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Orthography in the Correspondence of Lady  
Katherine Paston, 1603-1627

M.Phil (research) Thesis

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of the University of Glasgow for the degree of  
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## Abstract

The following thesis examines the spelling practices of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the correspondence of one woman, Lady Katherine Paston (1578-1629). The increased availability of printed texts in the sixteenth century saw the spread of standardised spellings where previous generations had relied on idiosyncratic pronunciation-based spelling systems, and the collection of letters written by and received by Lady Katherine Paston offers an excellent opportunity to compare the spelling practices in private correspondence in the early seventeenth century and the extent to which personal orthographic systems remained in use alongside standardised forms.

British Library Additional Manuscript 27447 contains the correspondence of the Paston family, including 48 letters in Lady Paston's own hand and a further 37 letters addressed to her. The letters received by Lady Paston are predominantly the work of male correspondents, many of whom would have received a high level of education and this allows a comparison between the spelling practices of male and female correspondents and the influence of education and the move towards a more standardised spelling system.

In addition to the comparison of male and female spelling habits, the inclusion of letters by Lady Paston's son and younger sister raise interesting questions about education and the possible influence of the personal spelling habits of others. While no letters between Lady Paston and her elder sister, Lady Abigail Mundeford, have been preserved, the surviving letters by Lady Mundeford have also been examined to offer a comparison of the orthographies of three sisters, and the extent to which they differ from one another.

I began by transcribing all of the letters in the collection (even though an edition of the *Correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston* was produced in 1941), and those by Lady Mundeford, before applying a questionnaire of frequently occurring words to each letter to produce an inventory of spellings for each individual. These questionnaires were used to produce tables of spellings in order to compare the spelling practices of the correspondents as well as highlight patterns and developments within the spelling habits of an individual.

By conducting a detailed analysis of the spellings employed by Lady Paston and her correspondents it has been possible provide an insight into the range of spellings available, the frequency with which forms were used and, in some cases, the gradual adoption of one form over another and ultimately to reconstruct the personal orthography of Lady Katherine Paston based upon her surviving letters. The reconstruction of Lady Paston's personal orthography in Chapter Four is based on the structure of modern spelling habits and the way in which Lady Paston's spelling system fits within a modern spelling structure.

By comparing the letters of Lady Paston and those of her sisters it revealed that each woman had their own distinctive spelling system despite the initial appearances that the spelling habits of the women were more erratic and idiosyncratic than the male correspondents. The spellings employed by the male correspondents show an awareness of the standardised forms, though these were used alongside non-standardised forms and some of the non-standardised spellings were gradually replaced by the standardised form.

The examination of the spelling habits of Lady Paston and her male and female correspondents showed that the individuals represented in this collection were clearly aware of the standardised spellings which were becoming more common in the early seventeenth century, with some writers adopting standardised forms over a number of years and some of the male writers displayed an almost completely modern spelling system, however, many of the correspondents continue to use non-standardised forms within their own personal spelling systems.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction: The Paston Letters

The Pastons are a well-known family in the history of the English language as a result of the collection of letters which has survived from the fifteenth-century. The fifteenth-century Paston letters, dating from the 1420s until the 1500s, have been extensively studied in terms of their historical content as well as the evidence they provide for the use of Middle English in private correspondence. The Pastons became a prominent Norfolk family in the early fifteenth-century, having benefitted from the social turmoil of the Black Death and surviving letters bear witness to the Wars of the Roses. This collection of early Paston letters has been the subject of much historical and linguistic investigation, most notably by Norman Davis (and subsequently Richard Beadle) in the three volumes of *Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century* published between 1971 and 2005.

The fifteenth-century correspondence is not, however, the only collection of letters to have survived from the Paston family. Subsequent generations of Pastons continued to preserve their correspondence and it is the letters of the early seventeenth-century which will be the focus of this thesis. The letters of Lady Katherine Paston (1578-1629) were written between 1618 and 1627, with the majority of these dating from 1624 until 1627 while her young son William was an undergraduate at Cambridge. In addition to the letters written by Lady Paston, there are a number of letters written by members of Lady Paston's family and friends who were prominent figures in Norfolk society.

The letters of Lady Katherine Paston and her circle are preserved in British Library Additional Manuscripts 27447 and 36988. An edition of eighty-five letters was produced by Ruth Hughey in 1941 and it is this edition which provides the basis for this research. Hughey's edition includes biographical information on the correspondents as well as providing notes on the historical context of the letters, yet Hughey does not discuss the orthography or language used in the letters. The dates of many of the letters are those provided by Hughey either from the letters themselves or from historical and genealogical research. The letters of Lady Abigail Mundeford and the two incomplete letters by Lady Muriel Bell are mostly undated, with only two of her letters having been clearly dated by Lady Mundeford herself. A further three letters, however, have been annotated by another hand, giving dates and information on the content of the letters.

### Aim and methodology

The aim of this M.Phil thesis is to produce a comprehensive study of the orthography of Lady Katherine Paston through the examination of her private correspondence. Through the careful analysis of the 48 surviving letters written by Lady Paston and comparing them to the spellings preserved in the letters of those in her circle, it will be possible to reconstruct her personal spelling system. A detailed questionnaire was applied to each letter in the collection in order to identify particular patterns and features of Lady Paston's orthographic system and to establish the regularity, or otherwise, of that system. The spelling practices of Lady Paston will then be compared to the structure of the modern spelling system in order to highlight the differences as well as the ways in which her personal orthography shows the extent to which standardisation had influenced her choices. As well as comparing Lady

Paston's orthography with that of her male correspondents, it is necessary to consider her spellings within the wider context of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century usages and the increasing influence of standardised spellings on personal orthographies. The examination of personal spelling habits may also provide some information on features of Lady Paston's pronunciation, though the increasing influence of standardised forms may have distorted or hidden features which may have provided clues to her pronunciation had she been writing in the century before. Although the letters of Lady Paston's sister, Lady Mundeford were not included in Hughey's edition they will be considered alongside those of Lady Paston in order to compare the spelling habits of the Knyvett sisters.

From this point the following sigla will be used:

A1 - British Library Additional Manuscript 27447

A2 - British Library Additional Manuscript 36988

A3 - British Library Additional Manuscript 27400

### Early Modern English

In order to understand the significance of the spelling practices of Lady Katherine Paston we must first consider the wider context of the Early Modern English period. It was in the Early Modern period of the sixteenth-, seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries in which English moved away from the regional dialects of the Middle English period to the national and international language which flourishes today. The English in use in the Early Modern period

is recognisably modern when compared with that of Middle English, yet to the eye of a modern reader there are enough differences to show that this is a language in transition.

In 1476, shrewd merchant William Caxton (1422-1491) introduced the printing press to England following its success on the Continent and in doing so initiated a major change in the history of the English language. Before the introduction of the printing press to England manuscript production was a skilled and laborious process, and as a result the availability of texts was limited to those who could afford them. Printed texts offered a cheaper and more widely available alternative to the work of the scribe yet the increasing availability of texts resulted in new problems. Manuscript production had been a localised practice for many centuries yet the introduction of the printing press led to texts being available on a national level, but the widespread availability of texts highlighted the lack of a consistent standard English orthography. In order to bring their printed books to the widest possible audience, the early printers had to decide which spelling system to adopt in their texts. A focused form of language, so-called "Type IV" or "Chancery Standard", was the language of official government documents in the fifteenth-century; however there were a number of systems competing for the role of standard (Smith, 1998:69). As a result of the dialectal variation of the late Middle English period, Caxton quickly realised that the success of his printing house lay in the selection of the form of English that would be understandable to the greatest number of people and he therefore opted to reproduce the English of London and the South-East (McCrum, McNeil, Cran, 2002:86).

Caxton's decision to use London English did not, however, result in immediate orthographic uniformity, and throughout the sixteenth-century people continued to write using their own personal spelling practices. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the personal spelling

habits recorded in journals, wills, private documents and private correspondence. Towards the end of the Middle English period 'laymen' were becoming more literate allowing people to write their own letters 'without necessarily being forced to adopt a consistent standard of orthography' (Salmon, 1999:15) and it was common practice for individuals to use spellings based upon their pronunciations and, as a result, spellings varied from writer to writer. Education was no barrier to orthographical variation with highly educated individuals such as Queen Elizabeth I using their own idiosyncratic spelling systems.

As the sixteenth-century progressed, however, the increasing number of grammar schools and the influence of the spellings used in printed texts led to the gradual adoption of more standardised spellings. The sixteenth-century also saw the emergence of those who wished to reform English spelling for a number of reasons and writers such as John Hart, William Bullokar and Richard Mulcaster propose their own systems to produce a more regular and systematic orthography which would represent the language of the sixteenth-century. The suggested spelling reforms were never adopted and writers continued to write using spellings based on pronunciation alongside more standardised forms. By the latter half of the seventeenth-century the orthography was, for the most part, the orthography which we use today (Salmon, 1999:32).

In the seventeenth-century people continued to write using their own personal spelling habits but standardised spellings were beginning to become more widespread among educated individuals, with the less well educated men and women often attempting to conform to standardised spelling conventions. The increasing adoption of standardised spellings in personal documents and correspondence highlights the use of idiosyncratic forms and in many cases it is possible to offer an explanation for a particular usage. In spite

of the gradual standardisation of English orthography, the seventeenth-century saw the continued attempts to reform English spelling. The use of standardised spellings in private writings in the seventeenth-century offers the opportunity to monitor the rate at which standardised forms are adopted into the writings of women such as Lady Katherine Paston and her contemporaries.

### Literacy and Education

No evidence survives for the education received by Lady Paston and her sisters; however, the letters which survive make it obvious that they were confident in their reading and writing abilities at a time when literacy among women was far behind that of men despite increasing levels of female literacy.

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw an increase in the education available to more of the population. Prior to the dissolution of monasteries and convents in the aftermath of the Reformation, religious institutions had offered education to small groups of children, often from more privileged backgrounds and evidence suggests that the education provided was somewhat limited (Eales, 1998:38). Upper class families retained traditional teaching methods, employing tutors to teach their children. Tudor grammar schools catered mainly for boys from middle class backgrounds and education was viewed as a means of social advancement. In Elizabethan England, 'petty schools' were open to most children regardless of their background. Schools were mostly under the supervision of the Church, and there is evidence to suggest that religious orthodoxy took precedent over the intelligence or abilities of an individual in appointing teachers to these schools (Picard, 2004:214). In addition to his

proposals for spelling reform, Richard Mulcaster was also interested in reforming the education system, proposing a national curriculum and a higher standard of teaching (Picard, 2004:214) Whilst most histories of education in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'assume a more or less steady expansion from the 1530s until the mid-seventeenth-century, Cressy writes that the 'educational boom' of the 1560s had by the 1580s become an 'educational recession' which lasted into the second decade of the seventeenth-century (Cressy, 1980:169).

Boys from wealthy middle class families or from the gentry were able to attend the Inns of Court to receive legal training or to continue their education at Oxford or Cambridge (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg,2003:41), as in the case of Lady Paston's son, William. At this time boys attended university at a much younger age and William Paston was only fourteen when he left the family home to study at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

'Education, like most components of lifestyle, was socially stratified. The way children were trained for adult life varied according to the social background and gender. In general, the education of boys could be academic, while only exceptionally was this the case with girls.' (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003:41)

Despite the growth in the number of schools in the sixteenth-century, girls did not share in the increased availability of education. Girls attending convent schools before the Reformation were taught 'religion, morals, French and practical skills such as needlework' and the small groups of girls were usually the daughters of 'lords, knights and gentlemen' (Eales, 1998:38). Schools exclusively for girls began to appear in the mid sixteenth-century, often run by gentlewomen, however these were relatively uncommon until the mid

seventeenth-century when most major towns had a school for girls, teaching skills such as writing, music and needlework as opposed to the more academic education on offer at boys' grammar schools (Eales, 1998:39). Girls from privileged backgrounds such as the Knyvett sisters were more likely to have received an education from a private tutor or governess and were taught skills appropriate to their social sphere. The serious education of women was not without opposition, with many educated men in the sixteenth-century recommending that women's education be limited to learning to read the Bible and moral texts, with 'grammar, logic, history, politics and mathematics' being left purely for the education of men however. Women in the Early Modern period were considered too fragile to bear the burden of intellectualism, and academic pursuits were deemed unnecessary since a woman's life would consist of little more than looking after her family and household and as a result academic study was not available to women. Some privileged women were, however, fortunate enough to receive an education from academic tutors; one such woman was Elizabeth I who proved herself to be a very intelligent woman fluent in several languages and knowledgeable in political and religious matters.

In the sixteenth-century there was an increase in the number of printed vernacular texts for use in education. It is in this period that English was used in the teaching of the classical languages and many classical works were translated into English for use in education. Lady Katherine Paston appears to have placed greater emphasis on her son reading in English rather than mastering Latin, she wrote:

'...if thow canst not attayne to Learninge the Lattin tounge parfitly. yet bestow thy time in redinge good English bookes which may furnish thy minde *with* delitfull good things:' (A1 f.240r)

Similarly the number of printed books intended for a female readership increased in the late sixteenth-century, reflecting the growth in literacy amongst women.

The ability to read was considered of greater importance than the ability to write. This was especially true following the Reformation when it was desired that all good Christians be able to read and understand the word of God in the vernacular. Children would have begun their education with printed book known as a hornbook or 'absey-book' containing the letters of the alphabet (Picard, 2004:215). Reading and writing in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were taught as separate skills, 'only in the hands of an unusually demanding schoolmaster would a pupil tackle writing while still learning to read' (Cressy, 1980: 20). Picard writes that being able to read printed and written texts was more difficult than it is today owing to the 'heavy black font' of the printed texts and the complicated, flourished secretary hand of the period, 'which had the disadvantage of having several variants for each letter' (2004:215). As a result, the ability to read a printed work does not presuppose the ability to read a handwritten document, and the ability to read handwriting came only through contact with such documents (Daybell, 2005:146), therefore such an ability was more common among women of the upper classes who were more accustomed to reading letters and handwritten manuscripts.

Levels of female literacy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been the subject of much debate, especially regarding the ways in which literacy is defined. Women who were able to read print may not have been able to read handwritten text, and women who could read may not have been able to write. Much that is written on levels of literacy among women is based on 'signature literacy', that is the ability to sign one's own name, however that is by no means indicative of an individual's ability to fully read or write. It has

been suggested that 'signature literacy' among women was as low as 1 per cent in 1500, yet within a century and a half 'all gentlewomen [...] were able to write' (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 42-43):

'The educational system placed one prestigious variety of English, the language of law and administration, beyond the reach of the lower orders and women' (Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg, 2003: 41).

Whilst this may be true of the complex Latin legal terminology, the letters of Lady Paston and her sisters show that they are comfortable discussing matters such as rents, leases, tenancies and other similar matters; this is especially true of Lady Paston who managed her husband's affairs during his long periods of illness; however, she left the drafting of an official petition to a professional scribe (A1 f.175). It has been suggested by Terriu Nevalainen and Helena Raumolin-Brunberg that the emphasis placed on classical education in boys' grammar schools and universities meant that women were not so far behind men in their use of the vernacular (2003: 41).

In spite of Lady Paston's obvious abilities to read and write to a reasonably high standard, it is doubtful she would have had anything to do with the education of her sons. While it is entirely possible that some families did educate their own children, most parents lacked the required skills, time or patience to teach literacy and a family such as the Pastons would have probably employed a professional tutor (Cressy, 1980:40).

The survey of the spelling practices of Lady Katherine Paston, Lady Muriel Bell and Lady Abigail Mundeford in the chapter which follows will examine the ways in which personal orthography was influenced by increased standardisation in print. Subsequent chapters will

compare the orthographies of the Knyvett sisters with the spelling practices of Lady Paston's male correspondents and it will be interesting to compare the way in which standardised forms are used in the writings of the more educated male correspondents.

### Early Modern English Letter Writing

In addition to looking at the language and literacy of the Early Modern period it is worth looking at the letters of Lady Katherine, her sisters, Lady Mundeford and Lady Bell, and her male correspondents within the wider culture of Early Modern epistolary correspondence.

The private letters of Lady Katherine Paston which are preserved as Add. MSS 27447 and 36988 are all holograph letters and it would seem that Lady Paston only employed a professional scribe for the writing of official petitions such as that to Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam dated 1619 (A1 f.175r). The practice of using professional scribes was not uncommon in the Early Modern period amongst those who could afford to employ such a service. Secretaries were used by those who were lacking the 'necessary literate skills' and those of rank or profession who required assistance with their correspondence (Cusack, 2006:193).

Correspondence from the Early Modern period usually takes the form of a letter written on one or two sheets of paper and, since envelopes were not yet used, the letter was folded small with the blank verso side to the outside, upon which directions for delivery were written (Cusack, 2006:195). The folded letters were then sealed in order to ensure privacy and that they would not be opened until in the hands of the addressee (Daybell, 2005:151). Most of the letters by Lady Paston are written on a single side of paper, and in a number of

cases she continues the postscripts or closing remarks down the left-hand margin of the folio in order to avoid using another sheet of paper. The vast majority of Lady Paston's letters were written to her son, William, who was an undergraduate at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and in most cases the subject of the letter is little more than a mother offering advice, reporting news from family and friends in Norfolk and reassuring herself of his wellbeing. Letters from Lady Paston's correspondents, however, vary from half a page, such as an invitation to dinner from Lady Heveningham (A1 f.158r), to several sides in length, the longer letters often discussing business matters.

In the letters by Lady Paston to her son William, Lady Paston employs a series of stock phrases to open and close her letters and in most cases this includes a blessing on her son's health and wellbeing. The reports of illnesses and deaths in the correspondence of Lady Paston remind the reader that this was the time of plagues, virulent epidemics and shorter life expectancy even among the upper classes, so it is unsurprising that it was common practice to offer a blessing upon someone's health and happiness. Examples of opening lines range from variations of her frequently used blessings such as:

'My sweet will: the Lord blese the ever' (A1 f.252)

'My good childd the lords mercy and blesinge be evermore vpon the:' (A1 f.260)

As well as examples of longer and less frequently used blessings such as:

'My sweet will: grase mercy and all healthe be multtplied to the...'

(A1 f.246)

'My good child, the mercy of the Lorde blese preseeve and keep the in all thy good ways words and works for evermore, to the glory of his owne nam and to thy good bothe in this and the Liffe to com:/' (A2 f.38r)

'My good Child the [Lo]rd blese the ever more in all thy goings ovtt and thy Cominges in. euen in all thy ways workes and words, for his mercy sake:'(A2 f.27r,v)

Such blessings are often repeated at the end of a letter, and in many cases Lady Paston asks that her son 'remembers' her to his tutors and friends:

'I pray the *remember* me too all good frinds wher so ever thow beest the lord for ever blese preserve and keep the now and ev[er]' (A2 f.49r)

'...and so the Lords blesinge be for euer more vpon thy sowle and body farwell good will:.' (A2 f.29r)

However, it is also common to find Lady Paston closing the letter to her son without a final blessing, as can be seen in examples such as:

'farwell sweet harte for this time in great hast as may be.. (A1 f.250r)

'...and so for this time I bide the most hartily farwell this present friday night:'(A2 f.41r)

The term of address between Lady Paston and her son is, as we might expect, far more affectionate than the terms of address used between Lady Paston and her other correspondents. The vast majority of the letters by Lady Paston are to her son, William and most of the letters open with 'My good Will:', 'My sweet will:' or 'My good child'. The most frequent terms of address to Lady Paston include 'Good Sister', 'Good Madame', 'My Deare

Sister', Good Cosin' and 'Most Worthy Sister'. William Paston begins the two surviving letters to his mother with the lines 'Most honored and Deare mother' and 'Most deare and honored mother' (A2 f.32r and f.34r). Letters addressed to Lady Paston from men who are not within her close circle of family and friends have a more formal style of address, such as William Denny's 'Noble Lady' (A1 f.224r), 'My euer honored Lady' from Samuel Matchett (A1 f.173r,v) and 'Our most honored & good Lady' in the letter from Jane and John Smith (A1 f.199r).

It was common practice in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to comment on the letter being written, in particular the 'writer's dissatisfaction with the appearance of the letter' (Tanskanen, 2007: 82). Lady Katherine Paston herself commented on the quality of her writing and the appearance of her letter:

'I wright this as much in hast as may be: with a pen of my Cosine Cooks *which* I think haue writen many an indenture, it is but a bad on and my hast makes it not better...'  
(A1 f.252r)

'never wors pen never wors paper nor wors writer:/' (A2 f.45r,v)

Similarly, one of Lady Paston's male correspondents, Samuel Matchett is critical of his own writing:

'...I beseech yow passe by my bouldnes herein & lett these my illiterate & tedious lynes be only knowne to your Ladyship' (A1 f.173r,v)

'Considering the uncertainty in the delivery of letters in the Early Modern period, it does not seem illogical to assume that acknowledgement of receipt is an important element in the correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston.' (Tanskanen, 2007: 78)

The letters of Lady Katherine Paston and her correspondents contain many references to the delivering and receiving of letters. The royal post began delivering private letters in 1635, however before (and for a time after) this official service was put in place, letters were delivered by paid carriers, bearers, messengers or servants or sometimes delivered by 'a friend or stranger headed in the desired direction' (Stewart and Wolfe, 2004:121). In addition to delivering letters, the bearers were also entrusted to deliver parcels, money and verbal messages. The reliability of such a service however depended on the diligence and speed of the individual bearer and the failure to deliver letters was not uncommon. Stewart and Wolfe (2004:121) and Tanskanen (2007: 78) comment that the unreliability of employing such methods of delivery means that it is unsurprising that the sending and receiving of letters is discussed in many Early Modern letters. The hope of safe delivery and the failure to receive letters is discussed in a number of Lady Paston's letters and in a number of letters the carriers and bearers themselves are discussed.

