'High Housewifery': the Duties and Letters of Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester

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Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester, is probably best known today for Ben Jonson’s description of her as “noble, fruitful, [and] chaste” and his praise of her “high housewifery” in his poem “To Penshurst,” a celebration of the Sidney family and their country estate. Because Barbara Sidney does indeed seem to have fulfilled the role of ideal aristocratic wife, mother, and household manager, an examination of her duties and a reconstruction of some of her missing letters can give us insight into the daily life and responsibilities of an early modern woman of the upper social ranks. Her relations to her large household, her role in educating her children, her administration of the family estate, and her interaction with her husband’s career and finances seem to have been typical of early modern women associated with court circles, although there would obviously be national, local, and individual variations in experience across Britain and Europe. Her experience continues to resonate today, for many of her concerns echo our own involvement with work and family.

Barbara Sidney makes a particularly rewarding study because of the rich archival sources preserved by the Sidney family over many generations—account books, estate papers, genealogical records, and a wealth of correspondence. Thus, even though she undertook no significant role in the religion, politics, or literary culture of her day, we have more documentation for her life than we have for many more renowned figures. Unlike her sister-in-law, Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, or her daughter Lady Mary Wroth, she did not circulate poems in manuscript, and she never appeared in print. She did not think of herself as a writer,
to our knowledge, and her side of her extensive correspondence with her husband Robert Sidney, first Earl of Leicester, has been lost—while she saved at least 332 letters that he wrote to her. We know that she wrote approximately as often as he did, since he so frequently refers to her letters. We also have the lively and detailed letters of Robert Sidney’s trusted friend and agent Rowland Whyte, who sent Sidney extensive reports on family and court matters while Sidney was in the Netherlands on Queen Elizabeth’s service; Whyte undoubtedly wrote additional letters, but his surviving letters to Robert (dating from September 1595 through December 1602) fill two volumes. Whyte, Robert’s friend as much as servant, accompanied him to university and on his European travels, and he often cared for Robert’s family when he was away. For example, his letters give vivid reports of a family epidemic of the measles in autumn 1595 when Barbara was in the final month of pregnancy. Eventually Barbara came down with the measles herself, then went into labor, and finally delivered a son, “a goodly fat boy, but as full of the measles in the face as can be,” as Whyte reported. (Little Robert thrived, eventually succeeding his father as the second Earl of Leicester.) Yet we know that Whyte’s correspondence, which sometimes presents Barbara’s viewpoint, does not constitute her missing replies, because Whyte also mentions letters from Barbara. And, although Wroth sometimes takes her mother’s part in letters to her father, Wroth also mentions Barbara’s own letters. From this surviving family correspondence we can reconstruct the four major topics of Barbara’s missing letters: family, Penshurst, the court, and finances. She wrote most often of her family—her affection for her husband, her desire to be with him, and her concern for his health and safety; her pregnancies, childbirth, and the christenings of their eleven children; household moves from Penshurst to London or to join Robert in the Netherlands; the health, education and marriages of their children; and later visits from their grandchildren. She wrote often of the administration of Penshurst, including building projects, the gardens, problems with servants. She wrote of their court connections, both their entertainment of aristocratic family and friends, and her visits to court to obtain his leave to come home from Flushing. She also wrote frequently about their problematic finances.
So how did her letters disappear? The most frequent explanations for the missing letters have been either that Barbara was illiterate and did not write on her own behalf, or that she was nearly illiterate, and therefore her husband was too ashamed of her letters to keep them. However, he (or later generations) also lost or discarded letters from other women in the family, including his learned and eloquent sister the Countess of Pembroke. So neither of those explanations seems to fit the facts that we have, although we do not have nearly as many facts about Barbara Gamage’s early life as we would like. We do not know how she was educated, how much of her early life was spent in Wales, if she ever visited the English court in her youth, or even if she spoke English with a Welsh accent. Daughter and sole legitimate heir of John Gamage of Coity Castle in Glamorganshire and his wife Gwenllian (daughter of Sir Thomas ap Jenkin Powell of Glynogwr), Barbara Gamage came from a cultured and literate Welsh family. Gamage sons were sent to university, her father was celebrated for his activity in promoting Welsh poetry, and famous bards such as Tomas ab Ieuan ap Rhys sang at her home. Women in her family apparently were educated, as well. For example, John Gamage wrote to his wife in 1576 asking her to keep his doings secret, so she presumably was able to read the letter herself rather than have it read to her.

Barbara was apparently bilingual in Welsh and English, and she may well have been fully literate in both languages, although we now suspect that she read English well but did not write it easily, like many Welsh (and English) gentlewomen of her generation. She obviously read letters herself, since Robert sent her an open letter to deliver after she had read it (Letter 82), and, like Barbara’s father, he wrote to his wife about matters that he asked her not to share with anyone (167). Furthermore, Robert’s letters are sometimes intimate enough that it is difficult to imagine them read aloud by a third party. As Ralph Houlbrooke argues, literacy brought a change in tone of letters between husband and wife, allowing them to be “much freer and more intimate,” as “the composition of letters became a more personal and private matter.”

Barbara’s ability to read her husband’s letters would not necessarily imply the ability to respond without the aid of a secretary, because reading was usually taught separately from writing. She must have had an accept-
able hand, however, for Robert told her to write to her cousin the Lord Admiral and promised to “set down what you shall say to him” (84). That is, in this sensitive political matter, he would compose her letter, but she should send it in her own hand. As James Daybell notes, business correspondence could be handled by a secretary, but correspondence between relatives or close friends was expected to be in one’s own hand.12 Robert, as we shall see, also expected her to correspond with Hugh Sanford, the Earl of Pembroke’s secretary, about the dowry for their daughter Mary; she may have employed a secretary to correspond with a secretary, although since these marriage negotiations were a family matter the etiquette was more ambiguous (141). She did use a secretary for routine business matters, as was normative for aristocratic men and women.13 One surviving letter written in a fluent mixed Italian hand is apparently a scribal copy, since that signature does not match her other signatures.14

