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Did the Black Death Create A 'Golden Age' For Women In Medieval London?

Professor Caroline Mary Barron OBE, Professor Emerita Royal Holloway, University of London

Monday, 31 July 2023



A Word From Today's Chairman

Mike Wardle
CEO & Head of Indices
Z/Yen Group





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Today's Agenda



- 15:00 – 15:05 Chairman's Introduction
- 15:05 – 15:25 Keynote Presentation – Prof. Caroline Mary Barron
- 15:25 – 15:45 Question & Answer



Today's Speaker



Professor Caroline Mary Barron OBE
Professor Emerita Royal Holloway,
University of London



Was There a 'Golden Age' for Women in Medieval London?

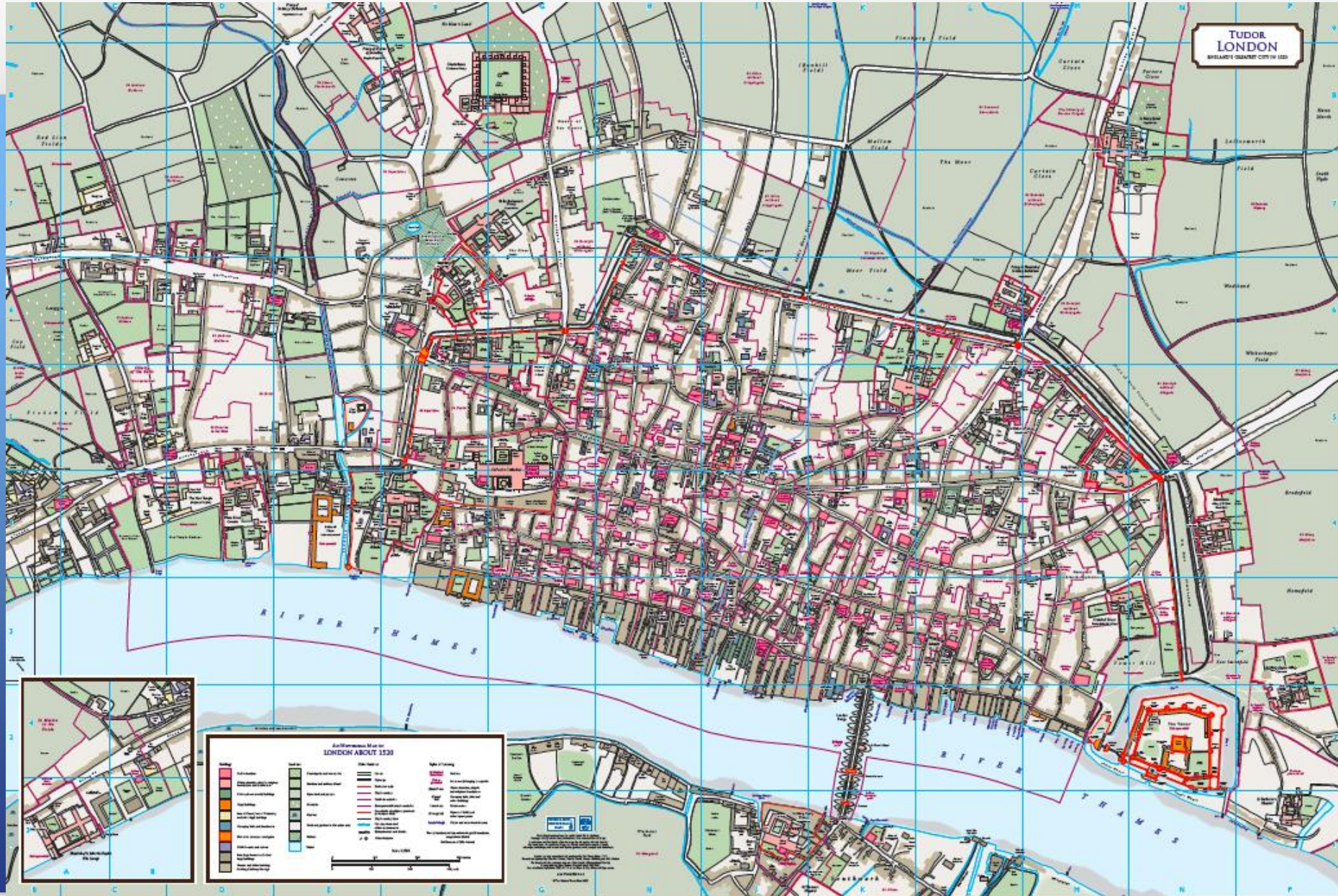
Caroline M. Barron

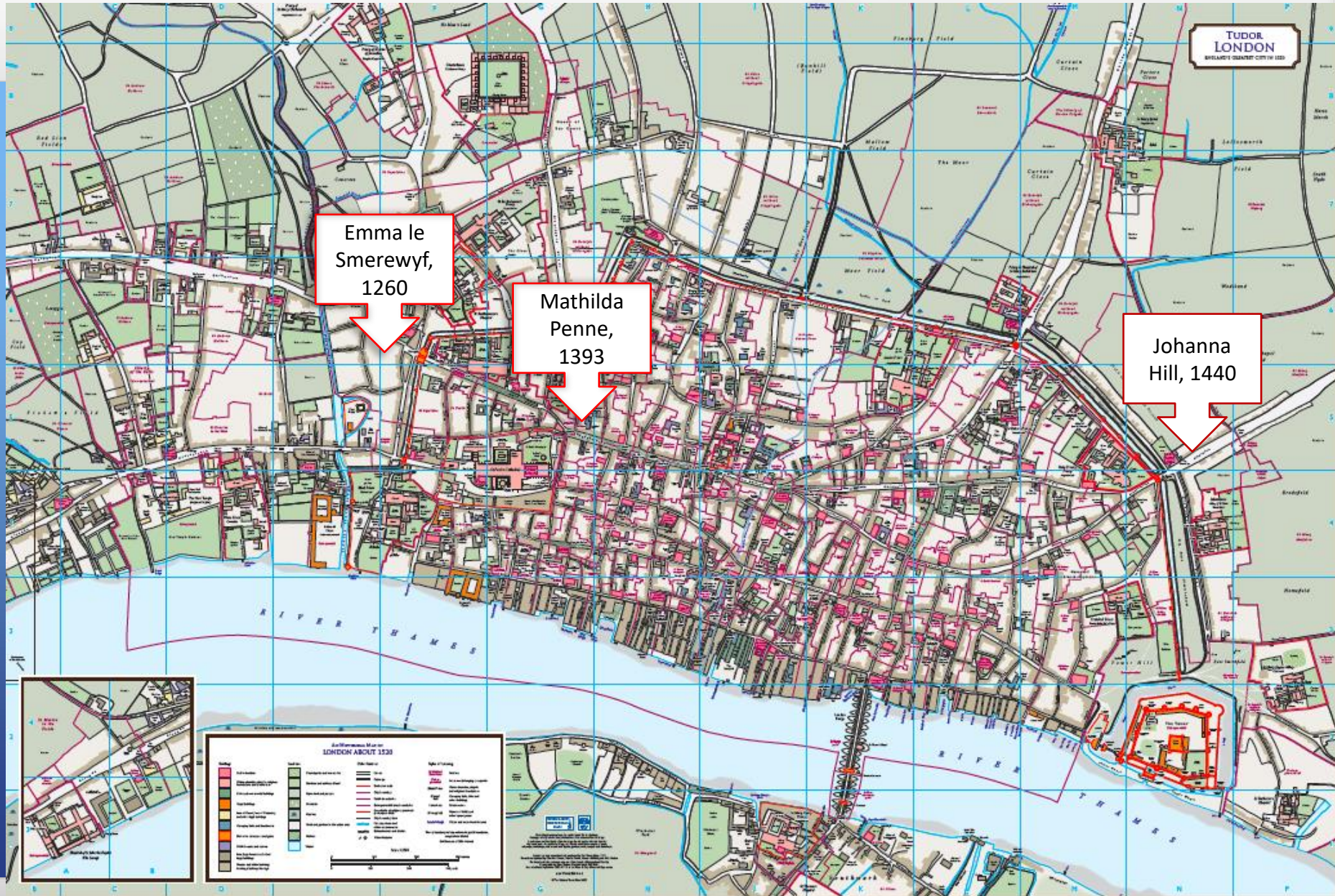
Emeritus Professor of Medieval History

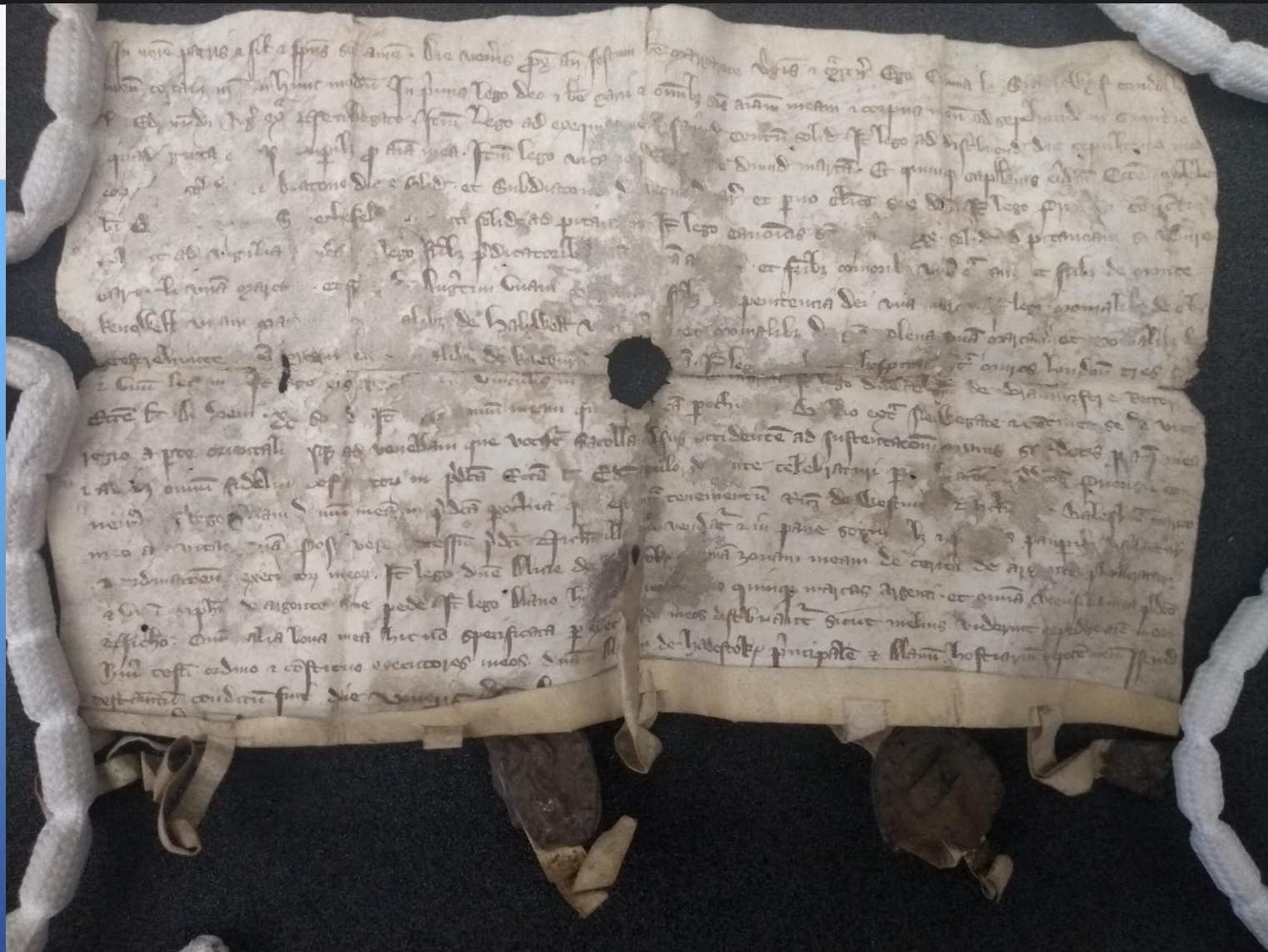
Royal Holloway, University of London

31 July 2023

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Will of Emma le Smerewyf, 1260, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS D.D. Ch. Ch. O 1051
Printed in H.E. Salter, *Cartulary of Oseney Abbey* (1935), vol. 5 pp. 357-58
(Photo: Matthew Holford, 2020)



Clauses from the will of Emma le Smerewyf (1260)



2. I leave my soul to God, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and all saints, and my body to be buried in the cemetery of the church of St Sepulchre outside Newgate.