'I hope before this you haue *received* my letter by Iohnsons the Cambridge Carrier *with* 5 li 10 s. Sent to good mr Roberts for a supply till I send more to the comencment.' (A2 f.31r)

'...euey Saturday your Ladiship shall haue a letter from me or my tutor, if they doe not miscary By the carrier.' (A2 f.32r)

'I haue much longed to heer of my foot post. by whom I did send my letters to the *with* a lease of pateridges: his nam was nipps. if he did not giue the child a wrong nam: but I feare he is nipt in the Crowne that he is not yett returned. he haue fayled of his promis to me. for he sayd he wold bring a letter from the as wedensday the 22. but he is not com this thursday 23 at noon [...]' (A2 f.59r)

'[...] I am promised that this my letter shall com to the by saterday night.'

(A1 f.244r)

'I wil wright the these two ore three lines to lett the knowe that I did not receiue thy kinde letter by Iohn borrows [...]' (A1 f.260r)

Sanna- Kaisa Tanskanen's study of the intertextual networks in the correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston has highlighted the frequent use of lines acknowledging receipt, failure to receive letters, reference to previous correspondence, the intention to write further letters and the discussion of letters to or from a third party. Tanskanen writes that acknowledgment of receipt is restricted to letters between those who are in 'close and frequent contact with each other.' (2007:86)

The intention to write letters is also discussed in Lady Paston's letters:

'...commend me very kindly to good mr Roberts: I will wright to him next if I doe not speake *with* him soon:' (A1 f.268r)

'[...] I do imagine that thow didest earnestly expect a letter from me the last weeke, and I had pen in hand to begine to the, but thy brothers illnes prevented me at that time[...]' (A1 f.242r)

'good will tell tom Hartstonge that I doe like well of his wrightinge. I wold haue written to him to put him in minde of sum things but I haue now no time:/'

(A1 f.232r)

In the sixteenth-century, the reading and writing of letters was considered a tiring pursuit for women, especially during illness. Lady Paston's letters contain many references to being

unable to write due to ill health or lack of time. Lady Mundeford's letter to Lady Bell describes how she is unable to continue with her letter because of problems with her eyes.

'my poore eyes are so weak & do so {smart} and watter upon euey short Reading or writting, as it makes me very sad to think of it [...]

'Swet Sister I cannot se to say now {more} but I am thyne.' (A3 f.28r)

Letter writing was not beyond the influence of print culture in the Early Modern period. Latin and vernacular books on the theory of letter writing had been in existence since the eleventh-century (Stewart and Wolfe, 2004:21), but these theoretical works were not aimed at instructing the general public in the art of writing letters. By the 1560s books instructing in the conventions of composing letters were becoming increasingly common and the most influential of these manuals was Day's *The English Secretarie* which was published in 1586 (Stewart and Wolfe, 2004:23). By the mid seventeenth-century, such manuals were focused on a more practical approach to letter writing within the wider context of education and scholarly ability, with titles such as Snell's *The right teaching of useful knowledg* (1649) and Young's *The Compleat English Scholar* (1680) among the most widely read of the scholarly manuals (Stewart and Wolfe, 2004:24).

Modern letters are considered private, intended only for eyes of the addressee, in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, however, letters were often read aloud or shared with friends and family. Such a practice is demonstrated in the letter from Philip Alpe to Lady Paston when he writes:

'I had present accesse vnto his lordship who pryuatlye red your letter, then calling for Mr hobard and Mr Shepherd he openlye red the same againe to them.' (A1 f.223r)

On a more personal level, letters offer an insight into the personality of the author. The letters from Lady Paston to her son show that she was a caring mother who took a keen interest in William's education, health and wellbeing, as well as that of his friends, cousins and tutors. In addition to this there are some lovely light-hearted remarks in letters to William which show a less serious side to Lady Paston.

'winnett was maried this mihellmas day to you know who: / : / : /'  
(A2 f.49r)

'Now least I shold forget to be thankefull for a sorte of tokens. bothe for booke and candell: ther want but a bell; coold you not haue parswaded your Cosine mun bell. to haue com this way: then I shold haue bine fully suplyed of bell booke and candell: /'  
(A1 f.236r)

### Punctuation, Capitalisation and Abbreviations

One noticeable difference between modern letters and correspondence from the Early Modern period is the use of punctuation, or in some cases the absence of punctuation. One particularly noticeable feature is the irregularity of capitalisation. Capitals were used in printed texts and in private writing to indicate important items (Salmon, 1999: 44), yet they are often absent where a modern reader would expect capitalisation, such as the start of a sentence or a proper noun. Examples of this irregular distribution can be found throughout

the correspondence of Lady Paston. A letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 1626 (Add MS 36988 f.55r) for instance contains a capitalised 'Raughty and Cowld' (draughty and cold) alongside the names Paston and Bell which do not have capitals. Lady Paston's irregular distribution of capitals is illustrated in the following extract in which the names Will, Mun (Edmund) and Payne are not capitalised, yet *cake* and *cheese* are spelt with capitals:

'Good will: mistress Smithe haue sent the, the vpermost Cake and Commends her to the: likewise honest goodman payne haue sent the on of the Cheses in the bottom of the trunck, I wish thow woldest send thy Cosines mun and Robert Bell heyther, half my great Cake: or Mistress Smithes which thow willt; and a few links and pudinges half a dosine of each, and Comend me to them bothe very kindly, let mun cary them too them:' (A2 f.36r)

As with the apparently irregular distribution of capitals in the Early Modern period, the letters of Lady Paston and her circle also reflect the somewhat erratic and idiosyncratic use of punctuation at the time. Many of the modern punctuation marks were only introduced in the sixteenth-century and were 'intended for the convenience of the reader rather than for the listener; punctuation ceases to be regarded primarily as a guide to the spoken language, and becomes an aid to clarity in the printed word' (Salmon, 1999: 40). As with many other aspects of the written language during this period, punctuation was also strongly influenced by the conventions emerging from the printing houses.

'New conventions became established, and were disseminated more quickly through printed books than through manuscripts, because of the number of identical copies produced by the new process. Practices established by printers soon began to appear in manuscripts.' (Parkes, 1992:56)

Colons and semi-colons were used far more frequently than in modern punctuation, being used in place of the comma or full stop of modern conventions. Commas can be found in the correspondence; often they are used as they would be today though in many cases they are used less frequently or omitted altogether. The colon was used 'to indicate a major medial pause, or disjunction of sense [...]' (Parkes, 1992: 302) and this use can be seen in Lady Paston's letters as well as those of her correspondents. Often the colon was used like a modern comma.

'I haue sent the as thow desirest, some edible Comodity for this Lent. to eate in your chamber your good tutor and you together: a Cake and Cheese a fewe pudinges and linkes: a turkey pie pasty: a pot of Quinces and sume marmelate [...]' (A2 f.36r)

In addition to the use of colons and commas, virgules are frequently used 'to mark the briefest pause or hesitation in a text [...]' (Parkes, 1992: 308). Parkes writes that in manuscripts from the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries, the virgule was used 'for all pauses except the final one' (1992:308), yet there are a number of letters which Lady Paston ends with a final virgule, usually following the date.

'I leaue you Thorpe this 29<sup>th</sup> of May 1624/' (Add. MS 212r)

Full stops as used in modern punctuation are much less common in this correspondence and Lady Paston frequently uses the colon or semi-colon to indicate a final pause, however it is far more common to find the colon with virgule to mark a final pause in Lady Paston's letters. The colon and virgule are also used by Lady Paston as a kind of exclamation mark as can be seen in the following examples:

'I know of your owne self. You ar free enough from wronginge any on:/ and I did: and ever will acknowledge it :/:/:' (A1 f.179r)

'winnett was maried this mihellmas day to you know who :/:/:' (A2 f.49r)

Whilst the punctuation employed by Lady Paston is more erratic than modern conventions she uses punctuation more than some of her male correspondents. Letters by Sir Thomas Holland (A1 f.168r) and Samuel Matchett (A1 f.173r, v), for example, have virtually no punctuation, with the occasional colon, virgule or parentheses. Samuel Matchett's letter contains almost no punctuation marks to indicate the end of a sentence, however, he consistently uses capitals at the start of the sentence.

The apostrophe is noticeably absent in the vast majority of the letters in this collection of correspondence, especially the genitive –s ending which only emerged in the later seventeenth-century (Nevalainen, 2006:74). In Late Middle and Early Modern English the genitive suffix –(e)s was incorrectly believed to represent an abbreviation of the possessive pronoun *his* and resulted in the use of forms such as the following:

'tom I haue sent to my Cosine Coke his howse till mr Birch his returne' (A1 f.254r)

'I hope you haue the good docter walllsalls his directions for preparinge your self'  
(A1 f.256r)

'St. Gorge his day' (A3 f.17r)

However, there appears to be an example of a –'s ending in a letter by Lady Mundeford (A3 f.30v) when she writes 'to setle it upon his father's [...]'. This letter, however, is likely to date

from the 1640s and is therefore at least twenty years later than the letters of Lady Paston's correspondence.

Epistolary correspondence and printed texts of the Early Modern period regularly used abbreviated spellings. In some cases this followed the medieval practice of using a tilde (~) to mark the omission of a nasal consonant, for example in a word such as <<comend>> a tilde would be placed over the <m> to denote a following <m> (Nevalainen,2006:5).

Similarly the letters of Lady Paston and her correspondents contain a high number of instances of abbreviated forms including <<wt>> 'with', <<wch>> 'which' and <<yor>> 'your', all of which were common at the time. Lady Abigail Mundeford used the <<wt>> abbreviation to mean 'with' and 'what', with the intended meaning only clear from the context. Titles were another commonly abbreviated feature in Early Modern writing.

Stewart and Wolfe (2004:7) provide a useful list of abbreviated forms, almost all of which can be found in the collection of Lady Paston's correspondence as well as the letters by Lady Mundeford and Lady Bell.

La:	<i>Lady or Ladyship</i>
L:, Lo:, Lp	<i>Lord or Lordship</i>
Matie	<i>Maiestie</i>
Sr	<i>Sir</i>
w <u>ch</u>	<i>which</i>
w <u>th</u>	<i>with</i> (though <<wt>> in the letters of Lady Paston)
y <u>e</u>	<i>the</i>
y <u>t</u>	<i>that</i>

yor\_ and yr\_     *your*

In addition to these abbreviations there are others within the letters of Lady Paston and her circle, such as Lady Bell's use of <<Nep:>> for *nephew* and Lady Paston's use of <<rec:>> for *received*. The spelling of her son's name as 'will:' is interesting as she consistently treats the name like an abbreviated form with the usual semi-colon and a flourish above the name in a number of letters, yet she does not repeat this consistently in her use of other shortened names such as Mun as a diminutive form of Edmund. There are also examples of Lady Paston abbreviating her own name, as can be seen in her use of 'Ka Paston' and in the same letter she abbreviates Sir John Heveningham's name to 'Sr Jo: He:' (Add MS 27447 f.258).

## Biographies of the Correspondents

### Lady Katherine Paston (1578-1629)

Katherine Knyvett was baptised on 22 June 1578, one of four daughters and two sons born to Sir Thomas and Lady Muriel Knyvett (nee Parry) of Ashwellthorpe. Ruth Hughey writes that the Knyvett family were 'an important family, claiming a prouder inheritance than the [Pastons]' (1941:16) and the Parrys and the Knyvetts had links to the courts of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. Lady Katherine Paston's entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography contains an important piece of information that is of interest in this examination of her personal orthography: 'details of Katherine's education are unknown' (Mahlberg, 2005). On 28<sup>th</sup> April 1603, Katherine Knyvett married Edmund Paston (1585-1632) and by 1610 their first son William was born with their second son Thomas born four years later. In 1624 William moved to Cambridge where he was to study aged only 14 as was common at the time.

Of the 48 surviving letters written by Lady Paston the majority were written to William during his time at Cambridge from 1624 until 1627 and in these letters she offers maternal advice and encouragement as well as relating news of their family and friends. The evidence appears to suggest that Lady Katherine Paston was a confident and intelligent woman who carried a suit to court on behalf of her husband and managed the family estate during Edmund's periods of illness. Interestingly, most of Lady Paston's correspondents were men including her brothers-in-law Sir John Heveningham and Sir Thomas Holland yet, as Gaby Mahlberg writes in the DNB entry for Lady Paston 'Lady Paston was far from dependent on these men' (DNB 2005). Lady Katherine Paston died on 10 March 1629 and was laid to rest

in a grand tomb in St Margaret's Church, Paston. The letters written by Lady Paston and her correspondents are preserved as British Library Additional Manuscripts 27447 and 36988.

### Lady Muriel Bell

Lady Muriel Bell was sister to Lady Paston and Lady Mundeford and on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1605 she became the second wife to Sir Edmund Bell, Knt., of Outwell and Southacre. Lady Bell and her husband had two sons Edmund and Robert, who was born in 1608 following the death of his father in 1607. Lady Bell's sons attended Cambridge at the same time as their cousin William Paston and they are frequently mentioned in the letters from Lady Paston to William. Hughey writes that following her husband's death, Lady Muriel lived at the Knyvett family home of Ashwellthorpe before possibly living for a short period at least with Lady Katherine at Paston Hall (Hughey, 1941:17). Despite the obviously close relationship of the two sisters, only one letter from Lady Muriel to Lady Paston has survived (A1 ff.221r-222r) and there are no surviving letters from Lady Paston to either of her sisters. Two incomplete letters by Lady Bell are preserved in Add. MS 27400 alongside those of her sister Lady Abigail Mundeford, though these letters will be dealt with in greater detail below. There are apparently no dates for Lady Muriel's birth or her death, yet references to Cromwell and the Civil War in the letters from Lady Mundeford to Lady Bell suggest that she survived until the late 1640s at least. Lady Bell is believed to have been buried at Wilby. (Hughey, 1941: 29)

### Lady Abigail Mundeford

On 17<sup>th</sup> December 1600, Abigail Knyvett married Sir Edmund Mundeford of Feltwell. While no letters between Lady Katherine and Lady Abigail survive, thirteen letters written by Lady Mundeford to her sister Lady Muriel Bell and nephew Sir Thomas Knyvett are preserved in

the correspondence of the Mundeford family as Additional Manuscript 27400. Lady Mundeford's letters were not included in Hughey's edition, yet they are discussed here in order to compare the differences in personal spelling habits within one family. No exact dates for Lady Mundeford's birth or death are given, yet the evidence from her letters show that she survived her sister Katherine by around twenty years.

#### William Paston (1610-1662-3)

Eldest son of Lady Katherine and Sir Edmund Paston, William was born in 1610, the year in which his namesake great-grandfather died. From 1624 until 1627 he was a student at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and it is from this period that the majority of Lady Paston's letters date and two letters from William to his mother have also survived. In 1629, the year of his mother's death, William married Katherine, daughter of the Earl of Lindsey and together they had five children. His eldest son, Robert, went on to become the first Earl of Yarmouth in 1679. William Paston died on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1662/3.

#### Sir John Heveningham (1576-1633)

Sir John Heveningham Ketteringham, born in 1576/7, was the eldest son of Sir Arthur Heveningham and his wife, Mary. Sir John's first wife died in 1600, and a year later he married Bridget Paston, sister to Sir Edmund Paston, and together they had ten children. Bridget died in 1624. Sir John was very close to the Paston family and was sole executor of Sir William Paston's will and as Hughey describes 'he fought zealously for the claims of his wife Bridget and her heirs male in the settlement of newly purchased Paston property'(Hughey, 1941:30). Sir John died in 1633.

Lady Mary Heveningham (d.1633?)

Mother to Sir John Heveningham, above, she was married to Sir Arthur Heveningham of Ketteringham. The one letter in this collection from Lady Heveningham, inviting Lady Paston to dine with her at Ketteringham, is in the hand of a scribe. Lady Heveningham died in 1633.

Sir Thomas Holland (1574-1625/6)

Thomas Holland married Mary Knyvett, sister of Lady Katherine Paston, at Ashwellthorpe in October 1601, and they had two sons before her death in 1605/6. Following her death he remarried and in 1608 he was knighted. For the last five years of his life he was a Member of Parliament. His letters in this collection date from 1603 to 1624 and reflect his close relationship with the Paston family for twenty-five years and in 1619 he was named as a trustee of the Paston estate. (Hughey, 1941:30) Lady Paston related the news of Sir Thomas's death in a letter to her son dated February 1626, in which she writes 'I haue lost a great frinde of him' (A2 f.40r).

Edward Paston (1570-1630)

Edward Paston was the son of Sir Thomas Paston, who was a member of the Privy Chamber of Henry VIII. Sir Thomas Paston was the son of Sir William Paston who died in 1554. Edward was twice married and had nine children by his second wife. Hughey writes that 'Edward Paston and his sons were the next heirs male to the main Paston holdings after the line represented by Sir Edmund Paston and his sons' (Hughey, 1941: 33). Seven letters to Lady Paston survive and range in date from 1611 to 1624.

Philip Alpe

Little biographical information is given in Hughey's edition. 'He was employed by Lady Paston during the time of this correspondence and is referred to as 'Philip' and as 'your man Alpe' (Hughey, 1941: 29). Alpe's will was dated September 1647 and was proved in May 1649. One letter survives from Philip Alpe to Lady Paston is preserved in A1.

William Brende (1558-1625)

Brende was employed as steward to the Paston family from the early 1620s having previously served as steward to the Gawdy family until 1622 (Hughey, 1941:29). One letter written by William Brende to Lady Paston survives in this collection.

Sir William Denny (d.1624)

William Denny was educated at Cambridge and was admitted to Gray's Inn in 1598. He served as a Member of Parliament for Norwich and received a knighthood in 1627. Hughey describes him as 'counsel for Sir Edmund and Lady Katherine Paston' (Hughey, 1941:29). Two of Sir William Denny's letters to Lady Paston are preserved in this collection.

Samuel Matchett (1581-1652)

Samuel Matchett was the son of a clerk and for the time covered by this collection of correspondence he worked for Sir John Heveningham (Hughey, 1941:32). Only one letter from Samuel Matchett to Lady Paston survives.

Jane and John Smith

One letter in this collection is from Jane and John Smith. Nothing definitive is known of this couple, however, Hughey believed to have identified them as the John Smith and Jane Herne who married at Caister in 1613 (Hughey, 1941: 116 n.29).

Samuel Walsall (1575-1626)

Samuel Walsall was admitted to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 1589 and was Master of the college from 1618 until 1626 (Hughey, 1941:34). It is in his role as Master of the College that he features in this correspondence, with one letter to Lady Paston and a number of references to him in Lady Paston's letters to her son.

Letters by Lady Katherine Paston

The numbers in the left-hand column refer to the letter numbers as they appear in Hughey's *Correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston 1603-1627* (1941).

8.	to Sir John Heveningham	4 <sup>th</sup> October 1618	A1 f.162r
13.	to Sir John Heveningham	1619	A1 f.179r
17.	to Sir John Heveningham	20 <sup>th</sup> January 1620	A1 f.183r
26.	to Sir John Heveningham	1622?	A1 f.172r
33.	to William Paston	January 1624?	A2 f.32r
39.	to William Paston	April 1624?	A1 f.231r
41.	to William Paston	11 <sup>th</sup> June 1624	A2 f.29r
42.	to William Paston	25 <sup>th</sup> June 1624	A2 f.31r

43.	to William Paston	June 1624?	A1 f.232r
44.	to William Paston	July 1624?	A2 f.47r
49.	to William Paston	Late February 1625	A1 f.262r
50.	to William Paston	1625?	A1 f.246r
51.	to William Paston	March 1625?	A2 f.36r
52.	to William Paston	1625?	A1 f.248r
53.	to William Paston	1 <sup>st</sup> April 1625?	A1 f.250r
54.	to William Paston	15 <sup>th</sup> April 1625?	A1 f.260r
55.	to William Paston	18 <sup>th</sup> April 1625	A2 f.43r,v
56.	to William Paston	Late April 1625?	A1 f.268r
57.	to William Paston	6 <sup>th</sup> May 1625	A2 f.45r,v
58.	to William Paston	Late August 1625?	A1 f.264r
59.	to William Paston	December 1625?	A1 f.266r
60.	to William Paston	December 1625?	A1 f.258r
61.	to William Paston	December 1625?	A2 f.25r
62.	to William Paston	February 1626	A2 f.40r
63.	to William Paston	February 1626?	A1 f.234r
64.	to William Paston	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 1626?	A1 f.242r
65.	to William Paston	March 1626?	A1 f.244r
66.	to William Paston	March 1626?	A2 f.38r
67.	to William Paston	March 1626?	A2 f. 65r
68.	to William Paston	March 1626?	A2 f.41r
69.	to William Paston	31 <sup>st</sup> March 1626	A2 f.51r
70.	to William Paston	Early April 1626?	A1 f. 252r

71.	to William Paston	September 1626?	A2 f.49r
72.	to William Paston	27 <sup>th</sup> October 1626	A2 f.53r
73.	to William Paston	1 <sup>st</sup> November 1626	A2 f.55r
74.	to William Paston	13 <sup>th</sup> November 1626	A2 f.57r
75.	to William Paston	November 1626?	A1 f.240r
76.	to William Paston	23 <sup>rd</sup> November 1626	A2 f.59r
77.	to William Paston	4 <sup>th</sup> December 1626	A2 f.61r
78.	to William Paston	7 <sup>th</sup> February 1627	A2 f.63r
79.	to William Paston	February 1627?	A1 f.236r
80.	to William Paston	February 1627?	A1 f.238r
81.	to William Paston	February 1627?	A1 f.254r
82.	to William Paston	March 1627?	A2 f.67r
83.	to William Paston	Late March 1627?	A1 f.256r
84.	to William Paston	3 <sup>rd</sup> May 1627	A2 f.69r
85.	to William Paston	July 1627	A2 f.71r

15. Lady Katherine Paston to Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam 29<sup>th</sup> April 1619?

Official petition written by a professional scribe on Lady Katherine's behalf.