Assumptions that she was nearly illiterate are based primarily on four pieces of evidence. First there are her awkward signatures, even more awkward after her husband was made Viscount L’Isle and she wrote “B. LiSle” instead of her earlier signature “Bar: Sydney”; her later signature uses the capital “S” in the middle and is printed in a large, scrawling italic hand that does indeed look more drawn than written, as Peter Croft observes.15 (It is not impossible that she had originally learned a different script, since the italic hand taught by humanists did not become a mark of social class in England until the late sixteenth century.)16 Second, no literary works by her are extant or referred to by her contemporaries. Third, her daughter Mary Wroth’s Urania, in shadowing her as the Queen of Morea, includes her in none of the literary exchanges that constitute so much of that work. Finally, Mr. Bird, the children’s tutor, retorted to her attempts to control him by blaming her “want of education,” as Whyte reported.17 But Bird’s reproaches might not indicate that she was illiterate. Rather, he was attempting to establish that he was more educated than she—and therefore she had no right to challenge him. The difficult Mr. Bird, who was constantly angling to gain control over the household, later so enraged his pupil William Sidney that Will stabbed him with his penknife in August 1605. (This indiscretion cost young Will his position at court with Prince Henry.) Robert advised Barbara to keep Bird on after that incident for a
few months, but they dismissed him as soon as they could (152). Clearly, Bird was a biased observer whose description of her “want of education” cannot be taken at face value. Thus, although no surviving evidence suggests that she had the humanist education of her husband’s learned sisters, who were taught rhetorical skills in English, French, Italian, and Latin, there is no necessity for concluding that she was entirely unschooled.

Barbara Gamage first enters written records at her father’s death on 8 September 1584, when she became the most sought-after heiress in Britain. She had recently come of age, but her powerful cousins struggled to control her marriage and therefore her large inheritance. (She was considered her father’s sole heir, although John Gamage had apparently considered leaving his estate to his illegitimate sons.) Her cousin Sir Edward Stradling immediately brought her to his home of St. Donats Castle in Glamorganshire, and he took possession of nearby Coity Castle in her name. Her inheritance, probably more than her own beauty and gentle charm, prompted three other cousins to vie for her hand—Thomas Jones of Abermarlis, Sir James Whitney of Whitney, and Herbert Croft of Croft Castle, who was favored by Queen Elizabeth. Another cousin, Sir Walter Ralegh, was incensed that Stradling had ignored three letters from the queen commanding “that you suffer not my kinswoman to be bought and sold in Wales” without Elizabeth’s permission or “the consent or advice” of Ralegh himself and that of yet another powerful cousin at court, Charles Howard, Lord High Admiral. Clearly, Barbara Gamage’s various male relatives seem more concerned with finances (she is “bought and sold”) than with her happiness. Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, head of the powerful Herbert family in Wales and England, supported another candidate, his young brother-in-law, Sir Robert Sidney. Even though Sir Francis Walsingham had written on behalf of the queen ordering Stradling to bring Barbara to the court and forbidding her to contract a marriage, Walsingham later said that he was delighted to hear that Stradling instead favored young Sidney. (Walsingham also had a stake in this outcome, since Walsingham’s daughter Frances had married Robert’s elder brother Sir Philip Sidney the previous September.) Conveniently, the letter from the queen ordering Stradling to bring Barbara to court before her marriage arrived two hours after her wedding to Robert Sidney at St. Donats on 23
September 1584, in the presence of the Earl of Pembroke, Stradling, and other family members. Such a dramatic coincidence must have been carefully arranged, but the stratagem worked. Walsingham assured Stradling, “there is no fault laid upon you by her Majesty; the marriage being generally well liked of.” Robert Sidney’s aunt Anne Russell Dudley, Countess of Warwick, seems to be the only relative who wrote with concern for the happiness of the young couple, thanking Stradling for “the great favour . . . showed my nephew Sidney, by whose free consent and furtherance that match was so well made up, which I hope shall be very happy to them both.” We have no record of Barbara’s own feelings about her marriage, but the couple may have been acquainted, and the marriage may well have been by her consent as well. Certainly the enduring affection expressed in their letters indicates that it was (or quickly became) a love match. Nonetheless, finances were not forgotten. There were the usual legal delays in processing Barbara’s inheritance, but on 6 February 1585 an indenture was drawn up granting Barbara and Robert Sidney the lands of her father, which subsequently provided nearly half of their income.

Barbara became a loving wife and mother, and she was also a competent manager. She was certainly well trained, as were the Sidney girls, in household administration, hospitality, and family medicine, but she may not have learned some social skills common to English aristocratic women—needlework, lute playing, court dancing, and archery. We have no evidence Barbara was trained in these areas. No needlework by her survives, for example, nor are there contemporary allusions to her skill to match those of her sister-in-law the Countess of Pembroke. With her Welsh background it is likely that she did share her husband’s love of music; in Wroth’s *Urania* their avatars the King and Queen of Morea, are depicted enjoying a family concert.

Barbara’s correspondence is her only form of written composition mentioned by her contemporaries. Although she composed other family and business letters, the letters she wrote to her husband were by far her most sustained epistolary effort. Even though her side of the correspondence has been lost, we have her husband’s replies and the reports of Robert’s other correspondents, particularly his trusted henchman Whyte. So, what can we deduce about her hundreds of missing letters? We can
first of all assume that her letters were as affectionate as the ones she received. Did she call him “sweetheart,” as he called her, or some other endearment? Perhaps “my dearest heart” as her daughter-in-law Dorothy Percy Sidney, Countess of Leicester, called her husband? Or “My true love” or “My dearest joy,” as Sir Edward Dering called his wife? She obviously wrote to say how much she missed him, for he frequently mentioned her loving words in his reply, as when he said that he would be home as soon as he could, for “I do no less long to see you than you say you do to see me” (188).

What was her writing style? Here we can make some informed guesses, for she probably used the unadorned plain style that was fashionable for familiar correspondence and that was used by her husband. Robert makes no learned jests or classical allusions, displaying none of the learning so evident in his Commonplace Books. Nor does he discuss his reading with her, employ clever word play, or refer to his own poetry. Perhaps those elements were saved for his (now lost) frequent correspondence with his witty and learned sister. Rather, he wrote to his wife in a plain style, focusing primarily on family and personal matters, including occasional court news or gossip. We are probably safe in assuming that is her epistolary style as well. Like her husband, she no doubt supplied a formal inscription on the outside, but used all available writing surface inside, including frequent postscripts written in the left margin. Even if her hand was relatively unpracticed it is unlikely to have been more difficult to read than Robert’s notoriously bad hand, particularly in his later years. (His deteriorating handwriting could be partially attributed to the aging process, either failing eyesight or perhaps an arthritic hand.) Her letters, like her husband’s, would have been sealed with the Sidney pheon, unless she decided (like her daughter Mary Wroth) to retain her own family crest—in Barbara’s case, the Gamage griffin.