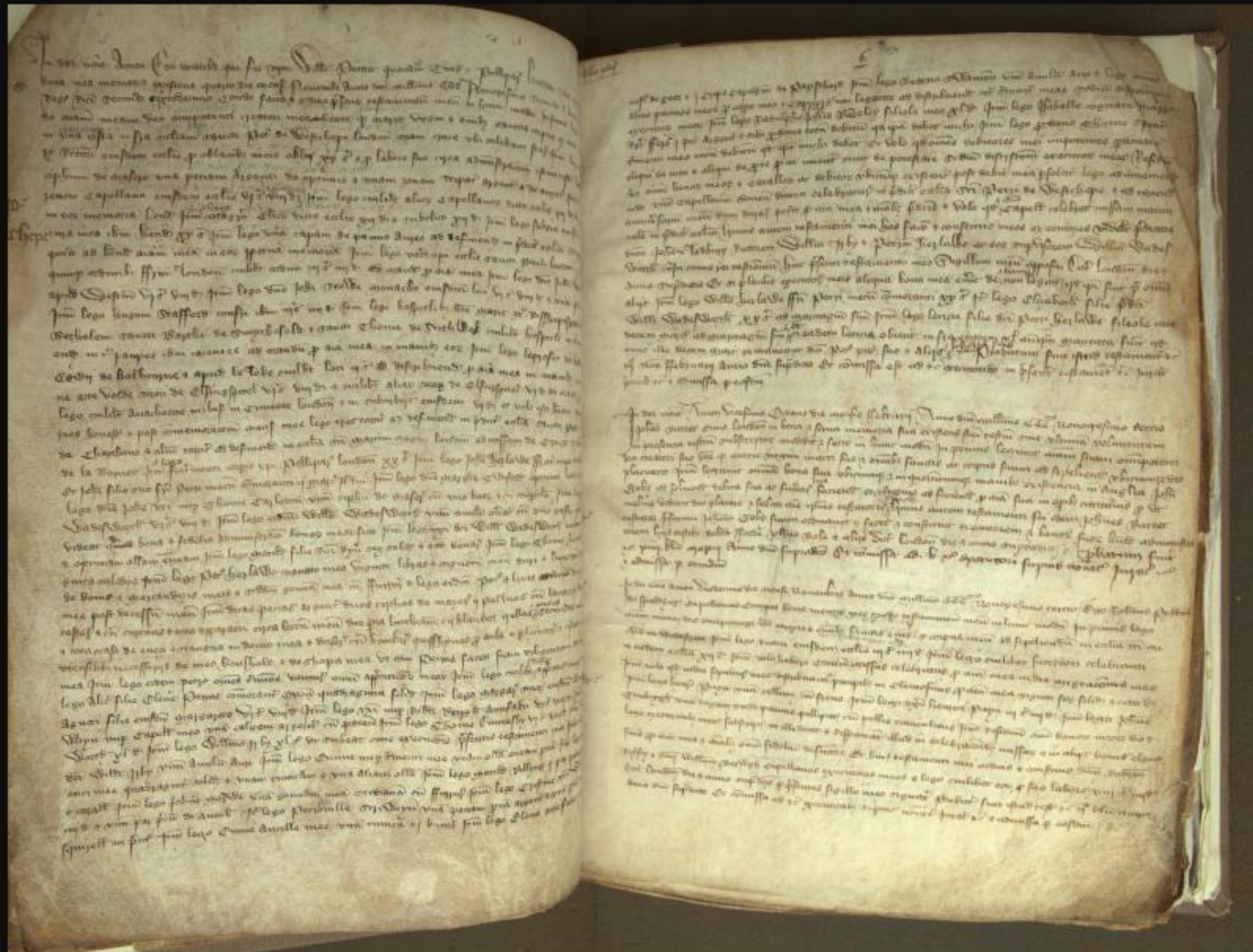
8. I leave to the nuns of Clerkenwell 1 mark, and to the nuns of Halliwell 1 mark, and to the nuns of St Helen's 1 mark, and to the nuns of Cheshunt 1 mark, and to the nuns of Kilburn 1 mark.