A1 f.175

Letters received by Lady Katherine Paston

1.	Sir Thomas Holland to Lady Muriel Knyvett *	16 <sup>th</sup> February 1603	A1 f.143r
2.	Edward Paston to Sir Edmund Paston *	25 <sup>th</sup> July 1611	A1 f.151r
3.	Sir Thomas Holland to Lady Muriel Bell *	17 <sup>th</sup> May 1614	A1 f.155r
4.	Lady Mary Heveningham	1615	A1 f.158r
5.	Sir John Heveningham	30 <sup>th</sup> March 1618	A1 f.156r
6.	Edward Paston to	23 <sup>rd</sup> August 1618	A1 f.160r
7.	Sir John Heveningham	3 <sup>rd</sup> October 1618	A1 f.164r
9.	Sir John Heveningham	7 <sup>th</sup> October 1618	A1 f.166r
10.	Lady Muriel Bell	1618	A1 f.221r,v-222r
11.	Sir Thomas Holland	28 <sup>th</sup> October 1618	A1 f.168r
12.	Sir John Heveningham	10 <sup>th</sup> February 1619	A1 f.170r
14.	Samuel Matchett	16 <sup>th</sup> April 1619	A1 f.173r,v
16.	Sir John Heveningham	18 <sup>th</sup> January 1620	A1 f.181r
18.	Sir Thomas Holland	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 1620	A1 f.177r,v-178r
19.	Sir Thomas Holland	4 <sup>th</sup> March 1620	A1 f.185r
20.	Sir John Heveningham	29 <sup>th</sup> March 1620	A1 f.187r
21.	William Denny	6 <sup>th</sup> June 1620	A1 f.189r
22.	Sir John Heveningham	6 <sup>th</sup> November 1621	A1 f.191r
23.	Sir John Heveningham	13 <sup>th</sup> July 1622	A1 f.193r
24.	Sir John Heveningham	27 <sup>th</sup> August 1622	A1 f.195r
25.	Sir John Heveningham	30 <sup>th</sup> October 1622	A2 f.21r
27.	Edward Paston	26 <sup>th</sup> May 1623	A1 f.197r
28.	Edward Paston	11 <sup>th</sup> September 1623	A2 f.23r

29. Jane and John Smith	18 <sup>th</sup> November 1623	A1 f.199r
30. Edward Paston	2 <sup>nd</sup> January 1624	A1 f.201r
31. Sir Thomas Holland	1624	A1 f.217r
32. William Paston	26 <sup>th</sup> January 1624	A2 f.32r
34. Sir John Heveningham	5 <sup>th</sup> February 1624	A1 f.203r
35. Dr Samuel Walsall	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 1624	A1 f.205r
36. Sir John Heveningham	24 <sup>th</sup> February 1624	A1 f.207r
37. Edward Paston	12 <sup>th</sup> April 1624	A1 f.209r
38. Sir John Heveningham	23 <sup>rd</sup> April 1624	A1 f.211r
40. Edward Paston	29 <sup>th</sup> May 1624	A1 f.212r
45. William Brende	5 <sup>th</sup> August 1624	A1 f.219r
46. Philip Alpe	23 <sup>rd</sup> August 1624	A1 f.223r
47. William Denny	December 1624	A1 f.224r
48. William Paston	22 <sup>nd</sup> February 1625	A2 f.34r

\*Letters not addressed to Lady Katherine Paston.

The Lady Muriel Knyvett to whom the first letter is addressed was the mother of Lady Paston, Lady Mundeford and Lady Bell and their sister Mary Holland who was married to Sir Thomas Holland but is not represented in these letters.

#### Letters by Lady Abigail Mundeford

to Thomas Knyvett Esq.	17 <sup>th</sup> May 1618 (dated)	A3 f.11r
to Lady Muriel Bell	No date	A3 ff.12r-13r

to Lady Muriel Bell	No date	A3 ff.15r-16r
to Thomas Knyvett Esq.	15 <sup>th</sup> March (year unknown)	A3 f.17r
to Thomas Knyvett Esq.	No date	A3 f.21r
to Lady Muriel Bell	No date	A3 ff.22r-23r
to Thomas Knyvett Esq.	13 <sup>th</sup> October 1628?	A3 f.24r
to Lady Muriel Bell	January 1647/48?*	A3 ff.26r-27v
to Lady Muriel Bell	6 <sup>th</sup> January (year unknown)	A3 f.28r
to Lady Muriel Bell	No date	A3 f.29r
to Lady Muriel Bell	No date	A3 f.31r
to Lady Muriel Bell	No date	A3 f.33r

\*Date given in annotation in margin of letter

### The Letters of Lady Muriel Bell

British Library catalogues record only one known letter by Lady Katherine Paston's sister, Lady Muriel Bell and the letter, believed to date from 1618, is preserved in the collection of Lady Katherine Paston's correspondence (A1 f.221r-222r). The letters by Lady Katherine's other sister, Lady Abigail Mundeford are preserved alongside the Mundeford family correspondence as A3. Within the collection of letters identified as those written by Lady Abigail Mundeford there are two incomplete letters which may be of particular interest in

the study of the orthography of Lady Katherine Paston and her sisters. A3 folios 23 verso and 30 recto are in a different hand to the hand of Lady Mundeford and the letters are not signed or dated. The heavy and more rounded hand of these incomplete letters does however bear a marked resemblance to the handwriting of Lady Muriel Bell's only known letter. These letters contain further links to Lady Bell; f.23v is written on a used sheet of paper which includes an address in Lady Mundeford's hand 'To my assured kind Sister the Lady Bell giue these' and f.30r has been annotated in another hand describing that letter as 'a letter of the Lady Bell...'. The address on folio 23v is clearly in the hand of Lady Mundeford as it is a smaller, more italic hand and contains her characteristic right-hand flourish above every <d>.

In addition to the evidence above, there are a number of orthographical clues which would support the idea that these may be lost letters by Lady Muriel Bell. The orthography of Lady Muriel Bell's only known letter (A1 f.221r-222r) contains a number of distinctive features which are mirrored in the two incomplete letters in Add MS 27400. Lady Muriel Bell is the only one of Lady Katherine's correspondents to use the <wh-> diagraph in her spelling of *would* as <<whould>>, and a very similar form <<whoald>> can be found in Add MS 27400 f.23v although the use of <oa> does not fit with the <ou> form of the thirteen instances of <<whould>> in her known letter, however the apparent <oa> spelling may in fact be a badly formed <u> which appears more like an <a>. A distinctive feature of Lady Bell's spelling habits is her consistent doubling of word-final consonants such as in her use of <<whatt, itt, att and putt>> and these forms are found in her letter of 1618 as well as in A3 f.23v and f.30r. Lady Bell's representation of *here* as <<hear>> is repeated in the incomplete letter on folio 23v. Similarly, Lady Bell's spelling of *desire* as <<dissier>> is distinct among Lady

Katherine's correspondents and this form is mirrored in both of the letters in Add MS 27400. Another similarity can be seen in the use of <<frind>> and <<frindes>> in A3 f.23v and f.30r respectively. There is no evidence of Lady Muriel Bell's spelling of *where*, however, the 1618 letter contains the form <<eles whear>> *elsewhere*, and the <ea> spelling of *where* is repeated in A3 f.30r in the use of the form <<whear euer>> *wherever*. Lady Bell's only known letter contains a distinctive spelling of *believe* as <<Belleeue>> and A3 f.30r contains the very similar form <<belleeu>> and the same folio contains the representation of *about* as <<abought>>, mirroring the use of this form in the 1618 letter. Damage to A3 f. 30r has obscured the final letter or letters of *write* and as a result it is difficult to be certain if this would follow the <<writt>> form used in Lady Bell's known letter or indicate if she had adopted the standardised form by the time of writing these letters.

Based on the palaeographical and orthographical evidence, as well as the address and annotation on the Add MS 27400 f.23v and f.30r, I believe that these letters are the work of Lady Katherine Paston's sister, Lady Muriel Bell. While each of these letters is only one page in length, compared with the three sides of the 1618 letter, there are enough parallels in handwriting and spelling to suggest that these are by Lady Bell, and therefore supplement the orthographical evidence provided by her only known letter, Add MS 27447 ff221r-222r. The use of unusual forms such as <<dissiers>>, <<abought>> and <<whould>> in the letters in Add MS 27400 suggest that these were a firmly established part of Lady Bell's personal spelling system. The letters by Lady Bell in the correspondence of the Mundeford family are in a less careful hand than that of the 1618 letter suggesting that these are later than her known letter. The letters by Lady Abigail Mundeford are mostly undated, however, references to Cromwell and the trial of King Charles I would date some of these to the late

1640s and the Civil War and it is therefore possible that Lady Bell's letters are of a similar date, some twenty years after the death of Lady Katherine Paston. Where such historical information exists, further research should be able to provide approximate dates at least for these letters.

Letters by Lady Muriel Bell

to Lady Katherine Paston	1618?	A1 ff.221r-222r
['Sweett Neece'] *	No date	A3 f.23v?
to Thomas Knyvett Esq.?	No date	A3 f.30r?

\*Annotation suggests the letter is addressed to 'the Lady Rous'? Annotation very feint.

## Chapter Two: The Orthographies of Three Knyvett Sisters

The letters of Lady Abigail Mundeford are of particular interest; with the exception of Lady Katherine Paston's sister, Lady Muriel Bell, there are no other female correspondents within this collection of letters. There is one letter from Lady Mary Heveningham (A1 f.158r); however Hughey in her notes on the text claims that this is in the hand of a professional scribe or secretary (Hughey, 1941: 106). The influence of Lady Katherine's male correspondents will be discussed in Chapter Three. With no female correspondents with which to compare and contrast spelling systems and the adoption of standardised forms, it will therefore be interesting to examine the orthographies of the Knyvett sisters in comparison with sixteenth- and seventeenth-century female writers. By comparing their spelling systems with other women it will be possible to see the way in which standardised forms were being adopted by women and the levels of variation within the writing of Early Modern women.

Lady Katherine and her sister, Lady Muriel Bell have what appears to be two very distinctive personal orthographies. Only one letter by Lady Muriel Bell survives in this collection of correspondence, but from this one letter it is possible to highlight particular features of Lady Muriel's orthography which differ from that of her sister, or shared features which may be exclusive to the Knyvett sisters.

Despite initial appearances that Lady Muriel's spelling system is unusual and unconventional, she actually employs many forms which are recognisably modern spellings, and in many cases her orthography is more standardised than that of Lady Katherine. Lady Muriel is consistent in her use of <<should>> and <<could>> whereas Lady Katherine displays a lot of variation in her spelling of these particular words. Lady Katherine does not

use the modern <ou> spelling of *should*, instead she uses <<shold>> or <<sholdest>>. Single variants of these forms also occur: <<sholdst, shouldest, showld>>. Lady Paston's letter to her son William dated February 1627 contains a form which has been transcribed by Hughey to fit with Lady Paston's usual <<sholdest>> form (Hughey, 1941:100), yet the original letter appears to have a double pen stroke resulting in the form <<sholldest>> (A1 f.254).

Similarly, Lady Katherine does not use the modern <ou> spelling in her forms of *would* and *could*. Her spelling of *would* follows her <old> form of *should* with the variant form <<woold>> used on three separate occasions. This <oo> spelling of *would* reflects her dominant spelling of *could* as <<coold>>, with one variant with an additional final -e. On two separate occasions however, Lady Katherine uses a variant form <<cowld>>, which again mirrors single variant form of *should* as <<showld>>. Her use of the <<cowld>> spelling is of particular interest as it not only reflects the use of <ow> where we would now expect to find <ow>, but it is also identical to her spelling of *cold* as <<cowld>>. The latter may be indicative of a similar pronunciation of *could* and *cold*. While she retains the <ou> form, Lady Muriel's spelling of *would* does not fit with her modern forms of *should* and *could*. In her letter, Lady Muriel uses the form <<whould>> fourteen times with no variant forms and the use of this initial <wh> spelling of *would* is unique among Lady Paston's correspondents. The regularity of Lady Bell's <wh> spelling suggests that this unusual form is her primary spelling of this word, or at the very least a dominant form within her orthography and the evidence from A3 f.23v supports this, with a single instance of the <wh> spelling with no variant. The occurrence of *would* in A3 folio 23v appears to contain the <oa> digraph in place of the conventional <ou>, as the top of the letter form is almost closed looking more like <a> than <u>, however, the regularity with which Lady Bell used the <<whould>> spelling in her earlier letter and comparison with other <u> graphemes in

the letter suggest that this is probably the spelling recorded here though with a slightly less distinct <u> grapheme.

Interestingly, Lady Katherine's spellings of *should*, *would* and *could* are relatively old-fashioned when compared with those of her correspondents. Lady Katherine's dominant spelling of *should* as <<shold>> was in use in the sixteenth-century, yet even by the second half of the century the present-day <ou> spelling was already widespread in printed texts and private documents, though in many cases it was spelt with an additional final –e. Similarly, Lady Katherine's <oo>/<ow> spellings of *could* were unusual even in the sixteenth-century with <ou> forms dominant and <oul> spellings widespread in the latter half of the century. Lady Katherine's faithful use of the <<wold>> form of *would* was already an outdated form by the mid sixteenth-century, having gradually been replaced by <<would/woulde/would\*>>, especially in printed texts before being adopted into personal spelling systems. <<wold>> was not an entirely outdated form by the late sixteenth-century, remaining in use in personal orthographies, such as that of Queen Elizabeth, who retained this form throughout her life.

The use of such apparently outdated spellings suggests that Lady Katherine was perhaps educated by or influenced by an individual who had learned these forms early in their life, and continued to use these forms despite the increasing influence of standardised forms. If these forms are the result of her education, then we would expect to see these forms mirrored in the spelling of her sister, Lady Muriel; however this is not the case, as Muriel's <<should, could>> and even her unusual <<whould>> spellings are more forward-looking than those of Lady Katherine. With only one letter as evidence for Lady Muriel's spelling system it is difficult to say for certain if these forms were used consistently throughout her

life or if she updated her spelling to fit with that of her contemporaries or as a result of influence from printed texts.

One of the most interesting features of the orthography of the Knyvett sisters is that not one of the sisters has an entirely standardised system of spelling *should*, *would* and *could*, with each woman having their own distinctive system for spelling these words. Lady Mundeford's system is the most modernised of the three, with standard forms of *should* and *would*, and a spelling of *should* which differs only from the standard through the use of <ow> in place of <ou>, and on two occasions she uses the correct standard form (A3 f.24r and f.31). Lady Muriel Bell has standardised forms of *should* and *could*, but has a distinctive <wh> spelling of *would*, <<whould>>. Lady Katherine Paston, on the other hand, has comparatively archaic spellings <<shold, wold and coold>> as her dominant forms. If the Knyvett sisters had received the same education then we would expect to find more of an overlap in their preferred spellings, yet in the case of these particular words, each sister has their own distinctive system. The more standardised system employed by Lady Mundeford is interesting when compared with the more archaic spellings of Lady Paston's letters. With no definitive dates for the births of Lady Bell and Lady Mundeford it is impossible to be certain of the eldest and youngest Knyvett sisters and it would be of interest to compare the adoption of standardised forms depending on the age of the author.

Lady Katherine's spellings of *should*, *would* and *could* are not the only features of her spelling system which are apparently old fashioned by the first decades of the seventeenth-century: her use of the form <<bine>> for *been* does not fit with the forms employed by her correspondents. Yet despite this form not being used by most of those in her circle, she did not seem to feel the need to replace <<bine>>, choosing instead to use this form

consistently with no variants. Lady Muriel Bell's chosen form, <<ben>>, can be found in her 1618 letter to Lady Paston (A1 ff.221r-222r) as well as a single usage in A3 f.30r. This form is shared by at least one other correspondent and is closer to the spellings of the other correspondents than Lady Paston's preferred spelling. The spellings used in Lady Abigail Mundeford's surviving letters suggest that unlike her sisters she did not have a firmly established spelling of *been*. Three letters (A3 ff.12r-13r, f.15r-16r & f.21) contain the form <<ben>>, which she shares with Lady Bell, while another three letters (A3 ff.22r-23r, ff.26r-27v & f.31r) contain Lady Paston's preferred form <<bine>>, with the single variant <<bin>> appearing in f.22-23. The <<bine>> spelling was also used letters written by Elizabeth I, and Burnley (1992:220) suggests that such spellings in the sixteenth-century were the result of attempts to represent the effects of the Great Vowel Shift, in this case representing the raising of /e:/ to /i:/ and the use of this form among the Knyvett sisters may be therefore have been inherited from an older individual at the time of their education. The limited evidence for Lady Bell's orthography does not rule out the possibility of this form having been used earlier in her life or having been retained as an occasional variant.

Lady Katherine is very consistent in her spellings of *write* and *writing* as <<wright >> and <<wrighting>>. Of the 19 instances of <<wrighting >> and the one variant <<wrightinge>>, her use of <gh> as a length mark is consistent. Her spelling <<wright>> appears in her letters 27 times yet in this case two variant forms are used without the <gh> spelling, <<write>> (letter 80, February 1627) and <<writer>> (letter 56, late April 1625). Similarly, Lady Katherine's use of <written> is fairly consistent, with only two alternative spellings <<writen>> (letter 70, April 1626 and letter 76, 23 November 1626) and <<writtine >> (letter 74, 13 November 1626). Lady Muriel Bell, on the other hand, does not share her sister's

consistent <gh> spelling of <<wright & wrighting>>. Instead, Lady Bell's spellings <<writt, writting>> appear to follow her general trend for the use of double consonants at the end of words. It may also be the case, however, that these particular forms are analogous spellings based on her correct modern spelling of *written*. With each word only appearing once in Lady Bell's letter, it is not possible to say for certain if this was a consistent practice or an anomaly within her personal orthography. The evidence provided by the incomplete letters in Add MS 27400 does not clarify this problem, as damage to folio 30r has obscured the final letter or letters of <<writ\_>> and as a result we cannot be certain if she had retained this <tt> form or had adopted the standard <write> spelling. The evidence from the thirteen letters by Lady Mundeford preserved in Add MS 27400 shows that her preferred forms of *write* and *writing* were closer to those of Lady Bell than Lady Paston's <gh> spellings. Lady Mundeford used the <<writt>> form for both *write* (f.15v) and *wrote* (f.33r), as well as <<writ>> for *write* (f.31r). Her form <<writting>> (f.28r) is identical to that of Lady Bell and she also employs the correct modern spelling of <writings> (f.24r). A3 folio 12r contains the form <<wrett>> to mean *written*, '...wer thay you hast wrett of...' Interestingly, Lady Bell and Lady Mundeford are not the only correspondents to utilise this <tt> spelling; Edward Paston in a letter dated May 1624 would appear to be using the <<writt>> form for *wrote*. He writes 'Whereas I writt vnto you that I purposed to terrie here vntill tuesdaye next, I doe purpose to goe to Townebarningham...' (Letter 40, 29 May 1624). Lady Katherine's <gh> form is shared by at least two of her correspondents yet this spelling is not listed as a variant in the OED. Baugh and Cable write that words such as *delight* developed the <gh> spelling through analogy with words such as *light* and *night* where the <gh> had originally represented an actual sound (2002: 208), the palatal variant [ç] having been lost in these words by the Late Middle English period (Nevalainen, 2006: 128). Lady Katherine's use of

<gh> in her form <<wright>> suggests an awareness of similar pronunciations and this has therefore resulted in a similar spelling. Lady Katherine is for the most part consistent in her use of <gh> spellings in words such as <<delightful, allmighty and nayghbours>> yet in three of her letters she omits the <gh> resulting in the forms <<delitfull>> *delightful*, <<delitest>> and <<naybors>> *neighbours*. There are few examples of <gh> spellings in Lady Bell's 1618 letter (A1 ff.221r-222r) yet on one occasion she has used an additional <gh> in her spelling of *about* as <<abought>>, a spelling which she repeated in A3 f.23v suggesting that this was more than just a one-off usage, though this may not have been her dominant spelling.

