Abstract:

Contrary to their ubiquity within written, visual, and material sources, chests have largely remained overlooked in studies of the late Middle Ages. Bill Brown's "thing theory" helps to explain the ways in which chests can transform from unnoticed "things" in the background to meaningful "objects" when viewed through their entanglements with commercial, consumer, political, and moral concerns. The interdisciplinary study of chests in the late Middle Ages brings together a range of evidence including inventories, guild accounts, court pleas, contemporary writings, images, and material culture from Burgundy, France, and England.

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RUNNING HEAD VERSO: KATHERINE ANNE WILSON

SEND PROOFS TO: k.wilson@chester.ac.uk

Commerce and Consumers: The Ubiquitous Chest of the Late Middle Ages

In the twelfth-century memoirs of Guibert de Nogent, a chest played a part in the downfall of two peasants

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Katherine Anne Wilson is Senior Lecturer in Medieval History, University of Chester. She is the author of *The Power of Textiles: Tapestries of the Burgundian Dominions (1363-1477)* (Turnhout, 2018); editor of, with Bart Lambert, *Europe's Rich Fabric: The Consumption, Commercialisation and Production of Luxury Textiles in Italy, the Low Countries and Neighbouring Territories (Fourteenth-Sixteenth Centuries)* (New York, 2016).

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visiting the city of Laon. Enticing the two unfortunate peasants into his residence, a merchant who sold wheat and vegetables in the city marketplace took them to a chest and raised the lid, saying, “Bend your head and shoulders over the chest to see that the rest does not differ from the sample which I showed you in the marketplace.” When one of the buyers leaned his belly over the edge of the chest, the seller lifted his feet, pushed him into the chest, and lowered the lid on him, keeping him in a safe prison until he ransomed himself. Guibert de Nogent’s tale was a moral commentary exploring the distinction between the corrupt medieval city and the purer countryside, partly designed to set up his narrative of the rebellion of Laon in 1112. Although the role of the chest receives scant attention, the use of the chest as a plot device implies how chests might have been entangled routinely within social relations. [1]

Guibert de Nogent’s narrative assumed that chests were central to, and visible in, everyday life in the twelfth century—physical and cultural phenomena recognizable to rural peasants and urban merchants alike, as well as to any readers of Guibert’s work. Written, visual, and material evidence from approximately 1300 to 1500 reveals a world awash with chests, confirming his assumption. English manorial court rolls reveal that chests featured heavily in peasant households; four of the fourteen households that Briggs described for the period from 1270 to 1420 featured chests in their lists of furnishings. Household inventories, usually taken at the death of an individual for tax or inheritance purposes, provide a snapshot of chests in urban households. Eighty-seven of the ninety-one Dijon inventories from 1390 to 1408 have at least one recorded example of an *arche* (chest). Chests appear regularly in other documents of that era: Guild accounts afford insights into their manufacture; household accounts and inventories of royal and ducal possessions record information relating to their makers, their material forms, their decoration, and their movement; wills drawn up in advance of death, or upon death, record their disposal as moveable property; court pleas invoked them in criminal proceedings; contemporary writings used them as plot devices; and many surviving miniatures and paintings included their depiction. Indeed, many medieval chests survive, both in museum collections around the world and in churches and cathedrals across Europe.[2]

Despite their ubiquity, however, chests, somehow remained overlooked. This is one example of a broader historical problem: as Rublack notes, “We still know surprisingly little about exactly how things were fabricated, exchanged and valued in everyday life [. This is] especially the case for many goods

categorized as mundane as well as non or semi-durable." When chests happen to emerge in scholarship, whether archaeological, art-historical, or historical, they tend to be treated by region or as single or special examples. Medieval chests have yet to be fully analyzed in light of the recent material and emotional "turns" in the study of history, which challenge the assumed distinction between "subject" and "object" through a focus on materiality and the meanings attached to material characteristics. For example, the work of Labanyi, Downes, Holloway, and Randels raises the question of what "things do to people" rather than just "what people do with them." Moreover, Smail's pioneering work on medieval probate inventories seeks to "treat the material world as an actor in the making of history." Notwithstanding serious reservations about whether we can entirely recover what things did to people in the past, historians should acknowledge that "things do not exist without being full of people" and that a consideration of humanity is automatically also a consideration of thinghood.[3]