13. I leave my house in the parish of St Sepulchre to Nicholas de Baileham my husband, for his lifetime. After the death of Nicholas the house is to be sold and the proceeds distributed in bread, shoes, and clothing for the poor, at the direction of my executors.

15. I leave to Alan Hostarius my nephew 5 marks of silver, and I leave all my utensils to the aforesaid Nicholas.

17. I appoint as executors Lady Alice de Hadestoke as principal, together with Alan Hostarius my nephew.

Will of Mathilda Penne, skinner, 4 November 1393





Clauses from the will of Mathilda Penne (1393)



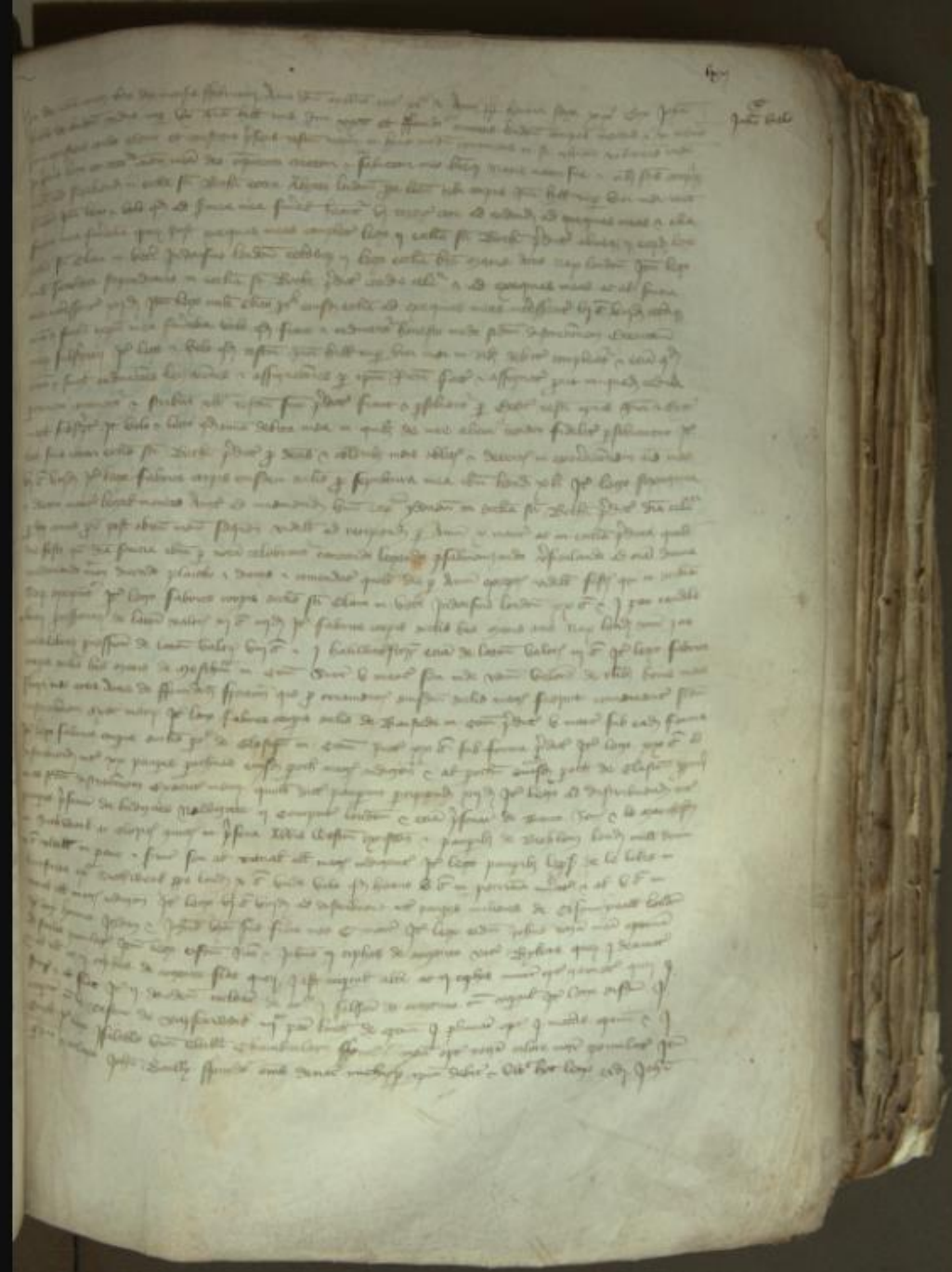
18. I Leave 20s. to the fraternity of Corpus Christi of the Skinners of London.