Another feature of Lady Muriel Bell's orthography which differs from that of Lady Katherine is in her consistent use of double consonant and it is this feature of her spelling system which is perhaps most immediately apparent to modern readers with examples including <<whatt, thatt, itt, att>>, all of which Lady Katherine normally spells with a single final <t>. Of the four forms listed above, only <<that>> appears as a variant in Lady Bell's letter to Lady Paston and is in fact used on four occasions, compared with only two for <<thatt>>. The use of doubled consonants in final position is a regular feature in Lady Bell's spelling system with numerous examples including <<directt, greatt, sweett and courtt>> and in some instances she adopts the final double consonant in place of a final <e> such as <<promiss>> *promise* and <<cass>> *case*. The new evidence provided by A3 folios 23v and 30r shows that the doubling of consonants was a firmly established characteristic of Lady Bell's orthography, as can be seen in the use of forms such as <<affeccttionat>> *affectionate*, <<visitt>> *visit* and <<esstatt>> *estate*. While it is a less common feature of Lady Katherine's orthography, she also used double letter spellings in her letters, for example <<hee, att, bee, itt>> though these are comparatively uncommon in her

orthography. Both sisters share forms including <<lett, gett and fitt>> and the evidence appears to suggest that the use of these spellings was also widespread among Lady Katherine's correspondents, as will be discussed in the subsequent chapter. Salmon writes that in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries 'educated men were in the process of rejecting unnecessary doubled consonants and final <e>s' (Salmon, 1999:42). There are several examples of doubled consonants and the use of final -e in Lady Katherine's writing, for example, <<sonne>> *son*, <<legge>> *leg* and <<bigge>> *big*. Lady Bell's use of doubled consonants is interesting as she appears to double intermedial <s>, <l> and <t> in almost every example in her letter. *Reason* and *cousin*, for instance, are recorded as <<reassone>> and <<cossen>>, *relate*, *valuing* and *holes* become <<rellatt>>, <<vallewing>> and <<holles>> and she uses <tt> in her forms including <<writting>> *writing* and <<sattisfacttione>> *satisfaction*. The use of 'superfluous letters not representing any sound' was the cause of much consternation for spelling reformers such as Richard Mulcaster (Salmon, 1999:33).

The doubling of intermedial consonants results in Lady Muriel Bell's unusual spelling of *desire* as <<dissier>> in her letter to Lady Katherine Paston (A1 ff.221r-222r) as well as in both of the incomplete letters preserved in A3 (f.23v & f.30v), with each letter containing more than one example. Despite this variant being listed in the OED, this form of *desire* is unique among Lady Katherine's correspondents with no examples of either <di-> or <ss> spellings being used by Lady Katherine or her correspondents. This is perhaps the result of Lady Bell's attempts to represent her pronunciation of this word. The consistent use of both <<dissier>> and <<dissiered>> suggest that this was her intended representation of the word. Lady Katherine Paston's used the modern spelling of <desire> and she used this

consistently with the occasional variant such as <<desier>> (1619) and <<desyre>> (late March 1627). Lady Katherine's variant form <<desier>> was Lady Mundeford's principal spelling which she used on eight occasions, alongside <<desiered, desierd, desiers, desirus and desiereth>> and two instances of the modern spellings <desire> and <desired>.

Just as there are numerous examples of Lady Katherine omitting a final <e> where we would expect to find it in standard modern usage, Lady Bell uses a single consonant where we would now use a doubled consonant in spite of her habit of doubling consonants in most examples in her letter. We therefore find examples of forms such as <<peny>> *penny*, <<aleadged >> *alleged* and <<medle>> *meddle*.

Lady Katherine had a tendency to add final –e where a modern reader would expect to find a single final consonant, with forms such as <<ofe>> *of* and *off*, <<hime >> *him*, <<ore>> *or*, <<wante>> *want* and <<thate>> *that* being used on occasion. In addition to this, there are a number of examples in Lady Katherine's letters of final –e being omitted where we would expect to find it in present-day spellings. Examples include <<ar>> *are*, <<wer>> *were*, <<don>> *done*, <<the>> *thee* and <<thos>> *those*. While her use of final –e is not as common as in Lady Katherine's letters, Lady Muriel Bell does have some examples of her use final –e such as in her use of the forms <<reassone>> *reason*, <<lawe>> *law*, <<noe>> *no* and <<complayne>> *complain*. In addition to this there are examples of spellings where final –e is omitted, for example <<ignoranc>> *ignorance*.

A regular feature of Lady Katherine's orthography is her use of <inge> where Lady Bell has the conventional <ing> spelling, with examples including <<beinge, goinge, haueinge, loueinge, knowinge>>.

A number of forms used in Lady Muriel Bell's letter suggest an orthography which is more modern and standardised than that of her sister. *They* appears in its present-day spelling in Lady Bell's letter without variation, whereas Lady Katherine uses <<thay>> over thirty times with a single use of a variant with a final –e. Lady Paston's dominant <<thay>> form is shared by Lady Mundeford who used it without variation. Interestingly, Lady Paston and Lady Mundeford's preferred form <<thay>> is a less common variant of the standardised form <<they>> which was already prevalent in printed texts in the early part of the sixteenth-century as well as being used in private writings.

In the writings of Lady Katherine Paston, Lady Muriel Bell and Lady Abigail Mundeford there are several examples of what may be described as homonyms, that is words with identical spellings and pronunciations but different meanings. The first example of this is Lady Bell's spelling of *there* and *their* as <<ther>> which she uses six times and four times respectively with no variants, though as is often the case the limited evidence for Lady Bell's spelling system does not rule out the possibility of the use of variant forms elsewhere. A single usage in A3 f.30r, however, suggests that <<ther>> was indeed her preferred form of *there*. Lady Mundeford and Lady Paston share their sister's use of <<ther>> as their dominant form representing both *there* and *their*. In the letters by Lady Paston this form is used alongside the alternative spellings << theer, there and theare>> for *there* and <<thaier>> for *their*. The latter of these forms appears to be the result of confusion perhaps under the influence of the modern *their* spelling used by Lady Katherine's correspondents. Similarly, her variants <<theer>> and <<theare>> may also be indicative of the influence of the *there* form though with an uncertainty over the use of the additional letters. Each of Lady Katherine's variant spellings of *there* and *their* are used on only one occasion meaning it is therefore difficult to

be certain if these are the results of conscious attempts to mimic the standardised orthography of other writers or printed texts, or merely erroneous spellings in rushed letters. The <<theare>> spelling is used by one of Lady Katherine's male correspondents, Sir John Heveningham and she may therefore have unconsciously adopted this form for use on this one occasion under the influence of his letters. She does not however use this form in a letter to Sir John, but in a letter to her son William.

The <<ther>> spelling of *there* and *their* was relatively common in the sixteenth-century in printed texts as well as in private writings. By the second half of the sixteenth-century, however, the standardised modern form <their> was already in use in printed texts and alternative forms such as <<there, theyr, their and theare>> remained in use in private writings across the country. Similarly, sixteenth-century forms of *there* included <<ther, thayr, theyr, thar and thear>>. When compared with these sixteenth-century forms, the spellings of Lady Paston, Lady Bell and Lady Mundeford are within the range of accepted spellings, however, the <their> form had begun to emerge as the standard form in print and in official documents such as royal proclamations.

Lady Paston and Lady Bell share the <<wear>> spelling of *were* as their dominant form, although Lady Katherine also has the alternative forms <<wer>> and the modern form <<were>>, perhaps as a result of the increasing influence of standardised usage. The limited evidence provided by Lady Mundeford's letters indicates that <<wer>> was her preferred form with no variant forms used in these letters. The Knyvett sisters are not alone in their use of the <ea> form of *were* with evidence of at least one of Lady Katherine's principal male correspondents also using this form. Lady Katherine's spelling of *were* as <<wear>> is

identical to her spelling of *wear*, which is her dominant spelling alongside a variant with a final <e> and one instance of <<wearinge>>.

In their spellings of *here* and *hear*, however, Lady Katherine Paston and both of her sisters appear to have quite separate systems. Lady Bell's letter from 1618 provides evidence for her spelling of *here* as <<hear>>, with no variation and here it also demonstrates that her preferred spelling of *hear* is the standard modern form. Evidence from A3 f.23v supports the use of <<hear>> as her dominant form of *here*. Lady Katherine on the other hand uses <<heer>> as her main form of *here* and *hear*, using it on 26 and 51 occasions respectively. Of the two alternative spellings employed by Lady Katherine, one is the standard modern spelling <<here>>, however she uses these as a variant form of *hear*. Once again, Lady Katherine demonstrates the consistency and regularity of her spelling system using each of the variants <<here>> and <<her>> *hear* on one occasion. In her spelling of *heard*, however, Lady Katherine has adopted the modern spelling as her main form with single instances of the alternative forms <<hearde>> and <<herd>>. Lady Abigail Mundeford on the other hand uses <<here>> as her dominant spelling of *here* and *hear*, though A3 f.29r contains the single variant <<heer>> for *hear*. Lady Mundeford's does not share Lady Paston's preferred standardised form of *heard*, opting instead for the form <<hard>>. It is interesting that none of the three sisters share a dominant spelling of *here* and *hear*, and that each of them employs their chosen form for both words.

The use of <ee> where modern spelling conventions would have <ea> is a feature shared by Lady Katherine and Lady Bell as can be seen in their spellings of *year* and *dear* as <<yeer>> and <<deer>> and the use of <<dearest, deerly, neer>> by Lady Katherine. That is not to say

that <ee> forms are used consistently in place of <ea> as these spellings are used alongside forms such as <<means, feare and cleane>>.

Lady Katherine Paston does not use the modern <ie> spelling of *friend* as her chosen form, but instead consistently used the form <<frinde>>, the only variation in this particular form coming from the use of <s> and <es> in the plural, with the <s> ending appearing only slightly more frequently than the alternative. The one instance of *friends* in Lady Bell's 1618 letter (A1 ff.221r-222r) would appear to indicate that she shared the <<frindes>> form employed by Lady Paston. The new evidence provided by A3 folios 23v and 30v support this, with individual examples of <<frindes>> and <<frind>> respectively, the latter example differing only from Lady Paston's usage through the absence of final -e, though the limited evidence does not rule out the possibility of Lady Bell having used the final -e in her spelling elsewhere. Lady Mundeford, however, does not use her sisters' preferred <i> spelling, having opted instead the archaic form <<frend/s>> (A3 ff.11, 15, 17), and this particular spelling was used by at least three of Lady Katherine's male correspondents (Sir Thomas Holland, William Denny and William Brende), as will be discussed in the following chapter. Lady Mundeford's letter to Lady Bell, reputedly dating from January 1647/48, (A3 f.26r-27v) contains a single instance of the correct modern form <friends>, once again showing Lady Mundeford's awareness, though not widespread adoption, of standardised spellings.

The 1618 letter by Lady Muriel Bell (A1 ff.221r-222r) suggests a tendency to spell words such as *assure*, *pleasure* and *censure* with a <-uer> ending as opposed to the accepted modern <-ure> forms resulting in Lady Bell's spellings <<assuer, pleasuer and censsuer>> as well as her use of the forms <<secuer, secuering and vnsecuered>>. This <-uer> ending is also used on two occasions by Lady Katherine in the forms <<treasuer>> *treasure* and

<<laysuer>> *leisure*. Lady Katherine, however, is more likely to use the conventional <ure> spelling as can be seen in her spellings <<secure, plesure and indure>> though these forms also appear without the final -e in the forms <<pleasur and indur>> Since all of the possible <ure> endings in Lady Bell's letter are spelled with the <uer> spelling it is therefore likely that this is indicative of a particular feature of her orthography. It is impossible to say for certain if this was a permanent feature of her spelling system or a habit at this point in her life. The <uer> spelling is shared by Lady Mundeford in her spelling of <<suer>> (A3 f.11) and <<purely>> (A3 ff.22r-23r).

Sixteenth-century spellings of *though* and *although* were subject to a great deal of variation in personal orthographies, with spellings ranging from <<thoo>> in a 1559 memoir (Cusack, 2006:260) through to the standard modern spellings. Lady Katherine's spelling of *though* is divided between the modern form and the form <<thowgh>>. Similarly, her spelling of *although* is almost standardised with her most common form <<allthough>> being used on three occasions though with two variant spellings <<althowgh and although>>. Lady Bell on the other hand has only one example of *although* and for this she uses the modern standard spelling. The use of the <ow> digraph is a common feature in the orthography of Lady Katherine for instance in her spelling of *thought* as <<thowght>> as well as in words such as *soul*, *found*, *house*, *shoulders* and *about* which she spells as <<sowll, fownd, howse, showlders and abowte>>. Sixteenth-century spellings of *thought* were subject to personal variation however it appears that the use of <ou> spellings was already established by the middle of the century. In addition to her use of <ow> where we would expect <ou> in standardised forms, Lady Katherine also employs the <aw> digraph in place of the standard <au> forms such as in her spellings <<becawse>> and <<cawse>>. Once again the evidence

appears to suggest that this <aw> form of *because* was comparatively uncommon among her correspondents and sixteenth-century writers, with most sixteenth-century variation resulting from <bi-, by- and be-> forms. The evidence provided by Lady Bell's letter appears to suggest that she does not share her sister's use of <aw> or <ow> spellings, opting instead for the conventional modern spellings <<although>> and <<cause>>. Lady Mundeford used the correct modern spellings of *because/cause* as variants to her more dominant forms <<becaus>> and <<caus>>. In spite of her use of <ow> in her spelling of *enough* as <<enowgh>>, Lady Katherine's spelling is more modernised than the numerous variants which were in use in the sixteenth-century including <<ynough, inough and inoughe>>.

The spelling of *trouble* and *double* is consistently spelt <<truble, trubling, troublesum>> and <<duble>> in Lady Katherine's letters with the standard <ou> being represented with <u>.

The <ou> form of *trouble* is also missing in Lady Bell's letter, where she opts instead for the form <<troble>>. As well as using forms which replace <ou> with a <u> or <o> spelling, both ladies also use forms which include <ou> or <ow> where a modern reader would not expect to find it, for example, in Lady Bell's spelling of *told* as <<tould>> and Lady Katherine's use of <<towld>> in a number of her letters. The <ou> digraph is also used by Lady Bell in her spelling of words such as <<ressoulved>> *resolved* and <<ould>> *old*.

The use of <w> where modern spelling conventions now use <u> can also be found in Lady Bell's spelling of *continued* and *valuing* as <<contenew>> and <<vallewing>>. The <ew> spelling was also used by three of Lady Katherine's correspondents, including her son William, in their spelling of *continue*.

Lady Bell regularly uses the <ea> digraph in an interesting manner, resulting in forms including <<conceaytts>>, <<answear>> *answer*, <<aledged>> *alleged*, <<searuants>>

*servants* and <<Belleau>> *believe*. Lady Bell uses this spelling of *believe* alongside the form <<Belleeue>> and neither of these spellings are repeated by Lady Katherine or her correspondents, with Lady Katherine consistently using the form <<beleue/beleuinge>>.

A regular feature of Lady Paston's spelling system is her use of <par-> spellings of words such as *perform*, *persuade*, *permit* and *perceive* resulting in forms including <<parforme, parswad, parmite and parsayve>> though standard modern forms of *perform* and *perceive* are also used. As well as using <par-> spellings in place of modern <per-> forms, Lady Paston spells *particulars* as <<perticulars>>. The continued use of these spellings appears to be indicative of an attempt to represent a particular feature of Lady Paston's pronunciation.

The use of <ar> in words with a modern <er> spelling may be explained by the lowering of /ɛr/ to /ar/ in Late Middle English being reflected in the Early Modern spelling system (Nevalainen,2006:125), as can be seen in the use of forms such as <<saruants>> in the letters of Lady Mundeford (A3 ff.12r-13r).

One particular feature within Lady Katherine's spelling system is her use of initial <i> in her spelling of words such as *encourage*, *endeavour*, *enlighten* and English as <<incouredge, indevor, inlighten and Inglish>> though the latter example is also spelt <<englishe>> in a later letter. Though the evidence is far more limited than for the spellings of Lady Paston, the evidence would appear to suggest that Lady Mundeford shared this feature, as can be seen in her use of <<inable>> *enable* (A3 f.30v) and <<Ingland>> *England* (A3 f.31r).

Similarly, the three letters by Lady Bell suggest that she also used such spellings, as can be seen in her use of spellings such as <<inioy/ inioyed>> *enjoy/ enjoyed* (A3 f.30r) and <<inforced>> *enforced* (A3 f.23v)

Another interesting feature of Lady Katherine's letters is her continued use of *thee/thou* in addressing her son, William. Of the 309 instances of *thee*, she uses this form on only four occasions with <<the>> used 305 times. Similarly, she uses <<thow>> on 109 occasions throughout her letters, compared with only two instances of <<thou>>. Lady Mundeford's letters indicate that she shared Lady Paston's preference for the <<the>> and <<thow>> spellings. Lady Bell on the other hand seems to show the opposite trend, using <<thee>> as her dominant spelling with only one example of <<the>> and there is no evidence of her chosen form of *thou* in her letter to Lady Paston (A1 ff.221r-222r) or in the letters in A3 (f.23v & f.30r). The use of *thee* and *thou* more than 400 times in the letters of Lady Paston can be explained by the social conventions of the day which dictated that the *thee/thou* address was used in family and intimate relationships, whereas *you* was used in non-family relationships (Cusack, 2006:191). The vast majority of Lady Paston's letters were written to her son which would account for the frequent use of *thee/thou* in her letters. This distinction also explains the discrepancy between Lady Paston's consistent use of *thee* and *thou* while it is noticeably absent from the letters of most of her correspondents, having been used only by Edward Paston and her sister Lady Bell. This convention is mirrored in the letters from Lady Mundeford to her nephew Thomas Knyvett and her sister Lady Bell (A3).

Words such as *shall* had a number of variant spellings in the sixteenth-century, yet by the time Lady Katherine is writing in the 1620s it is spelt fairly consistently in its modern form with only one example of <<shal>> (A2 f.25r). Lady Katherine's spelling of *shalt*, however, displays more variation with the forms <<shalt, shallt and shallte>>. One area of interest though is the form *shall be*. Lady Katherine's spelling of *shall be* is divided between three forms <<shall be, shallbe and shalbe>> apparently displaying uncertainty whether to spell it

as one word or two. Lady Mundeford's letters show the use of *shall be* as two separate words with no variants (A3 f. 13r, f.15v, f.22r, f.24). *Shall*, however, was recorded with <l> or <ll> spellings, with <<shal>> being the slightly more common form within the 13 letters in Add. MS 27400.

Lady Katherine displays less uncertainty in her spelling of *myself*, *himself*, *yourself* and *themselves* as two separate words where we would now expect one word and this practice is apparently shared by Lady Bell in her one use of <<your self>>. This is also the case with the use of the form <<can not>> *cannot* which appears in the letters of both Knyvett sisters. In the letters of Lady Katherine there are a number of words which are written as two words where we would now use one, these examples include <<an other>> *another*, <<any on>> *anyone*, <<well com>> *welcome* and <<euery thinge >> *everything*. More unusual examples of this feature can also be found in Lady Katherine's letters including <<a way>> *away*, <<be ware>> *beware*, <<a frayd>> *afraid* and <<in convenienc>> *inconvenience*. A similar example of this can be found in Lady Bell's letter when she spells *an end* as <<a nend>>.

Both ladies have a number of spellings which may be the result of errors rather than conscious attempts to represent pronunciations or to mimic the use of other spellings. Lady Bell, for instance, has spellings including <<receuie>> *receive* and <<resoule>> *resolve*. Similarly, Lady Katherine's letters contain a number of unusual forms with examples including <<provke>> *provoke*, <<eseptially>> *especially*, and <<nesenger>> *messenger*. The letters of Lady Katherine may offer an explanation for the use of these erroneous spellings when they have been spelt correctly elsewhere. In a number of letters, Lady Katherine finishes the letter by saying she has written 'in hast' or refers to the apparently hurried

nature of her letters, for example 'I wright this as much in hast as may be' (A1 f. 252r) and 'written as fast as I can driue' (A2 f.59r).

The use of <gu> spellings appears to have been the cause of particular confusion for Lady Paston. On two separate occasions she uses the correct modern spelling of *guide* but on in another letter she uses the unusual form <<giude>> (A1 f.258r). Similarly, the spelling of *guard* seems to have caused problems for Lady Paston with the forms <<gward>> (A2 f.51r) and <<garded>> (A2 f.49r) with no evidence of her having used the correct modern spelling. Similarly, her spelling of *gilt* appears as <<guilt>> and <<gilt>>. Lady Mundeford too, does not use the <gu> digraph in her spelling of *guess* as <<gess>> (A3 f.12v). Another digraph which appears to have been problematic for Lady Katherine is her use of <wh>. There are numerous examples of the correct use of <wh> in Lady Paston's writing yet it is her spelling of *whole* which is of interest. In a letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1625 (A2 f.45r,v) *whole* is recorded as <<wholl>>, with the conventional <wh> digraph yet with a final double <l> where we would now expect to find a single <l> and a final <e>. However, in letters from February 1625 (A1 f.262r) and 1<sup>st</sup> April 1625 (A1 f.250r) she uses the form <<howlsum>>, using an initial <h> in place of the <wh> of the standardised form which she employed in her spelling of <<wholl>> just one month later. Her chosen spelling of *unwholesome* in a letter from March 1625 (A2 f.36r) does not, however, adhere to her spellings of *whole* or *wholesome*, opting instead for the form <<vnhollsom>>. Her use of <<vnhollsom>> is interesting as she drops the <w> altogether and repeats the double <l> found in her spelling <<wholl>>. In addition to these differences, Lady Katherine uses <o> in <<vnhollsom>> where she had previously used <u> in <<howlsum>>. Lady Paston's spelling of *whom* in a letter dated 1<sup>st</sup> November 1626 (A2 f.55r) follows a similar pattern to her spelling of *wholesome* resulting in the form

<<howme>>. This <<howme>> form appears in the same letter as the correct modern spelling of *whose*, which if she had followed the same rule for her spelling of *whom* would have resulted in the form <<\*howse>> which is identical to her chosen spelling of *house*.