And what did she write about? The major themes of her letters, as we might expect, deal with the overlapping spheres of family matters, administration of their estate at Penshurst, court connections, and finances. But another overarching theme is what Gary Schneider has recently termed “epistolary continuity,” which was “perhaps the ‘master theme’ of epistolary communication” in the early modern period. Barbara asked Robert to
write more often, for he sends a letter “lest you chide me for not writing” (128). But he also complained when he did not receive letters regularly from her, on one occasion looking frantically first at Windsor and then at London, “But have not found any word from you,” and on another occasion he said, “I know the wind is the cause, else I should have heard from you how you do. . . . I do long to hear how you and your children do” (145, 86). Sometimes letters arrived in clusters, as when Robert said “the 18th I received 3 letters from you,” and a week later he thanked her for more “kind letters” (121, 122).

Like her husband, she normally used three common strategies for ensuring that no letters had been lost—dating them, telling him which bearer brought them, and, whenever she was not home at Penshurst, giving her location so that the recipient could ascertain how long the letters should take to arrive. For example, on 19 August 1612 Sidney wrote to her from Flushing, saying, “This day at noon Besbedg came hither, having been in much danger at sea. He brought me your letter of the 9 of this month, at the writing whereof you had not received mine by your coachman. Since my landing I have written twice unto you, but the winds have been so contrary, as the last letters were sent by land” (230). This passage establishes that she dated her letters (“your letter of the 9 of this month”), that he had written to her by their coachman, and that his letters were normally sent directly by ship, but on this occasion had to travel overland first because of weather. So, like her husband, Barbara would normally acknowledge each letter by date and/or carrier, strategies that were developed in the sixteenth century to cope with the unreliability of postal service.

Like other correspondents, they were loath to pass up an opportunity to have a letter carried, even if there was little to say. For example, on 9 November 1612, Sidney said, “I will not let this bearer, Ensign Watkins, come unto you without a letter, although I sent unto you this day by your son’s man” (239). Sometimes the bearer could be completely trusted, as when he sent her letters by their daughter Mary Wroth, but sometimes the bearer was unreliable and letters did not arrive in a timely fashion.

Family matters are the most important topic of her letters. The frequent messages carried between Barbara and Robert testified to their affection. She frequently reproached her husband for being away so long—and
sometimes for “breaking faith with her” when he postponed, often repeatedly, his arrival at Penshurst. Robert’s duties as Governor of the English garrison town of Flushing in the Netherlands and later as chamberlain to Queen Anne meant that his time was not his own. “Let not my stay make you think unkindness in me,” he said time and again (15). Or, when she had obviously told him how much she missed him, he replied, “I take it very kindly that you esteem it so great a contentment to be still with me. I esteem it no whit less to have your company but such is the course of my life as I cannot tie myself to mine own home always . . . . I trust we shall one day live more together than hitherto we have done” (27). Throughout their thirty-seven years of marriage he continually assured her, “I do long to see you” (65, 133, 263, etc.), but they rarely lived together continuously for more than a few months at a time. Millicent Hay calculated that during his fourteen years of service under Queen Elizabeth (1589–1603) he was in England more than he was in Flushing, so he did not spend enough time at his post to please the queen or enough time at home to please his wife.\(^{29}\) When he later served as Lord Chamberlain to Queen Anne (1604–19), those duties also frequently kept him apart from his family.

Barbara longed to go with him when he returned to his duties in Flushing, but it was not always possible, given her frequent pregnancies. On 19 May 1594, for example, he wrote from the court at Greenwich, “I am exceeding sorry that I cannot have your company. If you were not as you are I would put you to the trouble to come to me: but considering how near your time you are I would not do it for anything” (42). She wrote repeatedly to say how unhappy she was that they were separated. In answer to one such letter he expressed his relief that she was safely at home: “I thank you for the desire you have to be with me . . . . I must and do love you the more for it: and am as sorry to want your company as you are. But every hour more and more I see reason to be glad that I took you not over with me. For this town is full of the bloody flux, and many die of it” (100).\(^{30}\)

Her unhappiness with his frequent and prolonged absence was part of a larger cultural pattern among the upper classes throughout Britain and Europe. As Lena Cowan Orlin observes, during this period there was an inherent conflict in household roles as men’s work changed, taking
them more often from home.31 Barbara’s father, despite occasional trips to London, no doubt lived primarily at home, undertaking his duties as Lord of Coity and overseeing the lands that constituted his wealth. Her husband, in contrast, was an administrator in the government bureaucracy who was called away from Penshurst for months or even years at a time. Under Queen Elizabeth he had little say in his deployment, and his repeated efforts to find a position in England came to naught until James came to the throne.

While he was gone, Barbara worried about his health and safety, as he did hers. Once she evidently wrote in alarm about hearing of a minor injury, and he had considerable trouble convincing her that he was not seriously hurt, saying, “You do me wrong not to believe me. For I assure you of my word and faith that I have no bone either broken or out of joint, nor other hurt but I am somewhat black and blue about my right eye, and my right hand a little wrenched which made perhaps some alteration in my writing” (77). Because she worried so, he avoided mentioning his role in various military campaigns that he undertook in the Netherlands with Prince Maurice of Nassau.32 When he was much older and ill at Hampton Court she told him that she was on her way to take care of him, for he replied that he was sorry the news of his slight indisposition “made you think of so troublesome a journey as to come to see me. . . . Believe it, sweetheart, that if I had been ill indeed I would have sent for you” (295). Although he protests that he did not want her to fuss like that, he told Sir John Harington on another occasion, “My wife hath been my doctor, my nurse, my friend, and my sovereign cure.”33 Their correspondence also discussed the various illnesses of their many children, her cold, their son Will’s melancholy in one case, and her own melancholy in another.

