenced the development of the Renaissance emblem, however, was the tradition of collecting and using rhetorical commonplaces’, (1994), p. 32.
Traditionally it has been assumed that only men, educated in commonplace practices as schoolboys, engaged in this mode of composition. However, more recently it has been demonstrated that women also participated in this practice; Lucy Hutchinson, Brilliana Harley, and Ann Bowyer, for example, are all known to have kept commonplace books. These volumes were often structured around a series of headings or topics under which the compiler would record extracts from his or her reading for reuse in later compositions. The structure of many of Pulter’s emblem poems suggest she may have been working from a commonplace book. Emblem 21 for example is a fast-paced progress through a range of diverse images connected by the general theme of ‘strength through unity’. Pulter begins with a tale illustrating the way in which several beavers cooperate in the construction of their dams and this is followed by a rapid succession of references to London Bridge, British stately buildings in general, Diana’s Temple at Ephesus, Solomon’s Temple, elephants serving the Indian

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140 The Perdita online database of women’s manuscripts lists five documents under the category of ‘Commonplace Book’. These are: Beinecke Library MS b.106 (compiled by ‘An English Lady’ (1599-1608)); Folger Library MS V.a.220 (authored by Mary Beale (c. 1667)); Cumbria Record Office: WD/Te/Box 16 (two books owned by Elizabeth Birkett (c. 1700)); Aberdeen University Library MS 2543 (compiled by Margaret Clerk (1688-1713)); and Hallwood Library Special Collections: MS Portland PLfMs (compiled by Brilliana Harley (c. 1622)). The database also lists Lucy Hutchinson’s two books: Nottinghamshire Archives: DD/Hu1 and DD/Hu3 (religious commonplace book). For a discussion of Ann Bowyer’s late-sixteenth/early-seventeenth century commonplace book see Victoria Burke, ‘Ann Bowyer’s Commonplace Book (Bodleian Library Ashmole MS S1): Reading and Writing Among the “Middling Sort”’, *Early Modern Literary Studies* 6.3 (2001): 11-28 [URL: http://purl.oclc.org/emls/06-3/burkbow.htm]


142 Peter Beal notes that during the seventeenth century ‘the practice of keeping notebooks and commonplace books in general was one of the most widespread activities of the educated classes in contemporary England’ (1993), p. 131.

143 MS Lt q 32, f. 104v.
king, and whales used to grind corn in Canton. The poem concludes with a contrasting reference to the famous misanthrope Timon of Athens. Each of these examples is drawn from a different source including proverbial/oral culture, Pliny, the Bible, Plutarch, and Giovanni Botero. The bringing together of all of this material on a single theme suggests that either Pulter was drawing from a pre-composed book of commonplaces or that she was more generally engaging in the modes of thought and composition associated with this practice. 144

For contemporary readers, a significant part of the emblem's appeal resided in the use of a shared set of cultural assumptions and references, often linked to a shared educational background. 145 Pulter's text draws on both a circumscribed and a more general but overlapping set of cultural allusions. Her manuscript, with its very direct references to her own children, was apparently never circulated beyond the confines of her own home. This suggests an immediate readership with a very specific shared set of cultural and textual references derived from the microcosm of the house in which they were born and lived. In particular, the texts to which Pulter refers directly may have been readily available for her readership within the library at Broadfield. More generally however, Pulter alludes to a much wider body of knowledge and of shared cultural assumptions. Many of the fables to which she refers appeared in multiple versions during the first half of the seventeenth century. Describing the tale of the battle between the toad and the spider, which Pulter recounts in emblem 23, Thomas Browne notes that 'The Antipathy between a Toad and a

144 Ann Moss states that in the Renaissance schoolroom boys 'were conditioned to think in ways determined by the instrument they used to probe the material they were set to study, store in their memory, and retrieve for reproduction, that is to say, by their commonplace-book' (1996), p. 134.
145 Michael Bath notes that 'the emblem assumes an educated reader who recognises the genealogy of its topos, or who can at least supply the missing context of its classical use. This demand stimulates humanist complicity in defining a shared corpus of authoritative texts', (1994), pp. 31-32.
Spider, and that they poisonously destroy each other, is very famous, and solemn stories have been written of their combats, wherein most commonly the victory is given unto the Spider. As the comparison of Pulter’s reading with that of her contemporaries suggests, she was engaging with a range of texts that were popular among the educated.

Pulter’s sensitivity to both literary fashion and convention is further evidenced by her use of a range of specific sources and categories of text firmly embedded within the emblem tradition. Writing in 1646, a few years before Pulter began composing her own series of emblems, Thomas Blount published *The Arte of Making a Devises*, a text outlining the method for creating literary compositions comprising image and text, including the emblem. He notes that ‘the Embleme is properly a sweet and morall Symbole, which consists of picture and words, by which some weighty sentence is declared’ and then specifies that they are ‘reduced unto three principall kinds, viz. of Manners, of Nature, of History or Fable’. For Blount, the emblem is an entertaining and educational form premised on a specific trio of subjects. The topics to which he refers, human characteristics or behaviour, the natural world, and historical tales or fables, can be clearly seen in the range of material that Pulter incorporates into her own text. Her attack, in emblem 1, on Nimrod’s ambition for example, provides a good example of human corruption from which a moral can be derived, while texts including those by Pliny, Plutarch and Sandys furnish her


text with examples fitting the categories of nature and history. Several tales specifically labelled as ‘fables’ in their original sources, including for example the battle between the mice and frogs from Ogilby’s *Aesop*, are incorporated into the text. All of the evidence suggests that Pulter was keenly aware of the conventions of the form with which she was engaging.

In addition to drawing on reference works and other literary texts, it was conventional for emblem writers to draw on the material found in other emblem collections. With regard to Pulter’s emblem series, I have not been able to trace any single collection containing all of the emblematic images referenced. There are however several collections containing analogous emblems that she may have drawn on for her own collection. These include Geffrey Whitney’s *A Collection of Emblemes* (1586), Thomas Combe’s *The Theater of Fine Devices* (1593), and Henry Peacham’s *Minerva Britanna* (1612). A particularly significant point of reference is George Wither’s *Emblemes* (1635) from which Pulter seems to have derived the structure for her own compositions. Pulter’s text in general is in keeping with the emblematic tradition of bringing together a

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148 Geffrey Whitney, for example, was drawing on the emblem books of Alciato, Sambucus, Paradin, Hadriano Junius, Faernius, la Perrière, Barthélémy Aneau and Georgette de Montenay (Bath (1994), p. 70); Henry Peacham claims to have been drawing on ‘Alciat, Sambucus, Junius, Reusnerus, and others’ ((1612), sig. A3v.); and George Wither, while he claims to have had no interest in the emblematic tradition, reused the plates produced by Crispin de Passe for Gabriel Rollenhagen’s *Nucleus Emblematum Selectissimorum* (Utrecht, 1611-13). Scholars including Peter Daly have demonstrated the extent to which Wither was drawing on Rollenhagen’s collection; see Daly, ‘The Arbitrariness of George Wither’s Emblems: A Reconsideration’ in *The Art of the Emblem: Essays in Honor of Karl Josef Höligen* ed. by Michael Bath, John Manning and Alan R. Young (New York: AMS Press, 1993), pp. 201-34.

149 The single collection with the greatest collection of analogous images is Joachim Camerarius’ *Symbolorum et Emblematum ex Animalibus* (Nuremberg, 1595), which includes a total of twenty-eight images connected with Pulter’s text. Camerarius’ original text is in Latin and there was no contemporary English translation. In her text, Pulter claims she could not read Latin (see emblem 48, ll. 14-22) but it is possible that she would had some ability to derive some meaning from the words in page even if she could not translate it word for word. It seems likely however that the similarities between this text and Pulter’s volume are the result of a shared reliance on Pliny’s *Natural History* as a source.

150 In my edition of Pulter’s emblems, I have listed all analogous emblems in the notes accompanying each poem.

151 This connection is explored in Chapter Four.
collection of wide-ranging and esoteric images and references drawn from a
culture of commonplaces. She was evidently aware of many of the more popular
subjects for emblematic compositions, including 'the ape in man's clothing', the
'mouse and the oyster' and 'the toad and the spider', but rather than drawing on a
single collection for these motifs she was engaging with the tradition as a
whole. 152

From Pulter's textual references and allusions together with the material
features of the manuscript volume, it is possible to reconstruct a specific set of
overlapping contexts for her writing. Her poetry and prose was composed and
read within the circumscribed location of Broadfield manor house and its
eviron in rural Hertfordshire. But the text itself indicates a much broader
intellectual and literary context with which Pulter was engaging on
knowledgeable and sophisticated level. It is clear that a restricted physical
environment of both author and manuscript does not necessarily equate with a
limited intellectual environment. Throughout her volume Pulter reveals her
awareness of the much wider social, political, religious and literary environment
of Civil War and Interregnum England. Her text therefore provides the
opportunity of exploring a very specific response to this environment from the
position of a gentlewoman with a capacity to access the material and debates
circulating in the public sphere but with a more limited ability to directly enter
her own voice into that environment. 153 Given the apparently conventional nature

152 Pulter also had some connection with the Low Countries (see emblem 20 where she refers to
her 'Unkle Edw. P' and his connection to Amsterdam), where emblem books were particularly
popular, and where there was a strong tradition of emblem books. An extensive list of these
publications is provided in John Landwehr, Emblem and Fable Books Printed in the Low
153 While not physically located in close proximity to the centres of political contestation and
publication Pulter nonetheless had access to a range of materials relating to the conflict. In a
recent article Peter Lake and Steve Pincus point to the 'shifting geographic and social location of
the public sphere' in Civil War and Interregnum England. They argue that 'an increasingly wide
of Pulter’s engagement with textual culture it is possible to conclude that she was not alone in this situation.
Chapter Three

Lady Hester Pulter’s Stoic Response to Cromwell’s Protectorate

Throughout her manuscript Pulter expresses a vehemently royalist response to the social, political and religious upheaval of Interregnum England. In her occasional and devotional poems she responds to the political events of the 1640s, ultimately bemoaning the plight of Charles I, that ‘Christ-like martyr’.¹ This theme is maintained in her emblems, apparently composed between 1653 and 1658, in which she mourns the nation’s loss of the ‘Best of Kings’ and, eliding the hoped-for return of prince Charles with an allusion to Christ, she calls for the restoration of ‘his Princely Son’.² For Pulter the terrifying alternative to the restoration of the Stuarts is the prospect that the British people will ‘remain slaves to C.[romwell] evermore’.³ The Protector, who in one poem is characterised as a giant bird defecating over the English nation, is the main focus of her bitter attack on the monarch’s opposition. According to Pulter, the divinely appointed monarch has been removed and replaced by an ambitious tyrant supported by earthly props. In response to this situation Pulter presents her emblem series as a means by which both she and her readers could, in defiance of Cromwell’s rule, shore up their spiritual and political integrity, and by extension that of the nation as a whole.

¹ For a discussion of these images in Pulter’s poetry see Ross (2005), p. 4.
² Emblem 25, l.15 and emblem 4, l. 27.
³ Emblem 51, l. 16.
Obtaining of Peace

The first of Pulter's emblem poems introduces the political concerns and agenda of the series. Her poem is based on the biblical story of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, which she uses to outline both the causes and consequences of the suffering and chaos of the Civil Wars. She begins by rewriting the original story from the book of Genesis:

When Mighty Nimrade Hunting after fame
Built this huge Fabrick to get him a Name
Fearing another Deluge might ore flow
And all Mans petty Projects overthrow
With Slime and Brick instede of Lime and stone
Hee meant to reach unto Gods glorious Throne

Pulter accuses Nimrod of blasphemous ambition as he tries to use earthly and unnatural means to achieve divine status. In the original biblical text the collective builders of the tower state to one another 'let us build us a city and a tower...and let us make us a name' (my italics). Pulter however, shifts the emphasis of her poem to blame the individual actions of Nimrod who desires 'to get him a Name'. Her later references to Nimrod's rebellious supporters and her statement 'Soe let Usurping Nimrod's have their due' suggest that, within the context of 1650s England, she has Cromwell in particular in mind. This becomes more apparent as the collection progresses and Pulter refers to both the 'Protector' and to 'Oliver' who she desires to see removed from power by the same means applied to Charles 1. Regardless of the precise historical details of Cromwell's role in the demise of Charles I, Pulter explicitly holds him entirely responsible for the regicide.

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4 Emblem 1, ll. 1-6.
5 Genesis 10-11, Authorised Version; see Chapter Two for my discussion of Pulter's use of this translation.
6 Emblem 20, l. 36, and emblem 50, l. 20.
The story of Babel had particular political resonance in civil war and Interregnum England but Pulter’s use of the image contrasts with conventional references. The story was adopted by parties on both sides of the political divide but with each side emphasising very different aspects. For Parliamentarians, the figure of Nimrod provided a useful model of the archetypal tyrannical king, which could then be directed against both Charles I and his supporters. For royalists, the linguistic confusion inflicted as punishment for the rebels’ earthly ambition could be used to represent the chaos of Civil War and Interregnum England. Pulter adopts both sets of imagery, combining an emphasis on Nimrod with a consideration of the confusion caused by his attempt at usurpation. She asks God to:

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{let Usurping Nimrod's have their due} \\
&\text{let their accursed plots prove their delusion} \\
&\text{For Fanci'd Glory let them find confusion.}
\end{align*}
\]

Pulter places Cromwell in the place of tyrannical king. She draws on the royalist convention of associating Babel-like chaos with the Civil Wars and she attributes it to Cromwell’s personal ambition, which has disrupted the natural social order. Throughout her collection Pulter invokes a national situation in which confusion is manifested through the inversion of the traditional, divinely ordained, social structure. She explicitly states that had the gentry not ‘in Noble breeding faild’ then ‘Tinckers and Coblers never had prevaild’. In keeping with her use of

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10 This was a particularly common way of representing the effects of the Civil Wars. In a pamphlet first published in 1642 but reissued in 1647 entitled *The World Turn'd Upside Down: or, A Briefe Description of the Ridiculous Fashions of these Distracted Times*, for example, John Taylor provides an emblem for the nation in the form of a man with his ‘breeches on his shoulders’; his ‘doublet on his lower parts’; his ‘boots and spurs upon his armes and hands’; and his ‘gloves upon his feet, (whereon he stands), sig. A2r.
11 Emblem 19, l. 31.
Nimrod in this poem, throughout her emblems she uses images of tyranny formerly levelled at Charles I to attack Cromwell.\textsuperscript{12}

Pulter's Nimrod poem presents a remedy for the confusion and social chaos by reminding each individual reader of his or her correct and natural role within a divinely ordered social structure. She concludes with the lines:

\begin{verbatim}
But from presumption Lord preserve my Soul
That in thy Mercy I may safely Rowl
Resting in Christ that Blessed corner stone
Then by his Steps Ile mount his Glorious Throne
\end{verbatim}

The vocabulary of man-made architecture associated with the building of the tower at the start of the poem has been replaced with Biblical imagery of Christ as 'corner stone' and 'steps'.\textsuperscript{13} In this way, Pulter counters the active and aggressive ambition of Nimrod with the passivity of her own reliance on Christ. The focus of the poem shifts from the significance of the Nimrod story to the political circumstances of the nation to consider its application for the spiritual condition of the individual. Pulter provides a model of humility suitable to all Christians, even rulers. In this way, the individual and the national become intimately linked through the suggestion that they can both be governed by the same rules. Pulter addresses the role of the single person, not as the aggressive and ambitious individual typified by Cromwell, but as an essential cog in a much larger national machine. This sets the agenda for the collection as a whole in which the proposed reform of the individual is essential to the restoration of order on a national scale.

\textsuperscript{12} For a discussion of the ways in which Charles I compared with historical tyrants, specifically Richard III and Nero, see Joad Raymond, 'Popular Representations of Charles I' in \textit{The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I} ed. by Thomas N. Corns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 47-73 (p. 54). Pulter uses similar references to criticise Cromwell; see, for example, emblem 26, ll. 15-17 and emblem 29, ll. 16-19.

\textsuperscript{13} For a Biblical characterisation of Christ as a corner stone see Ephesians 2.20. For a reference to his steps see I Peter 2.21.
In her Nimrod poem, Pulter's emphasis on a passive reliance on Christ evokes the kind of Stoic response to defeat identified as a central theme of the poetry produced by royalists during the Interregnum. Earl Miner has read royalist, specifically Cavalier literature, with its emphasis on country retreat and the good life, as a withdrawal from the political world in the wake of the regicide. Similarly, Raymond Anselment, in his discussion of the influence of Stoicism on royalist thought identifies a propensity for the king's defeated supporters, to 'turn both away and inward in search of meaning'. Pulter's Nimrod emblem, in which she calls for assistance in dedicating herself wholly to Christ, provides a reminder of the form of 'patient fortitude' that Anselment identifies. Sarah Ross has noted that in many ways Pulter's poetry evokes 'the critical paradigm of royalist retirement during the Civil Wars and Interregnum' adding that within this model 'the writing of devotional verse [signals] a double retreat from the world'. But she goes on to argue that 'In Pulter's political elegies ... a re-action of sighs and tears constitutes a form of political action gendered female'. Drawing on James Loxley's account of royalist verse as a 'synecdoche of resistance', Ross argues that for Pulter 'polemical verse fulfils the obligation of service to the King and his cause'. Ross's argument is predominantly concerned with Pulter's elegies, the majority of which were apparently composed during the Civil Wars. In contrast, Pulter's emblem poems, composed just a few

15 Earl Miner defines the "Stoic" element of the Cavaliers as 'a self-sufficiency involving self-knowledge and wisdom, living a life relying on oneself, and refusing to be distracted by the baubles of the world', (1971), p. 90.
years later in response to Cromwell’s Protectorate, although they assert a similarly active response to the political events, have a very different message about the way in which this active intervention can be achieved.

In many of her emblem poems Pulter advocates the mode of passive resistance evident in her Nimrod emblem but in others she claims, for example, that ‘None but the Active Man a Friend can bee’ to the ‘King, his Int'rest and his end’. This approach can, in many ways, be linked to Andrew Shifflett’s recent call for a more nuanced understanding of Interregnum Stoicism. Rather than see Stoicism as a simple preference for ‘fortitude’ over ‘resistance’, Shifflett suggests that it is instead the careful negotiation between these two states. He argues for an understanding of Stoicism as a ‘middle way’, described as ‘prudence’, within which the individual makes due consideration of the specific circumstances in which she finds herself before deciding on the best course of action. Anger and aggression are not subsumed within this position but are instead kept under control until they are needed. The possibility of an active response, even explosively violent and aggressive action, is always hovering just below the surface of Stoic endurance. Pulter’s emblems, in which all responses are considered, enacts the tension between direct, sometimes bloody action, and a passive reliance on Christ to rectify the situation. Underlying this process is the individual’s aim to preserve his or her political and spiritual integrity, by whatever means necessary, in the face of ideological opposition.

Writing during the 1650s, Pulter would have had several different models of Stoicism and Christian neo-Stoicism available to her. In 1614 Thomas Lodge had first published his English translation of Seneca’s works; John Stradling’s

19 Emblem 39, ll. 27-30.
English translation of Lipsius's *Two Bookes of Constancie* had first been published in 1594/5 and had been republished several times since, including in 1654; and in 1606 Joseph Hall had published his influential *Heaven Upon Earth*. Most importantly for Pulter however, the Laudian minister Robert Sanderson had put forward his own Christianised version of Stoic 'prudence' in a sermon preached at Newport, on the Isle of Wight, in December 1648, not long before Charles I was executed.21 The sermon was published as part of Sanderson’s collection *Twenty Sermons Formally Preached* (1656), a text to which Pulter refers directly in her manuscript.22

As James Loxley notes, Sanderson uses his sermon to promote 'active fortitude ... tempered with prudence'.23 He refers to those enduring ‘such times as threaten persecution to all those, that will not recede from such principles of Religion, Justice, and Loyality, as they have hitherto held themselves obliged to walk by’.24 Under these circumstances individual integrity is key:

... there lyeth a necessity upon us, if we will be Christs disciples and friends, to deny our selves, our lusts, our interests, our fortunes, our liberties, our lives, or if there be any thing else that can be dearer to us: rather then for fear of any thing that can befall in any of these, consent to the least wilful violation of our bounden duty either to God or our neighour.25

Sanderson suggests that in the face of opposition spiritual integrity must be preserved by any means possible and at any cost. Significantly, he ranks the individual’s duty to her ‘neighbour’ just beneath her duty to God, suggesting that

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21 This sermon, its Stoic message, and its significance for Interregnum royalism are discussed in Røstvig (1962), pp. 82-3 and Loxley (1997), pp. 211-3.
22 In the margin of her eleventh emblem Pulter notes ‘See Doctor Sanderson out of Aristottle his Hist Anui 6’. She directs her reader to a sermon on Psalm 27.10, ‘When my Father and my Mother forsake me, the Lord taketh me up’, that he preached at Woburne in August 1647, Sanderson (1656), p. 273; for a discussion of Pulter’s use of this sermon see emblem 11, note to lines 1-6.
24 Sanderson (1656), p. 324.
25 Sanderson (1656), p. 320.
Christian duty is both a state of spiritual fortitude and of social action. He quotes Luke 14.26 to support his assertion that:

> If you be not in some measure prepared even for that also, and resolved (by God's assistance) to strive against sin, and to withstand all sinful temptations, even to the shedding of the last drop of blood in your bodies, if God call you to it: you have done nothing.\(^{26}\)

Spiritual integrity is to be preserved on both an individual and a national level and violence may, as God dictates, be necessary. Sanderson does however concede that:

> For the obtaining of peace, the preventing of mischiefs, the ridding of our selves and others from troubles; we may with a good conscience and without sin yield to the doing of any thing, that may stand with a good Conscience, and be done without sin.\(^ {27}\)

As the repetition here suggests, patient fortitude is acceptable but only as long as it does not jeopardise 'good conscience' and as long as it can be done 'without sin'. The main thrust of Sanderson's argument as a whole is that both active resistance and passive fortitude are legitimate means of response to affliction but only if spiritual and by extension social integrity are maintained. This position is made clear with the statement that 'Fortitude is an excellent vertue doubtless: but so is Prudence'.

In 1650s England, the issue of whether to engage in aggressive resistance or to maintain a position of patient fortitude was a prominent issue for royalists confronting the nation's new government in the wake of the regicide. In 1650 the government issued an Oath of Engagement requiring all adult men over the age of eighteen to swear allegiance to 'the Commonwealth of England, as it is now

\(^{26}\) Sanderson (1656), p. 321. Luke 14.26 states 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, his mother, and wife, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple'.

\(^{27}\) Sanderson (1656), p. 327.
established, without a King or House of Lords’. From Pulter’s perspective, while some women actually took the oath, it was, as contemporary pamphlets suggest, as much a matter of individual conscience as it was of participation in official state legislation.

The debate enacted in the contemporary press was polarised between those who called for active resistance to the oath out of loyalty to the Stuart monarchy and those on both sides of the political divide who recommended capitulation in the interests of national peace and stability. While the oath itself was removed in 1654 the issues it generated continued throughout the decade and there is evidence to suggest that Pulter took some interest in the debate. Among those texts directly cited in her manuscript is Francis Osborne’s *Advice to a Son* (1656/8) in which he states that the subject should ‘submit quietly to any power Providence shall please to mount into the saddle of Sovereignty, without enquiring into their Right’. Harnessing the providential vocabulary popular with those recommending engagement, Osborne advises capitulation to those in power irrespective of birthright or behaviour. Osborne was firmly on Parliament’s side in the dispute and his appeal to royalists is made in the interests of defending the new status quo.

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30 Francis Osborne, *Advice to a Son* (1656), p. 110. In her prose romance ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’ Pulter presents a verbal battle of the sexes between the heroine of the piece, Fidelia, and a villainous male character named Don Alphonso. Throughout his contribution to the dispute Don Alphonso frequently alludes to a text written by that ‘Elegant Pen’, a writer whom Fidelia later derides as a ‘learned Atheist’ (Ms Lt q 32, ff. 25v, 26r (reversed)). A discussion of Pulter’s use of Osborne’s text is provided in Chapter Two.
31 For a discussion of the way in which those urging submission to the commonwealth adopted the language of providence more commonly associated with the idea of divinely sanctioned monarchy see Burgess (1986), pp. 515-36.
32 Henson (2004).
On the other side of the political divide, Robert Sanderson responded to Antony Ascham’s *The Bounds & Bonds of Publique Obedience* (1649) with the statement that subjects ‘may submit to the Force’ of a new government without acknowledging ‘the Authority or by anie ... Voluntaire Act’ giving ‘strength, assistance, or countenance thereunto’. He goes on to state that this can be done without ‘anie prejudice unto the Claim of the Oppressed Partie’ and without excluding those who submit from lending the legitimate leader ‘due and bouden Asisistance, if, in time to com, it may be useful to him towards the Recoverie of his Right’. In keeping with the position put forward in his 1648 sermon he suggests that a passively detached form of obedience is acceptable but this does not rule out the possibility of action in defence of legitimate authority, should the time arise. In contrast to those including Osborne and Sanderson who printed persuasive manifestos aimed at moving a widespread readership, Pulter, who composed her poetry in manuscript, does not express a single consistent solution to the issue of Engagement. She instead considers the specific difficulties this conflict of political loyalties presents for the individual and is particularly concerned with the preservation of spiritual and political integrity in the face of opposition. Her poems provide a useful means by which she can consider the various ways in which this can be achieved.