Another area in which the Knyvett sisters differ is in their spellings of *business*. Lady Katherine only uses the word on three occasions, twice spelling it <<bisnes>> and using the single form <<busines>>. Based on the letter presented in the Hughey edition it would appear that Lady Bell has three variant spellings within her one surviving letter;

<<buss'nes>> being used on three occasions with the individual variant forms <<bussnes>> and <<bus'neses>> (Hughey, 1941:45-47). The original letter (A1 ff.221r-222r), however, does not show a clear apostrophe in her the spellings <<buss'nes>> and <<bus'neses>>. In words spelt with a double <s>, Lady Bell uses a long-s followed by a lower-case <s>, and it would appear that in the spellings of *business* which Hughey has transcribed as containing an apostrophe, Lady Bell has looped the tail of the long –s towards the top of the letter, almost like a figure of eight, giving the appearance of an apostrophe above the small <s>.

Similar long –s forms can be seen within a few lines of these spellings, such as

<<dissiered>>, yet Hughey has transcribed these as <ss> with no apostrophe. If this is indeed the case, then Lady Bell only uses the form <<bussnes>> which is used on four occasions with the single variant <<busneses>>. The surviving letters by Lady Paston's sister, Lady Mundeford appear to show a little uncertainty in the spelling of *business* with three variants recorded; Add MS 27400 ff.13r contains the form <<besynes>>, f.21 records the similar form <<besines>> whilst f.27r contains the spelling <<besenes>>. Lady Mundeford's spellings of *business* differ only through the use of the medial vowel, suggesting that Lady Mundeford was unsure how to represent this particular sound.

The letters of Lady Katherine contain a number of spellings which may be mistaken as errors were it not for her repeated and consistent use of these forms. One of the most obvious examples of this is her spelling of *doubt* and *debt* as <<doupt/doupte>> and <<dept>>. On no occasion does Lady Katherine adopt the <b> spelling which has become standard amongst her correspondents. Lady Paston's unusual <p> spellings may be the result of her being aware that there was a silent letter in the spelling of *doubt* which she tried to represent, using <p> instead of the conventional <b> and this erroneous form then became an habitual spelling. The <b> in the spelling of *doubt* and *debt* was never the result of the /b/ having been pronounced. *Doubt* and *debt* had been spelt <dette> and <dout> in the Middle English period, however by the sixteenth-century the influence of the Latin *debitum* and *dubitare* had resulted in the modern spellings (Salmon, 1999:28). If Add MS 27400 f.23v is indeed the work of Lady Bell, then it would appear to suggest that, by that stage in her life at least, she used the modern spelling <doubt>. There is evidence from an undated letter, A3 f.17r, that Lady Mundeford used the form <<dowght>> alongside the correct modern form which she used in a letter to Thomas Knyvett Esq., possibly dating from 1628 (A3 f.24r) though the limited evidence means we cannot be certain which, if either, was the dominant form. The <<dowght>> spelling of *doubt* recorded by Lady Mundeford appears to be an analogous, following her spelling of *about* as <<abought>> (A3 f.33r). In her one use of the word *receipts* she spells it as <<receyts>>, yet it is spelt in the modern form by at least one of her correspondents.

A notable feature of Lady Katherine's spelling system can be seen in her representation of /k/ and /ks/ in her spelling of words such as *respect* and *accept*. Lady Katherine's first letter in this collection, dated 4<sup>th</sup> October 1618 (A1 f.162r), contains two examples of the form

<<respeckt>>, with an additional <k> in an otherwise correct modern spelling. The use of <k> is found in the same letter in her spelling <<satisfaktion>>. By June 1624 (A2 f.31r and A1 f.232r), however, Lady Katherine records the conventional modern <respect> spelling on two occasions and once with an additional final –e. The final –e spelling, <<respecte>>, is repeated in a letter from March 1625 (A2 f.36r). The <k> spellings can also be found in her representation of <<direckted>> and <<direcktions>> in letters dated 20<sup>th</sup> January 1620 (A1 f.183r) and April 1626 (A1 f. 252r) respectively, yet her use of <<directe>> in April 1625 (A2 f.43r,v) suggested a move away from her continued use of <ck> in favour of a more standardised form, though her use of <<direcktions>> in April 1626 (A1 f. 252r), shows Lady Katherine reverting back to her habitual <ck> spelling. Lady Katherine’s spelling of *accept* is of particular interest as over the nine years covered by her letters she appears to have been undecided on a chosen form. A letter from 1622 (A1 f.172r) contains the forms <<acksept>> and <<acksepted>>; however, by the time of Lady Katherine’s next surviving letter from January 1624 (A2 f.32r) she employs the forms <<acsepet>> and <<accept>>, both without the <k> though with an additional <c> following the <s> and she retains this form in her use of <<acceptable>> in a letter from 1625 (A1 f.248r). Her letter from March 1626 displays the re-emergence of <k> in her use of the form <<ackscepte>> where she also retains the <sc>. By the date of her final letter in the collection, dated July 1627 (A2 f.71r), she has once again lost the <k> spelling and is no longer using the <sc> cluster, resulting in the forms <<acsept>> and <<acceptable>>, mirroring a spelling of *accept* first used in her letter from January 1624 (A2 f.32r). On no occasion does Lady Katherine Paston use the modern <cc> spelling of *accept*. In the letters of Lady Katherine Paston there are a number of examples of words being spelt with a <k> where modern spelling conventions would use a single <c> or the <ck> digraph. Examples of this practice include <<stokins>> *stockings* (A2 f.47r),

<<skor>> *score* (A2 f.43r,v), <<sikenes>> *sickness* (A1 f.264r), <<sike>> *sick* (A1 f.236r and f.238r) and <<eskape>> *escape* (A2 f.67r). Lady Katherine's use of <k> can also be seen in her spelling of *stomach* as <<stomake>> where we would now expect to use <ch> (A2 f.36r). *Except, excellent, exceedingly* and *excuse* are all spelt without the conventional modern <c> as can be seen in her use of the forms <<exept>> (A2 f.67r), <<exelent>> and <<exedingly>> (A2 f.59r). Lady Katherine's representation of *excuse* is of particular interest as, instead of using the conventional <xc> spelling, Lady Katherine uses the unusual <g> spelling <<exguse>> in two letters from March and April 1626 (A2 f. 65r and A1 f.252r) and uses <<exgvsed>> in another letter from 13<sup>th</sup> November 1626 (A2 f.57r). Lady Katherine's use of this unusual form on three separate occasions may have been the result of attempts to represent her pronunciation of /sk/ as /sg/. The use of this particular form on more than one occasion suggests that this was indeed her intended spelling and this spelling is not listed as a recognised variant in the OED. In her spelling of *except*, Lady Mundeford does not omit the <c> which we would expect to find in the modern form, but instead uses <s>, resulting in the form <<except>> (A3 f.12r-13r).

The representation of /s/ using the digraph <sc> appears to have caused some confusion in the spelling system of Lady Katherine Paston. Words which a modern reader would expect to spell with an initial <sc> are often spelt with an initial <s> as can be seen in the spelling of *sciences* as <<siences>> in a letter dated 6<sup>th</sup> May 1625 (A2 f.45r,v). In addition to words which do not display their modern <sc> spellings, Lady Katherine presents a number of forms which contain the <sc> digraph in place of the single <s> or <c> of standardised spelling conventions, for example <<scerch>> *search* (A2 f.32r), <<scanctify>> *sanctify* (A2 f.45r,v), <<scease>> *cease* (A1 f.264r and A2 f.59r) and <<sceruante>> *servant* (A1 f.238r).

Lady Katherine also employs the <sc> digraph medially to represent /s/ as can be seen in her use of spellings such as <<resceiue>> *receive* (A1 f.260) <<desceiue>> *deceive* (A1 f.234r), <<conscider>> *consider*, <<sosocietie>> *society* (both A1 f.256r) and <<prescent>> *present* (A2 f.69r). Similarly words ending in the modern <-ce> spellings such as *face*, *place* and *grace* appear in Lady Katherine's spelling system with an almost exclusive <-se> spelling as can be seen in the forms <<fase>> (A1 f.254r), <<plase>> (first used in A2 f.32r) and <<grase>> (A1 f.172r, A2 f.31r, A1 f.246r, A1 f.242r, A2 f.57r, A2 f.41r and A2 f.69r). There are however some examples of final <-c/-ce> as in her spellings of <<scinc>> *since* (A1 f.246r), <<expenc>> *expense* (A2 f.38r) as well as the unusual <-cs> ending in her spelling of *malice* as <<mallics>> (A1 f.238r).

Lady Katherine's spellings of *since* and *certain* are also of interest. Of the thirteen instances of *since* in the forty seven letters written by Lady Katherine only two letters from February 1627 (A1 f.254r) and March 1627 (A2 f.67r) contain the modern spelling <since>. There are two examples of the <sc> spelling <<scinc>> in letters dated 20<sup>th</sup> January 1620 (A1 f.183r) and 1625 (A1 f.246r). The remaining nine examples are of Lady Katherine's preferred form <<sinc>>, the modern form without the final -e, and the use of this form covers almost the full nine years represented by Lady Katherine's letters, ranging from a letter in 1619 (A1 f.179r) to May 1627 (A2 f.69r). The emergence of the modern form in her letters by February and March 1627 suggests an awareness of standardised spellings, however, the use of her dominant <<sinc>> form in a letter from May of that year suggests that this was still her preferred spelling. Lady Mundeford appears to have used the modern form <since> as her principal spelling yet she also used the form <<sence>> (A3 f.12r & f.33r). There is no evidence of Lady Bell's spelling of *since*. Of the eight examples of *certain* and the individual

occurrences of *uncertain* and *certainty*, none of the forms fit within the standardised modern spelling. Instead of the standard <ain> spelling Lady Paston employed <-ine> and <-in> spellings which resulted in her use of forms such as <<certine>> (A1 f.264r, A2 f.63r, A1 f.236r & f.238r and A2 f.67r) as well as <<certinty>> (A2 f.43r,v) and <<vncertine>> (A1 f.238r). Only one of the eight examples of *certain* is spelt with an initial <s>, <<sertine>> and this can be found in Lady Paston's first letter in the collection dated October 1618 (A1 f.162r). Based on the evidence preserved in British Library Add MS 27447 it is impossible to say if this <s> spelling is indicative of an earlier phase in Lady Katherine's orthography, an occasional deviant form which was eventually abandoned or an individual error. Lady Mundeford does not share Lady Paston's <-ine> or <-in> spellings of *certain*, opting instead for the <ay> forms <<certayne>> (A3 f.15v, f.16r), <<certayn>> (f.17r), <<certaynly>> (f.22v) and <<vncertayne>> (f.33r). The 1618 letter by Lady Bell (A1 ff.221r-222r) does not contain any evidence for her chosen form of *certain*, however, A3 folio 23 verso includes the form <<vncertaynty>>, suggesting that Lady Bell shared the <ay> spellings employed by Lady Mundeford.

All three women display the degree of variation which existed in the personal spelling systems of women in the early seventeenth-century. By comparing their orthographies it is possible to see the way in which standardised spellings were gradually adopted as each woman's spelling systems contain standardised and innovative forms alongside outdated or idiosyncratic variants. While it is not possible to conduct a comprehensive comparison of both women's orthographies due to the limited evidence for Lady Muriel Bell's and Lady Abigail Mundeford's spelling systems, it is possible to identify shared features and those developed independently of their sister. The differences in spellings between the Knyvett

sisters raise interesting questions about the education of women in the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries and the way in which personal spelling systems were subject to influence from the orthography of other writers, most notably through contact with the spelling systems of educated male correspondents. There is no record of the education of Lady Katherine and her sisters yet the use of old-fashioned spellings would appear to suggest that they were initially educated by someone who was educated in the early to mid-sixteenth-century. Whilst the orthographies of Lady Paston and her sisters contain numerous archaic spellings, when compared with the spelling systems of women in the second half of the sixteenth-century, it is apparent that the spelling systems of the Knyvett sisters are more consistent and modern, though not without variation and deviant spellings. Lady Mundeford's spelling system appears to have been more progressively modern than that of Lady Paston. The more modern and consistent spelling systems may be the result of the continued correspondence with educated male writers. Lady Katherine Paston wrote and received many letters discussing estate business as well as corresponding with her son's tutor at Cambridge. The influence of these educated men does not, however, mean that Lady Katherine's spelling system is entirely modern and free of idiosyncratic spellings. Lady Katherine's spelling is nevertheless confident and consistent and she does not feel the need to adapt or alter her orthography even if it is less modern than that of her correspondents. It is perhaps worth considering if the adoption of standardised forms was a purely communicative consideration with forms which may be problematic or archaic being replaced to some degree with a more standardised form. Most of the letters in the collection were intended for her son and she claims to have written a number of them in haste so it is doubtful that producing a consistently modern orthography was her primary concern in writing to her son.

Fig.1: Comparison of common words in the letters of Lady Katherine Paston, Lady Muriel Bell and Lady Abigail Mundeford

	Lady Katherine Paston	Lady Muriel Bell	Lady Abigail Mundeford
should	shold, shoulde, showld sholdest, sholdst, shouldest	should	showld, should
could	coold, cowld, coolde	could	could
would	wold, woold , woldest	whould	would
thee	the, thee	thee, the	the
thou	thow, thou		thow
been	bine	ben	bine, ben, bin
were	wear, were, wer	wear	wer
wear	wear		
they	thay, thaye	they	thay
there	ther, there, theer, theare	ther,	ther, there
their	ther, thaier	ther	ther
than	then	then	then
those	those, thos	thos	
here	heer	hear	here
hear	heer, here, her		here, heer
though	though, thowgh		though, thowgh
although	allthough, allthowgh, although	although	although

friend	frinde, frinds, frindly,	frindes	frend, frends, friends
write/writing	wright, write, writer, wrighting, wrightinge	writt, writing	writt, writ, writting, writings,
written	written, writen, writtine	written	wrett?, writt (wrote)
business	bisnes, business	bussnes, busneses	besynes, besines, besenes
desire	desire, desier, desyre	dissier, dissiered	desier, desire, desiered, desired, desirus, desiereth
believe	beleue, beleuinge	belleeue	beliue
trouble/ double	truble, duble	troble	truble, trobles, trobled
receive	receive, receiue, receyued, receve, receved, reseaiue		recayue

### Chapter Three: Lady Katherine Paston's Male Correspondents

“At this period, what becomes particularly noticeable is the disparity, even greater than in the previous period, between men and women. While men’s spelling seems to make some movements in the direction of modernisation, if only through their greater acquaintance with the spelling in the original Latin of loanwords, women’s spelling now seems to be totally illiterate, and largely based on phonetic principles.”

(Salmon, 1999:42)

Of the thirty-seven letters received by Lady Katherine which are preserved in this collection of correspondence, only one letter is definitely the work of a female writer. The letter from Lady Mary Heveningham is in the hand of a professional scribe or secretary and the letter received from Jane and John Smith was probably written by the latter, though it is difficult to be certain. The men with whom Lady Katherine was in regular correspondence were educated men who would have written extensively to manage their estates and business affairs. Lady Katherine’s letters are not therefore the correspondence of women who may only write to other women to exchange news; Lady Katherine’s letters are influenced by educated business men who would be more likely to use standardised forms. The use of standardised forms amongst Lady Katherine’s male correspondents does not however mean that their orthographies are not worth examining as there are many examples of non-standard and idiosyncratic usages within their letters. It is therefore interesting to compare the standard and non-standard forms in Lady Katherine’s orthography with those of her male associates.

As discussed in Chapter One, a grammar school education would have been available to most boys by the time Lady Katherine's male correspondents were born and for families in affluent counties such as Norfolk would have had a greater opportunity to attend such a school than boys living in other parts of England. Between 1600 and 1660, there were over 170 grammar schools in Norfolk compared with nineteen in London (Cooke and Wroughton, 1980:190), reflecting the prosperity and educational aspirations in that county.

The male writers represented here would have received varying levels of education depending on their intended role in life. Little or nothing is known of the education of many of the men with whom Lady Paston corresponded, however, individuals such as William Denny and Dr Samuel Walsall were clearly highly educated and those from privileged families such as Sir John Heveningham and Sir Thomas Holland would presumably have received a reasonably high level of education. On the other hand, figures such as Philip Alpe, William Brende, Samuel Matchett and John Smith appear to have been from less privileged backgrounds yet their letter writing abilities do not differ greatly from the more educated men. Nothing is known of their education yet it is probable that they would have attended a grammar school as was common by the late sixteenth-century.

In the letters received by Lady Katherine Paston, the vast majority of the occurrences of *should* appear in the modern spelling. Only one correspondent, Edward Paston, uses the form <<shoulde>>, the modern form with an additional final –e. The evidence from the seven letters by Edward Paston which are contained in this collection appears to suggest that <<shoulde>> was his dominant spelling, with <<should>> being used as a variant on only two occasions (A1 f.197r and A2 f.23r). Edward Paston was only eight years Lady Paston's senior yet she does not use the modern form or that used by Edward Paston. Of

the correspondents represented in this collection only one writer shares Lady Paston's principal spelling <<shold>>. The author of this particular letter (A1 f.219r), William Brende (1558-1625), was born twenty years before Lady Paston and his use of this form presumably represents a spelling system with characteristics from the early to mid sixteenth-century, and evidence from sixteenth-century sources would appear to support this. As discussed in the chapter above, Lady Paston's orthography contains a number of forms which were more commonly used in the early to mid sixteenth-century however this is perhaps to be expected given the lack of formal education for women in this period, with women probably being educated by governesses or tutors employed by the family. When viewed alongside the regularised modern forms employed by the other male correspondents in this collection, William Brende's use of this form is indicative of someone who learned to spell before the use of the modern form was firmly established. Only William Brende and Edward Paston present forms which vary from the standard spelling.

Greater variation can be seen in the spellings of *would* with deviant forms being used alongside standardised forms. Sir Thomas Holland, a mere four years older than Lady Paston, uses the variant <<woald>> on one occasion (A1 f.177r,v-178r), while using <<would>> on a further three occasions. Sir Thomas Holland is the only correspondent to use the <oa> spelling of *would*. With only four instances of *would* in six letters by Sir Thomas Holland it is difficult to be certain, based on this limited evidence, if this was a one-off error or represents a deviant form which was a regular feature of his orthography. The twelve letters by Sir John Heveningham also contain an example of a single variant which appears alongside eight examples of the modern standard spelling. Sir John's letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> July 1622 (A1 f.193r) contains the single form <<wold>>. Again, the limited evidence does not

allow us to be certain if this was a variant which he used on occasion or if it is an erroneous spelling in which Sir John has merely omitted the <u> by mistake. The letter by William Brende (A1 f.219r) also contains the form <<wold>> as his sole example of *would*. Assuming this is indicative of his usual spelling habits, this would tie in with his use of <<shold>> as representing spellings found widely in the sixteenth-century and we would therefore expect to find these spellings in the writings of those educated in the middle or later decades of the sixteenth-century, whose orthographies were established before the influence of standardised forms appearing in print. The use of the <<wold>> form in the letter by Sir John Heveningham is probably an error or a rarely used variant based on his frequent use of the modern spellings of *would* and *should* as opposed to William Brende's use of <<wold>> which used alongside his <<shold>> form is likely to represent an earlier usage.

Another interesting variant can be seen in Philip Alpe's letter from August 1624 (A1 f.223r) where he uses <<wowlde>> on two occasions, while also using the modern form on a further two occasions within the letter. The two instances of the <ow> spelling means that this cannot merely be dismissed as an error, but must therefore be to some extent representative of a feature of Alpe's orthography. The use of <ow> in place of the modern <ou> was by no means uncommon in the Early Modern period, and a number of examples of this can be found in this collection of correspondence. Alpe's letter contains only one example of <<should>> and no evidence for his preferred form of *could*. Just as he used the final -e in his spelling of *should* as <<shoulde>>, Edward Paston also displays a preference for the <<woulde>> form, using it on seven occasions with only two examples of the modern spelling.

Only five of the thirty-seven letters contain examples of *could* and, interestingly, each of these letters is by a different author, yet all five letters share the modern standardised form with no variant spellings. Of these correspondents, Sir John Heveningham and Sir Thomas Holland were born in 1576/77 and 1574 respectively while Edward Paston was born in 1570. No dates are known for the birth or death of Lady Muriel Bell (nee Knyvett), and the letter from Lady Mary Heveningham is equally problematic since this letter was clearly the work of a professional scribe or secretary. None of the correspondents mirror Lady Paston's <<coold>> and <<cowld>> spellings, however the limited evidence does not rule out the possibility of the authors using these variants elsewhere.