Births are a major topic in Barbara’s letters, since she had eleven children. It seems that nearly every time Robert returned to Penshurst Barbara became pregnant, so Jonson seems to have been quite right about both her chastity and her fruitfulness. Barbara added intimate postscripts alluding to her suspicion that she might again be pregnant. For example, Robert thanks her “for the news you write me in the postscript of your letter,” saying “I pray God to give us joy of it” (35). His replies also indicate that she wrote about her coming confinements, asking for his prayers—and,
we may deduce from his protestations, expressing her understandable frustration each time he was not home for the birth. For example, he wrote from Flushing in February 1597 before the birth of their daughter Bridget, “About this time according to your reckoning, you wrote unto me, you should be brought to bed. I send this bearer therefore over to see you from me and to let you know, that since I cannot be by you in your pains, yet that I will heartily pray to God for you, and with great earnestness expect the good news of your delivery” (116). She wrote to ask his opinion on who should stand as godparents for each child, and she expressed her own. Here family responsibilities shaded into political actions, for each christening offered the chance to solidify relationships with those chosen as godparents, and their list included some of the most important figures at court, particularly the Essex circle. The etiquette of such requests demanded an autograph letter, preferably hand delivered. At her request Robert wrote a letter asking Bridget Morison Radcliffe, Countess of Sussex, to be a godmother, telling Barbara, “And if she be in London I would you did deliver it yourself” (131). This might imply that Barbara was uncomfortable writing such formal letters to those above her in the social hierarchy, but it might also imply that Sidney would be the more effective supplicant, since the Countess of Sussex was his cousin. Similarly, Robert asked Barbara to write to her cousin the Lord Admiral, as we have seen, rather than simply writing himself.

Her moves are another major topic of discussion in her letters, for they took her between the spheres of Penshurst, Flushing, and the court, and she had full responsibility for supervision of the servants who were packing and moving her family’s clothing, bedding, and even furniture. On one occasion, so as not to insult her cousin the Lord Admiral, she had the logistical problem of having the three oldest children embark in a ship from one port and the four youngest leave simultaneously in a ship from another port. Although they discussed the pros and cons of each move in detail, Robert usually concluded, “do what you shall think best yourself . . . and I shall be best contented” (79).

Educating their large family was a subject of much concern in their letters. Robert and Barbara occasionally disagreed on how the children should be raised. He wanted the children to be sent away to a great house
to be educated and to make connections that would be useful to them at court; she wanted to keep the children home with her. Robert was most concerned that young William was still with the nursemaids when he was nearly seven; instead, he should have been studying Latin with a tutor. Robert was also adamant that she should leave the three older children at home when she went to join him at Flushing in 1597, both because of the “bad air” and because in Flushing “they cannot learn, what they may do in other places” (126). He wanted Mary (aged 9) and Kate (nearly 8) to remain in England at the homes of his Dudley aunts (Katherine Dudley Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, and Anne Russell Dudley, Countess of Warwick), and Will at the home of Sir Charles Morison. He knew that Barbara would object to leaving them, “but you must remember, I have part in them, as well as you, and therefore must have care of them.” And, to induce her to obey, he was not above threatening her. The air was too dangerous for their health, he said, “and truly if you do bring them over, if anything happen amiss to any of them, you shall hereafter not have your will more in it.” It was enough to terrify any mother, and Whyte let Robert know the distress that his commands were causing his family, saying that young Mary “every time she thinks of it doth fall aweeping, and my Lady when she perceives it doth bear her company.”

Robert said he did not question Barbara’s love as a mother, but feared her “too much fondness” (126). All through April Robert wrote to have her leave the children. First he gave way on the girls, saying, “For the girls, I cannot mislike the care you take of them: but for the boys, you must resolve to let me have my will. For I know better what belongs to a man than you do” (127). But the Countess of Huntingdon pleaded her large debt and said she could not take the children, and Barbara said she could not think where to leave them, so in the end Robert had little choice but to let them all come to Flushing. Robert could command, cajole, or even plead, but in his absence he could not force Barbara to make choices that might be good for their children’s future but would take them from her. This difference in the Sidneys’ approach to childrearing continues throughout the correspondence, even years later when their sons were enrolled at Oxford but preferred to spend their time at Penshurst or with their newly-married sister Mary Wroth at Durrance or Loughton.
Educating their large family required a significant outlay of funds not only for tutors, but also for the boys’ college and European Grand Tour, and for the high cost of maintaining his daughters at court—Mary, Philippa, and then Barbara. (Katherine married quite young and does not seem to have been at court.) Will (and after his death young Robert) would inherit the estate, but Robert and Barbara had to finance marriage portions generous enough to allow all four surviving daughters to marry into wealthy families. The total amount of the dowries ran to some 14,000 pounds, but, because of Robert’s complex borrowing and reborrowing with high rates of interest, they actually cost him far more than that amount.35

As their daughters grew up, Barbara was deeply involved in marriage negotiations for them, including dealing with Sanford, secretary to William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, for his contribution to Mary’s dowry, and later working with Mary Wroth to arrange the marriage of the youngest child, Barbara, to one of their neighbors from the extremely wealthy Smythe family—the family that founded the East India Company.36 Robert seemed to take it as a matter of course that Barbara would handle correspondence about the marriages, as this was often the mother’s role.37 Just after young Mary Sidney’s wedding to Robert Wroth, Barbara added a “word of grief” at the end of a letter, and Robert tried to figure out what it was (150). Perhaps Barbara had told him that their daughter Mary was already unhappy with her marriage. In later years Barbara told him about the visits of their grandchildren, and then the death of their daughter Katherine Maunsell’s baby. She also wrote of her sorrow at the death of their son William of smallpox and then of their daughter Philippa Hobart in childbirth; Philippa was the eighth of their eleven children to predecease them. Robert replied, “My heart is too full of grief to use many words, especially since your grief must be as much as mine . . . . But God’s will be done: and I beseech him that while I live, yourself and those few that be left unto us may be spared” (306).38

After the family, the second major topic of Barbara’s letters was Penshurst. Running the estate at Penshurst was essentially running a small corporation, and despite the presence of a steward and other household officers, in Robert’s absence Barbara had primary responsibility for personnel decisions, purchases, contracts, and construction. Robert frequently sent
Barbara instructions for various household officials, but he also corresponded regularly with these employees. Barbara must have begged him not to make financial decisions with them without consulting her, for he promised that “these business in my absence I must commit unto you: neither indeed will I have anything hereafter dealt in without your knowledge” (104).