The process of preserving individual integrity is facilitated by Pulter’s use of the devotional emblem, the structure of which enacts a Stoic turn inwards in order to shore up and preserve individual virtue in the face of external threat.

According to Michael Bath, the development of the devotional emblem in

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England can in part be attributed to Joseph Hall, a man described by his contemporaries as 'our English Seneca'. At the turn of the seventeenth century Hall popularised the Calvinist form of spiritual meditation, derived from continental Ignatian models, on which the devotional emblem came to be based. In his treatise *Heaven Upon Earth* (1606), Hall states his intention to ‘teach men how to be happy in this life’ adding that in presenting his formula for achieving this he has ‘followed Seneca and gone beyond him’. Following Seneca, Hall advises that it is necessary to ‘call backe the mind from outward things, and draw it home into it self’ but he goes beyond the ‘wise Heathen’ in emphasising the significance of God for shoring up individual resolution.

Hall’s interest in devotional meditations was in many ways inspired and influenced by Seneca. In his preface to the *Arte of Divine Meditation* he makes an explicit link between his meditations and his former treatise stating that he has been encouraged to ‘send forth this Rule of Meditations; and after my Heaven upon earth, to discourse (although by way of example) of heaven above’. He goes on to argue that if ‘the simplicities of any Reader, shall bereave him of the benefite of my precepts, I knowe hee may make his use of my example’. While *Heaven on Earth* outlines the ideal state of human peace and constancy on earth, Hall’s meditations provide a model by which this process could be enacted.

37 Hall (1606), sig. A4r.
38 Hall (1606), sig. A5r. In addition, several of Hall’s *Meditations* (1605-6) are adaptations of his predecessor’s Epistles, see Smith (1948), p. 1200.
Through the process of meditation the individual is led away from the external world into an active contemplation of the self and its relationship with God. This process can be seen in Pulter’s Nimrod emblem in which her consideration of the problems of the external world leads to a recognition of her own sins and of her need for God’s support in addressing the situation.39

As Pulter’s Nimrod poem suggests, however, rather than represent a retreat from the national arena, the turn inwards to focus on the integrity of the individual has widespread implications for the political situation of the nation as a whole. A central tenet of Stoicism is that ‘the world is a living organism’ and therefore ‘each person can serve it wisely and well when they recognise that, as humans, they share the same fate as all other persons’.40 The preservation of individual virtue could therefore be a significant means by which the dispossessed could enact her own form of prudent political action. Pulter uses both the structure and content of her emblems to move the individual to a consideration of how best to restore or conserve his or her virtue and integrity in the face of contemporary political opposition. She presents alternative modes of action to specific situations, which, as her Nimrod suggests, are confronting both the individual and the nation as a whole. The majority of her poems then

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39 For discussion of Pulter’s adoption and innovation of this form see Chapter Four. Pulter’s interest in Hall’s work would have been in keeping with her contemporaries. Frances Egerton’s library included several works by Hall including: Contemplations, the Sixth Volume (1622); Contemplations Upon the Historie of the Old Testament. The Seventh Volume (1623); Meditations and Vowes Divine and Morall (1616); Newly Enlarged with Caracters of Vertues and Vices (1621); One of the Sermons Preacht and Westminister (1628); see Brayman Hackel, (2005), pp. 268, 274. Anne Southwell owned a copy of Hall’s Meditations and Vowes (1605-21); see Cavanaugh (1967), p. 253. Erica Longfellow explores the emphasis in Southwell’s on active piety, together with its Senecan undertones, (2004), pp. 108-09. Elizabeth Isham notes the influence of Hall on her own religious practice. In a marginal note she writes: ‘also I had read in Doct Halls booke how [necesa]ry meditation was which was a good inducement to me’; Princeton University Library, Robert H. Taylor Collection RTC01 no.62, f. 28v.

conclude with a focus on a remedy for individual sin underpinned by a reliance on God.

The Stoic focus on the individual meant that although the philosophy was not a retreat from political action it was a retreat from the centralised political institutions of the state.\textsuperscript{41} In royalist terms, the cloistered and retired individual was removed from the military and political world of direct conflict and chose instead to make a different kind of political statement. As a woman, specifically one apparently confined to her own home in a Hertfordshire village, Pulter was automatically precluded from direct engagement with the centralised institutions of state politics. But by using her poetry she was able to enact a Stoic intervention in the national political situation. For many royalists, the middle path of Stoic action was conceived more and more as a matter of writing and publication within the republic of letters.\textsuperscript{42} This provided a means of publicly disseminating political influence outside of the centralised circles of government. Pulter however did not print her text and it was apparently not circulated beyond the confines of her immediate family. Her poetry instead enacts a very different means of political action. Dedicating her poems to her own children, Pulter sets out to assert political influence through the regulation of both herself and of those individuals over which she did have some measure of control. In this way, she both enacts her own ideal role within society and exhorts others to do so too.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, Stoicism, with its emphasis on the virtue and reason of the individual, was perceived to be an anti-state response. Lipsius’s texts in particular, with their Tacitean influence, suggested ways of eluding what it presented as tyrannical control. As a

\textsuperscript{41} Shifflett (1998), p. 3.  
consequence, many in authority, specifically the early-Stuart monarchy, regarded
it with suspicion; James I, for example, famously warned his son against ‘proud
inconstant Lipsius’.

In keeping with the general theme of inversion pervading her emblems, Pulter associates Cromwell with centralised and authoritarian
control and in opposition to this she asserts the role of the individual in restoring
the natural, divine order he has destroyed. During the first half of the seventeenth
century England could in many ways be regarded as a ‘monarchical republic’
within which the individual, on occasion even a woman, could have a prominent
role to play in local government.

From Pulter’s perspective, the government of the 1650s Britain had shifted away from the hierarchical model of power she
associated with James I.

During the early decades of the seventeenth century, Pulter’s father, as a
lawyer and privy councillor, had taken a prominently active role in national
government, while on a more local level her husband had been both sheriff and
captain of the militia. In contrast, living in Interregnum Hertfordshire, she would
have been witness to the most systematic enforcement of Cromwell’s regime; her
husband had withdrawn from direct participation in local government and other
relatives and associates, including her brother-in-law John Harington had been
driven from national government.

In one poem she describes how in his bid for power Cromwell overcame both the Presbyterian and the Independent parties and
in another she complains that he has ‘kick’d King, Lords, and Commons out of

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43 Basilikon Doron (1599), p. 117.

exercise both formal and informal authority within the local community in When Gossips Meet:
Women, Family and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England (Oxford: Oxford University Press,
2003).

45 For a discussion of the political climate in Hertfordshire during the Civil Wars and into the
Interregnum; see Holmes, (1974). For discussion of Arthur Pulter’s and John Harington’s
withdrawal from local and national government see Chapter One.
doors. Her comments suggest that she perceived Cromwell's ascendancy as an ever-narrowing focus of power until one man had achieved absolute control of the nation. In keeping with her inversion of the imagery of tyranny and resistance previously associated with Charles I, Pulter adopts the Stoic emphasis on the role of the reasonable individual as a means of resisting Cromwell and of reasserting an older, more widely dispersed, system of authority.

**Tinckers and Coblers**

Throughout her emblems, Pulter suggests that the model of power being exercised in Interregnum England was far removed from the ideal she associated with James I and with her father's time in office. In contrast to a hierarchical system of mutual cooperation, she characterises the social order of Interregnum England as a tension between the unruly, anonymous masses and Cromwell's authoritarian control. In her forty-second emblem, for example, she lists a series of large beasts forcibly controlled and then destroyed by much smaller and weaker adversaries. She opens her poem with a reference to:

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This huge Laviathan for all his strength
Is by Indians Witt subdu'd at length
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Despite the whale's physical strength, he allows himself to be captured and overcome by a single man, an image that for Pulter functions as an apt metaphor for Cromwell's government of the nation. Pulter then asks:

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Who can but such a Monst'rous bulk deride
Who suffers one upon his Neck to Ride
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46 Emblem 52 and emblem 26, l. 39.
47 For Pulter's presentation of her father's role in government see emblem 48. A discussion of this poem is provided in Chapter One.
She is explicitly critical of the stronger creature that has allowed itself to be controlled by a much weaker force and by extension of the nation’s population who were submitting to Cromwell’s rule. In 1651, writing in response to the regicide and to the new republic, Hobbes had published his text *Leviathan* in which he outlined a model of centralised power as the most appropriate means of national government. He argued that in the interests of peace and safety the general population will voluntarily ‘conferre all their power and strength upon one Man, or upon one Assembly of men’. His text participated in contemporary debates concerning the new government’s Oath of Engagement and the degree to which the general population should be submitting to the imposition of illegitimate authority. He argued that in the national interest it was best to avoid further bloodshed through capitulation to the prevailing force. Pulter, in keeping with many other royalists who expressed outrage at Hobbes’s ideas, rejects this model of political power.

Rather than find ways of accommodating the new form of government, Pulter releases a barrage of emotive references designed to challenge Cromwell’s authority:

For from the vulgar one you see did rise
Which did the Fierce and Monstrous Hidra back
The Jade was resty and did Rideing lack
Now the Tame Beast both Whip and spur abides
Need must they Gallop, whom the Devill rides

Throughout her poetry, Pulter adopts the common motif of the nation turned on its head by those lower down the social scale, who were now usurping their

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49 Hobbes (1996), p. 120.
natural leaders. In keeping with jibes prevalent in the royalist newsbooks, Pulter
draws on Cromwell’s relatively low social standing to suggest that he has risen
from the ‘vulgar’ and is now controlling the population with illegitimate and
aggressive force.50 With the natural, hierarchical social order destroyed, the
general population has become a faceless and terrifying mob which,
characterised by the hydra, becomes a cohesive but many-headed monster. The
virtuous and rational, and well-bred individual on which a well-ordered society is
 premised has been replaced by an anonymous mass being driven to its own
destruction by a coercive force.51

Pulter goes on to compare the image of the Cromwell riding the unruly
hydra with an analogous example drawn from scripture in which the devil
possesses a herd of pigs:

Soe when hee did possess the Heard of swine
They straight ran Headlong into Neptunes brine
Then let the giddy Monster warning take
Least they precipitate into that Lake
Where sulphur mixt with never quenched Fire
Where they still die yet never quite expire

In Luke 8. 26-39, Jesus is confronted with a man called ‘Legion: because many
devils were entered into him’, who asks him to exorcise them. The devils then
take possession of a herd of pigs and are drowned. While Pulter does not refer to
Legion directly, his presence is implicit in her text; as a single man containing
many others beings, he invokes the well-known frontispiece to Hobbes’s
Leviathan. But rather than adopting this image, in which the authority of one is

50 For accounts of contemporary representations of the dispute divided along class lines see:
Laura Lunger Knoppers, ‘Sing Old Noll the Brewer’: Royalist Satire and Social Inversion, The
51 Pulter’s ideas about the hydra are similar to those of Thomas Browne. He describes the
multitude as a ‘numerous piece of Monstruosity, which, taken asunder, seemes the reasonable
Creatures of God; but confused together make but one great beast, and a monster, more
prodigious then Hydra’, Religio Medici (1642), pp. 112-13.
premised on and supported by a contract with many, Pulter uses her poem to focus on the role of an individual aggressor who has taken possession of many. This works on two levels; firstly it is a reference to Cromwell and his coercive influence on the multitude. Eliding the singular 'giddy Monster’ with the plural ‘Least they precipitate into that Lake’, Pulter points to the erasure of individual identity within the aggressive and unruly mob. Secondly, her poem alludes to the destructive influence of sin, which will ultimately destroy those within its power. In this way, Cromwell becomes the manifestation of collective sin holding the nation in its thrall.

Pulter’s poetry does however suggest some degree of popular complicity in Cromwell’s control over the nation. The leviathan with which Pulter compares the British people ‘allows’ the one who ultimately destroys it to ride on its back. This theme is evident throughout her emblem collection and is usefully illustrated by a poem depicting a duel between Virtue and Fortune. Pulter describes how ‘Vertue once in the Olympicks fought a Duell’ and ‘Fortune Couragiously did her oppose’. In this conflict Fortune wins and ‘did wear the Crown’. Pulter makes an explicit connection between the conflict between Virtue and Fortune and the Civil Wars in which ‘bold Impiety the Vict'ry won’. A key aspect of Pulter’s portrayal of this conflict is the extent to which Fortune is supported by the people, specifically those associated with London. She notes that when Fortune appeared to be losing the ‘Citty Cockneys satt most Melancholly’ but as soon as she wins ‘Peans the People unto Fortune Sing’. Virtue is explicitly connected with ‘God and Nature’ while Fortune is purely upheld by human support. In her reference to the city ‘Cockneys’ Pulter evokes
the Parliamentarian cause, which was conventionally associated with London.\(^{52}\)

Within the Stoic tradition, the battle between ‘virtus’ and ‘fortune’ represented the struggle of the virtuous individual to preserve his or her integrity in the face of contingency.\(^{53}\) This poem suggests that this battle within the individual has been manifested on a national scale and that ultimately Virtue has lost, not simply through the population’s inability to uphold virtue but through their total abandonment of virtue in favour of fortune. The challenge for the individual and for the nation as a whole is to find a way of reversing this process and of reasserting divinely, naturally endorsed virtue.

Pulter uses her poetry to suggest that through the assertion of individual virtue it will be re-established in a national scale. Pulter concludes her 42nd emblem, which is based on the image of the Leviathan, with a message of advice for her readers:

> Then take my counsell and the Find [fiend] off throw
> Least hee and you into perdition goe.

She asserts her own individual voice in her recommendation that the individual ‘you’ to whom she addresses her poem overthrows his or her own personal devils. Pulter’s emphasis on ‘you’ also invokes a collective group responsible for overthrowing, either Cromwell (a contextually specific fiend) or the collective devils afflicting the nation. With Cromwell functioning as the manifestation of collective national sin, the remedy of one can potentially lead to the removal of the other. The individual reader is therefore advised to take personal

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\(^{52}\) From February 1642 London was firmly under the control of the king’s parliamentary opposition; for a discussion of political allegiances within the capital and royalist attacks on the city in general see Ian Roy “‘This Proud Unthankefull City’: A Cavalier View of London in the Civil War” in *London and the Civil War* ed. by Stephen Porter (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), pp. 149-74.

responsibility for ensuring the collective welfare of the nation. The action implied here is direct, even violent as Pulter calls for the ‘giddy multitude’ to overthrow Cromwell’s oppressive regime. In contrast to Hobbes who uses the image of the leviathan to urge acceptance of and cooperation with the de facto power, Pulter urges resistance. The message of this poem contrasts with the more passive tone of her Nimrod poem but ultimately the agenda is the same: the individual is required to do whatever he or she finds necessary to retain their own, and by extension the nation’s, virtue.

While Cromwell is the main focus of Pulter’s attack on the political circumstances of Interregnum England, her critique of the nation’s government in general suggests a more nuanced approach both to the causes of the Civil Wars and the regicide. The reasons for the disintegration of the social order are complex and Pulter primarily blames those who should have been upholding the monarchy. Sarah Ross has demonstrated how, in her occasional poems, Pulter adopts the contemporary practice of equating Charles I with martyred Christ. In conjunction with this, she explores how Pulter uses a motif of a wounded stag as a metaphor for political defeat.\(^{54}\) For my purposes, a significant aspect of Pulter’s treatment of this trope is her focus on the hart’s, or Charles’s and the nation’s, enemies. In emblem 25 she states how the hart is ‘with Hounds opprest’ and how she has ‘An arrow Sticking in her quivering Breast’. If she moves ‘her guiltless blood still Flows’ but if she stands still she ‘Fals amongst her foes’.\(^ {55}\) Pulter compares this image with that of ‘the Best of Kings’ who is ‘In strange Delemmas every where enclosed’. Both the hart and Charles I are surrounded on all sides and there is no escaping their fate.

\(^{54}\) Ross (2005) pp. 3-4.
\(^{55}\) Emblem 25, ll. 11-14.
Pulter suggests that Charles was defeated not just by his enemies but also by those who should have been protecting him. She describes how:

In this great strait his native side hee chose
Perfidious Scot thou this base plot did'st Lay
Iscariot like thou didst thy Kings betray.\(^{56}\)

She condemns the Scots to whom Charles turned for help in 1647 because they betrayed him to Parliament. Her emphasis on the Scots being Charles’s ‘native side’ draws attention to the familial and hereditary connections linking the king to the Scots through his father James VI of Scotland and I of England. Pulter’s reference to Judas is significant, not simply because it creates an allusion to Charles as Christ but because it condemns those who should have provided support but instead betrayed him.\(^ {57}\) The implication is that natural, divinely instituted loyalties have been superseded by man-made, self-interested obligations. The poem concludes the reassurance that while Charles I may have lost his life on earth he ‘got a lasting Fame’ in heaven and ‘Thuss beeing overcome hee overcame’. Defeated by death, Charles is ultimately triumphant in escaping his earthly persecutors and in achieving everlasting life. Pulter concludes this poem by turning back to the individual reader and stating ‘Then Patient bee though things fit not thy Wish’. In this particular poem Stoical patience is recommended as a means of enduring and eventually overcoming earthly adversity, both on a personal level and potentially also on a national scale.

It is not only the Scots who receive Pulter’s censure. With frequent references to their dissolute behaviour, she blames the nobility in general for the

\(^{56}\) Emblem 25, II. 20-22.
\(^{57}\) Pulter was not alone in comparing the Scots with Judas; see for example the anonymous pamphlet *Judas Justified by His Brother Scot* (1647).
failure in the social hierarchy that has allowed the lower classes to prevail. In her eighth emblem she paints a picture of contemporary ‘Gallants’ with their ‘Dames, their Drink, their Dice’ who ‘being Athiest's wors then Beasts they bee’. This can be compared with a reference in emblem 24 in which, describing the way these ‘nobles’ treat their wives, she describes how ‘most to Taverns or to Wors will Rome/Or elce they'l alwais Tirannise at home’. Pulter suggests that fashionable young noblemen are both indulgent in their vices and negligent of their religious and marital duties. This does not suggest however that contemporary women are any better. She describes the difficulty of making a ‘Lite Lady Leave her Wanton Love’ in another poem adding that some ladies, including countesses and duchesses, attend ‘plays and Taverns’. Like contemporary men, these women neglect both their marital and domestic responsibilities together with the religious and social injunction that they remain chaste.

The nobility’s indulgence in vice and their simultaneous neglect of personal and domestic responsibility have wider implications for the nation as a whole. Pulter explicitly states that ‘Tin\c/kers and Coblers’ would not have prevailed ‘had not Lords in Noble breeding faild’. She then adds that it is this failure on the part of the ruling classes which ‘did make Us Bleed/ In our brave King’. For Pulter, the dissolute ruling classes are ultimately responsible for the

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58 Again, Pulter’s views on this matter are similar to those expressed by Thomas Browne who concludes his attack on the hydra with the statement that ‘Neither in the name of the multitude do I only include the base and minor sort of people; there is a rabble even amongst the Gentry; a sort of Plebeian heads, whose fancy move with the same wheele as these, men even in the same Levell with Mechanickes, though their fortunes doe somewhat guild their infirmities, and their purses compound their follies’, Religio Medici (1642), p. 113.

59 Emblem 8, i. 12, and emblem 19, i. 25.

60 Emblem 24, ii. 15-16.

61 Emblem 8, i. 16 and emblem 20, i. 34.

62 Emblem 19, ii. 30-31.
nation losing its collective head with that of Charles I. Pulter concludes her poem with a direct plea to her contemporaries to reform their behaviour. She asks them to ‘hear a Freind that Tels you but the Truth’ and to ‘leave those Follyes e're they doe leave you’ or else ‘expect that Hell will have its Due’. While on one level she expresses concern for the immortal souls of those engaging in such behaviour, on another she is thinking more broadly of the benefits this change would bring to society as a whole.

Pulter uses her emblems to depict and also to call for the restoration of an ideal social structure premised on the participation of those occupying different positions within the social hierarchy. Those higher up the social scale are supposed to take responsibility for those lower down and, in turn, those subordinate provide support and obedience to their superiors. The significance of the small for the maintenance of larger powers is emphasised in another of Pulter’s poems featuring the leviathan. In a series of emphatic statements Pulter highlights the strength and significance of the whale. ‘Even hee who treated Jonas in his Belly’, ‘Even hee the Chief of all Sons of Pride’ is unable to feed himself without the aid of the ‘little Musculus’ his guide. For Pulter, the leviathan provides the lesson that ‘greatest Monarchs poorest vassals need’ and she goes on to state that ‘hungry Pesants pamper’d Nobles Feed’. She derives the moral:

...let those that are placed the rest above
Answer their labour with their care and Love
And Pittie those which labor at the Plough
T’is God that made the difference and not thou.

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64 Emblem 12.
65 The book of Job states that the whale ‘beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride’ (41.34); he is therefore the most powerful of God’s creations.
Pulter invokes a particularly paternal way of understanding the relationship between the social classes. Those lower down the scale serve those above in return for care and security. She does not however subscribe to the kind of contractual arrangement outlined by Hobbes. For Hobbes the leviathan was a terrifying model of absolute authority under which man resigned his own power in return for protection. In Hobbes’s theory all individuals (even women) were equal in the state of nature but in order to protect themselves from other people they needed to make a contractual agreement with a single authority. For Pulter however, God institutes the difference and the relationship is one premised on care and responsibility. The model she outlines is in keeping with that promoted by James I, who characterised the relationship between monarch and subject as an agreement, analogous to marriage. The subject freely enters into the contract but is then bound by the terms of that agreement and is required to willingly submit to the king’s power, which is ultimately bestowed by God.

The seventeenth-century political analogy between the head of state and the head of the household is well known; in a treatise apparently composed in support of the Stuart monarchy, Robert Filmer famously asserted that the house was a ‘little commonwealth’ in which wives, children and servants have a duty of absolute obedience to the male head of the household, whose authority is derived from the model provided by Adam, the first father and first monarch. By extension, in this model the monarch has absolute dominion over his subjects. Filmer’s statement, extreme even for its time, was designed to legitimise and

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66 Robert Filmer, Patriarcha: A Defence of the Natural Power of Kings Against the Unnatural Liberty of the People (1680). The text was composed a long time before it was published but opinions are divided as to precisely when. James Daly argues that the text was produced between 1635 and 1642 as a response to increasing challenges to Charles I’s authority following the Ship Money crisis, Sir Robert Filmer and English Political Thought (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1979), p. 4.
bolster the authority of the Stuart monarchy in defiance of their rebellious subjects. Pulter however rejects this model of absolute authority, which she more readily associates with Cromwell. She instead puts forward a political model she simultaneously asserts throughout her poetry, in which a paternal leader has a duty of care towards his subjects who in turn reciprocate with loyalty and obedience. The implication of Pulter’s emblem collection is that the nation has entered into a political contract far removed from the model sanctioned by God and that it is the responsibility of each individual to help rectify this situation.

Hadassah

Pulter’s use of the pseudonym ‘Hadassah’ provides some indication of the way in which she seeks to present her own active response to the situation of Interregnum England. On the page immediately following the scribal title page to her literary manuscript, she has added several sub-titles in her own hand. She notes that her poems are:

Hadassas Chast Fances
Beeinge the Fruett of solitary and many of them sad howers

Pulter apparently adopted her chosen pseudonym ‘Hadassah’ around the time she began composing her emblem poems. She presents her compositions as the

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69 Ms Lt q, f. 1r.
70 The name ‘Hadassah’ does not appear within the main text of the occasional poems but it does appear within the main text of the emblem poems. The name appears elsewhere in the manuscript but in annotations apparently added in Pulter’s hand following the compilation of the manuscript.
virtuous product of her leisured but enforced and often sad confinement. She then adds:

Marvall not my names conceald
In beeinge hid itt is reve’ld

Using a vocabulary common to seventeenth-century ciphers, Pulter signals the relationship between her own name and her chosen moniker. Hadassah is the Hebrew version of the name Esther (and therefore her own name Hester) and it refers to the Biblical queen Esther and to her eponymous book in the Old Testament. Esther, a Jew, who is confined to a harem both prior to and after her marriage to king Ahasuerus, is forced to defend herself, her people and her religion against the actions of the king’s tyrannical advisor, Haman. For Pulter, the pseudonym is appropriate not simply because of the relationship it bears to her own name but because of the significance the story of Esther had in mid-seventeenth-century England.