27. I leave to Peter Herlawe my kinsman £20 and my gold signet, and to Lucy his wife £20 of my goods and merchandise and my second-best gown with its fur, and to the same Peter and Lucy [*long list of household furnishings*], and my chests containing other necessary utensils from my household and shop.

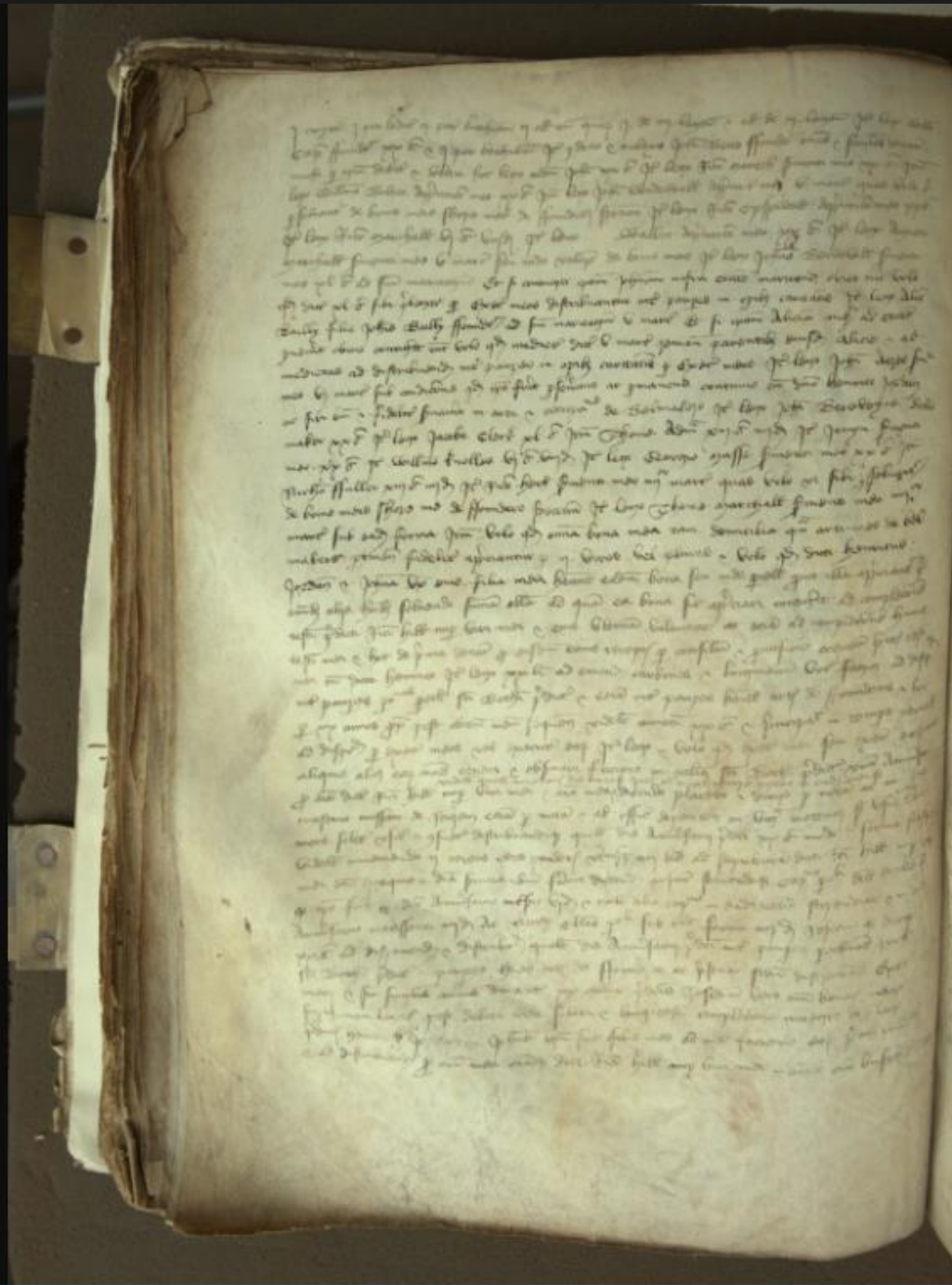
28. I leave to the same Peter all the unexpired terms of my apprentices.