Her authority at Penshurst was challenged by some of the upper servants, and she frequently had to appeal for Robert’s approval of her actions. She fired a saucy cook and a servant who seduced the housekeeper’s daughter, and complained about her troubles with the steward Thomas Golding and particularly with his wife, who treated her with disrespect. Disputes between aristocratic husbands and wives often involved the household officers and upper servants, as Alice Friedman notes, for frequently “the mistress’s loss was the officers’ gain,” and, although relations between Robert and Barbara were normally affectionate, there was one occasion when Robert temporarily took Golding’s part against Barbara in a complex dispute involving the children’s governess “Mrs Lucretia,” who also helped Barbara with administrative tasks.39 Golding had accused Barbara and Lucretia of mismanagement, provoking a scathing letter from Robert that “more grieved her than ever I knew her in my life at anything, and indeed the least unkind word that you send, is to her soul a torment,” Whyte reported. “Only for looking to your profit, she is forced to countenance a man whom she fears will never serve her until he might govern all things at his own will, and [for his] own good.” Barbara was certain that Lucretia had “great wrong done unto her;” and said that without the governess she did not know “how to keep house, or to have her children well governed or taught to work.”40 Because Whyte took the women’s part—and Robert believed him when he had not believed Barbara—Whyte could later report, “My Lady is very well and was much comforted in the kind letter you sent her last of the 21 of April.”41 Unfortunately, we do not have that “kind letter,” or indeed any letters from Robert to Barbara during this period. Perhaps his rebukes were so painful to her that she did not wish to retain any record of the incident.

Robert’s solution for household management was hiring a superior steward. He knew that it was a delicate matter, for Barbara needed to have help supervising the large staff of servants without undercutting her own
authority: “Neither is it any way my meaning to take any authority of the
house from you, but all things shall still be commanded by you” (187). Her
replies explaining her view of household management would be invaluable,
had they survived, but we can surmise that she would have been humili-
ated if she did not retain final say over the steward.  

Another problem with a servant, in this case a man named Rice who
seduced the housekeeper’s daughter, is worth noting because it has been
misread as a reference to Wroth’s natural son, named William Herbert
after his father. Robert says, “I wrote . . . what my will is touching Rice, and
did write the more earnestly because you may see how I do take the mat-
ter: not but I know you are careful to do that which is fit and for my honor
and contentment, for so I understand from my daughter and others, and
therefore I will not say any more of it” (255). Six days later he wrote again
about the same incident, “You have done very well in putting Rice away: for
it had been too great a shame he should have stayed in the house . . . and as
for the housekeeper and his wife, I do not see wherein they should offend
if it were not in making their child too wanton” (256). Wroth’s only part
in this incident is justifying her mother’s dismissal of Rice. The confusion
about the natural child arose because the Historical Manuscript Commission
Report on the Manuscripts of De L’Isle and Dudley omitted the first of these
letters and much of the second, and then mistranscribed “Rice” as “Will.”
(Wroth’s natural children, Katherine and William Herbert, were appar-
ently born after Barbara’s death in 1621).

Barbara’s letters also included reports on their building projects. Some of them were relatively small, such as the dovecote and the rabbit
warren, but she also supervised the building of the stables, the outer wall,
and the long gallery. Robert saw supervising builders as part of housewif-
ery: “I need not send to know how my buildings go forwards. For I am
sure you are so good a housewife as you may be put in trust with them”
(44). She reported on plumbing problems and discussed the selling of
timber, arranged to have cattle put in the more luxuriant pasture at Otford,
and supervised the stables and the dispatch of horses and coaches from
Penshurst to London or Flushing. The gardens at Penshurst were her par-
ticular care, and their abundant fruit gave opportunities for the gift-giving
that was such an important part of court life.
She was also, we might say, the procurement officer. Robert’s letters frequently mention her requests that he send her from Flushing such items as Rhenish wine, blankets, coats for the children, decorative borders for her gowns, medicines, and a new bed for her lying in. She liked the bed he sent, but the chair and cushions were of inferior quality, as he admitted: “I trust you like the bed I sent you, though I think you do not so well like of the chairs and cushions: and indeed I would they had been somewhat better trimmed” (181). She sent foodstuffs from Penshurst to be distributed at court when he was there. The letters are full of references to her peaches—sent in a greater quantity, he said, than he had friends to give them—as well as her apricots, cherries, plums, and deer from the estate, that were sent to be distributed as gifts to important friends who might favor his suits. When he was abroad, he sent gifts like “12 boar pies unto you, and a piece of hangings for my Lord Rich, and hawks for Sir Ha. Leigh,” which she was to distribute accordingly (89). In addition to sending fruit, she was also asked to send trees, as when her daughter Katherine wanted some sent to Wales as a gift for her father-in-law. Gift-giving also extended to purchases. Most of these were handled by Whyte and other agents, but on occasion Barbara herself was responsible, as when she had gloves made for Queen Anne by the queen’s own glove maker, Shepharde (145).

The third major topic in the correspondence was their court connections, particularly their entertainment of aristocratic family and friends, and their efforts at court to secure Robert’s leave and the estate of Otford. Their primary social group was the titled aristocracy, even long before Robert became Earl of Leicester in 1618. When Barbara was in Flushing in the 1590s she lived in the magnificent Princen Huys, or Prince’s House, as Roger Kuin has established. There she became friends with Louise de Coligne, Princess of Orange, who served as godmother to their first son, named William in honor of her assassinated husband, William of Orange. When Barbara was in England, she visited with friends and family members, including her sisters-in-law: Mary Sidney Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, at Wilton, Ivychurch, and Baynards Castle in London; Frances Walsingham Sidney (then Countess of Essex) and her mother at the Walsingham home of Barn Elms, or in London at Essex house. Later Barbara was most often host to a distinguished group who loved to come...
to Penshurst, especially in summer: her nephews William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery; her niece Elizabeth Sidney Manners, Countess of Rutland; her daughter Mary Wroth’s dear friend Susan de Vere Herbert, Countess of Montgomery; and Susan’s sisters, Elizabeth de Vere Stanley, Countess of Derby, and Bridget de Vere, Lady Norris (later Countess of Berkshire). Her daughter-in-law Dorothy Percy Sidney, and Dorothy’s sister Lucy Percy Hay, Countess of Carlisle, were frequently at Penshurst, and Dorothy also hosted Barbara at Syon house, home of the Percys, Earls of Northumberland. Lady Anne Clifford, then Countess of Dorset, lived nearby at Knole, and recorded one of her visits in her diary, as well as her disappointment on a previous occasion when her husband would not permit her to accompany him to Penshurst.44 Barbara told Robert about these visits with various friends and relatives, sent on his letters to them and added some of her own. Corresponding with a wide circle of female friends and relatives would have been normative for a woman of her social class in Britain and Europe.45