In the biblical story, Esther takes a highly active role in the redemption of her people. This aspect is highlighted by Francis Quarles in Hadassa: Or the History of Queene Ester (1621) in which he rewrites the Book of Esther as a series of poems and meditations dedicated to James I. In his preface, Quarles argues that Esther’s actions represent a means of assisting the monarch in the operation of justice. Using ‘the winged Commonwealth of Bees’ as an analogy of mutual cooperation for the greater good, Quarles suggests that each individual

It also appears within one other poem extant on a loose sheet accompanying the manuscript and dated 1665. This would suggest she adopted the Hadassah pseudonym during the 1650s, after she had completed the occasional poems and when she began writing her emblems. Sarah Ross notes the similarity between ‘The Weepeing Wishe’ and Quarles’ emblematic depiction of Hadassah (2005), pp. 6-7. During the early decades of the seventeenth century Quarles was a highly popular emblem writer, and it is plausible that, given Pulter’s interest in emblems, she was reading his texts. He was also the secretary of Pulter’s associate Archbishop James Ussher, see Karl Josef Hölgen, ‘Quarles, Francis (1592–1644)’, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22945, accessed 20 May 2008]. For a discussion of Pulter’s connection to Ussher see Chapter One.
has their own part to play in ensuring that the nation is governed according to God’s will.\textsuperscript{72} Despite transgressing her husband’s law, Esther represents a subject performing his or her own small part in this process whose actions ultimately uphold, rather than threaten, the legitimate authority. Similarly, while Pulter may be using her poetry to transgress the explicit demands of her husband and Cromwell, they provide a means of serving the wider interests of God, the nation and the true Stuart monarchy.

In the Bible, Esther transgresses her husband’s explicit injunction against entering into his presence uninvited and protects her people by speaking out in their defence. Criticising the inappropriate vocal expression of married women, Francis Quarles reiterates the common adage:

\begin{quote}
Ill thrives the haplesse Family, that showes 
A Cocke that’s silent, and a Hen that crowes.\textsuperscript{73}
\end{quote}

Made in reference to the actions of Vashti, Ahasuerus’s first wife, divorced on the grounds of disobedience, this comment points to the implications of women’s self-expression for wider issues of marital and social order. Women’s self-expression could be linked to the misbalance or inversion of power and authority that Pulter wants to challenge. In contrast, Esther was a figure who could be used to represent legitimate female self-expression, specifically in defence of the church. In keeping with Stoic philosophy outlined in Pulter’s text, the significance Quarles draws from the Biblical story of Esther is not that all women’s speech is inappropriate but that it must be suited to the specific circumstances. In the Book of Esther, Vashti disobeys her husband to further her

\textsuperscript{72} Francis Quarles, \textit{Hadassa: Or the History of Queene Ester} (1621), sig. H3r
\textsuperscript{73} Quarles (1621), sig. E1r.
own interests but in contrast Esther is motivated by concern for her people and for her religion.

Esther's value as a symbol of women's legitimate action through speech is demonstrated in the use of her name in reference to Henrietta Maria. In 1637, Francis Lenton, the self-styled 'Queen's Poet', composed 'Queen Esters Haliluahs' in which he presents the queen as Esther for her role in defending Catholicism to her husband, Charles I. The royal marriage had been a significant aspect of 1630s Stuart court mythology and was presented as a model of neo-platonic harmonious unity on which the nation could model itself. This suggests that within the concept of marriage promoted by the Stuart monarch it was possible for a woman to use her status as wife to promote religious harmony and social unity. The 'Hadassah' pseudonym therefore allows Pulter to speak in defence of her people and her religion without compromising, through her own unruly behaviour, a social order she is keen to preserve. The texts produced by Quarles and Lenton explore the potential for the subject to challenge the religious policy of their husband and/or monarch. As such, the story provides Pulter with a viable model of spiritual integrity in the face of opposition, possibly from her husband but almost certainly from Cromwell's regime.

While in the 1630s the name 'Hadassah' had significant monarchical connotations, during the 1640s, puritans and other radical religious groups used the story of Esther as a means of asserting their own religious interests in opposition to Charles I and to the religious reforms instituted by William Laud. In a sermon preached at Hitchin just a few miles from where the Pulters were

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74 Veevers (1989), p. 82.
76 Catherine Coussens discusses how Hadassah or Esther provided a 'fruitful and flexible model of virtuous female agency for both royalist and anti-royalist commentators' (2006), p. 11.
living in Broadfield, and published in late July 1644, John Bewick includes Esther among notable biblical examples of God saving his people 'by weak means'. Some indication of Bewick's political and religious stance is provided by the dedication of his text to Robert, earl of Essex 'Generall of the Army raised by the Parliament, in defence of true Protestant Religion'. At the time of publication Essex's army was facing defeat at the hands of the royalists and just two weeks later they would surrender. Esther is used in this context as a reminder that God will find ways to defend his people and their faith against kings and their tyrannical advisors. For puritan women, the figure of Esther became a particularly useful means by which they could legitimise the assertion of their own voices in defence of their religious interests and of the people they claimed to represent. During the early years of the 1640s, for example, the name was used by women petitioners seeking to legitimise their direct politically motivated appeal to their rulers. The allusion to Esther, in conjunction with the act of petitioning, signalled a model of women's direct participation in the nation as political subjects. Pulter draws on these connotations of subject-hood but she also alludes back to the conception of Haddasah used in reference to Henrietta Maria in which women's political action and subject-hood were defined in relation to their role in marriage.

As her cipher suggests, Pulter's 'Hadassah' pseudonym provides a clue both to her own identity in the form of her real name and also to the way in

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78 Among Pulter's post-Restoration verse is a poem entitled 'On the Fall of that grand Rebel the Earl of Essex his Effigies in Henry 7th's Chappel in Westminster Abby' in which Pulter describes Essex as the 'Bold Earl blown up with Pop'lar breath' and recounts the events surrounding the royalist desecration of his tomb in Westminster Abbey in 1646 and Charles II's later removal of the tomb from the Abbey, Ms Lt q 32, f. 85r. The poem was transcribed into the volume by the eighteenth-century annotator, although it is almost certainly Pulter's own composition. For a discussion of this poem see Robson (2000), pp. 238-56.
which she constructs her authorial identity. A central concern for studies exploring royalist women’s writing, including those by Catherine Gallagher, Carol Barash and Hero Chalmers, is the way in which royalist women writers, usually those who printed or circulated their texts, used royalist tropes to assert their own political and textual authority. Following Gallagher’s extremely influential essay ‘Embracing the Absolute’, it has been widely accepted that royalist women could use the concept of absolute monarchy as a model of authority allowing them to conceive of themselves as divinely-sanctioned commanders of their own texts. Gallagher argues that in a society structured around the relationship between monarch and subject women could conceive of themselves as ‘monarchs’, for which there was a precedent, more easily than as ‘subjects’, for which there was none. Through their texts, women were then able to contribute an authoritative voice to national political debate. Pulter, however, associates absolutism not with the Stuart monarchy she supports but with the Cromwellian Protectorate she opposes. She therefore conceives of a very different model of textual authority rooted in the material circumstances in which she wrote and within which she apparently imagined her text being read. In contrast to Gallagher’s suggestion, she apparently considers herself an active and valuable subject, or citizen, of the state.

A key difference between Pulter’s text and the writing of other seventeenth-century women is the circumscribed nature of its circulation and the potentially very limited audience Pulter anticipated for her manuscript. Margaret

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82 Barash and Chalmers have generally accepted the usefulness of royalism as an ideology for women writers but both have modified Gallagher’s argument; Barash explores the ‘fissures’ in royalist ideology and considers their implications for women while Chalmers draws attention to the differences between royalist women. See Barash (1996), p. 21 and Chalmers (2004), p. 7.
Cavendish, with whom the absolute monarchy model of authority is most closely associated, printed her own texts exposing them to a much wider readership than that addressed by Pulter. In these circumstances an absolutist monarchical identity was a means of asserting ownership and authority over a text available to a general, unknowable and uncontrolled readership who would inevitably exercise their own capacity for interpretation. In contrast, Pulter, who addresses her manuscript to her family, specifically to her own children, speaks with the authority of a wife and mother. This places her in a position of relative, not absolute, authority as she asserts her legitimate social role in educating her own offspring. Pulter’s manuscript is not designed to assert an authoritative political voice within a national or international arena but to exercise political authority from within her immediate social circumstances. In doing this, she draws on the Stoic emphasis on the influential role of the individual within society as a whole.

Pulter’s conception of her poetic identity can be seen in emblem 20 in which, in opposition to the model of social disintegration outlined above, she sets out an ideal social role for contemporary women. The poem opens with an emblem of the turtle dove, a conventional image for marital fidelity. She writes:

Who can but pitty this poor Turtle Dove
Which was soe kind and constant to her Love
And since his Death his loss shee doth Deplore
For his dear sake shee’l never Couple more\

Pulter draws her image of the dove from Pliny’s *Natural History* (1601) but her interpretation of the image is very different. For Pliny, doves live ‘coupled by the bond of marriage…unless they be in a state of single life or widdowhead by the

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83 In addition to publishing her works in print Cavendish was disseminating material in another significant public sphere, the republic of letters. See David Norbrook ‘Women, the Republic of Letters, and the Public Sphere in the Mid-Seventeenth Century’, *Criticism* 46.2 (Spring 2004), pp. 223-40.

84 Ms Lt q 32, f. 103v.
death of their fellow'. For Pulter, the dove provides a model of enduring marital fidelity that transcends separation through death. She is extremely critical of those ‘Who being Freed soe Oft, would bee a slave’ and she condemns remarriage on the grounds that it distorts a woman’s true relationship with God. As a whole, Pulter’s manuscript provides some sense of religious and political differences between herself and her husband. Arthur Pulter retired from public duty at the outbreak of civil war suggesting he may have been reluctant to fight for his king. He was also the patron of a Presbyterian minister suggesting his religious beliefs were very different from or at least more flexible than those of his more conformist wife. Given the scarce amount of information about the Pulters’ marriage it is difficult to attribute any certainty to these speculations. However, this poem reflects a not uncommon cultural assumption that a woman’s duty to her husband could come into conflict with that to her God. Within this context Pulter’s adoption of the Hadassah pseudonym appears particularly apt. Pulter’s vocabulary of bondage and freedom is redolent of Esther’s condition of confinement both prior to and following her marriage to

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85 Pliny, *Natural History* (1601), ‘First Tome’, p. 290  
86 The issue of political and religious differences between Pulter and her husband Arthur is discussed in Chapter One.  
87 Elizabeth Richardson, whose *A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters* (1645) was dedicated to Pulter’s step-mother Jane Boteler (d. 1672), makes a similar point. Referring to her own widowhood, she asks God to assist her so that she ‘may turne this freedome from the bond of marriage only the more to thy service’, p. 134. (Reproduced in Sylvia Brown ed. *Women’s Writing in Stuart England: The Mothers’ Legacies of Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Joscelin and Elizabeth Richardson* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999), p. 228). Similarly, Sarah Ross has demonstrated that Katherine Austen makes a virtue out of maintaining her own widowhood in order to protect the interests of her children; see ‘“And Trophes of his praises make”: Providence and Poetry in Katherine Austen’s *Book M, 1664-1668*’, in *Early Modern Women’s Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity/Trent Colloquium* ed. by Victoria Burke and Jonathan Gibson (Aldershott: Ashgate, 2004), p. 184. Erica Longfellow discusses the emphasis that contemporary advice manuals place on choosing a spouse of equal faith. Similarly, in her discussion of Anne Southwell’s poetry Longfellow demonstrates that, like Pulter, Southwell was concerned with the behaviour of men that ‘hampers women’s ability to honour God’. (2004), pp. 33-41, 111-12.
King Ahasuerus.\textsuperscript{88} Esther must choose to transgress the explicit commands of her husband in order to protect the interests of her people and her faith. She therefore provides a model of the individual dedicated to her own religious and political convictions despite the difficulties of immediate circumstances.

Pulter goes on to consider traditional examples of women exercising spiritual, and in many ways, political independence. Pulter invokes Deborah and Anna as examples of Biblical women active in their religious convictions. Anna was a prophetess who remained a widow for ‘fourscore and four years’ after the death of husband and devoted her life to God.\textsuperscript{89} Similarly, Deborah, who was frequently associated with Elizabeth I, was a militant prophetess who helped lead a ten-thousand strong army of God’s people.\textsuperscript{90} Both women had a degree of independence from men enabling them to be active supporters of God. As these references suggest, Pulter does not reject marriage outright; she urges her contemporaries for example to ‘Constant bee unto one only Love’. She is concerned not so much with marriage but with a woman’s moral independence, which could be achieved both within and outside of marriage. Addressing contemporary women Pulter tells them:

\begin{quote}
Then if your Husbands rant it high and Game 
Besure you Double not their Guilt and Shame
\end{quote}

Women are urged not to follow the dissolute example of their husbands but to retain their own moral integrity. The social and political emphasis of her advice

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{88} Before her marriage, Esther is ‘brought also unto the king’s house, to the custody of Hegai, keeper of the women’ (Esther 2:7). After her marriage she is kept confined to Ahasuerus’s palace. 
\textsuperscript{89} Luke 2.36-37
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{90} Judges 4.4. Deborah was the wife of Lapidoth but it is possible that Pulter had in mind her association with Elizabeth I who famously never married. See Anne McLaren, ‘Elizabeth I as Deborah: Biblical typology, prophecy and political power’ in \textit{Gender, Power and Privilege in Early Modern Europe} ed. by Jessica Munns and Penny Richards (Harlow: Pearson, 2003), pp. 90-107, pp. 192-96. A key character in Pulter’s prose romance ‘The Unfortunate Florinda’ (c. 1655-60) is the ‘unparraleld Virgin’ princess (later queen) ‘Gloriana’, suggesting Pulter took a specific interest in the dead queen’s legacy, MS Lt q 32, f. 31Bv.
\end{flushright}
becomes apparent when she observes that 'Countis, Dutchis, [and] Protectors Daughter' have a tendency to visit places such as parks, theatre and taverns where they indulge in illicit behaviour. Pulter's direct reference to countesses and duchesses highlights the failure of the nobility who are set alongside and made complicit with Cromwell's daughter. On the 8th of June 1652 Bridget née Cromwell married her second husband, Charles Fleetwood, just six months after the death of her first, Henry Ireton, having met him in St James's Park. 91 Similarly, Pulter refers to a 'Bedlam, Belgick, Beast' who had 'a score of husbands at the least'. At this time the term 'Belgick' pertained to the Netherlands, a model republic much admired by Milton, and a country associated with widespread religious sectarianism. 92 Pulter associates multiple marriages with loose morals and an indulgence in vice, which she then explicitly applies to her political opposition. The practice of accusing the opposition of loose morality was common amongst royalist writers but for Pulter this is explicitly associated with a lack of spiritual independence. 93 Rather than chose to live an independently virtuous life, Parliamentary women seek out the carnal comforts and spiritual limitations of marriage.

91 An account of this episode is provided by Lucy Hutchinson who states that 'there went a story that as my Lady Ireton was walking in St James's park, the Lady Lambert, as proud as her husband, came where she was, and as the present princess always hath precedency of the relict of the dead one, so she put my Lady Ireton below; who, notwithstanding her piety and humility, was a little grieved at the affront; and that Colonel Fleetwood being then present, in mourning for his wife, who died at the same time her lord did, took occasion to introduce himself, and was immediately accepted by the lady and her father' Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson ed., N. H. Keeble (London: Phoenix Press, 1995), p. 251.

92 See for example his numerous positive references to the republic in The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth (1660).

In keeping with her Stoic insistence on the significance of individual virtue, Pulter recommends an alternative model of behaviour. Her suggestion is closely tied to her own authorial identity:

But Chastly live and rather spend your dayes
In setting Forth your great Creator's praise
And for diversion pass your Idle times
As I doe now in writeing harmless Rimes

Asking 'Have wee not better every day at Home', Pulter recommends modest and virtuous domesticity over a life of public vice. She manifests her own private and domestic devotion through the composition of 'harmles Rimes'. Her rhymes are 'harmles' because she does not challenge the accepted status quo with her actions. Dedicated to her own children, they enable her to perform her role as a good Protestant mother, providing a spiritual education. She provides both direct, explicit instruction on how best to behave and also presents a model on which, she suggests, other women can model their behaviour. Pulter urges women in general to do 'As I doe' adding that they should 'Both my example, and my Counsell take'. In this way, Pulter conceives of a domestic role for herself, which is powerful in the spiritual and political example it provides to others. The key to this identity is integrity and she concludes her poem with the couplet:

Then o my God assist mee with they Grace
That when I die I may but chang my place.

Pulter advises others in a moral and religious consistency transcending the vicissitudes of earthly existence, specifically the immediate social circumstances of Interregnum England. Each individual is encouraged to act according to the dictates of her own virtue and in this way to transcend the example and dictates of Cromwell's politically coercive and socially corrupt state.
Pulter is careful to demonstrate that the virtuous individuality she recommends is very different from the self-centred individualism typified by Cromwell. Emblem 28 demonstrates how her ‘Hadassah’ pseudonym is central to this project. Pulter asks:

Then let mee ever have a splendent fame
Or let me loos Hadassah my lov’d Name
Far better in Oblivion live and Die
Then to survive with these in infamie.

She is concerned with the nature and endurance of her own authorial reputation but she is careful to assert the essential differences between her own ‘lov’d Name’ and the name Nimrod ‘sought to get himself’ through the construction of the Tower of Babel. Her poem opens with the story of Herostratus who was so desperate to secure his own immortal fame that he burnt down the famous temple of Diana at Ephesus. He was put to death and it was decided that as punishment his name should not be recorded for posterity or ever mentioned again. For Pulter, Herostratus typifies the blasphemous personal ambition she identifies in Cromwell. In contrast to this, she adopts the name ‘Hadassah’ which, as Sarah Ross has demonstrated, means ‘godly fame’. Countering any suggestion that her poetry may be a way of preserving her own identity for prosperity she argues for her role in promoting God’s word. In doing this she asserts her role in providing a model for and educating others.

In ‘The Weeping Wishe’ an occasional poem composed in 1665, several years after her emblem poems, Pulter suggests the Hadassah pseudonym was a means of preserving for posterity, not herself, but those close to her. She writes:

O that my tears that fall down to the earth

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94 Emblem 28.
95 Emblem 1.
96 *Brill’s New Pauly*, VI, p. 276
Might give some noble unknown Flower berth
Then would Hadassahs more resplendent Fame
Out live the Famous Artimitius name

Pulter desires her tears to ensure her lasting reputation through the life it gives to others. Her desire to give ‘some noble unknown Flower berth’ evokes an episode from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in which Venus’s tears for Adonis’s death produce a new flower. Artemisia was renowned for building a tomb for her husband Mausalus, which became one of the Seven Wonders of the World. In this way, her actions ensured the survival of another’s reputation and her own name is remembered because she preserved that of her husband. Sarah Ross has read a political message in this poem she says that the ‘sighes’ and ‘tears’ described in ‘The Weepeing Wishe’ are Pulter’s poems, held up as salves ‘to sustain her personal and political friends’.

Within this model, Pulter’s poetry is a means of enacting a royalist form of stoical fortitude and endurance in defiance of the current political climate.

As its full title suggests, Pulter composed ‘The Weepeing Wishe’ in January 1665, several years after she had compiled her manuscript volume and several years after the Restoration. This suggests that the poetical agenda it presents is being retrospectively imposed on the volume and this would explain some discrepancy in the tone of this poem compared to that of the emblem series. In ‘The Weepeing Wishe’ Pulter is anticipating or at least contemplating her own

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98 Ms Lt q 32, f. 84v.
99 Pulter refers to this story twice in her poetry; once in her emblem 30 and more fully in her occasional poem ‘The Garden, or The Contention of Flowers, To my Deare Daughter Mistris Anne Pulte, at her desire written’, Ms Lt q 32, ff. 111r, 19v. In this poem the Adonis flower, referring to Venus, describes how after he is gored by the boar ‘The mixture of my Blood her Brackish tears/And the influence of her eye my flower up rears’. It is possible that this poem is an elegy for Pulter’s son Edward who died in 1665, although there is no evidence to suggest when precisely this occurred.
100 For accounts of this story see Goulart (1621), ‘Book One’, p. 22 and Pliny (1601), ‘Second Tome’, p. 568.
death, although she did not in fact die for another thirteen years.\textsuperscript{102} Given the date of the poem it is likely that she had spent the previous year watching as the plague devastated London and was fearing for both herself and her family.\textsuperscript{103}

Within this general frame, she asks:

\begin{quote}
Then lett my dieinge tears a Cordiall prove 
Seeinge I my Friends above my life doe love.
\end{quote}

Pulter’s ‘Friends’ appear to be family members or close family associates and she desires that her poetry may sustain them in the event of her death. Her use of the medical term ‘Cordiall’ suggests a further allusion to the illness of the plague. In this context, the collection can be seen as a means by which she sought to ensure the endurance of her own reputation. This retrospective agenda, apparently imposed on the volume in 1665/6, is very different from the more active and immediate tone of the emblems, composed in response to the political situation of 1650s England.

The essential difference in tone between ‘The Weepeing Wishe’ and Pulter’s emblem poetry can be detected in the different uses made of a single allusion. In ‘The Weepeing Wishe’ Pulter anticipates the complete annihilation of her own identity and expresses the desire that her own demise might ensure the survival of others. She specifically refers to Artimesia who subjects her own identity to the preservation of her husband’s memory. In emblem 20 however Pulter is careful to reject the implication of total abnegation of identity. Again alluding to Artemisia she writes:

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{102} A second poem dated January 1665 entitled ‘The Hope’ displays a similar preoccupation with death. It opens with the lines: ‘Deare Death desolve thesee mortal charms/And then Ile throw myself into thy arms’, Ms Lt q 32, f. 88r.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
\textsuperscript{103} A. Lloyd Moote and Dorothy C. Moote note that following the peak of the outbreak in London during 1665 the epidemic ‘continued through the cold winter and all the next year, adding 100,000 victims in the provinces to the same number in Greater London in 1665 and several thousand fatalities in the capital in 1666’, (2004), p. 201. They add that ‘the parish authorities in Hertfordshire ... erected a pesthouse in the heart of the county’, Moote and Moote (2004), p. 201.
\end{quote}
Yet Anchorites I would not have you turn
Nor Halcions, nor bee your Husbands Urn

Having advised contemporary women that it is best if they ‘Chastly live’ and spend their days ‘In setting Forth [their] great Creator’s praise’ she now cautions against taking this too far. She warns them against the actions of Artemisia who literally became her husband’s burial ‘Urn’ when she ingested his ashes. 104 She also rejects the model of the anchorite who, bricked up in a cell, embodies a state of pristine religious isolation. Pulter does not see a complete withdrawal from society as best means of action and she overtly rejects the model of passive resistance that has traditionally been associated with the royalist cause. She instead recommends a condition of self-regulation enabling a woman to take part in wider society without becoming prey to its corrupting influence. Pulter suggests that through the Stoic maintenance of individual virtue contemporary women could take an active participation in society and, by extension, national politics. Her statement that women have ‘better every day at Home’ does not suggest an avoidance of social responsibility but a fulfilment of it. In contrast to the frivolity of those public pastimes she associates with her contemporaries she recommends the enactment of social duty within the home.

In emblem 20, in addition to dismissing the examples provided by anchorites and by Artemisia, Pulter also rejects the model offered by ‘Halcion’, or Alcyone, who committed suicide after hearing of the death of her husband. 105 Although for the Stoic, suicide was the ultimate means of preserving individual integrity in the face of earthly opposition, it was highly problematic for the

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104 In his ‘Elogie of Artemisia’ Pierre Le Moyne presents a scene in which ‘The ashes of Mausolus, which she hitherto so charity preserved, are moistned with her Tears in the Cup you see in her hand. She takes it up to drink them’. He then adds that ‘nothing but Artemisia alone could make a fit sepulchre for Mausolus’, The Gallery of Heroick Women (1652), p. 95.

105 An account of this story is provided by Goulart (1621), ‘Book One’, p. 239
Christian. Pulter considers the morality of suicide in an emblem based on an account taken from Pliny of a ‘Brackman’ who burns himself alive on a funeral pyre. He sacrifices himself so that his own disease will not infect those around him. This enables his soul to leave his diseased body and to reassume its ‘Pristine Glory’. Pulter compares his actions with that of the phoenix, which achieves rebirth through the destruction of its aged corporeal body. Pulter is drawn to this and she writes:

Who would not such a blessed change explore
Or who would such a change as this deplore

Throughout her poems, Pulter is consumed by a desire to transcend the physical limitations of her own body. But in this poem she considers the Christian implications of such actions:

Although I cannot in Sols Fulgour Frie
Nor dare not like this Gymnosophist die
Such Stoicall tricks a Christian spirit loaths

Pulter identifies the Brackman’s actions with Stoic philosophy. Gymnosophists were the ultimate Stoics, subjecting themselves to excruciating pain so that they may exercise the transcendence of their spirit.

Although Pulter’s poetry is dominated by Stoic ideas she resists the drive towards suicide. She instead turns to the Bible for an analogous story with Christian undertones. She refers to ‘old Aaron’ who, when the time came, ‘put of his Cloaths’ and passed them to his son, Eleazor. Pulter expresses her desire to ‘lay by’ her mortality as Aaron did with his clothing. She writes:

Who then can say Hadassah here doth Lie

107 Emblem 44, Ms Lt q 32, f.121 v.
108 Jayne Archer discusses the ways in which Pulter uses alchemical imagery to explore this issue, (2005) pp. 1-14.
110 Numbers 20.28
When as my soul shall reassend above  
To God the Fount of Life, Light, Joy, and Love

For Pulter, Hadassah is the true virtuous essence of her being and is therefore the part of her with the capacity to transcend the physical corruption of her body. The implication of her allusion to the story of Aaron is that, unlike the Brackman, Pulter is desirous of leaving behind her physical body but only at the divinely allotted time. Till then, she will continue in her internal struggle to preserve the integrity of her authorial identity.