Lady Katherine Paston's consistent use of <<bine>> for *been* is not shared by any of her predominantly male correspondents. The closest form to that employed by Lady Paston is Sir Thomas Holland's use of <<bin>> in the earliest letter in this collection, dated February 1603 (A1 f.143r). Sir Thomas Holland is the only writer to share Lady Paston's <i> spelling of *been*, however, he does not use the final –e as found in Lady Paston's example. Of the thirty-seven letters there were only fourteen instances of *been*. Only one of these letters contains the modern standard spelling which appears in a 1619 letter by Samuel Matchett (A1 f.173r,v), where it is used alongside the form <<beene>>. This <<beene>> form is the sole spelling used in five of Sir John Heveningham's letters (A1 f.156r, f.164r, f.187r, f.195r and f.207r) spanning some six years from 1618 to 1624 and shows a consistent usage of this form. The two examples of <<ben>> in two letters by Edward Paston occur almost thirteen years apart in July 1611 (A1 f.151r) and May 1624 (A1 f.212r) and while this does not rule out the possibility of variant forms being used at any point in these thirteen years, it suggests that <<ben>> was a dominant form within his spelling system at a time when

spelling was still subject to variation. Interestingly, this form is shared by Lady Katherine Paston's sister, Lady Muriel Bell.

As with his spelling of *been* as <<beene>>, Sir John Heveningham is consistent in his use of the deviant spelling <<weare>> for *were* which he used over a number of years, with five instances over four years (A1 f.187r, f.191r, f.195r and two instances in f.207r) with no recorded variants. The <ea> spelling of *were* is shared by Lady Muriel Bell in her use of the form <<wear>> (A1 f.221r-222r). Sir Thomas Holland, Edward Paston, Dr Samuel Walsall, Lady Mary Heveningham's scribe and Lady Katherine Paston's son, William all record the standard modern spelling <were> and all of these occur without an accompanying variant.

In the spellings of *they* preserved in the collection of received correspondence, only Sir John Heveningham deviated from the standard form, opting instead for the form <<thay>>. Sir John's use of the <a> spelling spans some six years from 1618 to 1624 (A1 f.156r, f.191r, f.207r and f.211r) suggesting that this was his dominant form, however, a letter from October 1622 (A2 f.21r) contains the standardised <<they>> spelling. The use of this form shows Sir John's awareness of the standardised form in spite of his decision to retain his established personal spelling habits. Of the correspondents who use *they*, all record the modern form with no additional variants (Edward Paston A1 f. 151r, f.212r and A2 f.23r; Lady Muriel Bell A1 ff.221r-222r; Sir Thomas Holland A1 ff.177r,v-178; William Brende A1 f.219r and Philip Alpe A1 f.223r).

In the spellings of *there* presented by Lady Paston's male correspondents there is an interesting combination of variant forms. The standard modern spelling is used primarily by Edward Paston, occurring fifteen times in four letters dating from 1623 to 1624 (A1 f.197r, f.209, f.212r and A2 f.23r). An earlier letter by Edward Paston dated July 1611 (A1 f.151r)

contains one example of his use of the form <<ther>>. This may have been used as an alternative to his more commonly used <<there>> spelling or, given the twelve years between examples, it may be indicative of a shift within Edward Paston's orthographical habits. It is worth noting that where Edward Paston used either form he did not use any variants. Letters from Jane and John Smith (A1 f.199r), Dr Samuel Walsall (A1 f.205r) and Philip Alpe (A1 f.223r) contain individual instances of <there> with no alternative spellings. <<ther>> is the principal spelling employed by Sir John Heveningham, However it is not his only spelling of *there*, with <<theare>> being used on six occasions (A1 f.156r, f.166r and f.187r). Sir John Heveningham is the only correspondent to use this particular <ea> spelling. Prior to 1620, Sir John used <<ther>> and <<theare>> showing a slight preference towards the use of <<ther>>. Sir John does not use the <ea> spelling after 1620, opting instead to use the <<ther>> form suggesting a marked shift in Sir John Heveningham's primary spelling of *there*. At some point between 1620 and 1622, Sir John appears to have abandoned his use of the variant <<theare>> while retaining <<ther>> as his dominant spelling. The letters written by Lady Katherine Paston contain a single example of <<theare>> and it could be the case that this form entered Lady Paston's spelling system as a result of Sir John Heveningham's usage, however, Lady Paston used this form in a letter from 1626 (A2 f.57r), six years after Sir John's last recorded usage in this collection. Sir John may have continued to use the <ea> spelling sporadically in letters to Lady Paston which have not survived or it may have been used by another writer who is not represented in these letters. Lady Paston's son William uses the <<ther>> form in the letter to his mother dated February 1625 (A2 f.34r) and this is a form which he shared with his mother. Based on the limited evidence of his two letters to his mother which have survived in this collection, William Paston's spelling habits differ from those of his mother in a number of respects as a result of the

influence of his tutors as a child and as a teenager at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Dr Samuel Walsall, Master of Corpus Christi College used the standardised modern form in his one surviving letter to Lady Paston, suggesting the use of standardised spellings among William Paston's tutors.

The limited evidence appears to suggest that Sir Thomas Holland shared Sir John Heveningham's and Lady Paston's use of <<ther>> as his chosen representation of *there*, however, of the six letters received by Sir Thomas Holland dating from 1603 to 1624, only one letter (A1 f.185r) contains an example of *there* which he spelt <<ther>>. William Brende also employs this <<ther>> form in his letter from August 1624 (A1 f.219r). Of all the correspondents, only William Denny uses the <ei> spelling of the standardised form <their> as his chosen representation of *there*. He uses this form on two occasions within his letter (A1 f.224r) suggesting that this was his intended spelling as opposed to an error. Context shows that he was not using these two examples as possessive pronouns.

The possessive pronoun *their* appears to have been the subject of variation within the personal orthography of Edward Paston. His first letter in this collection, dated July 1611 (A1 f.151v), contains two examples of the conventional modern form with an additional final -e, <<theire>>. Subsequent letters in 1623 and 1624 show that he had dropped the final -e, perhaps in order to conform to the standardised spelling. His final letter in this collection from May 1624 (A1 f.212r), however, contains the form <<there>> for *their* suggesting confusion between *their* and the standard spelling of *there* which he was using by this date. Only one letter from January 1620 (A1 f.181r) provides evidence for Sir John Heveningham's spelling of *their* and it would appear to suggest that he used the same form as his dominant form of *there*, <<ther>>. These examples from Edward Paston, Sir John Heveningham,

William Denny as well as Lady Muriel Bell show that the <there/their> spelling distinction was as confusing for seventeenth-century writers as it is for many modern writers. In spite of the increasing influence of standardised spellings throughout the sixteenth-century, early seventeenth-century writers, however, would still have been influenced by pronunciation-based spelling practices making a shared form for *there* and *their* more likely. Sir Thomas Holland (A1 f.186r, f.185r and f.217r), Samuel Matchett (A1 f.173r,v), William Denny (A1 f.189r) and William Brende (A1 f.219r) all use the correct modern form <their>.

William Denny (d.1642) and Edward Paston are the only two correspondents to use the modern spelling <here> in letters from June 1620 (A1 f.189r) and May 1624 (A1 f.212) respectively. Sir Thomas Holland (A1 f.155r), Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.164r, f.166r, f.187r, f.203r) and William Paston (A2 f.32r) all use the <ee> spelling <<heere>>. Lady Muriel Bell is the sole correspondent to use the <ea> form, <<hear>> (A1 ff.221r,v-222r). Sir Thomas Holland retains his <ee> spelling for his chosen representation of *hear* as <<heere>>.

Edward Paston (A1 f.151v), Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.181r, f.187r, f.195r, f.203r & f.211r), William Paston (A2 f.32r) and William Denny (A1 f.224r) all record the modern <ea> spelling with an additional final –e resulting in the form <<heare>>, and in the case of William Paston (A2 f.32r) *heard* is also spelt with a final –e, <<hearde>>. Only one writer, Samuel Matchett (A1 f.173r,v), uses <<hearinge>> in the sense of a legal hearing, and again his spelling only differs from the modern form through the use of a final –e.

All of the examples of *shall* display the conventional modern spelling. *Shall be*, on the other hand, appears to have been thought of as one word, resulting in the use of the form <<shalbe>> which appears in letters by Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.156r, f.166r, f.191r & f.211r), Sir Thomas Holland (A1 f.185r & f.217r), Edward Paston (A1 f.197r & f.212r), William

Brende (A1 f.219r), Philip Alpe (A1 f.223r) and William Denny (A1 f.224r). The single <l> spelling of <<shalbe>> used alongside the consistent double <l> spelling of <shall> suggests that this was considered a distinct single word rather than a mere elision of *shall* and *be* as no correspondent offers a spelling such as *\*shallbe*. The spelling of *will be* also follows this pattern, resulting in the use of the form <<wilbe>> in letters by Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.191r) and Edward Paston (A1 f.197r & A2 f.23r). The letters of Lady Katherine Paston and her correspondents in this collection display a very regular system of spelling *shall* compared with the level of variation recorded in private orthographies in the sixteenth-century. Sixteenth-century letters and private documents record forms such as <<schall>>, recorded in Cornwall in 1532 by William Godolphin (Cusack,2006:197), Alice Radcliffe's use of <<sall>> in Lancashire in 1524 (Cusack, 2006:232) and <<shalle>> used as late as 1593 in the will of Gloucestershire man Thomas Maertemer (Cusack,2006:338). Variation was not uncommon in early printed texts such as Caxton's *Lyf of Our Lady* from 1483 which records the forms <<shal>> and <<shul>>.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Lady Paston's consistent <gh> spelling of *write* and *writing* appears unusual to a modern reader as she appears to have used the <gh> to denote the vowel length. The use of this form can also be found in a number of letters from Lady Paston's main correspondent, Sir John Heveningham in the forms <<wright>> (A1 f.166r, f.187r & f.195r), <<wrightings>> (A1 f.156r) and <<wrighteth>> (A1 f.207r), and as with Lady Paston, Sir John is faithful to his use of <gh> as a length mark. The <gh> spelling can also be found in Philip Alpe's letter dated August 1624 (A1 f.223r) in his use of the form <<wrighting>>. Once again the spellings presented by Edward Paston appear to show a change in his preferred spelling over several years. His first letter from July 1611 (A1 f.151v)

contains the spelling <<wryte>>, by 1623 (A2 f.23r) however, his preferred spelling would seem to be <<write>> in line with modern spelling conventions. <i> and <y> were used almost interchangeably in the Early Modern period, however his use of <i> in place of the earlier <y> suggests that he was following the standardised spellings. His spelling of *writing* as <<writinge>> (A2 f.23r) again differs from the modern form only through the use of a final –e. Edward Paston’s final letter from May 1624 (A1 f.212r), however, contains Lady Muriel Bell’s unusual form <<writt>>. His use of this form may be erroneous, perhaps as a result of the influence of the <tt> spelling of <written>. None of the examples of *written* recorded by Lady Muriel Bell (A1 ff.221r-222r), Samuel Matchett (A1 f.173r,v) and Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.181r & f.191r) deviates from the standard spelling.

Lady Muriel Bell is the only letter-writer in this collection to offer a spelling of *desire* which deviates from the modern spelling; she is the only writer to use the form <<dissier>>, which has been discussed in the previous chapter. Only Sir John Heveningham’s use of the <-eth> (A1 f.193r & f.207r) and <-inge> (A1 f.156r, f.195r and f.211r) suffixes mark the <desire> spellings as being different from modern spelling practices.

In her private writings Lady Katherine Paston displays a tendency towards using <par-> in her spelling of words such as *perform*, *persuade* and *perceive*, yet uses an initial <per-> in her representation of *particular*. Her male correspondents on the other hand, use <per-> in their spellings of *perform*, *persuade* and *perceive*. Samuel Matchett and Edward Paston use abbreviations in their spellings of *performance* and *perswation* (A1 f.173r,v) and *particuler* (A1 f.212r) respectively. The use of abbreviations was as common practice in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries. Sir Thomas Holland is the only correspondent to use <per-> in his spelling of *particular* as <<perticuler>> (A1 ff. 177r,v-178r), and it is also worth noting his

use of <-er> in the final syllable instead of the modern <-ar> ending. The use of this <-er> spelling can also be found in the writings of Edward Paston, in his use of the forms <<particuler>> (A1 f.212r) and <<particularly>> (A1 f.201r & 209r), and Philip Alpe's use of <<particuler>> (A1 f.223r). Another characteristic which distinguishes the Early Modern spellings from their modern equivalents is the consistent use of final -e in all of the recorded examples of <<performe>> in letters by Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.166r, f.203r & f.211r), Lady Muriel Bell (A1 ff.221r-222r) and Sir Thomas Holland (A1 ff.177r,v-178r & f.185r). Sir John Heveningham and Samuel Matchett both use <-wa-> in their spelling of <<perswaded>> (A1 f.166r) and <<perswation>> (A1 f.173r,v) respectively, where modern readers would now expect to find <-ua-> spellings.

The spellings of *receive* are, for the most part, the conventional modern spelling, with the use of the <u> grapheme where the modern form has <v>. <u> and <v> were interchangeable in the Early Modern period. Similarly, <i> and <y> could be used interchangeably as in William Brende's use of <<receyued>> (A1 f.219r). Sir Thomas Holland in his letters dated October 1618 (A1 f.168r) and March 1620 (A1 f.177r,v-178r) used the forms <<receaued>> and <<receaeue>>, and is the only correspondent to record the <ea> spelling. In his letter from October 1618 (A1 f.168r) he used the form <<receaeue>> on two occasions suggesting that this was his regular spelling at this point in his life. By 1624, however, Sir Thomas Holland has adopted the standardised <ei> spelling in his use of <<receiued>> (A1 f.217r). Both instances of Sir John Heveningham's use of <<Receiue>> (A1 f.164r) and <<Receiued>> (A1 f.195r) are capitalised. Samuel Matchett's use of the form <<receivid>> (A1 f.173r,v) is worth noting for his use of the <-id> suffix in place of the <-ed> suffix which was already firmly established by the early seventeenth-century.

Edward Paston, Sir John Heveningham, Lady Muriel bell and William Paston use <-ew> in place of the standard <-ue> in their spellings of *continue*. Edward Paston used the form <<continewally>> (A1 f.151r), Sir John Heveningham used <<continewe>> in his letter from March 1618 (A1 f.156r), Lady Muriel Bell recorded the spelling <<contenewed>> (A1 ff.221r-222r) and William Paston, Lady Paston's son, used the form <<contineweth>> (A2 f.34r). Despite recording this form in 1618, Sir John Heveningham does not retain the <ew> spelling and evidence would appear to suggest that in the two years since recording that particular usage, Sir John had adopted the standardised <u> form, resulting in his letter from January 1620 (A1 f.181r) containing the form <<continuaunce>> and his use of <<continueth>> in February 1624 (A1 f.203r) suggests that he retained the <u> spellings in his personal orthography. Sir Thomas Holland, on the other hand, had been using the correct modern spelling as early as 1603 in his letter to Lady Paston's mother, Lady Muriel Knyvett (A1 f.143r). Both Sir John Heveningham and Sir Thomas Holland record the <au> spelling of *continuance* as <<continuaunce>> in letters from January and March 1620 (A1 f.181r and A1 177r,v-178r) and the use of this form suggests a feature of pronunciation in the early seventeenth-century.

The spellings of *himself*, *myself* and *yourself* are interesting as most of the examples contained within these letters show that based on their spellings these words were probably considered as two separate words in Early Modern English, resulting in the use of the forms <<my selfe, your selfe and him selfe>> which are recorded by most of the correspondents and single examples of <<her selfe>> and <<them selues>> used by Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.207r) and William Brende (A1 f.219r) respectively. A number of the correspondents use an abbreviation in place of the <u> grapheme in their spellings of <<your selfe>>. The

use of abbreviations was a common feature in Early Modern spelling practices. The one letter by Samuel Matchett (A1 f.173r,v) contains two examples of *himself* being spelt as a single word and without the additional final –e which was favoured by most of the other letter-writers represented in this collection. Similarly, a letter from Sir John Heveningham, dated November 1621 (A1 f.191r), contains <<himself>> and <<myselfe>> as a single word, yet in the same letter, he used the form <<your selfe>>. Subsequent letters by Sir John do not contain any further examples of either *himself* or *myself*, making it impossible to say if he continued to spell these as one word or two. His one example of his spelling of *herself* as <<her selfe>> (A1 f.207r) and his continued use of <<your selfe>> suggests that he still had a preference towards using two separate words, however his use of <<himself>> and <<myselfe>> suggest an awareness of a trend towards using these single-word spellings. The majority of the letters within this collection show *self* being spelt with a final –e, however, as early as 1615 Lady Mary Heveningham’s scribe was using the form <<my self>> (A1 f.158r). The final –e has also been dropped by Lady Muriel Bell (A1 f.221r-222r), one of the examples by Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.191r), William Denny’s one use of <<your self>> (A1 f.224r) and all of the forms in Samuel Matchett’s letter (A1 f.173r,v), <<self, my self, himself and your self>>. Lady Muriel Bell (A1 f.221r-222r) is the only letter-writer to record *self* with a final <ff> spelling, <<selfff>>, though as we have already seen, Lady Muriel Bell has a tendency to double consonants in word final position. A letter by Edward Paston from April 1624 (A1 f.209r) contains the interesting form <<your salfe>>. He is the only writer to use the <a> spelling of *self* and this is the sole occurrence within Edward Paston’s letters in this collection ranging in date from 1611 to 1624. It is therefore likely that this was an erroneous spelling perhaps influenced by surrounding words or a momentary lapse in concentration.

The single <s> spelling of *business* as <<busines>> is the preferred spelling for three of Lady Paston's male correspondents, Sir Thomas Holland (A1 f.143r & f.177r,v-178r), Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.156r & f.181r) and Edward Paston (A1 ff.197r, 201r, 209r & 212r) and all three use this spelling relatively consistently. That is not to say, however, that these forms were used without exception as Sir Thomas Holland's letter from October 1618 (A1 f.168r) contains the form <<buisines>> with an additional <i>, which is a mistake many people still make today. The correspondents' letters contain only one example of the modern double <s> spelling, which can be found in Edward Paston's letter dated May 1624 (A1 f.212r), where it is used alongside his usual <<busines>> spelling. Lady Muriel Bell's spellings in Hughey's edition of *The Correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston 1603-1627* (1941: 45-47) <<buss'nes, Bussnes and bus'neses>> do not fit with any of the other spellings recorded by Lady Paston or those in her circle of correspondents and I believe that these forms are the result of an erroneous transcription by Hughey, with the apparent apostrophes having been formed by the loop of the long <s>. Lady Bell's chosen forms of <<bussnes and busneses>> are therefore well within the range of variant forms in use in the sixteenth- and seventeenth- centuries in private spelling systems, and are in fact much closer to the standard than the forms recorded by Hughey would suggest.

One word which shows the use of several variant spellings between Lady Katherine Paston's predominantly male correspondents is in their spelling of the word *friend*. As discussed in the above chapter, Lady Paston and her sister Lady Muriel Bell share the use of the <<frindes>> spelling. Dr Samuel Walsall is the only correspondent to record the modern <ie> form (A1 f.205r). Only one of Sir John Heveningham's letters, dated February 1624 (A1 f.203r) contains an example of the word which he spells <<freinde>> and <<ffreindes>>. His

<ei> form is not repeated by any of his fellow correspondents and suggests an attempt to copy the standardised <ie> form, though it is difficult to be certain of this based on only two examples contained in the one letter. The initial <ff> of Sir John's form <<ffreindes>> is the Early Modern realisation of a capital <f>. The secretary or scribe writing on behalf of Lady Mary Heveningham in 1615 (A1 f.158r) uses a double <e> spelling, <<freend>> which may again be indicative of an attempt to aim for the standardised <ie> spelling. The single <e> spelling can be found in the letters of Edward Paston in the use of the form <<frendly>> (A1 f.151v), Sir Thomas Holland's use of <<frend>> (A1 f.155r) as well as William Denny's use of <<frends>> (A1 f.189r) and the use of <<vnfrendly>> in William Brende's letter from August 1624 (A1 f.219r). The use of this <e> spelling of *friend* spans almost the entire collection from 1611 to 1624. Sixteenth-century sources appear to show <i>, <e>, and <y> spellings of *friend* as being more dominant than the modern <ie> form, which was gradually being used in printed texts in the closing decades of the century, for example in Lyly's *Euphues/Anatomy of Wit* which was published in London in 1578 (Burnley, 2000:227) and Day's *English Secretorie* from 1586 which was also published in London (Gorlach, 1991: 354). The use of the <e> spelling of *friend* as <<frend>> appears to have been in use from the start of the Early Modern period through to the seventeenth-century, appearing in early printed works by Caxton such as *The Book Called Cordyal* printed in 1480 and continuing in use in private correspondence through until the first half of the seventeenth-century as can be seen in the letters of Lady Katherine Paston. Lady Katherine's <i> spelling mirrors that of Elizabeth I (1533-1603) and was the form used by spelling reformer Richard Mulcaster in his '*First Part of the Elementarie*' of 1582. <y> spellings of *friend* such as <<fryndis>> in a deposition from Leicester in 1525 (Cusack, 2006:108) appear to have fallen out of regular use by the mid sixteenth-century.