Family letters and visits shaded into business, for Barbara repeatedly went to court to intercede for Robert’s leave to come home from Flushing, using her contacts not only with her uncle the Lord Admiral but also with the women in the family—most importantly Robert’s sister the Countess of Pembroke, his brother’s widow Frances Walsingham, then Countess of Essex, and his formidable aunts the Countesses of Huntington and Warwick. For example, Robert asked her in 1596, “When the Queen comes to Whitehall, I pray solicit my leave to come over” (103). She was there again in November 1599 “with her great belly,” to enlist the help of his aunts to intercede with the queen for his return.46 Barbara wanted Robert at home, and when his leave was repeatedly denied or postponed, she took it very hard, as Rowland Whyte’s letters indicate. For example, in June of 1600, while Barbara was visiting the Countess of Pembroke at Baynard’s Castle and the sisters-in-law were working together with other friends and relatives for Robert’s leave, Whyte reported, “My Lady was for 2 days very ill . . . which I fear me proceeded from a grief she took that after many assured promises made unto her by her honourable friends in Court for your leave to return. She found but uncertain fruit of it, much blaming their unkind and slack dealing with her in it. But they all assure her and
me that the Queen will grant it ere it be long but that they think it not fit to trouble her too often about it." We can easily picture a tense family encounter when Barbara accused her sister-in-law of negligence, while Mary Sidney tried to explain the realities of court politics.

On another occasion when Barbara finally did obtain Robert’s leave, Whyte reported that she had kept the queen’s original letter safe for him and sent him a copy. She never did become reconciled to his long absences, writing to beg him to apply for leave to come home again as soon as he arrived in Flushing. We might have a little sympathy for Robert, caught between the constant demands of his wife that he come home at once and the demands of his queen that he remain in Flushing, which he called “the grave of my youth and I fear of my fortune.”

Nevertheless, Barbara and Robert remained an effective team. The other matter in which he most often sought her intercession at court was obtaining the estate of Otford. In January of 1600, after some fifteen years of attempts to obtain that estate, the promise was made that if Lady Sidney “did come to court in the absence of her husband and deliver unto the Queen a petition [about Otford]” then the Countess of Pembroke would bring her to the queen. Barbara accordingly took the advice of their Dudley aunts as to the type of present and the time to give it, to induce the queen to hear their suit for Otford. They eventually did obtain that estate and, in later years, leased it to Rowland Whyte.

The fourth major theme of her correspondence, an undercurrent in discussions of family matters, Penshurst, and court connections, is money. From Robert’s apologies we can deduce that she repeatedly asked for her household allowance, and he had to reply that he was too short of cash to send it just then. She also worried about the portion of the household money that was held up by the escapades of the corrupt Treasurer at War, Thomas Sherley (81). (Some of Robert’s pay went directly to Barbara for the household.) Pawning plate seems to have been their standard way of handling a cash flow problem. For example, he wrote in the midst of a particularly acute financial crisis that if worse comes to worst, “you have plate yet left in the house, and I do not love my plate so well as I love my wife” (121). He frequently apologized for his lack of money, as when he said in 1609 that she had to be content without “many things which are fit
for you,” but he promised, “as soon as I can bring my estate into any good order, I will set you out such an allowance as shall befit my wife, whom I love so well” (187).

The Sidneys were cash poor, but they lived richly. Performing nobility, as Kari McBride notes, was a form of theatre requiring a proper set, costumes, and supporting actors. The Sidneys spent lavishly in all three areas. The set was the country house, the estate that the nobility built or enlarged to attract a visit by the monarch. Largely for this purpose the Sidneys built the long gallery, new stables, and garden walls at Penshurst. Their steward Thomas Golding dissuaded Robert from enlarging the deer park, since the Sidneys needed the rent from that land, and the 400 deer the park could already support “will afford hunting sufficient for your honourable friends whenever they shall spend part of the season here.”

Robert told Barbara that she spent far too much on housekeeping, and they absolutely must live within their means. She told him that he spent far too much on his clothes and on his travels. For example, his sheepish replies demonstrate that she had accused him of extravagance when he borrowed 1,000 pounds from the Earl of Essex for a sable cloak and other outfits for his embassy to the king of France (22–24). Robert defended this daunting sum as a necessary investment in his career, believing that the splendor of his dress and retinue would reflect glory on Elizabeth, and that she would therefore be more likely to favor him. He knew what magnificence was, for his father Sir Henry Sidney had lived as Viceroy in his positions as Lord President of both Ireland and Wales. During Robert’s youthful travel in Europe, his father had promised that he would give him “such a suit of apparel, as shall befit your father’s son to wear, in any court in Germany.” (This was at a time when the court at Dresden was renowned for its clothing, armor, and goldsmiths.) Such extravagant display had become almost a form of gambling, as courtiers wagered vast sums that they would be rewarded at court. Again and again Barbara questioned the necessity for such enormous investments, which he promised would be a step toward a higher position under the queen. Her skepticism was justified, for he never did recoup those expenses or gain Elizabeth’s favor, and to pay the debt for his French embassy he eventually sold some of Barbara’s lands in Wales.
In later years, when he had gained the favor of King James and served as Lord Chamberlain to Queen Anne, Robert averaged some 400 pounds per year for his ordinary clothes, buying annually sixteen suits, not including larger sums for furs and jewels. He spent far more on clothing than did his wife, who, according to Whyte, spent comparatively little on herself and did not even have a suitable gown for court, for “she bestows it [all] upon her little ones.” Dressing the part of the successful courtier was becoming less important, however. As Lisa Celovsky has demonstrated, when the ideal of magnificence was replaced by the masculine ideal of the obedient courtier, such display came to be seen as imprudence.