**Wealthy Husbands and their Wives**

In her adoption of ‘Hadassah’ as a pseudonym, Pulter alludes to a model of political response enacted from within the context of marriage and the household. Esther must negotiate her marital relationship with Ahasuerus, who is also her king, in order to defend the interests of her people. The elision of monarch and husband in this situation draws attention the familiar seventeenth-century analogy between state and ‘oeconomics’. The name ‘Hadassah’ therefore provides the ideal vehicle through which Pulter can communicate her own political action from within the domestic context of her manor house, Broadfield in Hertfordshire. On a material level, her political message, expressed in manuscript, is communicated through direct, personal interaction with those, including her husband and children, within her household. Just as Esther’s communication with her husband is a literal engagement with state politics, Pulter suggests that her own engagement with her family has much wider implications.
In contrast to those women she condemns for neglecting their domestic duties, Pulter refuses to contribute to contemporary degeneration and instead upholds her position as a good wife and mother in the face of what she presents as broader social trends. The model Pulter recommends is in keeping with that associated with her mother in the sermon and epicedium discussed in Chapter One. In these texts Mary Ley is celebrated for her dedication to providing spiritual and practical support to the community and for providing an exemplary model for her children. It is plausible that Pulter, who was only eight when her mother died, had access to these materials and therefore to the model of ideal wife and motherhood they describe. Presented in this way, Mary Ley provides the ideal companion to Pulter’s father James Ley, whose political role within the court of James I is celebrated by Pulter in her 48th emblem. Both parents take an active part in the spiritual, social and political welfare of the nation; Mary through her activities within the family and community and James through his role in government. Through these representations Mary and James Ley emerge as the perfect model of social, family and state responsibility, a model that Pulter nostalgically associates with a social and political golden age.

During the 1630s, the marriage between Charles I and his Catholic wife Henrietta Maria was promoted as a model of unity and cooperation on which the nation as a whole could model itself. Pulter makes direct reference to this phenomenon in an occasional poem entitled ‘On the Kinge most excelent magisty’. She opens with the lines:

Victorious Palm, triumphing Lawrell Bowes
Encircles round illustrious Cæsars Browes
Whose valour fills with wonder future story

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Whilst Vertue Crowns him with immortall Glory

Addressing Charles I in present tense, this poem was apparently composed prior to his death. That Pulter invokes Charles as a king triumphant in battle suggests the poem was composed towards the start of the Civil Wars, possibly in 1644 when the royalists were at their most successful in their military campaign.

This image of a militarily victorious monarch is complimented with a reference to the royal marriage. Pulter writes:

And let us Lovly, Loyall, Royall Queen
To all succeeding ages still bee seen
A most unparrild pattern of turn [true?] Love
Begun on earth ending in Heaven a bove

Charles’s active and virtuous military role is complemented by his wife’s loving nature and together they provide an ideal example for their subjects and for future generations to follow. Throughout the poem Pulter draws on celestial imagery presenting Charles I and Henrietta Maria as the fixed heavenly sun casting their influence on their subjects’ ‘Humble Orbs’. This suggests that in addition to providing an example of correct behaviour the monarch and his queen gently guide the actions of those subjects in their orbit. Good governance is premised in the well-regulated marital partnership and it is from this foundation that the virtuous man or woman is able to benefit the nation as a whole.

While marriage and family relations in general occupied a significant conceptual position in seventeenth century political discourse they also had a much more concrete relevance for the government and widespread well-being of the nation. Inverting traditional scholarly narratives concerning the relationship between the household and the state, Mary S. Hartman has argued for a view of

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112 ‘On the Kinge most excelent magisty’, MS Lt q 32, f. 44r. An additional, unidentified, hand has added ‘K. Charles I’ to this title.
113 For my dating of this poem see Chapter Two.
Western society within which changes, specifically those relating to the
distribution of authority between men and women, introduced at the level of
multiple individual households had far reaching implications for the social,
political, and economic developments within the nation as a whole.¹¹⁴ Set within
this framework, Pulter’s actions within her household, including the didactic
emblems she apparently wrote for the education of her own children, and
possibly grandchildren, had a much greater purpose.¹¹⁵ Her own husband, despite
his withdrawal from local government, was a landowner and prominent member
of the local gentry.¹¹⁶ Pulter’s sons would potentially occupy similar positions in
society and her daughters could be expected to marry men of equal standing and
to produce their own children. In instilling her immediate family with a model of
her own social and political views Pulter was aiming to disseminate and
perpetuate a world-view in opposition to the prevailing government. The broader
implication of her text, with its wide-reaching address to ‘husbands’, ‘wives’,
‘parents’, and ‘nobles’ is that if sufficient numbers of people were to follow this
example then the social disintegration outlined above would be reversed and
natural, monarchical order would be restored.

The significance of family for Pulter’s emblem series is made apparent in
the second emblem in the collection. As Sarah Ross has pointed out, this poem is
a companion piece to the first emblem depicting Nimrod and the Tower of Babel

¹¹⁴ Mary S. Hartman, The Household and the Making of History: A Subversive View of the
¹¹⁵ As Hilda L. Smith notes, early modern women ‘who wrote about politics, and did it from a
consciously woman-centred perspective, embraced both the realities of some women’s power and
the need to define the state more broadly so that the family’s reflection and engendering of
political status would be recognized’ (1998), p. 5.
¹¹⁶ See Chapter One.
and together the two poems set the agenda for the collection as a whole.\textsuperscript{117}

Emblem 1 concludes with a prayer to God in which Pulter states:

\begin{verbatim}
That in thy Mercy I may safely Rowl
Resting in Christ that Blessed corner stone
Then by his Steps I'lle mount his Glorious Throne\textsuperscript{118}
\end{verbatim}

In these lines she alludes to the Tower of Babel’s builders’ blasphemous attempts to scale heaven by their own earthly means and rewrites this action as a devout progression to heaven via Christ’s ‘Steps’. This imagery is continued at the start of emblem 2 in which Pulter claims to be leading her own children up a set of ‘Blessed steps’. She writes:

\begin{verbatim}
Come my Dear Children come and Happy bee
Even as I follow Christ soe Follow mee
Eight of your Number finished have their Story
Now their souls doe shine in endless Glory\textsuperscript{119}
\end{verbatim}

Complementing the strongly political message of the previous poem, this emblem is concerned with Pulter’s own family. Her reference to the eight of her children who had died by the early 1650s implies that it is very specifically her own children she has in mind while composing these emblems.\textsuperscript{120} They potentially included her young son John, who was born in 1648, and those who would have been young adults at the time she was writing, including Arthur (b. 1636) and Edward (b. 1638). She urges them to ‘let Gods Word your sole Director bee’ in directing their path to heaven. Pulter presents herself as her family’s spiritual guide following the word of God and showing them the way to salvation. There is also the suggestion is that in this way they will avoid the blasphemous route Nimrod attempted to take.

\textsuperscript{117} Ross (2000), p. 132.
\textsuperscript{118} Emblem II. 22-24.
\textsuperscript{119} Emblem 2. II. 1-4.
\textsuperscript{120} For a discussion of Pulter’s children see Chapter 1 above.
Pulter herself is guided in the process of providing a spiritual education for her children by Alithea or 'Fair Truth and her Celestiall Train'. In an occasional poem entitled 'Alitheas Pearl' Pulter presents Alithea as her own spiritual guide who will 'lead [her] to eternall bliss' and who one 'Sunday, offer'd [her] an Orient Pearl'.\textsuperscript{121} The pearl represents Pulter's faith and spiritual virtues; it becomes 'both dim and sad' when she is preoccupied with earthly matters but is 'fare more bright' when Alithea returns and reminds her of God and the salvation awaiting her. In Pulter's second emblem, the twelve steps up which Alithea leads Pulter and her children are Humility, Patience, Temperance, Chastitie, Prudence, Just, Contentation, Constancy, Fortitude, Faith, Hope and Charity.\textsuperscript{122} Pulter's list of humanist virtues includes the four Stoic virtues of prudentia, fortitudo, iustitia, and temperantia (or modestia) and reaches its apotheosis in the three Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity.\textsuperscript{123} The path as 'Hellenics this did know' is straight and narrow following a Stoic route of consistency and single mindedness. In asserting her own role in the spiritual education of her own children, Pulter opens her emblem series with a statement of her own social role as moral arbiter and suggests that her emblems are a means by which she may achieve this. That the poem can be twinned with the Nimrod emblem suggests that the moral education provided by Pulter is a response to the situation of Interregnum England. She rejects the model of Nimrod's blasphemous ambition with its attendant political associations and instead recommends her own model of spiritual advancement.

\textsuperscript{121} In her reference to 'Sunday' Pulter may be alluding to her baptism, which took place on Sunday 19\textsuperscript{th} June 1605.
\textsuperscript{122} Pulter's catalogue of virtues does not correspond with any pre-existing model suggesting these are the virtues she considered most significant.
\textsuperscript{123} Markku Peltonen *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought* (1995), pp. 33-34.
Pulter’s second emblem is not the only place in the collection in which she refers to her own children. Emblem 36, which opens with the direct appeal ‘Come my Dear Pledges of our Constant Loves’, displays a similar exhortative tone.\footnote{Emblem 36.} This reference to the product of her marital ‘Loves’, firmly locates her address to her children within the context of her (as it is depicted here) strong marriage. The poem makes a far more explicit connection between the spiritual education Pulter is offering her children and the religious and political environment of Interregnum England. In this poem Pulter encourages her children to ‘Come look upon these pretty innocent Doves’ which ‘swallow Orient Pearls like Peas’. For Pulter, doves represent the spiritually virtuous who here are swallowing the spiritual truths in the form of pearls, an image in keeping with her account of Alithea’s gift of a pearl to her in youth. She encourages her children to follow the example of the doves who keep their pearls safe in their stomachs and tells them to ‘treasure sacred truths within your heart’.

The doves are then contrasted with ‘people which are like those swine’ and who ‘at Gods word and Ministers repine’.\footnote{Matthew 7.6.} Pulter draws on a biblical precedent for using the boar to symbolise the irreligious, whose actions she goes on to equate with iconoclasm and political rebellion. In a few lines she runs swiftly through the various stages of this characterisation:

\begin{quote}
Of these the Bore God's vinyards that destroy
And with their Filth his sacred Phane annoy
Soe mad Antiochus the Temple stain'd
Even soe our Janiazaries Po'les prophan'd
Making the Church a stable and a stews
The while imprisoning Nobles in the Mews
\end{quote}
Psalm 80.8-13 praises the Lord because he hath 'brought a vine out of Egypt' and asks why he has 'broken down her hedges' allowing 'the boar out of the wood' to 'waste it'. The boar represents the sinful destroying or disregarding God's word and his people, specifically the Israelites who he had brought out of Egypt. Pulter links this persecution to the sacrilegious action of sacrificing swine, which according to the Bible pollutes the sacred church and altar and is an abomination. When Antiochus's profanes the temple his actions include sacrificing 'swine's flesh'. Pulter then links Antiochus's actions to those of the 'Janiazaries' or puritan soldiers who, it was widely reported, were desecrating churches across the country, including St Paul's Cathedral in London. Pulter refers to the soldiers' reported habit of bringing prostitutes into the churches, which they were also using as stables. It is not mentioned here, but Pulter may also have been thinking of the reports of soldiers using church buildings as places in which to butcher meat. Their alleged practice of cutting up dead animals on the altar would make a direct link to the earlier allusion to the abomination of sacrificing the flesh of swine.

Pulter's attack on the religious sacrilege of the puritan soldiers is deeply embedded in her political opposition to the army and to the king's opponents as a whole. But her criticism moves away from a focus on the army's sacrilegious actions to an attack on the imprisonment of 4,500 royalist soldiers in the royal

126 Elsewhere, Pulter specifically refers to the royalists as the Israelites or God's chosen people; see emblem 25, line 19.
127 Isaiah 66.3.
128 I Maccabees 1.47.
129 See emblem 36, note to lines 22-23.
130 See for example an issue of Mercurius Rusticus which reports on the desecration of a church in Sudley Castle. It states that the 'rebells' make 'the Chancell their Slaughter house, unto the Pulpit ... they fasten pegges to hang the Carcasses of their Slaughtered sheep: the Communion-Table ... they make their Dresser or Chopping-board to cut out their meat' (24 June 1643), p. 47.
mews, or stables, after the battle of Naseby. Her reference to these soldiers as ‘Nobles’ adds an additional, social, class-based, element to her criticism, which in sum amounts to a multi-faceted attack on the monarch’s opposition from the perspective of religion, political affiliation and class. In encouraging her children to follow the example of ‘doves’ and not ‘swine’ Pulter was apparently asserting her political as well as her religious views and urging them to follow. The collection as a whole presents an education in how the individual would perform their ideal political, religious and social role, in keeping with Pulter’s royalist and Laudian values. She places great emphasis on personal integrity and virtue and on not following the negative example of others.

A significant element of the advice that Pulter provides to her children focuses on their respective roles within marriage. She demonstrates that the responsibilities of the active citizen begin within the home and that actions within the family are directly linked to general well being of the nation. For Pulter, the failure of contemporary men to observe their duties to their wives is implicated in the widespread social upheaval of the Civil Wars and she contrasts their behaviour with that of the ideal citizen is defined in an emblem of an elephant worshipping the sun. This poem apparently provides a companion piece to emblem 20, discussed above, in which Pulter uses the example of the dove to present a model of the ideal Christian woman. The emblematic image of the elephant worshipping the sun had previously appeared in a collection by Joachim Camerarius where it is used to represent the concept of ‘pietas’ meaning ‘a sense of duty to one's gods, family or country’. In contrast Geoffrey Whitney, in his extremely popular late-sixteenth-century collection of emblems,

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131 See emblem 36, note to line 24.
132 Emblem 19.
133 Joachim Camerarius, Symbolorum et Emblematum ex Animalibus (Nuremberg, 1595), p. 9.
represents the concept of ‘pietas’ with an image of Aeneas fleeing Troy with his father on his back.\textsuperscript{134} The Virgilian concept of family, adopted by Whitney, is based on male lineage; in the \textit{Aeneid} Aeneas’ wife Creusa is killed as she follows at a distance. But Pulter exploits the Stuart notion that the relationship between husband and wife is central to the family unit on which the structure of society as a whole is based.

Taking her information from Pliny’s \textit{Natural History} (1601), Pulter describes how male and female elephants ‘Innocently each other doe Injoy’ suggesting that their relationship is based on a modest and reciprocal affection.\textsuperscript{135} If he ‘doubts scortation’ (ie. if he suspects adultery) the male elephant observes his social duty to act as moral arbiter and disciplines his mate. The elephant’s marital authority and chastity contribute to the qualities making him the ideal subject. They are combined with his loyalty to his king and country, proven by the martial prowess of elephants in general when on the ‘Feild they’l bravly Fighting die’, and also his piety, confirmed each morning by his religious observances of the sun. The exact performance of his marital, social and religious duties makes the elephant the ideal role model for contemporary men, a model corresponding with the marital ideal represented by Charles I and Henrietta Maria in ‘On the Kinge most excelent magisty’. Pulter concludes her emblem with a direct, personal address to her male readers whom she implicates in the nation’s failing:

\begin{quote}
For Honnours sake looke too’t, for shame at least,
You see a Wittall is below a Beast.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{134} Geoffrey Whitney, \textit{A Choice of Emblemes} (1586), p. 163.
\textsuperscript{135} Pliny (1601), ‘First Tome’, pp. 192-6.
Degraded by his acceptance of his wife's infidelity the individual man is exhorted to set his own house in order. The poem implies that if decisive action is taken on a domestic level then this will contribute to the overall restoration of social order.

Pulter is careful to stress however that although husbands should be ensuring the good behaviour of their wives this does not mean they should be tyrannous. In her thirty-second emblem Pulter provides a lesson in legitimate jealousy. She describes how the lion is 'most indulgent to his Lyones' but nonetheless he 'kils her if hee knows shee do' th a miss'. He will only do this if he 'Smels the Panthers strong perfumes' on the lioness's fur and if he can be certain that she has 'Broke her Faith'. If the lioness is careful to 'wash her in some Cristall streams' then the lion 'never dreams' that she has betrayed him. In this poem, Pulter overlooks the immorality of the lioness's actions in order to focus on the nobility of the lion who does not succumb to idle jealousy. This is contrasted with the actions of the 'wild hairbraind and Lascivious Ass' who 'All Creatures els in Jealousie doth pass'. The ass is so jealous of his female that:

hee dooth Watch her young ones when they fall
Then to prevent all fear hee bites of all

The male watches the female give birth so that if she gives birth to a male he can immediately geld it. It is not entirely clear if the ass does this because he suspects that the female has been unfaithful and the young is not his or if, and this seems more likely, he does it to prevent future infidelity. The moral that Pulter ultimately derives from these stories is that 'The Noblest Mind is from Suspition Free'. It is therefore better to be like the lion and deceived by lack of evidence than to be like the ass whose actions betray his fundamental lack of trust.
Pulter’s attitude to jealousy is in keeping with her general attitude to marriage, which she characterises as a loving partnership rather than an overt hierarchy in which the husband controls his wife. In one emblem she describes the behaviour of ‘Marmottanes’ who ‘for Conjugall Love...may be Crownd’. These animals share the burden of constructing their nest; one animal lies on its back, allowing the other to pile ‘Grass and Herbs’ upon its stomach. Functioning as a living sledge, it is then drawn by the tail into the nest. Making a direct comparison between this behaviour and that of her contemporaries, Pulter asks:

Surely they live Far more happie lives
Then many Wealthy Husbands and their Wives.

The focus of Pulter’s criticism is on contemporary men whom she accuses of neglect in that ‘most to Taverns or to Wors will Rome’ or excessive force in that ‘they’l always Tirannise at home’. In contrast to this she uses images from Pliny’s *Natural History* to provide examples from nature of parental cooperation. In one emblem she refers to ‘Manucodiats’ describing how:

... on their Backs the Males have hollow Pits
In which the Female lays her Egs and Sits

The nurturing of young becomes a communal effort and Pulter exhorts that ‘Parents then Learn here Indulgencie’. According to her, parental responsibility is in forbearance and she stresses lenience and nurturance.

Pulter goes on to state that the model of parenthood she recommends has divine origins; she tells her reader that:

the least spark or beam of Love
Is first diffus’d and kindled from above

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137 Emblem 24.
138 Emblem 5.
The love she identifies between man and wife and between them as parents and their children originates in God. Drawing on a neoplatonic model of God as the ultimate source of light she suggests that human love is a spark of that light. Rather than providing a model or pattern of love, God is its originator and people can share in his goodness and divinity. Pulter suggests that the ultimate demonstration of this divine love is in reciprocal family relations. She concludes her poem with a prayer that God will:

let mee with such holy Fervour Burn
When that Eternall Spark begins to Glow
In my Chast Breast let itt diffuse below
To all relations then reascend above
To God the Fount of Glory, Life and Love.

The love and influence Pulter seeks to disseminate is characterised as a divine spark from God. The neoplatonic model she invokes is hierarchical but importantly it implies that each individual person, or living organism, has a shared, divine, origin. The divine spark of love derived from God is more than an essence of the soul, it is the soul itself, which Pulter wants ultimately to see returned to its source. Pulter implies that the model of social and family relations she promotes is premised in God and the divinity residing within each individual. It is far removed from the human model of coercive control she associates with the new government and is more in keeping the neo-platonic model of power promoted by the Caroline court.139

The direct pertinence of this message for the issue of Interregnum political engagement is made explicit in Pulter's romance. This text appears to have been composed around the same time that Pulter was writing her emblems and therefore reflects many of the same preoccupations. In one section Pulter

presents a verbal battle of the sexes between Don Alphonso, a villainous male character, and Fidelia, the virtuous heroine. In their debate about the relative virtue and authority of men and women, specifically within marriage, the characters reveal their opposing attitudes to power and authority in general. Don Alphonso begins the exchange with a vicious attack on women who he says ‘were created only to be subservants to men’.\textsuperscript{140} He goes on to say that women will be slaves in the present but also ‘to all eternity’ because they are ‘weaker in the body’ and also ‘in the Faculties of their Souls, if they have any Souls at all’. He goes on to quote the views of ‘that Elegant Pen’ who says that man is ‘the noblest and free’st Creature’ and should not be condemned ‘all his life time to converse with a simple sluttish woeman’. Instead, man should be able to ‘Choos, take, and leave at his pleasure’ and not have to suffer that ‘Padlock Mariage, to be hung upon his Liberty’.

The ‘Elegant Pen’ to whom Don Alphonso refers is Francis Osborne whose ideas about women are put forward in his \textit{Advice to a Son} (1656) where his misogynist attack on women is presented alongside his recommendation that the subject should ‘submit quietly to any power Providence shall please to mount into the saddle of Soveraignty, without enquiring into their Right’.\textsuperscript{141} The statements that Osborne makes in his pamphlet are dominated by Machiavellian self-interest. He says for example that if civil strife erupts it is better not to get too involved from the start, just in case it fails, but to ‘have patience, and see the Tree sufficiently shaken, before you run to scramble for the fruit’.\textsuperscript{142} Similarly, if you are committed to a cause and it begins ‘to totter’ it is better, he says, to prolong life ‘by the forfeiture of Trust’ than to have it buried ‘in the field of

\textsuperscript{140} MS Lt q 32, f. 25r.
\textsuperscript{141} Francis Osborne, \textit{Advice to a Son} (1656), p. 110.
\textsuperscript{142} Osborne (1656), p. 80.
Honour'. Within this context of worldly self-interest the only marriage that Osborne can bring himself to recommend is one in which the woman is endowed with a 'great Estate'.\textsuperscript{143} For Osborne, marriage, like other social bonds, should be a matter of convenience ultimately serving the demands of the (male) individual.

In Pulter's text, Fidelia responds to Don Alphonso, not with a defence of marriage, but with an assertion of female virtue. She says that 'the Works of the Creation' rose 'by gradations, untill the woman who was the last and choisest works of Nature was Composed'.\textsuperscript{144} In support of this argument she cites several examples that prove the physical, and therefore the spiritual superiority of women. One example is taken from Plutarch who reports that in countries where they burn their dead the people prefer 'one woman to ten men to inkindle the Fire, they being of a more Unctious Nature Ayrey or Aethereall to Man'. Further evidence is provided by the 'Heathenish Barbarous Ordelian triall', or witch trial. Fidelia describes how women are thrown into 'Lakes and rivers and if they do not instantly sink' their persecutors have them 'Calcined to Ashes' without considering that women are of a more 'Unctious aethereall Nature then Man, and not so apt to Sink'. Fidelia concludes by pointing out that while 'woemen are bred up in as much ignorance as possible' it is still common for 'Simple Maids (as they call them) to fool the wisest and best bred Men'. With these humorous examples, Pulter suggests that women are of an innately virtuous nature and are in many ways superior to the men who aim to govern them.

On a more serious note, through the figure of Fidelia Pulter is able to challenge the worldview put forward by Osborne. By asserting the innate virtue of the individual, specifically women, she shifts the foundation of human

\textsuperscript{143} Osborne (1656), p. 49.
\textsuperscript{144} Ms Lt q 32, ff. 25v, 26r (reversed).
relations from a mode of self-interest with the potential for coercive domination to a model of mutual respect and cooperation. Within this context her emblem collection as a whole emerges as a means of educating her children in a concept of society and the state opposed to that which Osborne, and those like him, were presenting to their ‘sons’ and to the population at large. In opposition to the Machiavellian self-interest she associates with Osborne and with the monarch’s opposition more generally, Pulter promotes a model of society premised in mutually supportive cooperation, on both a family and a national level, between Stoically virtuous individuals. Rather than engage in this debate in print on a broadly public stage Pulter puts forward her views in manuscript for the more direct and immediate benefit of her own family. In this way she enacts her own social responsibility from within a domestic context.
Within Pulter’s literary manuscript, her series of emblem poems is clearly identified by a title page bearing the ornamental scribal inscription ‘Emblemes’. Above this, Pulter has added, in her own distinct italic hand, the statement that her compositions are ‘The sighes of a sad soule Emblematically breath’d forth by the noble Hadassah’. Although her poems, lacking mottoes and pictures, are not emblems in the strictest sense Pulter is careful to emphasise their emblematic status. Her statement, prominently positioned on the title page and providing a frame for the ensuing text, indicates that she considered her compositions to be emblems and that she intended them to be read in this way. More specifically, these emblems are the emotional, grief-fuelled, effusions of ‘the noble Hadassah’, indicating they are closely tied to Pulter’s authorial identity and to her response to the political, social and religious circumstances of Interregnum England. That this response is presented ‘Emblematically’ suggests Pulter perceived emblems to be a particularly useful way of reinforcing her political message, specifically her emphasis on Stoic endurance and integrity in the face of opposition.