29. I leave to each of my said apprentices 6s. 8d.

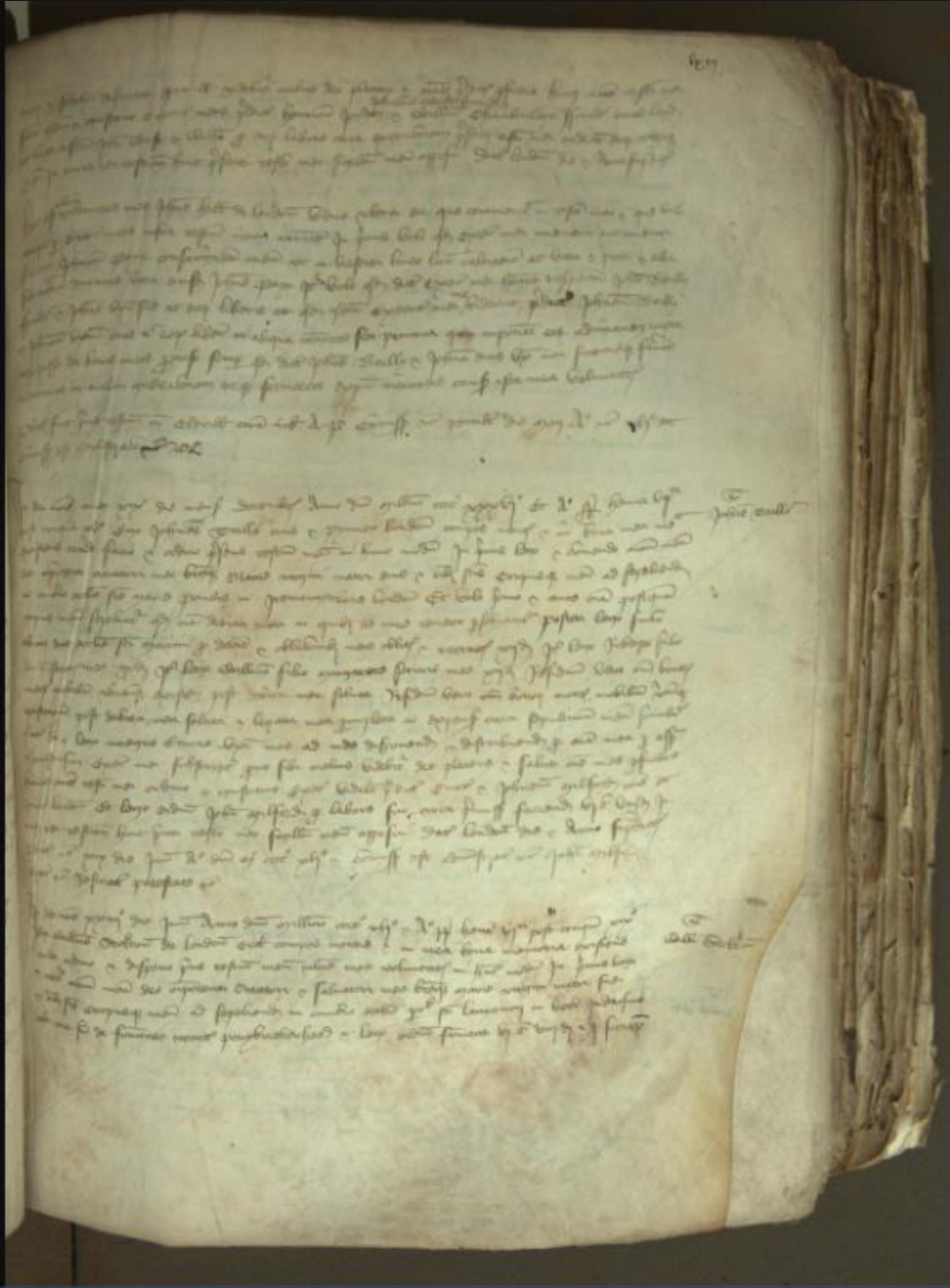
43. I leave to Petronilla, scrivener, a small piece of silver and a small mazer decorated with a squirrel.