Equally extravagant was the supporting cast. In any position where he had two servants, his estate agent Thomas Nevitt told him, one would have done. Robert frequently blamed Barbara for keeping an extravagant household and, as we have seen, there was some truth to his reproaches, but most of that expense was for hospitality. The Sidneys entertained on a scale more appropriate to their wealthy visitors than to their own estate. Robert’s clear vision of his place in society and consequently how his household should be run is set forth in his discussion of hiring a proper steward: “[The steward of a man’s house of my quality must both have the spirit and knowledge to command, and experience of all things that belongs to a house, both within doors and without . . . . Besides, he must know how to give entertainment to strangers, according to their quality, which is not easily found in one that is not bred where such courses are used” (187).

So it was not that Robert wanted to live less splendidly; he simply wanted to spend less. He knew how a noble house should be administered, but his models were beyond his means. His grandfather William Sidney had been chamberlain to King Edward, his father held court in castles in Dublin and Wales, and Robert himself was in charge of household arrangements for Queen Anne as her Lord Chamberlain. Barbara also knew well that hospitality meant treating company according to their rank. On one of the many occasions when Robert scolded her for spending too much money on the household, this time at their lodging in Baynards Castle, Whyte defended her, saying that they lived very simply except when their nephew William Lord Herbert was there. And “then is he respected as if
yourself were here, both for his diet and his chamber.” On another occasion when Robert had himself come home with company, he protested at the cost when he saw the bills. Yet he was continually urging her to “make much” of his sister, or his brother Thomas, or his niece Elizabeth Sidney Manners, Countess of Rutland, or later, Mary Wroth’s closest friend, Susan De Vere Herbert, Countess of Montgomery. On one occasion he told her that he thought the Earl of Pembroke, the Countess of Montgomery, and other distinguished company would be coming to Penshurst. Then on the next day he scolded her for too much preparation, saying, “The company which I see by your letter you look for doth not come at this time, and therefore you shall not need make any provisions and indeed if you did well mark my letter, I did write doubtfully of it” (158).

Ben Jonson (who may have served briefly as a tutor at Penshurst as Michael Brennan and Noel Kinnamon have recently argued), celebrated Barbara’s reputation as an exemplary hostess when he described an unexpected visit from King James when the family was absent:

what praise was heaped
On thy good lady then! who therein reaped
The just reward of her high housewifery:
To have her linen, plate, and all things nigh
When she was far; and not a room but dressed
As if it had expected such a guest!  

Jonson’s description of the linen, plate, and every room standing ready for unexpected guests, even the king, conjures up a massive amount of work—and expense.

Barbara, as heir of Coity, and Robert, as Lord Chamberlain to Queen Anne, certainly did know how to entertain royalty, but they did not have the resources to finance their lavish hospitality. On one occasion after Robert had given splendid entertainment to various dignitaries, Whyte admonished him “to remember that it is a happiness to be out of debt, and wisdom to spend no more than [one’s] fortune will bear.” Robert later advised Barbara, “But this we must at the last resolve: to keep such a house as we may, not as we would, and our friends must bear with us,
for we must not be undone” (187). It was good advice and, had they both been able to follow it, their financial situation would not have become so precarious. Yet their problems with debt were not unusual for their circle at court. According to Nevitt’s summary, their debt of some thirty-five hundred pounds was just a few hundred pounds over their annual income; those debts pale beside those of their nephew William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who, despite his vast estate, reputedly died some 80,000 pounds in debt.  

Except when she was constrained by the requirements of hospitality, Barbara apparently had a good head for finances and advised her husband on fiscal matters. For example, when Robert was confronted with a particularly difficult financial decision, he said, “I would to God my business had been such as I might have brought you thither myself. I thank you for your kind letter and the good advice you give me in it” (22). He often asked her to represent him in business dealings and law cases, as when he said, “My law causes will require some following which when James comes up, I pray you also have care of” (104). (His various lawsuits, primarily against young Robert Dudley over the estate of the Earl of Leicester, cost him at least 5,000 pounds.) And when he wanted to put Leigh Park in fine (a single large payment at the outset of the rental period), she convinced him that it would be more profitable to rent it (bringing in smaller and more regular payments) for he wrote that their servant James “tells me that your desire is that Leigh Park be rather set at rent than at fine: and mine opinion is so likewise, if I be not perhaps forced to make ready money. For it will be a good rent, and the sale of a little land will yield a greater sum” (54, 60). In 1612, he was eager for her to “come up” to meet him in London, adding, “I pray you make all the speed you can.” He asked her to hurry because he relied on her judgment and had “diverse business which I stay till your coming” (239). He repeatedly sought her counsel—and sometimes her signature, since many of Robert’s assets were originally hers, and he continued to refer to “your lands.” Early in their marriage he told her that he wanted to sell some of her Welsh lands to buy lands closer to Penshurst, but if these are the Welsh lands that Nevitt mentions as sold, the money was spent on his debts, so that her jointure lands were never replaced.
Some of her letters justified her own household expenses in answer to Robert’s rebukes. He scolded her, on one occasion, for running up a debt of 1,000 pounds for the household that they could ill afford, he said, since he had a debt of over 2,000 pounds in London. Besides, it was coming on Christmas, and that was a tremendous expense for one in his position. Apparently he perceived no irony whatever. He considered his court expenditures as unavoidable business expenses that demanded economies elsewhere, and he evidently still believed that Penshurst itself should be a source of income rather than an expense. But Barbara seems to have been worried about his spending habits, just as he was annoyed by hers, and no doubt her letters contained similar reproaches.

Most of their financial problems were caused by their desire to enact a noble life. Although Robert kept asking Barbara to “play the good housewife” and reduce household expenses, he decided to start collecting art, telling Barbara to take good care of the paintings he sent over, because “they have cost me a good deal of money . . . . I look for more out of Holland which I will send over with the Rhenish wine” (106). He also kept more than twenty horses at court, bought six new coaches, and spent large sums on his dogs. The Sidneys had a comfortable income, but not one that equalled Robert’s aspirations at court. In earlier days he attempted to keep up with his brother-in-law the Earl of Pembroke as well as the Earl of Essex, and later his constant companions were his nephews, the enormously wealthy Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. If such company were not a sufficient spur to magnificence, the construction at Knole was near enough to make enlarging the deer park and building a banqueting house seem like necessities, and he hired some of the workmen who had marbled the pillars at Knole. Robert simply could not afford the 2,000 pounds he spent annually to live at court, or the 500 pounds he spent on a costume for a single masque, or the 200 pounds just for diamond buttons. Looking at Nevitt’s accounts, one sees that Barbara’s household expenses were perhaps the least of their financial problems.