The very first recognisable collection of emblems was Andreas Alciato’s *Emblematum Liber*, which was published in Augsburg in 1531.¹ His compositions, the result of an apparently accidental typographical arrangement, were tripartite structures comprising a motto (inscriptio), a printed image

(pictura), and a short epigrammatic verse (subscriptio).² Throughout the sixteenth century, emblem books of this kind proliferated across Europe, reaching Britain in the early years of Queen Elizabeth’s reign. In c.1565/6 Thomas Palmer’s manuscript collection circulated amongst the literary elite and in 1586 Geffrey Whitney published the first printed volume of English emblems.³ The form reached its peak of popularity in Britain during the 1630s when writers such as Francis Quarles and George Wither began producing collections of devotional emblems.⁴ These emblems retained the mottoes and images associated with more traditional examples of the form but the short epigram was expanded into a lengthy meditative verse. During the 1640s and 50s writers including Mildmay Fane and Patrick Cary were, like Pulter, using devotional emblem books to present their royalist response to the Interregnum.⁵

With regards to their emblematic content and structure, however, Pulter’s emblems most closely resemble not other royalist collections but those published in 1635 by George Wither (1588-1667), a puritan who would eventually become a republican more radical that Milton. Both writers use the form of the spiritual or devotional emblem; moving away from the short epigrammatic verses of the kind found in Geffrey Whitney’s *A Collection of Emblemes* (1586) and Henry

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² This structure is usually cited as normative for the emblem form; see Peter Daly, *Literature in the Light of the Emblem* 2nd ed (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), p. 7.
⁴ Francis Quarles, *Emblemes* (1635) and *Hieroglyphikes of the Life of Man* (1638). George Wither, *A Collection of Emblemes* (1635). According to Michael Bath a total of twelve emblem books were published during the 1630s. This total can be compared with one emblem book published during the 1620s; one published between 1610 and 1620; and two published between 1600 and 1610 (1994), pp. 282-83.
Peacham’s *Minerva Britanna* (1612), they instead use a ‘deliberate’ or ‘fixed’ meditational structure. But in contrast to the collections of devotional emblems produced by writers including Francis Quarles and Christopher Harvey, which focus on a single image such as a heart or a candle, both Wither and Pulter continue to use the esoteric motifs found in the collections produced by Whitney and Peacham. Many of the motifs they use, such as the wounded stag and the heliotrope, are common staples of the esoteric tradition, for which, in keeping with emblem convention, both writers provide new verbal interpretations. The structural similarities between Pulter’s manuscript collection of emblems and Wither’s printed volume are striking enough to suggest Pulter may have read Wither’s emblem collection and may have been directly influenced by it.

While Wither’s reputation for radicalism may appear to set him at odds with Pulter and her vehement royalism, a comparison of the political views that he was expressing during Charles I’s personal rule with Pulter’s response to Cromwell’s Protectorate reveals many points of convergence. Both writers set out to educate the non-elite reader in a model of active citizenship that would help to counter the authoritarian nature of the regimes to which they were opposed. That they were both using a very specific form of the emblem suggests

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6 Joseph Hall contrasts ‘Deliberate’ meditation that is ‘wrought out of our owne heart’ with ‘Extemporall’ meditation which is ‘occasioned by outward occurrences offred to the mind’ (1606), p. 7. There is ‘no rule’ for the former kind of meditation while the latter is characterised by ‘the formal choice and methodological development of a topic’; Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 152.

7 See Quarles (1635) and (1638); and Christopher Harvey, *Schola Cordis, or The Heart of Itself Gone Away from God* (1647).

8 For emblems of the wounded stag see Pulter, emblems 22 and 25; and Wither (1635), p. 214. For the heliotrope see Pulter emblem 3; and Wither (1635), pp. 159, 209.

9 Pulter’s collection of fifty-three emblems (fifty-one excluding the two unnumbered additions) each approximately thirty lines in length, loosely corresponds with Wither’s four groups of fifty poems which, as he explains in his preface, are strictly limited to thirty lines. It seems likely that Wither adopted a thirty-line structure in order ensure the orderly arrangement of his compositions on the printed page and to enhance the aesthetic appeal of his collection. But Pulter, who was writing in manuscript, was not subject to these pressures and it is possible that she instead adopted this structure in direct imitation of her predecessor.
they considered it particularly suited to this purpose. As a didactic form, closely associated with a popular readership, the emblem could be used to attract and educate a wide range of people outside of the political and intellectual elite. It was therefore particularly suited to the dissemination of a political message highlighting the virtue and responsibility of the ordinary citizen. More specifically, both Wither and Pulter use a model of spiritual meditation that had been popularised in England by Joseph Hall. Hall had developed the form as a practical accompaniment to *Heaven On Earth*, his philosophical treatise on Christian Stoicism. For Hall, meditation was an indispensable accompaniment to a life of active civic virtue, and he was keen to ensure his message and methods were accessible to as many people as possible. Both Wither and Pulter adapt Hall’s devotional exercises to both enact and to recommend a virtuously active response to their immediate social and political circumstances.

**Onely a House-Keeper?**

Both Wither and Pulter preface their emblematic texts with allusions to the spiritually didactic nature of the ensuing volume. In Wither’s collection this takes the form of an illustrated frontispiece, engraved by William Marshall, depicting the divergent paths taken by the righteous and the sinful in their attempts to achieve salvation. The page is dominated by an image of a mountain and in the foreground Virtue and Fortune are depicted presiding over a group of people as they draw lots from a cauldron. Once they have been divided, the paths taken by the two groups are very different. The virtuous follow a path up the left hand side

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11 For a detailed account of this image see Bath (1994), pp. 111-15.
of the mountain; it begins rocky and difficult but becomes gradually more pastoral and pleasant. In contrast, the sinful are directed along a path that starts as a tree-lined avenue but which quickly becomes craggy and hazardous. At the end of each path the travellers meet their respective fates. The virtuous on the left hand side are flown to heaven on the back of an eagle, a traditional emblem for the soul in flight, while those on the opposite side are met by the skeletal sword-wielding figure of death.

Similarly, in her second emblem, one of the pair framing the collection as a whole, Pulter exhorts her readers to follow her in ascending the 'blessed steps' that lead to 'that Joy that never shall have end'. The path she recommends is difficult; it is a 'low-roofed' 'Firey Triall' characterised by 'self deniall'. Those that miss a step along the way fall 'into those sensuall Wayes which leads to Hell'. For those who succeed however the reward is a place in the 'Bosome of eternall Love'. In addition, Pulter warns against adopting the attitude of those who say the steps are 'too Tedious'. Instead of taking the true and difficult path to salvation they attempt to 'Climeber up a nearer way'. But without the guidance of 'Fair Truth' and her 'Celestiall Train' of heavenly virtues they 'Tumble Down' and 'for their own Chimmera lose a Crown'. Like Wither, Pulter presents her text as a means of providing spiritual guidance to her readers and encourages them to 'Follow me' as she is guided by Christ.

For both writers, their texts are a means by which their reader will be led towards the path of virtue and away from vagaries of fortune or earthly interest. While Wither's frontispiece might have been, as he claims, a fortuitous accident,
it nonetheless points to his poetic project. Presiding over the central image of the mountain is the figure of Urania, the heavenly muse or Holy Spirit, with her eyes turned towards the path reserved for the virtuous. Poetical composition is presented as a spiritually inspired means of educating the individual in the path he or she must follow. While Pulter does not adopt the mystical implications of Wither’s inspiration, she says that Christ and Alithea, or divine truth, are guiding her along her own path to virtue. In urging her children to ‘come follow me’ she derives the authority for her text, not as Wither does, from her status as a poet, but from speaking as a mother. While Wither, who printed his text, seeks to promote a universal message sanctioned by divine inspiration, Pulter is working within a much smaller arena and evoking the status and authority she holds within that context.

The model of virtue that both writers promote is characterised by spiritual integrity and constancy. In Wither’s frontispiece spiritual virtue is pitted against the machinations of worldly fortune, a pairing he revisits in his sixth emblem. Here, he criticises those who neglect virtue in order to climb the ‘Poore Heights’ which ‘Fortune reares’ and instead tells the reader: ‘On good, and honest Objects, fixe your Minde,/and Follow Vertue’. Virtue is characterised by a state of resolution, which, for the individual, means ‘though the World should topsie-turveye turne’ it cannot ‘divert his course’. As we have already seen, the virtues put forward by Pulter in response to the ‘topsie-turvey’ world of Interregnum England combine the four key Stoic virtues of prudentia, fortitudo, iustitia, and temperantia (or modestia) with the four theological virtues of faith, hope, and

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12 In his ‘Preposition to this Frontispiece’ Wither complains that the engraver ‘brought to light,/What, here, you see; therein, mistaking quite/The true Designe’. But he goes on to concede that it nonetheless ‘fitted many Fantasies/Much better, then what Reason can devise’ (1635), n.p.
charity.\textsuperscript{14} Taken together these virtues signal the agenda of Christian neo-Stoicism in evidence throughout Pulter’s emblems. But to these she adds three of her own virtues: contentation (or contentment), constancy and chastity. Pulter’s allusion to chastity signals a rejection of earthly pleasures in preference for the spiritual, and like Wither she places particular emphasis on the integrity of a mind ‘content’ and untroubled by external influence. To these she adds constancy, which founded in ‘contentation’ signals an ability to remain resolute regardless of pressure to do otherwise.

In putting forward their models of ideal behaviour, both writers draw on a seventeenth-century vocabulary of humanist, civic virtue combined with a model of Stoic, specifically Christianised Senecan, thought.\textsuperscript{15} Within both these frameworks great emphasis was placed on the virtuous individual’s capacity to use his or her virtue for the greater good of the nation. Civic humanism in particular stressed the importance of the \textit{vita activa} or a life of \textit{negotium} defined as promoting the public good even if, on occasion, that meant opposing the monarch. Similarly, as we have seen in the previous chapter, Stoicism did not necessarily equate with a withdrawal from public, political engagement but instead could be a means of enacting a prudent deliberation of the best and most effective way to act.\textsuperscript{16} Within this framework, the integrity and the virtue of the individual could be used as a means of resisting or challenging corruption and

\textsuperscript{14} See Chapter Three.

\textsuperscript{15} Peltonen, (1995). Maren-Sofie Røstvig comments on the Stoic nature of Wither’s emblem collection, specifically commenting on emblems 73 and 86. She argues that the former ‘advices [sic] men to court retirement from the world in the manner of monks’ while the latter provides a symbol ‘of the prudent mind which has taken refuge in a Stoical withdrawal from the world’, (1962), p. 83. While I agree with Røstvig’s identification of a Stoic element in Wither’s text I disagree with the emphasis she places on a Stoic withdrawal from society. In his 73\textsuperscript{rd} emblem Wither recommends prudent withdrawal ‘Untill thy minde may safely be exprest’ while in his 86\textsuperscript{th} emblem he places great emphasis on man’s ‘inward Riches’, from which ‘nothing can divide’ him. For a discussion of the Stoic elements of Pulter’s text see Chapter Three.

\textsuperscript{16} For a discussion of the significance of virtue for a life of \textit{negotium}, or action, see Peltonen (1995), esp. pp. 30-34, 150-56.
disintegration within the nation as a whole. For Wither and Pulter, the model of Stoic action they promote was a means of opposing the tyranny they respectively perceived in the governments of Charles I and Cromwell.

For Wither, the decades of Stuart rule, first under James I and then under his son Charles, were periods of over-exhortative political and religious control and court corruption. In opposition to this he promoted the active role of a body of godly citizens committed to upholding the welfare of the nation. In many ways, Pulter's response to what she perceives to be the authoritarian control of Cromwell who had 'kicked King, Lords and Commons out of doors' is analogous to that adopted during an earlier decade by Wither. But for her, while she is on occasion quietly critical of Charles I, the rule of James I in particular was a time when both her father and her husband took an active role in nation and local government and in ensuring the welfare of the nation. She therefore looks back to a golden age of political order characterised by the cooperation of monarch and citizen. For both writers the ideal nation is one in which the monarch is supported and kept in check by the wider population. This includes those in leadership roles who have a responsibility to uphold virtuous authority on a formal level, but also the population as a whole who, for the greater good of the nation, have a duty to maintain their own virtue and spiritual integrity, in defiance of corrupt earthly powers.

The vocabulary of Stoic virtue on which both writers draw can be traced back to the early-seventeenth-century culture of classical humanism that has in

18 Emblem 26, l. 39.
19 See Chapters One and Three.
turn been linked to the interest in classical republicanism that came to the fore during the 1650s. Explorations of this culture in early seventeenth-century England have demonstrated that the republican model that emerged during the Interregnum did not represent a decisive break from the political tradition that had preceded it. Such ideas were widespread in early modern England and they were adopted and modified to express a wide range of political positions. These ideas did not necessarily equate with the concept of ‘pure’ republicanism in the form of a state without a monarch but were instead used to explore the respective duties of monarch and subject within a mixed constitution. A comparison of the ideas put forward by Wither in 1635 and Pulter during the mid-1650s demonstrates the extent to which very similar concepts could evolve into political view-points which, on the surface at least, appear to be radically different. Writing in 1650s Pulter uses the rhetoric of republicanism to attack Cromwell’s tyranny while promoting a model of monarchy that she perceives to be inseparable from the active support and influence of the virtuous citizen. Over the decades Wither’s adoption of similar ideas emerged at various points as first

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22 Peltonen (1995), especially pp. 11-17. Jason McElligott and David L. Smith have noted that during the Civil Wars “‘absolutists’ were as rare as hen’s teeth’ and that ‘apart from a few inconsequential extremists, almost every royalist was a constitutional royalist’. But they go on to point out the ‘broad range of political and religious opinions, strategies and tactics which could be encompassed within the mainstream of “constitutional royalism”’, (2007), p. 12. David L. Smith provides a detailed study of the thoughts and actions of a specific group within the king’s party who advocated and attempted to promote a mixed constitution in *Constitutional Royalism and the Search for Settlement, c. 1640-1649* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
a challenge to absolutist monarchy, which he argued should be underpinned and qualified by the influence of the godly, and later as a radical mode of classical republicanism.23

Despite the apparent differences between Wither and Pulter, not least with regards to their gender, the extent to which their views coincide on many issues points to the shared culture on which they were drawing. For Wither, who was educated at Oxford, an interest in a humanist model of citizenship is hardly unusual.24 But for Pulter, a women apparently writing from the confines of her own home, this interest might be more surprising. In a note prefacing his discussion of republican language in early-seventeenth-century England, Markku Peltonen explains the absence from his study of references to women with the statement that ‘there were no such references: all treatises cited were written by and for an audience of men’.25 One of the treatises he discusses is Richard Brathwaite’s The English Gentleman (1630), which he describes as means of promoting, in the aftermath of Charles I’s dissolution of parliament, a ‘solution to the internal problems in England’. Peltonen goes on to say that Brathwaite seeks to achieve this through:

a vigorous defence of the traditional humanist idea of implanting virtues in the political nation which would enable its serious involvement in a virtuous negotium for the good of the commonwealth.26

23 Rob Browning has provided some indication of the republican elements of Wither’s emblematic text. My approach differs from his in that while he looks forward to the model of radical republicanism Wither adopted during the 1640s and 50s I am more concerned in tracing the continuation of the republican implications of his earlier texts; see Rob Browning, 'To Serve My Purpose': Interpretive Agency in George Wither's A Collection of Emblemes' in Images of Matter: Essays on British Literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance ed. by Yvonne Bruce (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), pp. 47-71.
But Peltonen over-looks the companion piece to this text, *The English Gentlewoman* (1631), which provides Brathwaite’s statement about the ideal female companion for the actively virtuous English gentleman.²⁷

Brathwaite opens his text with an address to the ‘Gentlewoman Reader’ in which he says that he is presenting to her view ‘One, whose improved Education will bee no blemish but a beauty to her Nation’.²⁸ From the start, his discussion of the ideal Christian woman is situated within a national context. He goes on to say that the ideal women is one who ‘in all her actions’ makes ‘Vertue her highest prize’.²⁹ But the concept of virtue that he endorses is not restricted to a focus on personal honour and chastity; it is instead more outwardly focussed on a model of virtue premised in the public good. In particular, the virtuous woman is active within her own household but:

> Neither holdes shee it sufficient to be onely a House-keeper; or Snaylle-like to be still under one roofe: she partakes therefore of the Pismire in providing, of the Sarreptan widdow in disposing: holding ever an absent providence better than an inprovident presence.³⁰

A woman’s role as a housekeeper is presented not as one of seclusion and withdrawal from the world but as a position from which women can do greater good to those around them.³¹ In placing this discussion within the context of an education premised on making a woman ‘a beauty to her Nation’ Brathwaite provides a model of a woman who contributes to the greater good of her country through her actions within the household and the local community.

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²⁷ Erica Longfellow discusses the degree of agency afforded women in contemporary advice manuals and the emphasis they place on a woman’s domestic role within the state (2004), pp. 35-39.
²⁸ Brathwaite (1631), sig. ¶¶3r.
²⁹ Brathwaite (1631), sig. ¶¶4r.
³⁰ Brathwaite (1631), sig. ¶¶4v.
³¹ In the Bible the Widow of Sarepta shares her last ‘handful of meal’ with Eliah and is rewarded with a ‘barrel of meal that shall not waste’ (1 Kings 17: 10-16).
Not only does Brathwaite put forward a model of civic womanhood, he specifies an education founded in humanist texts. Addressing his female readers, he acknowledges that ‘it is not given to most of you to be Linguists’ but many important texts have been ‘translated in your mother-tongue’. Above all Brathwaite recommends Plato because there are ‘none more Divinely Philosophicall’; Cicero because there are none more ‘philosophically rhetorical’; and Seneca because there is no one ‘more Sagely Morall’. The available evidence for women’s book ownership during the period confirms that not only was this form of humanist education promoted for women, it was actively pursued. More generally the evidence suggests that women, like their male counterparts, would have been exposed to humanist ideas through a range of media and in a variety of different forms. While in no measure as numerous as the university-educated men, there were those women who actively pursued a formal classical education and learnt Latin and Greek. But others would have been exposed to these ideas through their contact with those, specifically the men, who had. In her study of seventeenth century humanism, Margo Todd highlights the importance of sermons for the dissemination of ideas. These events provided a vehicle by which classically educated men conveyed their

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34 Todd (2002), p. 53.
ideas and opinions to a much broader cross-section of society. Ideas would also have spread in other ways, through widely disseminated forms, such as the printed advice books and plays, but also through more ‘private’ documents such as letters and in conversation.

While we have no direct evidence of how and by whom Pulter was educated we do have the implications supplied by Milton’s celebration of her sister, the ‘ingenious’ Margaret. In his ‘Sonnet X. To the Lady Margaret Ley’ he compares Margaret to both her statesman father and to the Athenian orator Isocrates.35 Milton evidently expected Margaret to understand his allusion to this republican hero, providing some indication of her participation in a shared intellectual culture. It seems likely that Pulter, who remained in contact with Margaret until her death, would have shared in her sister’s education. While Pulter claims not to have known Latin or Greek she was, in keeping with Brathwaite’s recommendations, reading significant humanist texts, including Plutarch’s *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* together with his *Morals*, Pliny’s *Natural History*, and Suetonius’ *The Historie of Twelve Caesars* in English translation.36 Her intimate knowledge of the emblem, a form premised in a humanist culture of commonplaces, provides further evidence of her immersion in this culture.37 While Pulter did not share in Wither’s university education she was not cut off from the same ideas and influences.

35 For a discussion of this poem see Chapter One.
36 Plutarch, *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes* trans., Thomas North (1579); Plutarch, *The Philosophie, Commonlie Called, the Morals* trans., Philemon Holland (1603); Pliny, *Natural History* trans., Philemon Holland (1601); Suetonius, *The Historie of Twelve Caesars* trans. Philemon Holland (1606). For the place of these texts and writers on the university syllabus in early seventeenth century see Todd (2002), especially p. 64.
On a more immediate level, during the 1650s Pulter was associating with a group of men for whom issues of tyranny and the national constitution were of particular interest. Her brother-in-law John Harington was an associate of several men, including Sir Samuel Browne, who had fought for parliament during the 1640s. But in 1648, Harrington withdrew from Parliament in protest at the ejection of moderates and it is possible that he, together with Browne, was involved in negotiating the Treaty of Newport. Subsequently both men, together with a number of their associates, were excluded from parliament during the 1650s.  

Valerie Pearl describes how the central political ‘beliefs and aspirations’ of the group to which they belonged were characterised by ‘respect for their version of the constitution, and of the fundamental laws’. She goes on to say that ‘where they begin to think of political theory, they call for a mixed constitution’. They felt their way ‘forward to a system of checks and balances’ but they were ‘firm believers in the orders of society’. Their emphasis on the importance of parliament and their respect for the law, even to the point of directly challenging Charles I during the earlier years of the 1640s, raises many of the issues explored above. Further along the political spectrum James Harrington, with whom Pulter was connected through his kinship and interaction with John Harington, used republican arguments to oppose Cromwell. While Pulter may not have shared in all points of her associates’ political views it is possible to detect many of the same concerns. In her emblems, she is primarily interested in promoting a model of citizenship that can help counter Cromwell’s corrosive influence through the exercise of active virtue for the wider social good.

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39 Pearl (1968), p. 95.
Similarly, in his emblems, Wither continues to use the vocabulary of protestantism and civic humanism that dominates his earlier texts.\textsuperscript{40} During the early years of his writing career he participated in the Spenserian poets' culture of opposition to what they perceived to be the corrupt court of James I, although as Michelle O’Callaghan points out:

Wither, like a number of loyal subjects, was capable both of viewing the king as the ideal head of state and seeing himself as part of an independent body of godly citizens who had a collective responsibility to ensure the health and safety of the commonwealth.\textsuperscript{41}

At this stage in his career, Wither was not promoting the fully-fledged republicanism that he would develop after the regicide.\textsuperscript{42} In \textit{Abuses Stript and Whipt}, he puts forward a vision of the country in which independent gentry and noble families could represent the interests of the godly nation better than the court, which, he suggested, was infected with corrupt councillors.\textsuperscript{43} In relation to this he promotes a classical model of nobility not connected to riches, wealth, or birth but instead founded in true virtue.\textsuperscript{44} In \textit{Britain’s Remembrancer} he condemns widespread lack of virtue caused by the general pursuit of self-interest and instead suggests that the truly virtuous should be promoted.\textsuperscript{45} A key body for the upholding of public virtue was parliament, which could be used to protect the nation’s interests and to challenge increasing degeneration. In his emblems, Wither’s views are developed beyond formal institutions of power. Like Pulter,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[40] For discussions of the humanist and republic elements of Wither’s earlier texts see Peltonen (1995), pp. 277-80.
\item[41] O’Callaghan (2000), p. 159.
\item[43] \textit{Abuses Stript and Whipt} (1613); discussed in O’Callaghan (2000), pp. 41-42.
\item[45] \textit{Britain’s Remembrancer} (1628); discussed in Peltonen (1995), pp. 278-79.
\end{footnotes}
he suggests that each individual has the capacity, through their virtuous actions, to contribute to the greater good of the nation.

Apes and Mushroom Men

The composition history of Wither’s Collection of Emblemes, which was first published in 1635, appears to be somewhat fractured. In his preface ‘To the Reader’, he states that ‘These Emblems, graven in Copper by Crispinus Passæus ... came into my hands, almost twentye yeares past’. He then adds that despite many failings in the composition of the original plates:

the Workmanship being judged very good, for the most part; and the rest excusable; some of my Friends were so much delighted in the Gravers art, and, in those Illustrations which for mine owne pleasure, I had made upon some few of them, that they requested mee to Moralize the rest. Which I cond[e]scended unto: And, they had beene brought to view many yeares agoe, but that the Copper Prints (which are now gotten) could not be procured out of Holland, upon any reasonable Conditions. 46

Wither suggests that the composition of his emblems took place over a maximum period of twenty years. He does not say when he first illustrated a few of the images for his ‘owne pleasure’ but it is possible that this took place around the time he first saw them. 47 By his own account, this would have been circa 1614, the same year he spent five months in prison for libelling a peer in Abuses Stript and Whipt (1613). 48 His statement that the volume would have been ‘brought to view many yeares agoe’ suggests that the collection as a whole was completed, if

46 Wither (1635), sig. A1v.
47 Throughout his volume Wither uses the word ‘emblem’ to refer to the engraving accompanying his text and he refers to his text using the term ‘illustration’; Peter M. Daly, ‘George Wither’s Use of Emblem Terminology’, in Aspects of Renaissance and Baroque Symbol Theory ed. by Peter Daly and John Manning (New York: AMS, 1999), pp. 27-38 (p. 28).
not twenty, then several years prior to its publication. It is possible that Wither himself eventually ‘procured’ the emblematic plates ‘out of Holland’ having apparently spent some time there during the early years of the 1630s. Some sense of this fragmentation is evident within the text itself; the lavish prefatory material celebrates Charles I, Henrietta Maria, Prince Charles, Prince James and several prominent members of the aristocracy, but the text itself has much in common with the more controversial works that Wither published in the previous decade.