First page of will of
Johanna Hill,
widow of Richard Hill,
citizen and founder,
3 February 1440




Second page of will of
Johanna Hill,
widow of Richard Hill,
citizen and founder,
3 February 1440



Third page of will of
Johanna Hill,
widow of Richard Hill,
citizen and founder,
3 February 1440



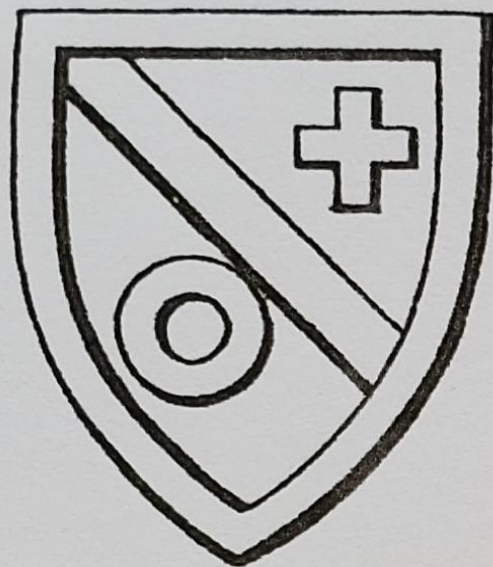
Clauses from the will of Johanna Hill, widow, founder and bell-maker (1441)



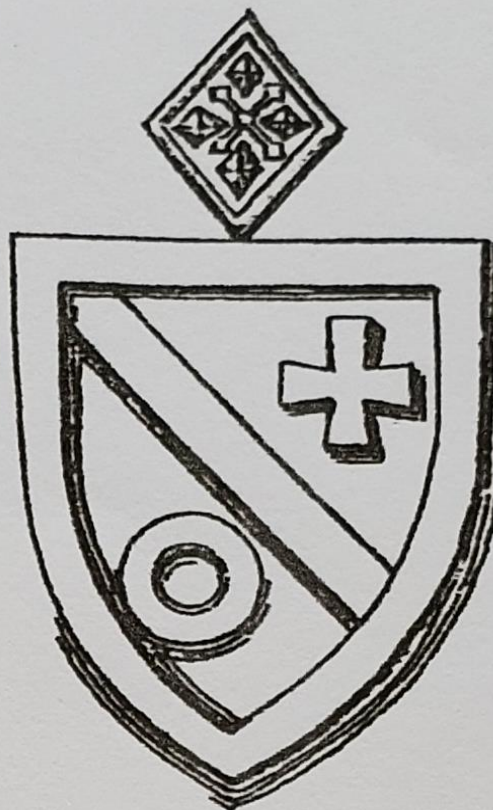
32. To John Woodwall, my apprentice, 5 marks, to be paid from goods in my founder's shop.

38. To John Acres, my servant, 6 marks, on condition that he continues to work for Henry Jordan [*Johanna's son-in-law*] well and faithfully in the art and occupation of bell-maker.

48. I leave all my goods, both domestic and those relating to my art of bell-maker, to be faithfully appraised by two or more men, and Henry Jordan and his wife Johanna, to have the goods before all others, in order to fulfill the will of Richard Hill my late husband and of this my own will.



1



2

Bell-founders' marks:
(left) Richard Hill (d. 1440)
(right) Johanna Hill (d. 1441)



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Caroline M. Barron

Emeritus Professor of Medieval History

Royal Holloway, University of London

31 July 2023

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Comments, Questions & Answers



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Forthcoming Events

- Tue, 1 August (11:00-11:45) ESOP Sofa: Esop Round-Table Newspad Review VII
- Wed, 9 August (11:00-11:45) Everything, Everywhere All at Once
- Mon, 21 August (11:00-11:45) Perseus - Help Unlock Finance for SMEs In The Race To Zero

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