The spellings of *cousin* presented in the letters addressed to Lady Katherine display a number of variant spellings between correspondents and even within the orthography of the same writer. Sir Thomas Holland appears to have been consistent in his use of <<cosen>> with this particular form appearing in two of his letters from October 1618 (A1 f.168r) and March 1620 (A1 f.177r, v-178r), however with only two examples recorded in two years it is difficult to be certain of this. The <<cosen>> form is shared by Philip Alpe (A1 f.223r) and a similar form is employed by Lady Muriel Bell (A1 f.221r,v-222r), though with her habitual doubling of consonants resulting in the form <<cossen>>. The evidence would seem to suggest that Edward Paston was undecided on his preferred spelling of *cousin*.

Edward Paston's first letter to Lady Paston, dated 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1618 (A1 f.160r), presents the form <<cozen>> which was used on three occasions within this letter and he repeats this spelling on eleven occasions in four subsequent letters dated 26<sup>th</sup> May 1623 (A1 f.197r), 11<sup>th</sup> September 1623 (A2 f.23r), 12<sup>th</sup> April 1624 (A1 f.209r) and 29<sup>th</sup> May 1624 (A1 f.212r). While the frequent use of this form would suggest that this was his dominant spelling, he was by no means exclusive in its use. In his letter dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 1623 (A2 f.23r) <<cozen>> appears on three occasions alongside the variant <<cosin>> and in a letter from January 1624 (A1 f.201r), Edward used this variant <<cosin>> four times without variation. His letter from May 1624 (A1 f.212r) contains three examples of *cousin*, all of which are recorded with a different spelling, <<cozen, cousin and coozen>>. His use of the correct modern form in this letter suggests that he was familiar with this spelling and he may have been in the process of adopting the standardised form into his personal spelling system. It is also worth noting his use of <oo> in the variant form <<coozen>> which he had spelt consistently with a single <o> in all previous examples since 1618 suggesting that the use of the standardised form in his orthography had caused an element of confusion resulting in the doubling of the

<o> where he may have been aiming for the <ou> of the emerging standard spelling. British Library Add MS 27447 contains two letters from Lady Paston's son William and each letter contains a different spelling of *cousin*. His first letter from January 1624 (A2 f.32r) records the form <<cosin>> mirroring the spelling of Edward Paston. William's letter dated 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1625 (A2 f.34r), however, records the unusual spelling <<chozen>> and since this is the only example of this form it is difficult to say if this was an erroneous spelling, perhaps as a result of confusion with another word, or if this was indeed his intended spelling and a conscious attempt to represent the /k/ sound. Amongst all of the correspondents who record spellings of *cousin*, there is a split in the preferred use of <z> and <s> spellings. There are fourteen <z> spellings of *cousin* in total, and thirteen of these can be found in the letters of Edward Paston with the one remaining form used by William Paston. Of the ten <s> forms, Edward Paston is once again responsible for the majority of these, having used <s> forms on six occasions. Lady Muriel Bell is the sole correspondent to offer the <ss> spelling which appears once in her letter of 1618.

Once again Lady Paston's preferred spelling of *certain* as <<certine/sertine>> is not shared by her correspondents. Instead Edward Paston (A1 f.160r) and Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.187r) use the form <<certayne>> which differs only from the modern spelling through the use of final -e and the <y> which was interchangeable with <i> in the Early Modern Period. Sir Thomas Holland, on the other hand, recorded the correct standard spelling of *certainly* and is the only correspondent to use the standard form of *certain* or related words.

Interestingly all four examples of *occasion* recorded by Lady Paston's correspondents are spelt in the correct standard form, appearing in letters by Samuel Matchett (A1 f.173r,v), Sir Thomas Holland (A1 f.177r,v-178r), Jane and John Smith (A1 f.199r) and William Denny (A1

f.224r). In addition to his standard form of *occasion*, Samuel Matchett also employs the correct modern form of *occasioned*. Lady Katherine Paston is the only letter-writer in the collection of her correspondence to record her chosen form <<ocation>>.

The spellings of *though* and *although* recorded in this collection of correspondence shows that by the 1610s and 1620s, the spellings of these particular words had become far more stable as a result of standardisation and all of these words presented by Lady Paston's correspondents are recorded in the standard modern spelling. Only Lady Paston herself offers examples which deviate from the standard spelling only through the use of <ow> in place of the standard <ou> and in the use of a double <l> in her spelling of *although*. When compared with the variation which existed in the previous century the use of these forms show a marked shift towards the widespread adoption of the standardised spelling. Caxton had used the modern standard form *though* in many of his early printed works such as *Cordyal* from 1480 and the standard form was by no means uncommon in the sixteenth-century, especially in printed texts, yet within the lifetime of many of the individuals represented in this collection private orthographies such as that of Queen Elizabeth recorded the regular use of forms including <<thogh>>, as can be seen in several of her handwritten letters from the 1580s though earlier in her life Elizabeth had used the form <<thogth>> (a spelling which she may have inherited from her governess, Kat Ashley).

Whilst the spellings of *though* and *although* appear correct to the eyes of a modern reader, many of the <gh> spellings recorded in the letters would appear to have caused problems for some of the letter-writers. The spelling of *high* appears to have been an issue for Sir Thomas Holland in his use of the form <<hiest>> *highest* (A1 f.143r). The <gh> is also missing in William Paston's use of <<almitie>> *almighty* in his letter of February 1625 (A2 f.34r), yet

it is used by Edward Paston (A1 f.151r) and Jane and John Smith (A1 f.199r) in their use of <<Almightie>> and <<almighty>> respectively. As has already been seen, Lady Paston and Sir John Heveningham both employed the <gh> digraph as a length mark in their use of the form <<wright and wrighting>>. Lady Muriel Bell (A1 ff.221r-222r) also appears to have used <gh> as a diacritic in her spellings of *about* and *overthrow* as <<abought>> and <<ouerthrowgh>>.

The use of the <ea> digraph in the letters addressed to Lady Katherine Paston has resulted in a number of spellings which give the words in question an unusual appearance to a modern reader and the unusual look of these words gives the impression of greater variation and more anomalous spellings than is necessarily the case. Relatively common words such as *year* and *dear* can often be found with a double <e> in place of the <ea> as demonstrated by Lady Muriel Bell's use of <<yeer>> (A1 ff.221r-222r) as well as Sir Thomas Holland's use of <<yeere>> (A1 f.168r). Edward Paston (A1 f.151r and A2 f.23r), Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.170r, f.187r, f.195r and A1 f.203r ) and Philip Alpe (A1 f.223r) all record the modern <ea> form with an additional final –e. Only William Denny offers a spelling of *year* which differs from the <ea> or <ee> forms presented by his fellow correspondents as can be seen by his single use of <<yere>> in June 1620 (A1 f.189r), though it is impossible to say if this was a regular spelling employed by William Denny. Sir Thomas Holland records two forms of *dear*, the first <<deere>> in March 1620 (A1 f.185r) follows his preferred spelling of *year*, while his second form <<deer>> from 1624 (A1 f.217r) has lost the final –e. Lady Paston's son William, writing from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is the only letter-writer to record the <ea> form of *dear* and he uses <<deare/Deare>> in both of his letters dated 26<sup>th</sup> January 1624 (A2 f.32r) and 22<sup>nd</sup> February 1625 (A2 f.34r). Not one of Lady

Paston's correspondents records the <ea> spelling of *heart*. The scribe or secretary writing on behalf of Lady Mary Heveningham (A1 f.158r) uses the forms <<hart>> *heart* and <<hartie>> *heartly*, with the former also appearing in Sir Thomas Holland's letter of March 1620 (A1 f.177r,v-178r). Spellings of *heartly* and *heartily* follow this same pattern with the single <a> in place of the conventional <ea>, examples of this include Sir John Heveningham's use of <<hartely>> (A1 f.193r, f.207r and f.211r) and <<harty>> (A1 f.203r, f.207r and f.211r) as well as William Paston's use of <<hartiest>> in January 1624 (A2 f.32r). The <ea> digraph is also omitted in William Denny's spelling of *treasurer* as <<Tra'sourer>> in his letter of December 1624 (A1 f.224r) as well as in Lady Muriel Bell's use of <<leve>> *leave* in 1618 (A1 ff.221r-222r). Similarly, William Paston uses a single <e> in his spelling of *reason* as <<Reson>> (A2 f.34r), yet Sir John Heveningham has the <ea> digraph in his standardised form <<reasonable>> (A1 f.164r)

The most interesting <ea> spellings, however, are those which omit the modern <ea> digraph or include it in words where it is not normally found. One such spelling is Edward Paston's realisation of *each* in a letter from 1611 (A1 f.151r) in which the modern <ea> is replaced by <ei>, resulting in the unusual form <<eiche>>. In addition to these forms which omit the <ea> there are a number of examples which include the <ea> where modern spelling contains only a single <e> or <a> and examples of this practice can be found in the letters of Lady Muriel Bell, Sir John Heveningham and Edward Paston. In her letter from 1618 (A1 f.221r,v-222r), Lady Muriel Bell presented a number of forms which follow this pattern including <<searuants>> *servants*, <<answear>> *answer*, <<aleadged>> *alleged* and <<wear>> *were*. Lady Muriel appears to be using the <ea> digraph to represent /i/ and /ɛ/. Sir John Heveningham also recorded a number of interesting forms such as <<seaven>>

*seven* (A1 f.156r), <<altogeather>> *altogether* (A1 f.195r) and <<togeather>> *together* (A1 f.207r). Edward Paston's letter dated 26<sup>th</sup> May 1623 (A1 f.197r) contains a single use of the form <<surveaye>> *survey*, using the <ea> in place of the standard <e> and this is his only example of this particular form. Within the same letter, however, Edward Paston uses two other spellings of *survey*, <<survaye and surveye>>, the latter differing from the modern form only through the use of a final-e. There is a final occurrence of this word in another of Edward Paston's letters from May 1624 (A1 f.212r) in which he use the form <<serveye>>. Of the four occurrences of this word, he has employed four different spellings, three of which occurring in the same letter, indicating an uncertainty over which form to use as the 'correct' form. Interestingly, Sir Thomas Holland uses <ae> in his spellings <<praesently>> *presently* (A1 f.143r) and <<praeuailinge>> *prevailing* (A1 f.168r) perhaps in an attempt to represent his interpretation of the pronunciation.

A large number of the spellings which differ from the accepted standard form, differ only through the use of <ow> in place of the <ou> of the conventional spelling, for example <<fownd>> *found*, <<cowntrey>> *country* and <<Accownt>> *account*, all of which appear in a letter by Sir John Heveningham in a letter dated 30<sup>th</sup> March 1618 (A1 f.156r) and there are numerous examples in subsequent letters by the same author and by other letter-writers in the collection. As with the use of <ea> in place of a single <e> or <a>, so we also find <ow/ou> where modern spelling conventions contain a single <o> suggesting an attempt to reflect the pronunciation of early seventeenth-century English. Examples of this practice include <<sould>> *sold* (Sir Thomas Holland A1 f.143r), <<tould>> *told* (Lady Muriel Bell A1 ff.221r-222r and Edward Paston A1 f.197r).

The above survey of the spelling practices of Lady Paston's male correspondents shows a more standardised level of spelling though there are enough variant forms and idiosyncratic spellings within their personal orthographies to indicate that the adoption of a fully standardised spelling system was far from complete among men who were born between the 1550s and the 1580s. A high level of education does not rule out the use of non-standard spellings, as can be seen in the spellings of Lady Paston's son William, who uses unusual forms such as <<chozen>> for *cousin*. There are a number of ways in which William Paston's spelling system differs from that of his mother, and perhaps shows the influence of the spelling habits of his tutor in the spellings he has adopted into his personal orthography. The lack of subsequent letters by William Paston means it is not possible to be certain if the spellings displayed in his two surviving letters were replaced by standardised forms or if these spellings remained with him throughout his life, at least as occasional variant forms. The disparities in the spelling systems of Lady Paston and the limited evidence for that of her son is unsurprising as his mother would have had a limited influence on his education, in spite of her obvious writing abilities. As with Lady Paston and her sisters, the variant spellings employed by the male writers are not very different from the standard usage and in many cases fit a pattern within their personal orthography; none of the forms presented in these letters would cause any problems in understanding for their contemporaries or for a modern reader familiar with the use of non-standard spellings in the seventeenth-century.

## Chapter Four: The Structure of Lady Katherine Paston's Orthography

This final chapter will examine the structure of Lady Katherine Paston's personal orthography based on Richard L. Venezky's work *The Structure of English Orthography* (1970). Lady Katherine Paston's spelling habits will be discussed in comparison with the conventions of the Modern English spelling system in order to identify particular features and patterns within her spelling system, and to highlight the ways in which her spelling habits differ from the standard spelling system in use today. In particular this chapter is influenced by *The Structure of English Orthography* chapters V to VII which examine the distributions and pronunciation of consonants and vowels in different environments. Venezky's work includes detailed analysis of many words and spelling patterns which are not represented in the letters of Lady Katherine Paston, and as a result this chapter will focus only on those spelling patterns which can be applied to the orthography of Lady Paston's letters.

### Consonant distribution

<b>

'Initial and medial *b* account for almost 95 percent of all occurrences of this unit; final *b* is rare [...]. In initial and final clusters *b* occurs chiefly with *r* and *l*, forming the initial clusters, *br-* and *bl-*, and the final clusters *-rb* and *-lb* [as well as] *-bt* and *-mb*, although they represent different patterns from the *-rb* and *-lb* clusters (Venezky, 1970:64).' <b> in *debt*, *doubt* and *subtle* corresponds to / $\emptyset$ / and <b> elsewhere corresponds to /b/.

Lady Paston's spelling practices would, for the most part, fit with this distribution of <b>. In her representations of the silent /b/ in *debt* and *doubt*, Lady Paston uses the presumably

unpronounced <p>, resulting in her usage <<dept>> and <<doupt/e>>. The <b> was never pronounced but was introduced into the spelling system as a result of confusion over the correct etymology of these words, having been borrowed from French but mirroring the Latin spelling. Most of Lady Katherine's correspondents used the modern <bt> spelling. The only exception to this appears to be Lady Mundeford's use of the <gh> form <<dowght>>, perhaps an analogous spelling based on her use of <<abought>> *about* (A3 f.17r).

### <c>

'C occurs primarily in initial and medial position; in final position it occurs in the ending *-ic*. The low frequency of final *c* is probably due to the problems created by derivational and inflectional suffixes which begin with the vowels *e*, *i*, *y*. In such cases *c* would be pronounced /s/ unless a *k* were added between *c* and the first vowel of the suffix' (Venezky, 1970:65). <C> also occurs in a number of initial clusters, such as *cl-*, *cr-*, *scr-* and in the final cluster *-ct*. <C> also occurs in initial *cz-* and final *-ic* in loanwords which are not represented in the letters of Lady Paston or her correspondents.

Lady Paston follows the conventions regarding the use of the initial clusters and the use of final clusters such as *-ct*. <C> in final position can be found in a number of words in the letters of Lady Paston and her correspondents where the final *-e* of modern spelling conventions has been omitted, resulting in forms such as <<sinc, onc, continuanc and performanc>>. 'C before the spellings *i*, *y*, *e*, corresponds to /s/' (Venezky, 1970:65), yet Lady Paston's spellings of *place*, *face*, *grace* and *twice* show <<plase, fase, grase and twis>>. Similarly, Lady Paston uses final <-cs> in her spelling of *malice* as <<mallics>> however the use of <-cs> in <<acscs>> *excess* and <<acsept/acceptable>> *accept* corresponds to /ks/. The latter example also occurs in Lady Paston's letters with the variant form <<acksept/

acksepted>> showing her use of <ck> to indicate the /k/ pronunciation. Lady Paston's use of <k> or <ck> where modern spellings would use <c> to represent /k/ is a regular feature of her orthography, as can be seen in her use of forms such as <<respeckt, direckted, neglekted, affecktion, and satisfaktion>>. It would appear that Lady Katherine is attempting to make a distinction in the use of <c>, <ck>, <cs> or <s> to represent /k/ and /s/. Further representations of /s/ will be discussed below.

### <ch>

'ch occurs frequently in initial and medial position and not so frequently in final position' (Venezky, 1970:66). In modern spelling <ch> corresponds to /tʃ/, /k/, /j/ and /tʃ/.

In most cases, Lady Paston's use of <ch> does not differ greatly from the modern usage. Lady Paston does not, however, use final <ch> in her spelling of *stomach*, instead opting for <k> to represent /k/, resulting in the form <<stomake>>, and a similar usage can be found in a letter by her sister, Lady Mundeford in her use of <<ake>> *ache*. A number of Lady Paston's letters addressed to her son at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge contain a <c> spelling of *Christi* and a similar spelling <<Cristmas>> can be found in a letter by Sir John Heveningham (A1 f.187r). A letter by William Paston, Lady Paston's son, contains a single instance of the unusual form <<chozen>> *cousin*, in which he used <ch> to represent /k/.

In a letter by Lady Abigail Mundeford (A3 f.31r) the words *Norwich* and *French* which would expect to find spelt with a final <ch> are in fact spelt with a final <sh>: <<Norwish>> and <<Frensh>>.

## &lt;d&gt;

Lady Paston's distribution of <d> is also well within the accepted norm for modern English spelling conventions. 'D occurs commonly in initial, medial and final position and in the clusters *dr-*, *dw-*, *-nd*, *-ld* [and] *-rd*' (Venezky, 1970:68).

## &lt;f&gt;

<f> can be found in initial, medial and final positions and alternates with <ph> in certain environments. There are a number of clusters containing <f>, for example *fl-*, *fr-*, *-lf*, *-rf*, *-ft* (Venezky, 1970:69). In most instances, Lady Paston's use of <f> follows modern conventions, with occasional variation through the use of <ff> where a single <f> is used in the modern form, for example <<satisfaction>>. In many nouns ending in <f>, the /f/ becomes /v/ 'with the addition of the regular plural morpheme' and the /f/ also becomes /v/ when the noun becomes a verb. (Venezky, 1970:69)

The English pronunciation of *lieutenant* is reflected in Lady Paston's spelling <<Leffetenants>>. This particular spelling is not recorded in the OED, however, the example <<lieuftenant>> is listed from 1500, with forms such as <<lieuete-naunte>> in use from the 1530s and the modern spelling in use by the first decades of the seventeenth century. The evidence from the OED would suggest that Lady Paston's spelling is based either purely on pronunciation or on an archaic or idiosyncratic spelling which she has inherited at some point in her life.

## &lt;g&gt;

<g> is mainly found in initial and medial position as well as in final position in a small number of words. In addition to this <g> is also used in a number of clusters including *gl-*,

*gn-*, *gr-*, *-gm* and *-gn*. <g> corresponds to /g/, /dz/ and occasionally /z/. 'After *g, u* is occasionally used to mark the correspondence *g*→/g/' (Venezky, 1970:56). The examples of <gu> spellings in Lady Paston's letters are interesting to a modern reader as a number of forms are presented from the correct spellings such as <<guide>>, to apparently confused spellings such as <<giude>>, <<gward>> and <<garded>>. Such spellings are not restricted to Lady Paston, as can be seen in Lady Mundeford's use of <<gess>> *guess* and <<disgise>> *disguise*. Spellings without <u> were not uncommon in Early Modern English and were used alongside <gu> forms and a number of these variants are listed in the OED, including Lady Mundeford's spelling <<gess>>.

The spelling of *designs* as <<desingns>> appears to suggest some confusion for Lady Paston in the positioning of the silent <g>. Lady Paston's use of <g> in <<exguse/ exgvsed>> *excuse/excused* is unique within the collection of her correspondence and the letters by Lady Mundeford and suggests her interpretation of the pronunciation as having a /g/ rather than a clear /k/ sound.

The use of initial <g> to represent /g/ and /dz/ does not appear to have been a problem in the spelling of Lady Paston. Lady Mundeford, Lady Paston's elder sister however, uses initial <j> in her spellings of *general* and *gentleman* as <<Jenerall>> and <<Jentleman>>, however she retains the use of <g> in medial position.

#### <gh>

Venezky writes that <gh> is 'uncommon in English orthography, occurring mostly in initial and final position and in the cluster *-ght*' (Venezky, 1970:72). In the letters of Lady Katherine Paston the <gh> corresponds either to /θ/ as *delight* or *though*, or to /f/ as in

*enough*. Lady Paston and her correspondents are fairly consistent in their use of <gh>, though there are occasional omissions where we would expect to find it in modern spelling as can be seen in the use of forms such as <<hiest>> *highest*, <<almitie>> *almighty*, <<naybors>> *neighbours* and <<delitfull>> *delightful*. Throughout the collection of Lady Paston's correspondence the spellings of words such as *though*, *although* and *enough* are far more consistent and standardised than in the century before, with any variation appearing in the use of <ou/ow> rather than the use of final <gh>.

As has been discussed in the chapters above, Lady Katherine Paston and her sisters, Lady Bell and Lady Mundeford have a number of unusual <gh> spellings. <gh> appears to have been used as a marker of vowel length in Lady Paston's spellings of *write* as <<wright>> and Lady Bell's and Lady Mundeford's use of <gh> in their spellings of *about* and *doubt*.