Wither’s dedications to the royal family and to various members of the aristocracy are in stark contrast to earlier texts, such as *Abuses Stript and Whipt*, which he dedicated ‘To himselfe’ with ‘all Happinesse’, and his *Motto*, which he democratically commended ‘To any body’.

In ‘A Writ of Prevention Concerning the Authors Dedication’ he expresses his unease at having to do this but says that it is necessary to ‘pay the Duties’ which he owes. The volume as a whole appears to be an elaborate bid for money and patronage during a time of financial hardship. His text is peppered with allusions to concerns about money. In his ‘Supersedeas to all them, whose custome it is, without any deserving, to importune Authors to give unto them their Bookes’, for example, he complains that too many people:

Aske and Take; As if you thought my store
Encreast without my Cost; and that, by Giving,
(both Paines and Charges too) I got my living.

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49 The volume eventually passed the censor July 1634 and the main title page was updated to 1635 to reflect its eventual publication date.
51 Jane Farnsworth argues that Wither’s dedication is reflected in the way his text as a whole draws on 1630s court culture; “An equall, and a mutuall flame”: George Wither’s *A Collection of Emblemes 1635 and Caroline Court Culture* in Bath and Russell (1999) pp. 83-96.
53 Wither (1635), sig. Oo2v.
The complete volume, which as Peter Daly notes, would have been prohibitively expensive for the majority of readers, is presented as a means by which Wither sought to earn his living. During the early 1630s his new wife Elizabeth had given birth to several children while Wither himself had, as a consequence of his earlier misdemeanours, struggled to make an income from his writing.\textsuperscript{54}

Apparently with some desperation he therefore resorted to seeking patronage for his text. In his address to Phillip, Earl of Pembroke, the brother of William Herbert who had secured his release from prison in 1614, he says that in neglecting to make 'Friends' his 'estate grew lesse/(By more than twice five hundred Marks decrease)'.\textsuperscript{55} His is evidently keen not to make this mistake again and addresses exhortative pleas for assistance to no less than nine individuals, including Prince James, who was less than a year old at the time, and Prince Charles, aged four, who he asks to 'favour me./When I growe old, and, You a Man shall be'.\textsuperscript{56}

Paratext aside, Wither's emblems, with their allusions to tyrants and the rule of law, raise many issues directly relevant to the political climate of 1630s England. Published just a few years after Charles's begrudging acceptance of the Petition of Right in June 1628, which he was subsequently accused of ignoring, and his unceremonious dissolution of Parliament in March 1629, the text touches on several potentially controversial matters. Some indication that Wither was

\textsuperscript{54} After his first spell in prison in 1613 for allegedly libelling a peer in \textit{Abuses Stript and Whipt} (1613), Wither was once again incarcerated in 1621 for his \textit{Motto}, which according to the authorities infringed the 1620 royal proclamation 'Against excess of lavish and licentious speech of matters of state'. He was freed in 1622 but the combination of a dispute with the Stationer's Company and trouble with the censor meant that during the 1620s he struggled to publish his work; see O'Callaghan, (2004).

\textsuperscript{55} French (1930), p. 960. Wither (1635), sig. Ee1r.

\textsuperscript{56} Wither (1635), sig. Kv.
well aware of these connections is provided in his ‘Preposition to the frontispiece
in which he informs the reader that the illustration and the ensuing text:

contayneth nought
Which (in a proper sense) concerneth, ought,
The present-Age.

In disclaiming any contemporary pertinence for his text Wither immediately
draws attention to the possibility that it might in fact contain controversial
comment. He had employed a similar strategy in the earlier texts that had caused
him so much trouble with the authorities. At the same time, in placing the
responsibility for what they find firmly with the reader, he seeks to evade any
repeat of the accusations and charges that had caused him problems in the past. If
we take Wither’s comments about the dating of the volume at face value it is
possible that his decision to publish in 1635 was the result of his desperate need
for money combined with an awareness of the ongoing pertinence of his text. For
a poet who liked to assert his prophetic abilities these connections may have been
particularly satisfying.

A key element of the collections produced by both Wither and Pulter is
their criticism of those people and institutions, outside of the monarchy, who are
failing to uphold the good governance of the nation. In keeping with his earlier
texts, Wither continues to be highly critical of the court. In emblem 183, for
example, he states:

I have been oft at Court; where I have spent,
Some idle time, to heare them Complement:
But, I have seene in Courtiers such deceit,
That, for their Favours, I could never wait.

57 Wither (1635), n.p.
Here court behaviour is presented as idle and characterised not by beneficial action but by the trivial exchange of ‘complement’. Wither is most scornful however of courtiers propensity for ‘deceit’ and for their tendency not to put their word into action. Elsewhere he complains about those ‘mushroom men’ who ‘Walke with our Lords, as if [they] were their Peere[s]’. These men, he says, may have acquired a ‘noble Title’ but their ‘vertues are of little price’. In Britain’s Remembrancer Wither had complained that the ‘greater part’ of the court were ‘of a Mushroome breed’ who ‘seeke their Soverigne to delight’ with ‘lyes’. At the heart of Wither’s criticism is an attack on a lack of real integrity and virtue; men have acquired status and titles they little deserve and instead of doing good are engaged in lies and deceit.

Wither’s criticism of the courtier’s pretence continues in his references to apes in men’s clothing. In Britain’s Remembrancer he describes the self-interested ‘Machivillian crew’ and ‘such Apes, and such Baboones’ who ‘would make their Princes glad with lies’. These are men who, rather than ensuring the king is virtuously assisted in his office, prefer to flatter and lie for their own advancement. In doing this, they resemble performing monkeys, which look like men but have none of mankind’s virtuous essence. Wither continues these themes in his Emblemes where he is particularly damning of those ‘mimicke Apes’ who achieve their status through being ‘borne the Sonne/Of some rich Alderman or Peere’. These men ‘spend their dayes/In courting one another’ and in placing ‘Gay Titles on each other’. In another emblem he compares the unworthy individual clothed in ‘honour’d Robes’ with an ‘Apish pigmie in attire’ and an ape ‘in Humane-Vestments clad’ which ‘when most fine, deserveth most

59 Britain’s Remembrancer (1628), p. 196v.
60 Britain’s Remembrancer (1628), sig. C6v.
61 Wither (1635), p. 5; see also p. 14.
disdaine'. 62 He is particularly critical of the inaction of such men arguing that through idleness nothing is achieved but 'stinking Smoke and Winde'. In contrast he argues for 'faire Vertues', which can only be acquired through 'labour'. 63

Pulter includes a similar reference to apes in her thirty-eighth emblem, where she criticises those who assist in the maintenance of tyrannical power. She opens with a description of a lion:

that of late soe Domineer'd
And of his subjects was not lov'd but fear'd
Being Cloy'd with Luxurie is sick at last
Then Doctor Fox is sent for all in hast.

In medieval beast epic, the fox is traditionally a high-ranking baron who occasionally served the lion-king and as characters, they play a significant part in a long tradition of political fabling. 64 Here Pulter presents a vicious tyrant seeking medical advice from a corrupt doctor. After assessing his patient's symptoms the doctor describes the 'sort of people 'bout your Court' called apes, whose 'blood is soveraign'. 65 Like Wither, Pulter uses the term 'apes' to refer to those ineffectual and deceitful members of the king's court. She concludes her poem by describing how 'then straight the apes were kil'd/The Lyon Eas'd, The Doctors purse was Fil'd'. Rather than check the Lion's tyranny, the Fox encourages him for his own financial gain. In keeping with her depictions elsewhere of Cromwell as a tyrannical king, Pulter may have been thinking of him again here. But implicit in her poem is the suggestion that all forms of power should be regulated by selfless virtue and not maintained by self-interest.

63 Wither (1635), p. 5.
64 See emblem 38, note to ll. 1-4.
65 Pulter refers to an idea that sick lions in the wild can cure themselves by eating apes; see emblem 38, note to ll. 18-19.
While the focus of Pulter’s thirty-eighth emblem is the Fox’s greed, she also provides a hint of warning in the fate of the Apes, who have also failed in their roles as courtiers. Elsewhere, she uses a traditional emblem of apes in men’s clothing to criticise the corrupt aspirations of ambitious men. In her twenty-sixth emblem she describes how ‘Those that employed are the Apes to catch’ start by scattering ‘Stockings, and Cloths about the Ground’.  

The apes are so ‘ambitious to bee in the Fashion’ they draw on the clothes and as a consequence are unable to escape when pursued by the huntsmen. Pulter goes on to compare the fate of the apes with that of ambitious men and women, eventually drawing a parallel between several examples from classical history and the more immediate actions of those who had ‘kick’d King, Lords, and Commons out of doors’.

In the examples she provides, Pulter makes a direct connection between the fate of England and the end of the Roman republic when ‘Pompias ambition would noe superiour have’ and ‘Caesar noe Equall would abide’. She goes on to refer to the ambition that ‘made the Trumviry end’. This is possibly a reminder of the disintegration of the First Triumvirate of Crassus, Julius Caesar and Pompey whose disputes led to civil war and the establishment of Caesar’s dictatorship.  

Or she may have been thinking of the Second Triumvirate of Octavian, Mark Antony, and Lepidus, which disintegrated into the autocratic rule of Octavian, or Augustus.  

Pulter concludes with the statement that:

Thus all Confusion from ambition springs  
Apes would bee men, and all men, would bee Kings  
Then by this Emblem it doth plain apear  
’T’is best for every one to keep his Sphere.

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66 Emblem 26.  
67 See emblem 26, note to ll. 32-33, 34-35.  
68 See emblem 26, note to ll. 36-37.
Pulter suggests that the self-motivated ambition of apish men has led to disintegration of a social order premised in the combined governance of king, lords and commons. As a result, the nation is now subject the authoritarian rule of one individual. This is set in opposition to a nation in which each individual maintains ‘his Sphere’ and thereby contributes to the collective governance of the nation.

Both Pulter and Wither trace the effects of unchecked authority and contemporary political corruption through to its influence on the church. In his preface, after praising Charles and Henrietta Maria for their marriage, Wither goes on to suggest that the king and queen might function as an emblem of how, not just the Protestant and Catholic churches, but ‘all the Daughters, of the Spouse Divine/Might reconciled be’ (my italics). This message is developed in emblem 244 where he calls for a greater degree of religious toleration. The accompanying image depicts a disembodied hand on a pole with its fingers pointing towards the sky. Wither describes how the ‘Fixed Palme, (whose fingers doe appeare,/As if displayed’ represents ‘agreeing Minds, that bee/Established in one trust’. He goes on to say that the Lord’s ‘sev’rall Churches’ stand ‘Like many Fingers, members of one Hand’. For him each church obeys the one ‘Will essential’ of God although ‘circumstantially, they differ’. He concludes with the statement that:

Till our confined Wisdome comes to know,
That, many things, for which wee wrangle so,
Would further that, whose hindrance wee doe feare,
If more our Faith, and lesse our Discord were.

He refuses to state that one church is the true church and instead emphasises cooperation for the general promotion of faith. His poem provides a reminder of the prevailing situation within the English church, in which, since his institution
as Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, William Laud had begun enforcing a more uniform mode of worship. In defiance of these reforms Wither’s emblem calls for greater toleration of and cooperation between the different sects. 69

In direct contrast to Wither, Pulter’s support for the Laudian church is underpinned by the suggestion that she considers it to be the only true church. But, like Wither she is critical of any form of control over religious practice that she considers to be motivated by politics and self-interest, not true piety. She opens her twenty-eighth emblem by recounting the story of Herastratus who ‘was so fond of Fame’ that he set the Temple of Diana at Ephesus ‘on a Flame’.

According to historical accounts, under interrogation Herastratus confessed that he burnt down the temple to secure the place of his own name in history. 70 From this story, Pulter derives the message that

Thus some out of Ambition some for gain
Mingle together holy and Prophane,

She goes on to equate religious sacrilege with political ambition citing several examples of those who committed offences against the church in order to further their own self-interest. These include Antiochus who forced the Jews to convert; Brennus who threatened to desecrate Apollo’s temple at Delphos; and Belshazzar and Nebuchadnazzar who, Pulter suggests, were punished by God for worshipping false idols and for removing sacred objects from the church. 71

Moving closer to home, Pulter provides a reminder of the Catholic uprising in Ireland in 1642, when thousands of Protestants were killed and ‘Cristall Shannon

69 David Norbrook has noted that Wither was associated with a group whose Arminian stance made them ‘less hostile than Calvinists to some of the traditional external forms of religion, which might work in the active process of finding salvation’ (2002), pp. 215-16. This is manifested in Wither’s emblems where he endorses, among other things, music for ‘Gods Worship’ (1635), p. 65. It is therefore not Laud’s changes to the church per se that Wither resists but his emphasis on uniformity.
70 See emblem 28, note to ll. 1-2.
71 See emblem 28, notes to ll. 19-20, 21-22, 25-30.
ran with Christian blood'. In the contemporary press the rebellion had frequently been portrayed, not as a religious uprising, but as an anarchical attack on monarchical authority. Pulter concludes her poem with a reference to those ‘that doe our Phanes prophain’. Criticising the puritan army, she suggests that contemporary attacks on the church are not being made in the interests of true religion but solely for the promotion of worldly, political ambition.

For Pulter and Wither, the self-interest and ambition afflicting the ruling classes and having a negative effect on the church is also affecting society more widely. In his seventy-sixth emblem, Wither depicts an image of an unlighted candle as an emblem of a certain type of individual found ‘in every Commonweale’. These are the people, he says, who ‘by gifts of Nature, and of Grace’ might choose to ‘stands as Lights, in profitable place’ to the nation. But instead they ‘loose their Talent, by neglecting it’. Wither suggests that virtue alone is insufficient if it is not used for the greater good. He contrasts the inactive with those who ‘maintaine their Lampe, in giving light’ and who ‘Waxe, and Oyle. and Fatnesse, they have in store’. These people he says are like ‘Lampes, or Candles, on a Table’ that ‘light Assemblies, Great and Honourable’. These are the people who bring the benefit of their virtue to many other people. They do this however not for their own profit but so ‘their Splendor might become/His praise, who those high favour did bequeath’. This life of virtuous action is contrasted with those who ‘like those Candles bee,/That stand unlighted in a Branch of gold’, because, adds Wither, ‘For what good use they are’.

Similarly Pulter, in her thirty-ninth emblem states that ‘Those that have reason, and yet Idle lie’ are ‘Just like Hogs’ who do ‘noe good untill they Die’.

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73 For reports of the army desecrating churches see emblem 36, note to l. 23.
She goes on to celebrate Draco whose ‘Law was good’ and meant that ‘Mother Idleness was writ in Blood’. Draco, the ‘draconian’ Athenian lawgiver stipulated a blanket punishment of death for every kind of crime, ranging from murder and sacrilege to petty larceny and the theft of fruit. Demades’ observation that Draco’s laws were ‘not written with incke, but with bloud’ was intended to be a critical reflection on their harshness but Pulter celebrates Draco’s actions and suggests that similar measures might be necessary in Interregnum England. She says that should Draco ‘reform our villages and Towns/Wee should have Empty houses and larg Grounds’. Pulter’s emphasis on houses and ‘larg Grounds’ suggests she particularly has the ruling classes in mind for Draco’s punishment.

But she goes on to express concern that:

the Law would take away (I fear) more lives
Of Country Gentlemen, and Citizens Wives
Then of the natives Blood the Spaniards Spil’ld
Or in these times our seeking Saints have Kil’ld

A wide-range individuals, from wealthy landed gentlemen to, significantly, those women married to less-elevated men in the city, would be at risk if the death sentence was imposed for idleness. Pulter compares the massacre that would ensue with reports of the Spaniards’ supposed killing sprees in South American and with the actions of the monarch’s parliamentary opposition during the nation’s recent political upheaval. The implication is that the more numerous criminals at large are not those who have actively perpetrated atrocities but those who have done nothing to prevent them.

In contrast to the failure of their contemporaries, both Wither and Pulter recommend models for reform. Wither’s views on the individual’s ideal

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74 See emblem 39, note to ll. 35-42.
75 See emblem 39, note to ll. 41, 42.
contribution to the state are put forward in an emblem tellingly listed in the index under ‘Patriots’.76 He compares those individuals ‘who rob themselves to multiply your gains’ to a candle which ‘burnes to give another light’ even until ‘it selfe it hath consumed’. True society is founded on those who put the collective good of the nation before their own selfish interests. Similarly, Pulter, provides a model of active virtue far removed from those idle ‘Gentlemen’ and ‘Wives’. She recounts the tale of a dolphin that assisted Neptune to woo and marry the sea nymph Amphitrite.77 She celebrates him for ensuring that ‘The Contract in noe Circumstance did Fayl’ and for guarding against any ‘affront his Soveraign should receive’. Evoking the dolphin, a creature renowned for its activity and for its friendship to man, she states that only the active individual is ‘true to’s King, his Int'rest and his end’ and that ‘None but the Active Man a Friend can bee’. For Pulter, this support for the king is a means of promoting the greater good of the nation. She concludes her poem with a reminder of Titus, the Roman emperor, ‘who would always say/When hee had don none good, I have lost this day’.78 Virtue is here defined as action for the good of others, which in itself becomes the defining feature of noble existence.

In order to assist and underpin the individual’s public duty, both Wither and Pulter encourage all of their readers to adopt a Stoic position of virtue and integrity. In emblem 81 for example Wither presents an image of ‘true Christian-confidence’ with one foot upon a ‘Squared-Stone./Which, whether side soe’re

76 Wither (1635), p. 165. Michelle O’Callaghan provides a discussion of Wither and his Spenserian associates as ‘patriots’. She says that in general they are ‘hispanophobes; they represent themselves as defenders of traditional liberties and oppose corruption at court; and they advocate an ‘Elizabethan’ revival which is equated with the reform of patronage systems, naval and colonial expansion, and a return to aristocratic martialism’ (2000), p. 18. A history of the term is provided by Thomas Cogswell, Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 84-99.

77 Emblem 39, ll. 1-16.

78 See emblem 39, note to ll. 33-34.
you turne it on,/ Stands fast'. He states that the 'perfection' of such confidence
'Shall never be attain'd without Affliction' and advises the reader to 'practise'
making the nature of such constancy 'thine owne'. Similarly, in the second
emblem in his collection, which depicts a 'Laureat head fixed upon a Basis of
Stone' Wither advises the reader to 'Propose good Ends with honest Meanes
thereeto./And therein Constant be'. This position is set in opposition to the
'Machavilian' who, in his political prevarication, is proved a fool. Wither is
interested in both spiritual and earthly forms of constancy which he sets in the
face of external, earthly trial and opposition. In contrast to the 'Machavilians' he
despises, Wither rejects the pursuit of self-interest through deceit and
dissemblance and instead promotes spiritual and political constancy supported
with noble deeds.

A similar message can be found in Pulter's third emblem where she
describes the heliotrope, or sunflower, a traditional symbol of constancy. The
flower was known for turning on its stalk to follow the passage of the sun across
the sky and it was therefore used to represent loyalty and devotion, usually to
God. Pulter reiterates this connection stating that the heliotrope 'as the Sun doth
Rise begins her Birth' and as the sun ascends higher she 'doth Taller grow'.
When the sun reaches his 'Miridian Height' the flower likewise, many 'Cubits'
tall 'doth stand upright'. In keeping with this connection, when the sun sets and
descends into the 'Western Tracts' the flower also sinks 'Lower and Lower'.
Pulter takes the connection between the flower and the sun to an extreme,
suggesting that when the sun appears in 'the Antipodes' the flower 'follows him
to tother Hemispheir'. She then makes a direct connection between the flower
and 'those Soules which are to God united'. Adding that even when 'Tyrants in
their innocent bloods doe Wallow’ or when they are martyred with ‘Jibbits, Precipices, Crosses, Flame’, the truly religious and virtuous maintain their ‘constant Love’ for God.

While the emphasis in Pulte’s poem is on spiritual virtue there is a degree to which it also implies loyalty to the defeated Stuart monarchy. In addition to being read as a spiritual symbol, the emblem of the heliotrope and the sun was traditionally understood to represent the relationship between the monarch and his or her subject. Wither presents this interpretation in emblem 159 where he states that, just as the heliotrope attends to the ‘ruler of the day’, ‘Thus fares it with a Nation, and their king, /Twixt whom there is a native Sympathy’. In several places in her collection, Pulter makes the explicit connection between the monarch and the sun, in emblem 52 for example she describes how ‘this sad Kingdome Locusts did or’e run’ with ‘Such Clowds (ay mee) as did Eclips our Sun’. The locusts in question are clearly identified as the king’s parliamentary opposition who have eclipsed his authority. In setting up a connection between the monarch and the sun, and the sun and God, Pulter suggests that loyalty to one is closely tied to loyalty to the other. For her, the Stuart monarchy provides a symbol of the well-governed virtuous nation and provides an antidote to the tyranny of Cromwell’s rule.

Both writers go on to suggest that in maintaining his or her Stoic integrity and virtue the individual can directly contribute to a reversal in national decline. In emblem 67, Wither sets out a model of the ‘kingdome’ which ‘will establish’d bee, /Wherein the People well agree’. Explicitly refusing to ‘unfold our Authors minde’ (ie. the mind of the person who created the visual image) he makes it clear that his interpretation of the emblematic image is intended ‘to gather’
meaning 'Whereby some usefull Moral may be taught'. He highlights his aim to 
derive a meaning specifically applicable to the immediate reader and the 
meaning he asserts is that:

Kingdomes, and the Royall-dignitie,  
Are best upheld, Where Subjects doe agree,  
To keepe upright the state of Soveraignty

Royal authority, he suggests, is underpinned by the willing and free cooperation 
of the nations subjects. He goes on to stress that 'The Rich, the Poore, the 
Swaine, the Gentleman' all have a role in the maintenance of this state and it is 
incumbent on all to 'carry/Their Aides to publike-works, in time of need'. 79 This 
is not to suggest however that monarchy is founded on the support of the people. 
Elsewhere, Wither is careful to refer to subjects as those 'on whom God hath 
bestowne/A King'. Kings are bestowed by God not chosen by the people, but 
within this framework the people still have the capacity to support or neglect 
their monarch and by extension the well-being of the nation as a whole.

Pulter's own emphasis on cooperation and unity, explored in the previous 
chapter through her emblem of the leviathan, is reiterated in a poem depicting the 
cooperative abilities of creatures she calls raccoons, when in fact she probably 
means beavers. 80 She describes the process by which they construct their dams, 
which begins when 'The first to bite the Timber doth not fayl'. Then the second 
beaver comes along and pulls the first 'Backward by the Tayl' and the third 
similarly pulls the second. Together they make a chain of creatures each helping 
to the move the log to the place it needs to be. For Pulter, this provides the lesson 
that 'what the strength of one could n'er attain/With force united's don with little

79 For the value to the commonwealth of people of all social standings following their specific 
80 See emblem 12 for the leviathan and emblem 21 for the raccoons. For a discussion of Pulter's 
confusion of the raccoon and the beaver see emblem 21, note to ll. 3-13. 

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pain'. This message is transferred to a national and historical setting with references to things that man has achieved through cooperation. Specifically 'London Bridg' was not built 'by one Man's Hands'; the 'Phane which for Diana's shrines renownd' could never have been 'composd by one alone'; it takes several men to capture 'Those Elaphants which Serve the Indian King'; and 'one Man' could never have written the 'numerous Vollumes' of books extant in the world. Pultor applies this message of unity to 'things both sacred and Prophain' which 'The Witt or Strength of one could n'ere attain'. She concludes her poem with a reference to 'hatefull Timons' who, resembling the Athenian misanthropist, reject the company of others and by implication refuse to cooperate for the greater good.

Each poet defines his or her own role within the nation in terms of the contribution they can make through their poetry. For Wither the poet's, and therefore his own, ideal role within the commonwealth is to directly comment on and intervene in national affairs. Reiterating his comments about the role of the individual within the kingdom he states that:

When each man keepes unto his Trade,
Then, all things better will be made.

He contrasts this with negative examples of 'Peasants' who 'meddle with affaires of State' and 'Great-men' who 'gravely undertake/To teach, how Broomes and Morter, we should make'. Wither then alludes to his own history stating:

But, I my self (you’l say) have medlings made, 

81 For a discussion of these references see emblem 21, notes to ll. 14, 18, 22, 26-27.
82 For an account of Timon see emblem 21, note to l. 30. Andrew Hadfield has read Shakespeare’s Timon of Athens (1607-08) as ‘an analysis of greed and government that is surely designed to reflect on the notorious court culture and promotion of favourites that many witnesses saw as the defining characteristic of James’s reign’, Shakespeare and Republicanism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 205. Also Andrew Hadfield, ‘Timon of Athens and Jacobean Politics’ in Shakespeare Survey 56 (2003), pp. 215-26.
In things, that are improper to my Trade.
No; for, the Muses are in all things free;
Fit subject of their Verse, all Creatures be;
And there is nothing man’d so meane, or great,
Whereof they have not Liberty to treat.

He appears to be alluding to his own comments on affairs of state, specifically in
*Abuses Stript and Whipt*, his *Motto* and potentially (depending on the date of
composition) *Britain’s Remembrancer*, which got him into so much trouble with
the authorities. But he emphasises the prerogative of the poet to comment on
these matters and in doing so suggests that with his emblems he is performing his
own allotted role within the nation.