Reading only Robert’s letters home, one might deduce that the Sidneys lived in abject poverty, but other family documents paint a somewhat different picture. Letters from their agents, the Penshurst inventories, and Nevitt’s summary of his accounts demonstrate that although Robert
and Barbara were always in debt, they lived a cultured life full of books, music, and art. They owned elegant furnishings, tapestries, maps, and paintings purchased in Robert’s time on the Continent. The Penshurst library had some 5,000 books. They also set a sumptuous table for their noble friends, including many types of wine and spirits imported from the Continent, and their garden was famous for its beauty as well as its superior fruit. Their lives may have been haunted by debt in their attempt to keep up with their wealthier relatives, but they lived well. And Robert did attain, at long last, the title of Earl of Leicester, thereby equaling his sister and his nephews in rank if not in wealth.

When Jonson praises Barbara in “To Penshurst,” he commends not only “her high housewifery,” but also her role in educating her children in religion, and in exemplifying with her husband “the mysteries of manners, arms and arts.” It is largely because of her contributions that he concludes,

Now, Penshurst, they that will proportion thee
With other edifices, when they see
Those proud, ambitious heaps, and nothing else,
May say, their lords have built, but thy lord dwells.

For Jonson that word “dwells” evokes an idealized aristocracy living in harmony with nature and with all social classes. He focuses his praise on most of the same topics that comprise Barbara Sidney’s correspondence—her love for her husband, her education of their children, her administration of Penshurst, and her hospitality and court connections. However, unlike Barbara, he glosses over the finances that made life at Penshurst possible. We may not have Barbara’s letters, but we can deduce many of her comments from Robert’s replies and from Rowland Whyte’s reports, and we can reconstruct the outline of her daily life from estate records and from Penshurst itself. Visitors to Penshurst can still see the long gallery that was built under Barbara’s supervision. Looking at the stone Sidney porcupine and Gamage griffin that she had set into the exterior walls makes her seem very close, especially when one goes to the Solar and looks at her portrait with six of her children, and one with just her eldest, Lady Mary Wroth.
By examining the life of Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester, we can begin to understand what an achievement it was for an upper-class early modern woman to be praised for her “high housewifery.”

Notes


3. Rowland Whyte to Robert Sidney, 2 December 1595, De L’Isle and Dudley MSS U1475 C12/35. All manuscript references are to the De L’Isle and Dudley papers at the Centre for Kentish Studies, unless otherwise noted. De L’Isle and Dudley papers are quoted with the kind permission of Viscount De L’Isle, MBE DL. Whyte quotations are from Noel Kinnamon’s transcriptions for The Correspondence of Rowland Whyte and Robert Sidney, First Earl of Leicester, ed. Michael G. Brennan, Noel J. Kinnamon, and Margaret P. Hannay (in progress).


5. John Gamage’s death in London provides evidence that the Gamage family may have lived there for part of the year, as was becoming customary. Thomas Parry, A History of Welsh Literature, trans. H. Idris Bell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1955), 177.


9. I am grateful to William Griffith and Nia Powell for this information. David
Cressy, Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980) for largely statistical reasons uses the ability to sign one’s name as the marker of literacy, a position challenged by Margaret Spufford, Small Books and Pleasant Histories (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1982).

10. All quotations from Robert Sidney’s letters to his wife are from Domestic Politics and Family Absence: The Correspondence (1588–1621) of Robert Sidney, first Earl of Leicester, and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester, ed. Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon, and Michael G. Brennan (Aldershot, Hants and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005); references to this edition are parenthetic by letter number.


14. Barbara Gamage Sidney to John Stamer, 3 January 1597, Huntington Library MS S’T’T 1897. I am grateful to Germaine Warkentin for this reference.

15. Barbara Gamage Sidney’s signatures are found in U1475 C1/12; U1500 A13/3; and Cecil Papers 87/138. See also The Poems of Robert Sidney, ed. Peter J. Croft (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 74.


17. Whyte to Sidney, 24 January 1599/1600, U1475 C12/208.


25. Dorothy Percy Sidney, Countess of Leicester, to Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, 26 September [1636], C82/1. Quotation from Noel Kinnamon’s transcription


30. The “bloody flux” was dysentery, with bloody discharge from the bowels.


34. Whyte to Sidney, 4 April 1597, C12/80.

35. Thomas Nevitt, “Memorial,” BL MS Addl. 12066, ed. Gavin Alexander and Barbara Ravelhofer, CERES/Sidneiana, 3r, 6v, and 8v. This is Nevitt’s detailed summary of Robert Sidney’s finances, which Nevitt compiled to justify his stewardship.

36. There were several marriages between Sidneys and Smythes over at least three generations; five years after Barbara’s death in 1621 Robert Sidney, first Earl of Leicester, married a rich widow from that same family.


38. Barbara’s own grief is graphically portrayed in Wroth’s descriptions of the deaths of Parselius and Philistella in *Urania*. See *The Second Part of The Countess of Montgomery’s Urania*, 400–06.


40. Whyte to Sidney, 19 April 1600, C12/235.

41. Whyte to Sidney, 26 April 1600, C12/237, 250–51.

42. O’Day notes how Lettice Bagot was “humiliated” when her husband removed the management of the household from her and treated her “like a naughty child,” “Tudor and Stuart Women: Their Lives through Their Letters,” 135.

43. Roger Kuin, “As Durty a Waulk’ – The Govenour of Flushing and His Correspondence,” paper read at Sixteenth Century Studies Conference, Toronto, 28


47. Whyte to Sidney, 6 June 1600, C12/250.

48. Whyte to Sidney, 22 December 1595, C12/46.


51. Whyte to Sidney, 9 February [1599/1600], C12/211.


53. Cf. Whyte’s letter promising that “to Capt. Barker will I deliver your silver vessel which I unpawned. It cost 205 l,” 11 February 1597/8, C12/130.


58. Nevitt, “Memorial,” 2r, 3r.


60. Whyte to Sidney, 12 April 1600, C12/233.


63. Whyte to Sidney, 19 April 1600, C12/235.


66. Whyte to Sidney, 27 September 1600, C12/279.


68. Nevitt, Memorial,” 6r; see also Brennan, *Sidneys of Penshurst*, 120–21.