#### <h>

<h> occurs in initial and medial position as well as medially and in final position as a marker following a vowel. The initial <h> is not pronounced in words such as *honest* and *hour* or in medial position in a number of words not represented in these letters, but is pronounced /h/ in all other positions. (Venezky, 1970:74)

The phenomenon of /h/-dropping can be found in English from the Middle English period onwards and there is possible evidence of this in a letter by Lady Paston in which she writes:

'... this arshe cowld and blacke wether...' (A1 f.266r)

Nevalainen writes that '/h/-dropping was common in words beginning with /h/ in weakly stressed positions [as well as] in French loan words with an initial /h/' (2006:126). There are no other examples of this within the letters by Lady Paston, nor are there any instances of

the related practice of the addition of unetymological /h/, known as /h/-insertion (Nevalainen, 2006:127). Such practices were not stigmatised in the Early Modern period.

### <j>

In the Early Modern period <i> and <j> were interchangeable, as can be seen in the use of spellings such as <<inioy>> *enjoy* and <<iorneie>> *journey* in letters by Lady Paston's correspondents. Many of the occurrences of <j> in Modern English spelling can be found in words of foreign origin which once again are not represented in the letters examined in this study. Lady Mundeford's use of initial <j> in place of the conventional initial <g> to represent /dz/ has been discussed above.

### <k>

<k> occurs in initial, medial and final position, appearing in the initial clusters *sk-*, *kn-*, and in the final clusters *-lk*, *-nk*, *-rk* and *-sk*. <k> can also be found in a number of modern borrowings which are not represented in the correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston. (Venezky, 1970:75) As Venezky points out, 'where the final *e* marks the correspondence of the preceding vowel, a *c* spelling for /k/ could not be used because the final *e* would also mark the incorrect correspondence for *c*' (Venezky, 1970:75).

As has already been discussed above, Lady Katherine Paston's letters display a tendency to use <k> for /k/ in words which have a modern <c> spelling, as can be seen in her use of spellings such as <<skor>> *score*, <<eskafe>> *escape* and <<phisike>> *physician*. Similarly, she used <k> in place of the modern <ck> in spellings such as <<stokins>> *stockings*, <<sike>> *sick* and <<pake>> *pack*.

<l>, <m>, <n>

Each of these graphs occurs in initial, medial and final position and in a large number of initial and final clusters and there are no major discrepancies between the use of these letters in modern spelling conventions and the orthography of Lady Paston and her correspondents. Occasional variation may be found, for example, in the use of double consonants where the modern form has a single consonant and vice versa.

<p>

The distribution of <p>, as with most other consonants, means that it is used in initial, medial and final positions as well as in a number of initial and final clusters. In words such as *receipt* and *consumption* the <p> is not pronounced and this is reflected in Lady Paston's spelling of these words. Unlike her spelling of *doubt* as <<doupt>> in which she attempts to represent the silent <b>, the <p> is omitted entirely in her spellings <<receyts>> and <<consumtion>> and the two separate instances of the latter show that this was her intended spelling.

The initial <per-> and <par-> clusters are the subject of much variation in the orthography of Lady Katherine Paston. There are a number of examples of words which we would expect to have the initial <per-> spelling, such as *persuade* and *perform* are in fact spelt with <par->: <<parswade>> and <<parforme>>. However, her one occurrence of *particular* has an initial <per-> spelling, <<perticulars>>.

## &lt;q&gt;

The orthography of Lady Katherine Paston and her correspondents reflects the limited distribution of the <qu> cluster and the use of this cluster is in keeping with modern spelling conventions.

## &lt;r&gt;

'r occurs in initial, medial, and final position and in a large number of clusters' (Venezky, 1970:81). The use of these initial and final clusters in the correspondence of Lady Katherine Paston does not differ from modern spellings; however there are a small number of spellings in Lady Paston's letters which appear to reflect the Early Modern phenomenon of /r/-deletion. 'In Early Modern English, r is still pronounced wherever it was written; there are no 'silent Rs' as in present-day Southern British English [...] London English ca.1600 was, like present-day General American, what is known as a 'rhotic' accent' (Smith, 2001:133). Evidence of /r/-deletion can be found from the fifteenth century onwards, especially in private orthographies from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, apparently indicating the 'phonetic weakening of postvocalic /r/' (Nevalainen, 2006:126). The examples from Lady Paston's orthography which appear to reflect this practice are <<extrodinary>> *extraordinary* and <<pateridgis/ pateridges>> *partridges*.

## &lt;s&gt;

As with <r>, <s> can occur in initial, medial and final positions and is also found in a large number of initial and final consonant clusters. A number of these clusters are of particular interest in the orthography of Lady Paston. Lady Paston's use of the initial and medial <sc> cluster does not adhere to modern spelling conventions and often results in unusual

spellings which would make sense when read aloud. The use of initial <sc> to represent /s/ can be found in a number of words including <<scanctify>> *sanctify*, <<scease>> *cease*, <<scerch>> *search* and <<sceruante>> *servant*; yet a word which we would expect to begin with the initial <sc>, *science*, is spelt <<siences>>. The use of <sc> to represent /s/ also occurs in medial position, for example, <<conscideration>> *consideration*, <<sosocietie>> *society* and <<prescent>> *present*.

Lady Paston's sister, Lady Mundeford, had not adopted the unetymological <s> in her spelling of *isle*, which she spelt <<lle>>. Lady Paston, on the other hand, uses the <s> though not in the correct modern form, instead recording the form <<iseland>>.

#### <sh>

'sh occurs alone in initial, medial and final position, and in the monomorphemic clusters *shr-* and *-rsh'* (Venezky, 1970:84). The use of <sh> in the personal orthographies of Lady Paston and her correspondents would appear to correspond with this distribution with only a few exceptions, such as Lady Mundeford's use of <sh> in place of <ch> in her spellings <<Norwish>> and <<Frensh>>, presumably misinterpreting /tʃ/ for /ʃ/.

#### <t>

Just like <r> and <s>, <t> appears in a large number of initial and final clusters as well as appearing alone in initial, medial and final positions. For the most part the use of <t> in this collection of correspondence is unremarkable though there are a few exceptions, such as Lady Paston's consistent use of <t> in her spelling of *occasion* as <<ocation>>. Similarly, Lady Paston's letters suggest a preference for <t> over the modern <sh> or <c> to represent /ʃ/

in spellings including <<fation>> *fashion*, <<pretious>> *precious*, <<espetially>> *especially* and <<gratious>> *gracious*.

#### <u>, <v>, <w>

Venezky writes that ‘*u* is a consonant after *q*, *g*, and exceptionally after *s*. Except for *qu*- these spellings are rare in Modern English’ (1970, 86). When following <q>, <u> corresponds to /ø/, yet elsewhere consonantal <u> corresponds to /w/. The latter correspondence of <u> → /w/ is reflected in a number of spellings in Lady Paston’s letters including <<parswade>> *persuade*.

‘Over 75 percent of all occurrences of <v> are found in medial position in modern English words’ (Venezky, 1970:87). This is also true of the occurrences of <v> in the letters of Lady Paston and her circle, however in most instances medial /v/ is more likely to have been written as <u>. The <u> and <v> graphs were interchangeable in the Early Modern period which resulted in spellings such as <<vnto>> *unto* and <<receiue>> *receive*.

<w> can be found medially, and initially in clusters such as <wr-> and <tw->, as well as in word final position. The initial <wr> digraph is used without exception in the spellings of *write* and *written* in the orthographies of Lady Paston and her circle. <w> was also used on occasion to represent /w/ where modern spellings have <u>, with Lady Paston even using <w> in one spelling of *guard* as <<gward>>.

#### <wh>

In modern English spelling <wh-> occurs only in initial position. The evidence from Lady Paston’s letters indicates that this cluster was a source of confusion in Lady Paston’s personal orthography. She correctly uses it in spellings such as <<wholl>> *whole* and

<<whose>>, yet she uses an initial <h> in spellings including <<howlsum>> *wholesome* and <<howme>> *whom*. In addition to these spellings, there are two separate instances of Lady Katherine spelling *hot* with the initial <wh> digraph: <<whot>>. The initial <wh> is omitted in her spelling of *white* when she writes 'it haue a witt Lion badge as the other danish ship had' (A2 f.25r).

#### <x>

In the letters of Lady Paston <x> occurs mainly in medial position, as is the case in the modern spelling system. <x> occurs in a number of spellings including <<exguse>> *excuse*, <<exelent>> *excellent* and <<expenc>> *expense*. The <x> is not, however, used in her representation of words such as *excess* which she spells <<acscs>>, using <cs> to represent /ks/.

#### <y>

Venezky writes that <y> is rare as a consonant spelling in English (Venezky, 1970:89). The use of <y> in variant in a number of vowel digraphs will be discussed below.

#### <z>

The letters of Lady Paston and her circle reflect the rarity of <z> spellings in the Early Modern and Modern English spellings systems and the use of <z> was stigmatised. That is not to say it does not appear at all in the correspondence of Lady Paston. Edward Paston uses <z> frequently in his preferred spelling of *cousin* as <<cozen>>, Lady Paston's son also

uses a <z> spelling of cousin, <<chozen>>, and <z> is used by Lady Mundeford in her spelling of *absence* as <<absenze>>.

### Vowel Distribution

#### <a>

The letters of Lady Katherine Paston contain a number of examples of <a> being used where modern spellings have <e>, for example, in her use of initial <a> in her spelling of *excess* as <<acsces>>. Similarly, there is the noticeable feature of <par> spellings in place of modern <per> forms, such as <<parforme, parswad, and parmite>>, *perform*, *persuade* and *permit*.

#### <e>

The distribution of <e> is of interest in the letters of Lady Paston. Words with an initial <e> spelling in modern orthography are often spelt with an initial <i> in the letters of Lady Paston, as can be seen in her use of forms such as <<inioyed>> *enjoyed*, <<indevor>> *endeavour* and <<Inglissh>> *English*. This is also a relatively common feature among her correspondents, with examples including William Brende's use of <<innough>> *enough* (A1 f.219r) and <<imploy>> *employ* in a 1603 letter by Sir Thomas Holland (A1 f.143r). In addition to <i> being used in place of initial <e>, there are a small number of examples of the trend being reversed, as can be seen in Sir John Heveningham's use of <<encrease>> *increase* (A1 f.203).

In medial position, <e> is once again used in place of the <i> of modern standard spellings.

In these spellings historical short-*i* is being represented with an <e>, and such spellings can

also be seen in the Middle English spellings of the earlier Paston letters. This is perhaps best seen in the letters of Lady Mundeford, though it is by no means uncommon in the correspondence of Lady Paston. Lady Mundeford's letters contain a number of these forms including <<derected>> *directed*, <<openion >> *opinion*, <<condetion>> *condition* and <<letle>> *little*.

### <i>

As we have seen above, the letters of Lady Paston and her correspondents display a significant trend for using initial <i> where the standard modern spelling has a initial <e>. Vocalic <i> and <y> occur in complementary distribution in the present-day spelling system, with <i> being used initially and medially, and <y> being used in final position (Venezky, 1970:59). Many modern words which have a final <i> are foreign loanwords which are not represented in the orthography of Lady Paston or her correspondents. 'Suffixation [...] causes the alternation of <i> and <y>. [...] A few words which end in vowel+y irregularly change y to i before some suffixes, e.g. day: daily' (Venezky, 1970:144). This is not however true in Lady Paston's spelling system as <ai> and <ay> were used interchangeably, resulting in the use of forms such as <<dayly>>.

### <o>

In the letters of Lady Paston <o> for the most part does not differ greatly from modern spelling practices. Occasionally, single <o> is used in place of <u> or <ou>, and many words such as <<honor>> *honour* appear to conform more to American English spelling conventions. In a letter by Lady Abigail Mundeford, the initial <o> in *obtained* is replaced by an initial <a>, resulting in the form <<abtayned>> (A3 f.12-13).

## &lt;u&gt;

<u> was often used in place of the modern <ou> digraph, as can be seen in Lady Katherine's use of spellings including <<truble>> *trouble*. Similarly, there are a number of spellings in Lady Paston's letters in which the <i> in words including *stir* and *dirtiness* is replaced with <u>, resulting in the spellings <<stur>> and <<durtines>>. The graphs <u> and <v> were used interchangeably in Early Modern writing and in print as can be seen in the use of forms such as <<vnto>> *unto* and <<beleue>> *believe*.

Vowel patterns

## &lt;ai/ay&gt;

The letters of Lady Paston contain a number of forms which differ only from the modern forms through the use of <ay> in place of <ai>, as can be seen in spellings such as <<fayled>> *failed*, <<chayer>> *chair* and <ay> is used consistently in her spelling of *again* as <<agayne>>. In her spelling of *certain* as <<certine>> Lady Paston consistently uses <i> instead of the modern <ai>.

## &lt;au/aw&gt;

The digraph <au> appears in a number of forms where it is not used in the modern spelling, for example <<gravnte>> *grant*. In addition to this, it does not appear in a number of forms in which a modern reader would expect to find it such as <<ante>> *aunt* and <<falte>> *fault*. As with <ai/ay> there are a number of words which differ from their modern spelling only

through the use of <aw> in place of the modern <au> such as Lady Paston's consistent spelling of *because* and *cause* as <<becawse>> and <<cawse>>.

#### <ea>

The use of <ea> is of particular interest in the letters of Lady Katherine Paston, as it is either used in a manner which does not fit with its modern distribution or it is replaced by a single vowel. Words in which <ea> is not used in the standard spelling include <<mearcy>> *mercy*, <<sleape>> *sleep*, <<healpe>> *help* and <<whear/whearas>> *where/whereas*. Words with <ea> in the modern form are often recorded with a single <e> or <a> in the letters of Lady Paston as can be seen in the use of forms such as <<wether>> *weather*, <<herd>> *heard*, <<reson>> *reason* and the frequently used <<harte>> *heart*. Similarly, in the letters by Lady Paston words such as *dear*, *near* and *year* are almost always spelt with <ee>; <<deer, neer and yeer>>.

#### <ee>

As discussed above, <ee> is regularly used in place of <ea> in words such as *dear*, *near* and *year*; however, words such as *mean/s* and *fear(e)* are spelt with the <ea>. Lady Paston's letters also contain examples of words with <ee> in their modern spelling including *keep* being spelt as <<kepe>>. Lady Paston's spelling of *been* does not conform with the present-day <ee> form, instead using the archaic <i> spelling <<bine>>. In addition to this, there are examples of words being spelt with <ee> where it is not used in the standard spelling, for example *shire* is spelt <<sheer>> and *piece* is recorded as <<peec>>.

## &lt;ei&gt;

In Lady Paston's holograph letters the <ei> in words such as *receive*, *receipts*, *perceive* and *leisure* are occasionally spelt with <ey> or <ay>, as can be seen in the use of spellings such as <<receyved>>, <<receyts>>, <<parsayve>> and <<laysuer>>, though it is worth noting that Lady Paston is fairly consistent in her use of the <ei> spelling of *receive*. On other occasions, however, the <ei> is used in place of the standard <ey>, such as in her spelling of *eyes* as <<eies>>.

## &lt;ie&gt;

In the letters of Lady Katherine Paston it is not unusual to find <ie> in place of a final <y> in spellings such as <<heauie>> *heavy*, <<icie>> *icy* and <<studie>> *study*. This practice is also frequently found in the letters of her correspondents, such as Lady Mundeford's use of <<crie>> *cry*. In addition to this usage, words such as *niece* and *friend*, with <ie> in medial position, are more likely to be spelt with a single <e> or <i> in Lady Paston's letters, as illustrated by her use of <<nece>> and <<frind>>. Other examples of this include <<beleue>> *believe* and <<mischiff>> *mischief*.

## &lt;ew/eu&gt;

The distribution of this digraph is more limited than many of those discussed above though it can be found in spellings such as Lady Paston's <<continew>>, yet she uses <u> in her spelling of *continuance* as <<continuanc>>.

## &lt;oa&gt;

As with the use of <ie> in medial position, words with a modern <oa> spelling are often recorded in this collection of letters with a single <o>, for example <<cotch>> *coach* and <<costs>> *coasts*.

## &lt;oo&gt;

For the most part, Lady Paston's distribution of <oo> is in keeping with modern spelling conventions, though with a few exceptions such as her consistent use of <oo> in her representation of *could* as <<could>> as well as her use of <ou> or <u> in spellings such as <<bloud>> and <<blude>> *blood*.

## &lt;ou&gt;

As has already been discussed above, words with modern <ou> spellings such as *trouble* and *double* are recorded with a single <u>, whereas *honour* is spelt with a single <o>, <<honor>>.

## &lt;ow&gt;

The letters of Lady Katherine Paston contain a number of words which differ from their modern forms only through the use of <ow> in place of <ou>, with numerous examples including <<fownde>> *found*, <<howse>> *house*, <<thowght>> *thought* and <<Accownts>> *accounts*. There are also a number of examples with <ow> where it is not used in the modern spelling, such as <<cowld>> *cold*, <<towld>> *told*, <<bowld>> *bold* and <<owld>> *old*.

### Final –e

The distribution of final-e in the letters by Lady Katherine Paston is interesting as there are numerous examples of its omission in words with a present-day final –e spelling, yet there are even more examples of words with an additional final –e where it is not used in the standard spelling. The many examples of words with a missing final –e include <<on>> *one*, <<hom>> *home*, <<com>> *come* <<ther>> *there*, <<sinc>> *since*, <<inconvenienc>> *inconvenience*, <<promis>> *promise* and <<Cambridg>> *Cambridge*. The number of words with an additional final –e far outnumbers the examples where final –e has been discarded. In the late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-centuries, compositors of printed works often used an additional final –e in order to justify a line of print, and as a result <e> was added to words where it would not otherwise have been used. The distribution of final –e spellings within Lady Paston’s letters has an apparently indiscriminate appearance and has resulted in unusual spellings such as <<cane>> *can*, <<fare>> *far*, <<pute>> *put*, <<ofe>> *of*, <<ore>> *or* and <<mane>> *man*.

### The –le pattern

It is common to find conventional <-le> forms such as <<duble>> *double* alongside <-el/-ell> spellings such as <<little/littell>> *little*, or in some instances the expected <-le> is replaced by <-ll>, such as in <<wholl>> *whole* and <<whill>> *while*.

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

The letters of Lady Paston and her correspondents show the increasing influence of standardised spellings in the first decades of the seventeenth-century. Whilst idiosyncratic and deviant spellings can still be found even in the letters of the most educated male correspondents, the level of variation is much less than in the sixteenth-century and personal orthographies were not fully standardised until the eighteenth-century. The comparison of the spelling practices of Lady Paston and her sisters illustrated the way in which their presumably shared education did not result in three identical spelling systems. The two surviving letters by her son William also show the way in which education did not guarantee an entirely standardised orthography, though it would be interesting to see if there is further evidence for his spelling practices later in his life. Similarly, the analysis of the orthographies of Lady Paston's male correspondents highlighted a number of shared variants which Lady Paston may have adopted as a result of her correspondence with individuals such as Sir John Heveningham, Sir Thomas Holland and Edward Paston over a number of years. Unlike many of her contemporaries, Lady Paston appears to have been confident in her own letter-writing abilities, only employing a professional scribe for official petitions. Despite initial appearances, closer examination and comparison of the letters of Lady Paston and the other individuals represented in this collection show a clear structure to personal orthographies. The discovery of the two incomplete letters by Lady Muriel Bell show the way in which her spelling system was structured enough to have retained identifiable characteristics well into the 1640s, almost thirty years after her only known letter, at a time when spelling practices are often considered erratic and idiosyncratic. Whilst standardised forms were becoming increasingly common as the Early Modern period

progressed, the evidence provided by this collection of correspondence shows that standardisation was not yet influential enough to have replaced personal spelling habits in private correspondence. It would be interesting to compare the letters of Lady Katherine Paston with a female contemporary who was not regularly corresponding with educated male writers in order to examine the influence these male contacts may have had on Lady Paston's spelling habits.

Having examined the spelling practices in the letters of Lady Paston and her circle, this provides the basis for further study of the pronunciation, morphology, vocabulary, and dialectal and social variation. The letters of Lady Katherine Paston do not mark the end of the Paston family correspondence, with letters and papers continuing until the 1730s. A similar orthographical survey could therefore be conducted on the later Paston letters in order to establish the rate of orthographical standardisation as well as looking at additional developments in punctuation, grammar, vocabulary and, where possible, pronunciation; such a project would complete the story of the Paston family and their extensive correspondence. In addition to the later Paston letters and papers of the seventeenth-century, it is possible that papers survive from the sixteenth-century which may bridge the gap between the famous correspondence of the fifteenth-century and the later generations of the Paston family, and it may therefore be possible to track orthographical and phonological developments over almost four centuries within the letters of one family.

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Image 1: Example of a letter by Lady Katherine Paston to William Paston. 14<sup>th</sup> April 1625?

British Library Add. MS 27447 f.260r.

Image 2: Lady Muriel Bell to Lady Katherine Paston. Lady Bell's only known letter.

British Library Add. MS 27447 f.221r, v-222r. First page of letter.

Image 3: Incomplete letter by Lady Muriel Bell. British Library Add. MS 27400 f.23v.

Image 4: Incomplete letter by Lady Muriel Bell. British Library Add. MS 27400 f.30r.

Image 5: Lady Abigail Mundeford to Thomas Knyvett. 17<sup>th</sup> May 1618.

British Library Add. MS 27400 f.11.