Similarly, Pulter follows her own advice to other women, which is to
reject a life of selfish worldly indulgence and to instead:

... Chastly live and rather spend your dayes
In setting Forth your great Creator’s praise
And for diversion pass your Idle times
As I doe now in writeing harmles Rimes

We can suppose that the ‘rimes’ Pulter was busy composing when she wrote this
were her emblems. She goes on to advice her female readers to ‘Both my
example, and my Councell take’ suggesting that, like Wither, she conceives of
her poetic project as both a participation in and the promotion of a more healthy
nation. Further indication of the potential for political comment that Pulter
discerns in the emblem can be seen in her forty-eighth poem where, with a little
self-mockery, she compares her poetry with the epics of Virgil and Homer. The
main narrative of her poem is a struggle between a mouse and oyster and it
becomes clear that the oyster ‘Torn up from A Rock’ who entraps the mouse is
supposed to be compared with Cromwell who ‘from a vulgar’ rose ‘to Raign’
and who is now oppressing ‘many a Noble Spirit’. Pulter says that as a woman

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84 Emblem 20, ll. 42-45.
she lacks the skills necessary to create a Greek or Latin epic and instead she will have to tell the political tale of 'the Captive Mous her dubious Fate' in her 'own Mother Tongue' and, as she goes on to demonstrate, in the form of an emblem. Rather than adopt the grand poetic form of the epic, traditionally used for relating matters of national consequence, Pulter adopts the much more humble form of the emblem for her own political commentary.

**Plaine and Vulgar Notions**

Despite the serious social and political agendas underlying Wither and Pulter's emblem collections, they are not presented as sententious didactic works. For both writers, much of the emblem's usefulness resided in its association with the provision of education for those outside of the intellectual and political elite. This is reflected in their adoption of Joseph Hall's meditational structure as the basis of their compositions. In his preface to *The Arte of Divine Meditation*, Hall is explicit about his aim to disseminate his message to a readership outside of the educated elite. He says that 'If now the simplicitie of any Reader, shall bereave him of the benefite of my precepts, I knowe he may make his use of my example'. For Hall, an important part of the way in which his meditations work is through their capacity to benefit a broad range of people, not simply through complex instruction, but through practical guidance. As the frontispiece to Wither's collection and Pulter's second emblem suggest, a significance aspect of their emblem collections is the role they adopt in providing an example to the reader. Both poets speak in the first person throughout, demonstrating their own investment in the meditation they present and drawing the reader after them. This

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85 Hall (1606), sig. A5r.
emphasis on example, rather than didactic pronouncements, supports both
Wither’s and Pulter’s condemnation of those who should in a leadership capacity
be setting a positive example to society as a whole.

Throughout his career Wither was drawn to forms that allowed him to
communicate with those outside of the intellectual and political elite. In the
preface to his Motto he states that some readers:

must be drawne on with some frivolous expressions, or else will never
listen to the grave precepts of Virtue; which, when they once heare, doe
many times beget a delight in them, before they be aware. 86

He suggests he is seeking to appeal to class of reader beyond those traditionally
interested in receiving moral education and that in order to do this he must
provide entertainment. He is sure that once these readers have found vertue
‘masked under the habit of a light Poem,’ they may ‘groe namord on her
beauty’. 87 A similar point is made in Britain’s Remembrancer where he notes
that:

(considering the common vanity, and how tedious matters of most
consequence are unto some eares) it is necessary, and by good authority
warrantable, to make use of all indifferent meanes, to worke on humane
infirmities, for our hearers profit. 88

In his Motto, Wither concludes his preface by asserting that in fact far from
representing a compromise, the ‘light poem’ may in fact be more effective then
anything more serious. He writes that

And I have heard divers, seriously protest, that they have much more
feelingly bin informed, and moved to detest the Vanity of the humor there
skoffed at, by that rude Tale, then they were by the most grave precepts
of Phylosophy. 89

86 Wither (1621), sig. A3v.
87 Wither (1621), sig. A3v.
88 Wither (1628), sig. B1r.
89 Wither (1621), sig. A4r.
He concludes with the assertion that he is more interested in the usefulness of a text than its outward show, even if that text 'being considered according to the Method of Art, and rules of Schollership, would seeme ridiculous'. This final comment suggests Wither is broadening his perceived audience to encompass all readers; even the very serious may be attracted by lighter matter and learn something from it.

In the preface to his Emblemes, Wither expresses a similar attitude to his use of the emblem form. Comparing his compositions with 'Viniger, Salt, or common Water', which may be used to 'make Sawces more pleasing to some tastes, than Sugar, and Spices', he states that 'plaine and vulgar notions', such as his emblems, may achieve that 'which the most admired Compositions could never effect in many Readers'. Later he adds that 'when levitie, or a childish delight in trifling Objects, hath allured them to looke on the pictures; Curiositie may urge them to pheepe further' and the teaching they glean from the compositions 'will, at last, wholly change them'. He suggests that the emblem is powerfully attractive and that this can be harnessed for social good. He also argues that his own creative status is of no interest to him and that he is 'contented to seeme Foolish...to the Overweening-Wise; that, I may make others Wiser than they were'. He goes so far as to compare his compositions with

90 Wither (1621), sig. A4r.
91 Wither (1635), sig. Ar.
92 Wither (1635), sig. A2r.
93 As Peter Daly has pointed out, while Wither uses his preface to assert his intention to educate less educated readers this is undermined by the physical nature of the final volume. Daly states that 'With its large folio format, 200 copperplate engravings on finely ruled pages, and final lottery with volvelles, A Collection of Emblemes was the most costly book ever produced to that date in England', 'The Arbitrariness of George Wither's Emblems: A Reconsideration' in Michael Bath, John Manning and Alan R. Young ed., The Art of the Emblem: Essays in Honor of Karl Josef Holigen (New York: AMS Press, 1993) pp. 201-34.
‘Rattles, and Hobby-horses for Children’ and uses the inclusion of a ‘Game at Lots, or (as it were) a Puppet-play in pictures’ to ‘allure’ his readers.\textsuperscript{94}

Similarly, Pulter, as we have seen, specifically addresses her own emblem collection to her children, the youngest of whom, John, would have been seven years old by the mid 1650s. In doing this, she highlights the emblem’s capacity to attract younger, less educated and less serious-minded readers and to provide moral education under the guise of entertainment.\textsuperscript{95} In several poems the narrative is identified with a specific mode of public amusement. In emblem 21, for example, she echoes Wither’s preface in her address to ‘You that love Poppit Playes, Masks, Court Buffoons’.\textsuperscript{96} A reference encompassing the tastes of those on all levels of the social spectrum, including the courtly and aristocratic audiences of masques and the potentially less sophisticated viewers of the puppet shows performed on the street.\textsuperscript{97} Similarly, in emblem 4 the dispute between ‘Vertue’ and ‘Fortune’ takes the form of a duel, or joust, performed at the ‘Olympicks’. It is possible that Pulter was thinking of the Olympic Games that were performed each year at Chipping Camden. Her first cousin Anthony Wood provides some indication of the games’ popularity, noting that they were ‘frequented by the nobility and gentry (some of whom came 60 miles to see them) even till the rascally rebellion was begun by the presbyterians, which gave

\textsuperscript{94} Wither’s lottery is a social game in which players select an emblem by spinning two dials at the back of the volume. This directs the reader firstly to an emblem and then to an accompanying stanza included at the back of each of the four separate collections within the main volume. The stanza provides a ‘reading’ of emblem making its message applicable to individual who has selected it. Wither is careful to anticipate potential criticism by stating that he has not developed the lottery as a ‘meanes to reprove men’s vices, without being suspected, (as I have hitherto unjustly beeene) to ayme at particular persons’ (1635), sig. A3r.

\textsuperscript{95} The emblem book has a long history of use in a didactic capacity within the schoolroom but it was not until the end of the seventeenth century that it came to be associated almost exclusively with children; Bath (1994), p. 264. Pulter’s manuscript, dedicated to her own children, therefore occupies an interesting position in the history of the emblem book. For a discussion of the emblem’s use in the classroom see Ayers Bagley, ‘Some Pedagogical Uses of the Emblem in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England’, in Emblematica 7 (1993), pp. 177-99.

\textsuperscript{96} Emblem 21, l. 1.

\textsuperscript{97} For accounts of these entertainments see emblem 21, note to ll. 1-2.
a stop to their proceedings'. In keeping with Wood's observation, Pulter's emphasis on amusement may have been a pointed response to the more puritanical in contemporary society, whom she describes as 'ridgid'.

In addition to her emphasis on entertainment, laughter is a significant element of Pulter's collection. In emblem 49, for example, she describes a 'Russian Rustick' who, climbing a tree, becomes trapped in a honeycomb. But a bear 'roameinge for her Prey' smells the honey and follows the man up the tree. The Russian, fearing for his life but seeing his opportunity for escape, 'Upon the Bears hin'd Legs hee then Catchd hold'. His plan works and:

The Bear affrighted (who can hold their laughter Got quickly out and puld the Man out after

Pulter's parenthetical remark (the scribe seems to regard the end of the line as sufficient punctuation) draws attention to the amusing dimension of this farcical story. Similarly, in emblem 13 a Tortoise 'hardly could hold in her Laughter' after seeing her pompous companion, a Porcupine whipped and made 'to skip' by a group of 'Frocketeers'. This emphasis on laughter and merriment contradicts her title-page allusion to 'the sighes of a sad soule' and provides a striking contrast to the majority of Pulter's poems, specifically her occasional verse, in which the predominant tone is melancholy and grief.

More generally, Pulter's textual emphasis on laughter is unusual for an early modern Englishwoman. Anne Southwell, for example, ruefully notes that 'a sanguine woman is of all accurst' and highlights the association between the

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98 For an account of the Chipping Camden Olympic Games see emblem 4, note to line 1.
99 Emblem 39, l. 22.
100 For a discussion of the prominence of grief and tears in Pulter's occasional and devotional poems see Ross (2005).
merry woman and a lack of virtue. Consequently, Southwell suppressed her own writing of witty or humorous poetry by destroying it. Pulter's emphasis on humour appears however to be one of the ways in which she conveyed a specific element of her own voice. In her occasional poem 'Made when I was not well, April 20, 1655' she describes how as a young woman she was full of 'sportive wit and Mirth', suggesting she perceives merriment to be a significant part of her personality. This is reiterated in her semi-autobiographical poem 'Alithea's Pearl' where she describes having the companionship of Peace who 'sweetly smiled' and Joy who 'Gigling Laugh'd outright'. Endowed with these virtues, Pulter says her young life was dominated by 'Mirth' to the extent that on occasion she became 'tir'd with Laughing'.

The prevailing tone of 'Made when I was not well' is however grief and mourning and her youthful joy and mirth are evoked as a point of contrast with her current suffering. In the poem as the whole, she engages in a poignant blazon of her own body beginning with her eyes which, when she was young, had a 'splendent Spritelynes' but now they are 'Dim and Dull and Sad'. Similarly, her 'Locks did Curle and were a Golden brown' but now 'thin and Lank like silver Threads hang down'. Her 'lips were Cherryes' and 'Rosey were [her] Cheeks' but now they 'for Blood or Beuty seek'. Her 'swelling Breasts' once 'the Bed of Love' are now, like 'fadeing Lillyes', 'withred' and 'shut out of sight'. She describes how her 'sportive wit and Mirth is now laid by' and there is no one 'more mopeing now and dul then I'. The reason for such misery is the death of her daughter Penelope and she concludes with the statement that 'My Joyes to

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101 'Precept 4', l. 463; reproduced in Seal Millman and Wright (2005), p. 72. For a discussion of this poem see the same volume p. 8.
102 MS Lt q 32, f. 73v.
103 MS Lt q 32, f. 48v.
Heaven with my Dear Pen did Fly’. Grieving for her daughter she challenges her own apparent reluctance to succumb to illness and death.

The contrast between the ‘wit and Mirth’ evident in Pulter’s emblem series and the more serious tone of ‘Made when I was not well’, which was apparently composed during the period in which she was writing her emblems, points to an important point of distinction between Pulter’s emblem collection and the majority of her poems. ‘Made when I was not well’, together with many of her other more mournful poems, is a response to the death of one of her children, specifically Penelope. Other compositions address her bouts of melancholia, physical illness, and traumatic events in her own and the nation’s history.104 In her contrast, her emblems, as her second emblem demonstrates, are concerned with those of her children who are still alive. She therefore adopts a form and a mode of address that allows her to communicate a more mirthful side of herself. Through the adoption of a playful maternal voice she is able to enhance the didactic potential of her text through the evocation of shared entertainment and pleasure.

Despite the less serious elements of their texts, Pulter and Wither do not exclude a more learned audience from their potential readership. Wither is careful to draw a distinction between ‘the Learned’ who ‘if they cast their eyes upon’ his emblems may be reminded ‘of some Dutie, which they might else forget’ and ‘the Vulgar Capacities’ who may ‘be many waies both Instructed, and Remembred’ even ‘before they be aware’ of what is happening.105 Similarly, in his instructions for using the ‘game of lotts’ included at the back of the volume, Wither is careful to note that:

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104 There are occasional exceptions, specifically her poem addressed to Davenant about the loss of his nose through syphilis and love poem entitled ‘My Love is Fair’; MS Lt q 32, ff. 83r, 82r.
105 Wither (1635), sig. A2r.
If King, Queene, Prince or any one that springs  
From Persons, knowne to be deriv'd from Kings,  
Shall seeke, for Sport sake, hence to draw their Lot  
Our Author sayes; that he provided not  
for such as those.\textsuperscript{106}

Instead he gives them, together with other ‘Personages, of High degree’, the right  
to chose their own lot. In contrast:

\begin{quote}
All others, who this Game, adventure will  
Must beare their Fortunes, be they Good, or ill
\end{quote}

For Wither, who had got into serious trouble with the authorities for libelling a peer, this was probably a way of absolving himself from any further accusations of slander. But in itemising a whole list of potential readers according to class, Wither raises the prospect of an audience that is popular in the widest sense, incorporating both a learned and a less-well educated reader. This in turn reinforces his emphasis throughout the text on the necessity for social cooperation and mutual responsibility for the social good.

Similarly, while Pulter suggests her collection is specifically addressed to her ‘children’ this does not exclude a wider readership. At the time she was writing, many of her children would have been teenagers or young adults, suggesting she is thinking of her own ‘children’ in the broadest sense of offspring rather than in terms of their age.\textsuperscript{107} While she may have had this specific domestic audience in mind, her compositions invoke a much broader range of individuals to whom she addresses her moral, social and political message. In several emblems she directs specific morals to ‘Parents’, ‘Youthfull Gallants’, ‘Weomen of this Age’ or to a general unspecified ‘reader’.\textsuperscript{108} For each group of specified individuals Pulter has a message appropriate for their

\textsuperscript{106} Wither (1635), sig. Ppv.
\textsuperscript{107} Emblem 2, l. 1. For the births and death of her children see Chapter One and emblem 2, note to l. 3.
\textsuperscript{108} Emblems 5, l. 16; 14, l. 23; 47, l. 17; 34, l. 19; 41, l. 27; 45 l. 2; 51, l. 12.
circumstances, which encourages them to conform to her own ideal of socially responsible behaviour. Parents are exhorted to ‘Learn here Indulgencie’; young gallants are reminded to choose their wives ‘by reason not for Fancies Sake’; and women are told that ‘Nothing gains love like virgin Modestie’. In keeping with Wither’s collection there are those she suggests who, rather than needing the educational message she puts forward, will be complicit in the education she provides. In several places she alludes to the ‘noble reader’ who she suggests will have sufficient skill to be able to discern the true message of her text.

While both Wither and Pulter apparently make concessions to those readers not in need of the education they are providing, implicit within their collections is the suggestion that the modern-day world is generally so committed to vice the only way to communicate a serious message is in the guise of entertainment. Wither notes that the ‘world is growne so in Love with Follie, that the Imprinting of over-solid and serious treatises would undoe the Book-sellers’. Instead, he presents an entertaining volume with the capacity to generate revenue through popular appeal not intellectual integrity. Similarly, throughout her volume, Pulter complains about those who spend all their time indulging in pleasure. She is critical of a world in which men are only concerned with ‘Dames’, ‘Drink’ and ‘Dice’ and while preoccupied with ‘drink’, ‘Ranting’, and ‘throwing the Die’ their ‘Lite’ or unchaste women are all daubing themselves in ‘Paint’ and attending ‘Bauls’, ‘Taverns’ and ‘Wanton Plays’. She describes a modern social world in which trivialities and superficial worldly pleasure have superseded more serious matters, including responsibility and virtue. Like

109 Emblems 5, l. 16; 14, l. 24; 47, l. 18.
110 In emblem 41 for example she cites a moral that the ‘Noble Reader plain may see’, l. 27.
111 Wither (1635), sig. A2v.
112 Emblems 8, l. 12; 36, l. 19; 8, l. 18; 19, l. 39.
Wither, in addressing her emblems to those, beyond her own children, who love various forms of entertainment, she is seeking to provide a moral education in a guise that will appeal to their interest in frivolity.

A key difference in the two texts is the way in which Pulter and Wither position themselves in relation to a contemporary culture given over to vice. Wither speaks as one who is just one step ahead of his reader in reforming his own foolish tendencies. He opens his address ‘To The Reader’ with the remark that:

> If there had not been some Bookes conceitedly composed, and sutable to meane capacities, I am doubtfull, whether I had ever beene so delighted in reading, as thereby to attaine to the little Knowledge I have.  

He frames his ensuing comments about those with ‘Vulgar Capacities’ with the suggestion that this is not a imperious comment from one who is innately superior but is instead some friendly advice from one who has been busy reforming his own ways. At the same time his remark functions as an advertisement for his own ‘conceitedly composed’ text, which he hopes will lead others down the same path to a ‘little Knowledge’.

In contrast, Pulter who, when she composed her emblems, was an aristocratic woman in her fifties and a mother to many children, adopts a tone more in keeping with her role as an experienced matriarch. While she is not averse to acknowledging her own sin, many of her comments about the condition of the nation are aimed at the nation’s ‘Youth’ whom she reminds to ‘Remember thy Creator’. In emblem 6 she presents a direct conflict between youth and experience when ‘Two Mountebancks’, one a ‘Spruce Young Gallant’ and the other ‘well in Age’, engage in a battle of ‘Antidotes’. Each contender ‘poyson

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113 Wither (1635), sig. Ar.
114 Emblem 8, l. 28.
should the other give’ while the winner is the one whose ‘Preparatives’ enable him to survive. The young man is given deadly aconite, ‘His Mouth to either Ear did stretch soe wide’ and ‘in this horrid posture strait hee died’. From this, Pulter derives the straightforward interpretation:

Then let this Teach all in their youth full age
Not to contest with those are ould and sage.

She goes on to conclude that:

This bould Young Quack his proud Attempts did feild
Then Let mee ever to my betters yield.

Maturity and social status are combined as markers of authority that the nation’s youth are required to respect. Throughout her text, her criticism is aimed at those who have literally overthrown the traditional systems of authority, a pattern of disrespect manifested in the nation in general. Asserting a voice of experience she aims to reassert the traditional values that have been so thoroughly undermined. One way in which she seeks to do this is by using a poetical form that will appeal to fun-seeking contemporary youths, while gently leading them down the path to socially useful virtue.

**The Ladder of Heaven**

A key way in which Wither and Pulter seek to ‘wholly change’ their readers is through the adoption of a poetical form designed to move the individual to a greater understanding of herself and of her relationship to God. The specific structure of the emblems produced by both Wither and Pulter can be traced to Joseph Hall and the model of Protestant mediation he developed during the early
years of the seventeenth century.115 During that period, Hall, a moderate or
‘episcopal’ puritan, ‘was renowned as a moralist’ and he gained a particular
reputation for his meditations.116 He was also widely known for his Senecanism;
in 1610 Loiseau de Torval, the French translator of Hall’s characters referred to
him as ‘la Senèque Chrestien’, and after his death Thomas Fuller remembered
him as ‘our English Seneca’.117 As we have seen in the previous chapter, Hall
published The Arte of Divine Meditation (1606) as a means of providing a
practical method for enacting the more abstractly theorised Stoic position put
forward in Heaven on Earth (1606).118 In the Arte of Divine Meditation, Hall sets
out a highly structured programme for ‘deliberate’ or ‘fixed’ meditation, of the
kind generally adopted by both Wither and Pulter in their emblematic
compositions.

In his preface to the Arte of Divine Meditation, Hall argues that through
meditation ‘the soule doeth unspeakeably benefit it selfe’. By this process ‘we
ransacke our deepe and false harts, find out our secret enemies, buckle with
them, expell them, arme ourselves against their re-entrance’.119 He argues that
meditation alone ‘is the remedie of security and worldliness, the pastime of
Saints, the ladder of heaven, and, in short the best improvement of
Christianitie’.120 Despite its inward focus, Hall is careful to stress the

115 For account of Hall’s model of meditation see Martz (1954), p. 25. Also Lewalski (1979), pp.
148-63.
116 See Adriana McCrea, Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England,
1584-1650 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 171 and Frank Livingstone Huntley,
Bishop Joseph Hall and Protestant Meditation in Seventeenth-Century England: A Study with
Texts of the Art of Divine Meditation (1606) and Occasional Meditations (1633) (Binghampton:
Center for Medieval and Early Renaissance Studies, 1981), pp. 50-52. Huntley notes that as early
as 1619 John Owens ‘singled out Hall’s meditations to praise him by’.
(1662), p. 130.
118 McCabe (1982), pp. 184-89.
119 Hall (1606), p. 2.
120 Hall (1606), p. 4.
significance of meditation within the active world. He argues that it enables us to 'fit ourselves to all good dueties' and that 'there is no man so taken up with action, as not sometimes to have a free minde; and there is no reasonable minde so simple, as not to bee able both to discourse somewhat, and to better itselpe by her secret thoughts'. Meditation is presented as a fitting and necessary accompaniment to an active live. It enables the individual to shore him or herself up against adversity and to better perform his or her active duties within society.

In his introduction, Wither explicitly states that his compositions are the result of apparently spontaneous 'Meditations', even if 'by obliging' himself 'to observe the same number of lines in every illustration' he has 'much injured the liberty of [his] Muse'. In his ninth emblem he sets out his understanding of the use and value of meditation. He remarks that:

such as would the Wit and Wealth acquire,
Which may the Crowne of approbation have,
Must wake by Night, to compasse their desire.

This is because night is 'more friend to Meditation, then the Day' and because meditation itself is essential 'ere in waightony Matters thou proceede'. Drawing on the Stoic rhetoric of prudence he says that:

By Night, we best may ruminate upon
Our Purposes; Then, best, we may enquire
What Actions wee amisse, or well, have done;
And, then, may best into our Selves retire

Like Hall, Wither promotes meditation as an essential accompaniment to action. Retirement, in this case at night, does not signal a complete withdrawal from action but is instead a means of prudently assessing the best means to proceed. In

121 Hall (1606), pp. 2, 5-6.
122 Wither (1635), sig. A2r.
using the emblem form throughout his collection he presents his compositions to his reader as a means of engaging in this form of contemplation.

For Wither, the emblem functions as more than a simple vehicle for the communication of a Stoic message. In keeping with its origins in devotional meditation, it is designed to engage and to actively move the mind and affections of the reader. Hall makes it clear that meditation ‘begins in the understanding’ but it ‘ends in the affections’; ‘It begins in the braine’ then ‘descends to the heart’; and it ‘Begins on earth’ and ‘ascends to heaven’.\(^{123}\) Wither was particularly drawn to literary forms with the potential to transform the mind of his audience. In *Britain's Remembrancer* he adds that he is intending not simply to appeal to the intellect:

> Let them be perswaded likewise, that I have not written this for those who have no need thereof, or to shew my owne wit or compendiousnesse, but to warne and instruct the ignorant; to whom I should more often speake in vaine, if I did not otherwhile by repetitions and circumlocutions, stirre up their affections, and beat into their understandings, the knowledge and feeling of those things which I deliver.\(^{124}\)

The style of his text is designed to actively ‘stirre up [the] affections’ of his reader and to instil not just knowledge but ‘feeling’ of the subject in hand. He considers this process particularly necessary for the ‘ignorant’ who are less likely to learn through instruction alone. Similarly, in the introduction to his emblems he states that he approves of compositions, and we may include his own emblems here, that ‘may be made use of, to stirre up the Affections, winne Attention, or help the Memory’.\(^{125}\) The visual component of the emblem was used to aid

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\(^{123}\) Hall (1606), p. 85.

\(^{124}\) Wither (1628), sig. B3r.

\(^{125}\) Wither (1635), sig. Ar.
memory while the meditational structure Wither adopts enables him to manipulate the affections.\textsuperscript{126}

In her unnumbered emblem, ‘When fair Aurora drest with radiant Light’, Pulter provides a comment on the devotional structure of her own compositions. Setting the poem within the context of her garden, Pulter describes how, when the sun sets, an ‘active Amizonian’ bee and a snail both become trapped inside a tulip. She uses this scenario to consider alternative modes of response to the spiritual and political circumstances of Interregnum England. Pulter describes how ‘while the Angrie Bee did such a Fluttring keep’ the snail ‘laid her[self] down to rest’. When the sun rises the next morning, the snail slides free but the bee ‘with Beating of her self did die’. The angry, aggressive and war-like bee does not consider her actions but rashly fights against her confinement and suffers as a consequence. Conversely, the contemplative snail, a symbol of self-containment and perseverance, prospers.

Pulter concludes her poem by suggesting the snail and the bee provide an apt message for those facing political opposition. Her reference to the patient and virtuous include a description of ‘wise Calistines’ the Greek historian who, when he became critical of the actions of Alexander the Great, was ‘us’d with greater Scorn’.\textsuperscript{127} His response to being ‘Tyrannically mangled’ was to remain stoically ‘unmov’d’. His actions are contrasted with references the aggression of others including Charles, Duke of Byron, who in Chapman’s play is portrayed as an

\textsuperscript{126} Francis Bacon notes that the ‘Art of Memorie, is but built upon two Intentions: The one Praenotion; the other Embleme: Praenotion, dischargeth the Indefinite seeking of that we would remember, and directeth us to seeke in a narrowe Compasse: that is, somewhat that hath Congruitie with our Place of Memorie: Embleme reduceth conceits intellectuall to Images sensible, which strike the Memorie more’ in The Twoo Bookes of Francis Bacon, Of the Proficience and Advancement of Learning, Divine and humane To the King (1606), sig. Pp2v.

\textsuperscript{127} See emblem 52, note to ll. 47-50.
ambitious Machiavellian attempting to over-throw his king.\textsuperscript{128} When he is imprisoned for treason and his sword is removed he is ‘inrag’d’. Pulter contrasts the virtuous, who defy a ruler in the wider interests of their nation, with those illegitimately challenging authority in pursuit of their own ends. There is the suggestion that the unjustly oppressed will, in the face of tyranny, be sustained by their virtue while the corrupt will continue in their inappropriate resistance to those exercising power against them.

Pulter goes on to apply the message of her poem to her contemporaries with the statement:

\begin{center}
Then if noe hope of liberty you see  
Think on the Snail, the Tulip, and the Bee
\end{center}

It is possible that she was thinking of those, including her kinsman Arthur Capel, who were literally imprisoned by the king’s opposition.\textsuperscript{129} But her reference provides a reminder of those more generally experiencing opposition and restriction under Cromwell’s regime. In recommending that her readers ‘Think on’ the subject of her poem, Pulter directly invites them to participate in the meditative exercises she recommends. She encourages her reader to engage in contemplation and in doing so presents her emblem collection as a means of adopting the position of Stoic prudence she promotes throughout. Those being persecuted for their virtuous defiance of political opposition are reminded of the value of patience and are encouraged to follow the snail’s contemplative example.


\textsuperscript{129} For a discussion of Pulter’s connection to Arthur Capel see Chapter One. For references to those among her associates who were imprisoned for their political allegiances see emblem 45, note to l. 17.
In keeping with the advice given by Hall at the start of his collection, while Wither and Pulter adhere to the general meditative structure he provides they do not always rigidly adhere to his formula. Hall himself states that 'we may not be too curious in a precise search of every place, and argument without omission of any'.\(^{130}\) He argues that to do this may ultimately defeat the purpose of the meditation 'For as the mind, if it go loose and without rule, roves to no purpose; so if it be too much fettered with the [gives] of strict regularity moveth nothing at all'.\(^ {131}\) For Hall the end is more significant than the means and he later reiterates the importance of engaging in the activity of meditation by whatever means work best, rather than enforcing a strict method. In keeping with this Wither and Pulter do not, for example, always proceed through each stage of the process outlined by Hall but they generally do include the two broad structural divisions of analysis and affection. The first part involves a consideration of, or 'understanding' of the topic of meditation, while the second is characterised as a 'stirring of the heart' or 'affections' during which the individual is moved closer to God.\(^ {132}\)

Two poems that provide particularly clear and complete examples of the way in Pulter and Wither make use of a meditative structure are Pulter's emblem 16, in which she depicts the cockatrice, and Wither's emblem 47, depicting a snake, coiled around the letter 'T,' and positioned below an image of a crown. In keeping with Hall's recommendation that at the start of the meditation it is necessary to 'consider seriously, what the thing is whereof wee meditate', both poets begin their compositions with descriptions of the emblematic image on

\(^{130}\) Hall (1606), p. 89.
\(^{131}\) Hall (1606), p. 89.
\(^{132}\) For a discussion of these two stages see Lewalski (1979), p. 153.
which the ensuing poem is based. Wither provides a brief account of the visual image accompanying his verse, stating ‘A Serpent rais’d above the Letter Tan, Aspiring to a Crowne, is figur’d here’. Pulter, whose poem is not accompanied by a visual image, provides a more lengthy description. She writes:

The Cockatrice as vulgarly receiv’d
Is against nature by a Cock conceiv’d
Whose Egs a Toad doth to perfection bring
Whence comes the Basalisk the serpents King

Pulter’s account of the cockatrice, its generation and its association with the basilisk has much in common with an account provided by Edward Topsell in his History of Four-Footed Beasts and Serpents and she may have been referring directly to the image he provides. In her description of the animal’s parentage Pulter invokes an animal that is half bird and half reptile, which in Topsell’s image takes the form of a snake with a cock’s comb on its head. From this, it is possible to detect the origins of Pulter’s description of the basalisk, a counterpart of the cockatrice, as the ‘serpents King’.

Pulter’s opening description does not end with her account of the mythical cockatrice. She goes on to state that:

If this fierce animall doth first see you
Prepare my Freind to bid this World adue
But of you see him first you are secure
If with this Cristall you your Selfe immure
The visual beams which Issue from his Eyes
Reverberat’s his poyson soe hee dies

133 In their choice of subject matter, Wither and Pulter follow Hall’s advice for extemporal meditation more closely than his specifications for deliberate meditation. For deliberate meditation Hall stresses that the subject ‘must be Divine and Spiritual; not evill, not worldly’ and he particularly recommends ‘thoughts either of the Deitie in his essence ... or of his attributes ... or of his works in the creation, preservation, government of all things’. For extemporal meditation he specifies the ‘severall natures and actions of the creature’ (1606), pp. 65, 70, 11. For a discussion of the significance of the creatures for meditation see Lewalski (1979), pp. 162-64; and of their significance for emblems see Bath (1994), pp. 164-66.

134 Image included in notes to emblem 16.
The fierce creature is accompanied by the suggestion that the reader, immured in ‘Cristall’ will be able to repel the deadly beams shooting from its eyes. Pulter’s account is a reminder of a story recounted by Topsell, who writes:

I cannot without laughing remember the olde Wives tales of the Vulgar Cockatrices that have bin in England; for I have oftentimes heard it related confidently, that once our Nation was full of Cockatrices, and that a certaine man did destroy them by going uppe and downe in Glasse, whereby their owne shapes were reflected upon their owne faces, as so they dyed.\(^{135}\)

This description of a man wearing a glass suit and engaging in battle with a swarm of half-chicken, half-snake-like creatures is highly memorable. This in itself is an important aspect of the meditative structure with which Pulter was working. The first part of the process, memory, is designed to evoke and embed an image within the mind of the person engaged in a meditative exercise. Similarly, Wither’s highly symbolic emblem can be compared with Pulter’s entertaining fable. The latter’s emblem demands intellectual curiosity and engagement in order to decipher its meaning. In contrast Pulter’s tale is entertaining and amusing. Both emblems however are designed to fulfil the function of evoking and fixing the reader’s mind, or ‘mind’s-eye’, upon the opening image.

Following the evocation of the opening image, both Pulter and Wither embark on the ‘understanding’ part of the meditative process. Hall stipulates a long list of ‘heads of reason’ through which the image can be passed in order to ensure it is properly understood. These include ‘causes and origins’, ‘fruits and effects’, ‘whereabouts’, ‘appendances and qualities’, ‘that which is divers from it’, ‘what neerest resemble it’, ‘names and titles’ and ‘scriptural references’.\(^{136}\)

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\(^{135}\) Topsell (1608), pp. 124-25.

\(^{136}\) Hall (1606), sig. A7v-A8v.
key point of contrast between Wither’s and Pulter’s emblems is that Wither is primarily concerned with the second, or ‘affectionate’, part of the meditative process, while Pulter places greater emphasis on the understanding, or intellectual element. The space Wither devotes to ‘understanding’ his emblematic image is comparatively short. He states that the cross ‘doth shew, that suffering is the way’. Connected with this the serpent is a reminder that ‘by embracing what we shall not shunne...we arise/Above the same’. In keeping with one of the most significant themes of his collection as a whole, Wither emphasises Christian suffering and the necessity of enduring it with stoic fortitude. He concludes with a reference to the image of a crown, which he describes as the prize that is won through the individual’s acceptance of and commitment to hardship in the pursuit of salvation.

The overt and explicit way in which Wither provides an explanation of the meaning of the emblematic image can be compared with the slightly less direct way in which Pulter brings her reader to an understanding of the trope with which she opens her poem. In contrast to Wither, Pulter devotes much of her poem to engaging in the activities Hall recommends for coming to a thorough understanding of the subject in question. Having described the man in the glass suit killing the cockatrice, she provides an analogous example with the statement that:

Soe Pertius with his sisters shineing shield  
Made Proud Medusa and the Gorgons Yield

Perseus’s reflective shield provides a direct parallel for the original glass armour while the Medusa with her hair of snakes can be compared with the reptile-like cockatrice. Pulter then goes on to provide an explicit interpretation of her opening image:
Sin is this Cursed Killing Cockatrice
If you discover its deceits it Dies
But if you don't nought but the splendent shield
Of Faith, will make this Hellish Monster Yield
Then with the Christian armour arm you
And all the Powers of Hell shall never harm you

She states that if sin is allowed to develop, then the only solution is to defend oneself with the 'shield of Faith' or 'Christian armour', the spiritual equivalent of the glass suit or the reflective shield. Drawing on Ephesians 6.11 and 6.13, which refer to 'the whole armour of God' and 'the shield of faith', Pulter presents a literary shield comprising scriptural or spiritual understanding.

Pulter's reference to the myth of Perseus, placed directly between her description of the cockatrice and the direct association between the cockatrice and sin, does not immediately present a logical point of transition. It is clear that Pulter is drawing an analogous connection between the story of the Perseus overcoming the Medusa and the defeat of the cockatrice but it is less clear why this should then lead to the identification of the cockatrice with sin. An explanation is provided by early modern interpretations of the myth of Medusa, helpfully summarised by John Harington in the preface to his translation of Ludovico Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, a text which is Pulter is known to have read. 137 Among the many different ways of interpreting this myth, Harington states that Perseus represents 'a wise man, sonne of Jupiter endewed with vertue from above' who 'slayeth sinne and vice, a thing base and earthly; signified by Gorgon'. 138 The story of Perseus is therefore analogous to the opening motif on the level of imagery but is also provides a pivotal point in the process of leading

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137 Pulter includes a direct reference to Harington's text in 'To Sir Wm. D. Upon the Unspeakable Loss of the most conspicuous and chief Ornament of his Frontispiece': reproduced in Seal Millman and Wright (2005), p. 121. James Harington was the father of Pulter's brother-in-law and associate John Harington MP. See also Chapter Two.

the mind to a greater appreciation of its symbolic function. The process of comparing the opening image with analogous references is an integral part of the process of meditation outlined for Joseph Hall but it also reflects on the commonplace culture of the emblem form on which Pulter was also drawing.139

In the second part of the meditative process the individual comes to recognise the pertinence of the original image for him or herself and through this he or she is moved closer to God. Hall describes this as the ‘very soule of Meditation’ adding that ‘A man is a man by his understanding part: but he is a Christian by his will and affections’.140 This progression is enacted in the form of a colloquy through which the speaker asks God directly for assistance in bringing about the necessary change within him or herself. The colloquy, characterised by a first person address to God, represents a significant departure from the emblem tradition as a whole. In the witty, rhetorical compositions associated with the earlier, continental emblem tradition, English examples of which are provided by Geoffrey Whitney and Henry Peacham, emphasis was placed on the writer’s capacity to take an image with a conventional, established meaning and to provide a new and innovative twist on that interpretation.141 In their devotional emblems, both Wither and Pulter move away from this emphasis on the performance of rhetoric and wit and instead adapt the form for the purpose of shoring up of individual integrity. Meaning is derived from the emblematic image so that it can be fully absorbed and apprehended by the individual and used as a basis for personal reform and sustenance.

139 A discussion of this is provided in Chapter Two.
140 Hall (1606), p. 150.
141 Whitney (1586) and Peacham (1612). For a discussion of this method of emblematic composition see Bath (1994), pp. 31-34.
The expression of an individual voice is not entirely self-interested; Michelle O’Callaghan has demonstrated that Wither was ‘attracted to genre that enabled scope for the expression of the ‘I’ and that ‘he praises himself in order to praise another person – his friends, his principles, his country, the human race’. In his interpretation of the emblem, Wither uses the first person to speak, not simply for himself but for a collective of like-minded individuals. But instead of using the emblem ‘to praise’ himself and other people, he uses it to present a process of self-reform that in turn is recommended to others. More specifically, O’Callaghan has argued that Wither used the first person pronoun to represent ‘a body of godly citizens who had collective responsibility to ensure the health and safety of the commonwealth’. A similar process is enacted in Pulter’s poetry, in which she follows Wither in his emphasis on an individual voice. Like Wither, she is concerned with the fostering of a collective body of citizens active in their support for the absent monarchy, whose rule she equates with national well-being. Both Pulter and Wither use a first person voice to present a body of virtuous individuals who stand firm in their integrity and conviction. It is this that enables them to resist the oppositional trends in society as a whole and to contribute to the general good.

Hall recommends that the colloquy should occur in a series of stages including ‘a harty and passionate wish of the soule’, ‘humble confession’, ‘Petition’, ‘Enforcement’, and ‘confidence’. Wither begins with a direct petition to God asking him to ‘Let me, O God, obtaine from thee the Grace, /To be partaker of thy Blessed Passion’. This is enforced with the request that God:

... Crucifie my Flesh upon the same,

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As much as my Corruption shall require

Hall places great emphasis on the importance of the complaint ‘wherin the heart bewayleth to itself his owne poverty, dulnesse, and imperfection’. Wither does not directly address this part of the process, choosing instead to focus on the ‘petition’ but in these lines the individual’s understanding of his or her imperfections is implicit. The speaker is thoroughly aware of his or her own depravity and it is apparently not considered necessary to labour the issue. In keeping with the puritan element of Wither’s text, he asks God for the mortification necessary to purge his corrupt human nature of sin.

Like Wither, Pulter concludes her poem with the wish that God will assist her own battle to preserve virtue in the face of sin, but she is more positive in her characterisation of human nature. She opens her address to God with an emotional appeal:

But o let mee dispose my thoughts soe well
That I may Crush this Embrion in the shell
Yet if I doe to sinfull Motions Yield
Bee thou to mee dear God a sun and shield

In contrast to Wither who places great emphasis on the emotion in his request that God to inspire his ‘Heart, with Strength, and Courage’, Pulter betrays her intellectual preoccupation with her reference to ‘thoughts’. While Wither suggests that sin is inevitable and accordingly requests God’s help in bearing ‘that Part, whereton doomed I am’, Pulter suggests that while sin may begin to develop it may be prevented and stopped while still in its nascent state. Although she may give way to ‘sinfull Motions’ this is far from inevitable. But she shares in Wither’s conviction that God has the capacity to protect and shield her from her own sinful nature.
A key feature of both of these poems are their implications of universal grace and free will. In petitioning God and calling for his assistance both Wither and Pulter actively choose to seek out and by implication to accept God’s grace. This contrasts with Hall’s Calvinist text in which it is implicit that the speaker is elect but also in need of God’s assistance to receive grace. Describing the process of ‘Petition’, Hall says that it involves ‘earnestly requesting that at his handes, which we acknowledge our selves unable, and none but God able to performe’. While the individual requests grace from God, at the same time he or she acknowledges his or her inability to do even this without God’s help. The petition itself involves requesting God who ‘hast prepared a place for my soule’ to ‘prepare my soule for that place’. There is nothing the individual can do to ensure the purity of her soul and she must instead commend herself to God who alone has the power to make the human soul accepting of grace.

In contrast to Hall, Wither makes a direct statement of his Arminianism in emblem 141 where he goes so far as to compare Calvinism unfavourably with Catholicism. He describes Catholics as a:

sort we know, who credit not,
That any hope of Mercie can be got,
Till they themselves, by their externall-deed,
Have merited the favours they shall need.

Conversely, he says that Calvinists are those who:

affirme, that God’s decree
Before all Worlds (what Words can fouler be?)
Debarr’d the greatest part of humane-race,
Without respecting sinne, from hope of Grace;
And, that, howere this number shall indeaver,
They must continue Reprobates for ever.

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Wither goes on to express his utter contempt for Calvinist doctrine of
predestination. He says that while Catholicism is riddled with ‘errors of impiety’
Calvinism ‘ascends the top of blasphemy’. He says that it ‘Dispoyles Religion
wholly of her fruits’ and ‘wrongeth God in all his Attributes’. In contrast, he
advises the reader to ‘believe/That wee thy Faith, may by thy Workes perceive’.
This is not because works in themselves have any value but because they pay
testament to the individual’s capacity to work ‘not for thy Wages; but, for love’.
Good works become a sign of inner virtue and through this the individual ‘mayst
have hopes’ and ‘God will grant them too’. The individual therefore has agency
to behave in a positive, Christian manner. This combines outward action with
inner virtue and through this has the capacity to work towards God’s grace,
which he will grant to the truly pious.

Pulter, while less overt, presents a similar view in her own emblems. In
her fifth emblem she says:

Then Oh my God from thy bright Throne above
Irradate my Soul soe with thy Love

She requests that God instils his love into her own soul but without indication of
the Calvinist view that this is in itself beyond the capacity of the human soul.
Instead she goes on to say that God can be compared with the sun which
‘Illuminateth all/Which are capacious on this Earthly Ball’. God’s love and grace
are universal but they bring particular light to those who are ‘capacious’ or
predisposed to accept it. She goes onto characterise her own ‘holy fervour’ as an
‘Eternall Spark’ glowing within her own ‘Chast Breast’ and she asks God to ‘let
itt diffuse below/To all relations’. Presented within a poem about parental love,
Pulter seeks to use the love of God within herself to bring good to those around
her. In keeping with Wither, she presents true religious fervour as something that
brings benefit to others and not just to the individual concerned. Following a
virtuous life on earth the soul with 'then reascend above/To God the Fount of
Glory, Life and Love'. Pulter's images of light provide a reminder of the
neoplatonic vocabulary she uses in her heliotrope emblem. The human soul is a
spark of the divine source of light and is therefore characterised by its goodness.

The Arminian elements behind the thinking of both Wither and Pulter can
be seen in the sections of their emblems devoted to petitioning God. In
concluding his forty-seventh emblem, Wither reveals his faith in the capacity of
the individual to have some agency in the reception of grace. He asks God to
allow him to embrace his cross with 'Willingnesse' and to instil 'Strength' and
'Courage' within him. While God's 'Assistance' is necessary to overcome
earthly and spiritual affliction the individual has the capacity to request this
assistance and to meet it with internal virtue. Wither concludes with the wish:

Among those Blessed Soules, let me be found,
Which, with eternall Glory shall be Crown'd

The 'Blessed Soules' to whom Wither refers are, in Calvinist terms, God's elect.
In contrast to his earlier statement that 'when we arise above' the cross we win
the 'Prize' signified by the 'Crowne', here Wither presents a voice of
uncertainty. Voicing the model of conditional election adopted by Arminians in
opposition to the unconditional election promoted by Calvinism, Wither
acknowledges that he still has the capacity to fail in his ability to accept God's
grace. As this condition has been predetermined there remains the possibility that
Wither will ultimately fail in his acceptance of God's grace and he commends
himself to God in the hope that he will be one of those able to receive it.
In contrast, the conclusion of Pulter's sixteenth emblem reveals her more positive understanding of the ultimate divinity of the soul. Applying the message of the original emblem to herself the Pulter concludes her poem with the lines:

Then as inslav'd to sin and Death I lie
Ile on the Brasen serpent cast mine Eye
Who conquerd Death and Hell on Calvary.

While in the desert, Moses set a brass serpent upon a pole to act as a talisman against snakebites. Any person bitten by a snake need only look on the brass serpent and he would be cured.\(^{145}\) Pulter's brass serpent 'conquerd Death and Hell on Calvary' meaning that the talisman to which she refers is Christ, who was crucified at Calvary. In turning to Christ in her hour of need the speaker is automatically protected from the destructive effects of sin and saved from death through eternal life. Unlike Wither who emphasises the need for the individual to undergo the process that Christ initiated whereby his flesh is crucified or mortified 'As much as my corruption shall require', Pulter presents Christ is a comfort because he provides a guarantee of salvation. She is less concerned about the human capacity to fail to receive God's grace and is instead more assertive in her expression of 'confidence' in God's protection.

For both Pulter and Wither free will is essential for their model of an active citizen with the capacity to resist potentially damaging external pressures. In a poem echoing his translation of Nemesius' treatise on free will, Wither states that 'in the Soule, God plac'd a Power-divine' that all external 'Inclinations, overswayes'.\(^{146}\) Similarly, for Pulter the human soul is created by 'Iradiation' form heaven and in placing their 'hopes and Joy's above' they are able to resist

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\(^{145}\) Numbers 21.5-9. See emblem 16, ll. 23-25.

fortune and 'her amorous smiles'. For Pulter and Wither, an Arminian emphasis on free will is a means by which they are able to promote the integrity and agency of the individual in defiance of authoritarian political regimes. An acknowledgement that good works may provide a way of testifying to inner virtue supports their emphasis on active participation in the nation.

Arminianism, therefore underscores the suggestion that individual men and women could pit their own faith in God against earthly forces. As Wither states in emblem 74, there is no such thing as 'changelesse Fate'; while there are 'those things which pertaine,/As Ground-workes, to Gods glorie' and 'unchanged remaine', God also 'gives men power, to build on his Foundation'. This means that not everything occurs according to a divine plan dictated by God and it is therefore not necessary to capitulate to external powers on the assumption that God ordained their actions. But Wither does go on to stipulate that free will only applies to those actions that agree with God's 'Foundation'. In these circumstances

No power-created can disturbe, the Workmans happy being
Nor, of those workings, which required are
Is many made unpossible

But, as soon as 'Man's heart begins that Counsell to preferre' that is 'derived from a crooked-will' then God will make his actions 'unpossible'.

For Pulter, God's power to intervene in these circumstances is represented by a fish called a remora or stay-ship. Emblem 43 recreates the opening of Virgil's Aeneid with Aeneas (renamed Caesar by Pulter) and his fellow Trojans setting sail for Italy. Pulter describes how:

This Stately Ship Courted by Winds and Tide
Upon the Curling Billows swiftly Rides

147 Emblem 35, ll. 16-22.
She provides a reminder of the fact that in the original text, the Trojans are at the mercy of the gods. In these circumstances, ‘Great Neptune’ ensures peace between those ‘blustering Tetarks’, the winds sent by Juno to impede their passage.¹⁴⁸ But Pulter’s description shifts and she goes on to describe how the ship came to a stand still and even though ‘Some Furl’d the sayls and others tri’d the Oar’ it could not be made to move again. Eventually ‘great Julius made one Dive’ into the water and he found ‘Remmora stick on the keell’ of the ship. This is compared with a story from Pliny in which ‘Periander sent to Geld the Youth/Of Gnidos’ has his ship stopped by a remora.¹⁴⁹ In her reference to Julius Caesar Pulter presents a man, who elsewhere she characterises as a tyrant, whose actions, are halted by a small creature sent by God.

Pulter’s allusion to the remora provides a reminder that a ‘poor’ thing has the capacity to ‘stop Mans proud designs’. In contrast to the opening of the poem, in which the gods were dictating man’s actions, Pulter highlights the human foundations of tyranny and warns that God will intervene to put things right. She concludes her poem with the moral:

Then let us all move humble in our sphear
And then noe Remmora wee need to Fear.

The ship, halted by the remora provides a reminder of man’s condition, evoked by Wither who says that ‘ev’ry man’ is ‘as a pilot, to some Vessell’.¹⁵⁰ Pulter suggests that contrary to the example provided by Aeneas, whose actions are directed by the gods for a greater purpose, man is free to take his own tyrannous course but in doing so he exposes himself to punishment. This applies to both the

¹⁴⁸ For a comparison of Pulter’s emblem with the opening of the Aeneid see emblem 43, note to ll. 1-10.
¹⁴⁹ See emblem 43, note to ll. 25-27.
¹⁵⁰ Wither (1635), p. 37. See also p. 13.
individual and the nation as a whole. The concept of the ship of state is well known, and is evoked by Pulter in emblem 48 where she refers to her father having ‘third place at the helm’.\textsuperscript{151} She therefore takes comfort in the fact that, while she shores up her own integrity in defiance of Cromwell and his corrosive effect on the nation, he eventually will be punished.

\textsuperscript{151} Emblem 48, l. 2.