Brown's "thing theory" is particularly important for a historical understanding of material culture, whether in written, visual, or material sources. His approach focuses on the ways in which unnoticed "things" in the background become meaningful "objects." As he states, "The story of objects asserting themselves as things, then, is the story of a changed relation to the human subject and thus the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation." Utilizing his method to study items in medieval English inventories, Jervis, Briggs, and Tompkins observe, "Things become objects as they are drawn into social engagements in which they become meaningful to people, objects, materials and spaces. As such the same item can become multiple objects, as it is drawn into different sets of social relationships, can lose its meaning as relationships dissolve and, crucially, gain new meanings as it is drawn into new social relationships."[4]

Two intertwined phenomena were central to the meaning that chests acquired in the later Middle Ages—the expansion of commerce and the increase in consumer activity c. 950 to 1500. Chests existed well before this period, but in the "Commercial Revolution" from 950 to 1350 that overturned existing commercial practices and revolutionized the lives of individuals across Western Europe, chests became enmeshed in commercial and consumer behavior as never before. Despite modifications of Lopez's concept of "Commercial Revolution," a "commercial society" certainly spread across Europe from 1300 to 1600.

Commercial expansion, coupled with new and developing urban consumer bases and driven further by the concentration of wealth among fewer people after the Black Death from 1347 to 1352, caused producers to innovate and products to proliferate in volume and variety. The explosion in commercial and consumer activity brought anxieties about the loss of face-to-face commercial transactions, repeated attempts to control the attire of social groups through sumptuary legislation, moralizing sermons about the acquisition of luxury objects, and a renewed emphasis on the sin of avarice in social commentary and visual culture. Although early historiography tended to focus more on the positive transformations of commercial and consumer practices, more recent works emphasize the continuities, negative consequences, and social discomfort that accompanied these changes. As Forrest and Haour explained, successful mercantile transactions were still largely reliant on face-to-face transactions and interactions based on personal impressions of trust.[5]

Credit was undoubtedly "the unstinting lubricant of the commercial revolution." But, as Howell sagely noted, "Everyone was in debt…virtually all of the time." Although "faceless credit" may have become more of a norm across Europe in the later Middle Ages, the avaricious accumulation of profit for self interest remained an anathema in this period. Moreover, relations of credit and debt were also "threaded with power," coercion, and violence. Finally, despite the increased proliferation of goods, expenditure on things to adorn one's person and home remained intensely problematical. As de Vries stated, "Only a thin line separated the noble patron of the arts from the vain, prideful self-aggrandizer; the refined pallet merged effortlessly with gluttony; the admiration of a fine garment easily turned to lust." In such a world, chests became meaningful objects through the roles that they played in social relations.[6]

COMMERCIAL ENTANGLEMENTS The material forms and characteristics of later medieval chests underpinned their commercial uses. Lopez suggested that chests helped to create deposit banking, because they facilitated the display of moneylenders' different currencies by day and because they made currencies secure through their durability and locking mechanisms by night. The contemporary descriptions of the chests that urban guilds, middle-class Londoners, and parish churches favored lends substance to this suggestion. The guild statutes of the chest makers of Paris in 1467 recorded that documents and guild

banners were to be held in a chest locked with three keys to be split between three members of the guild. The material characteristics of a surviving iron chest, preserved at the London Guildhall, dated to 1427, establishes the chest's significance in a commercial context (see Figure 1). According to Eames, the chest requires six keys to unlock, three outside and three inside. Opening the three outer locks reveals a separate inner lid with three more locking mechanisms that she describes as "a second, unsuspecting line of defense against thieves." Like the keys for the guild statues in Paris, the Guildhall keys were also distributed, this time, to three city aldermen and three "reputable men of the Commonalty," all of whom needed to be present to open the chest.[7]

Figure 1

Security was also highlighted in the descriptions of chests that contained commercial wealth earmarked for London parish churches. Four locks were fitted on the "Russes Chest," which John Lufkyn, a London pastry maker in 1454, bequeathed to the parish of St. Peter in Chepe. The chest left to London's Church of St. Mary in 1459 by Henry Frowyk, a mercer and former mayor, included not only iron banding but also an instrument called "le Bolt of iron over the lock" to protect the title deeds of the church property as well as its the surplus rents and profits. In a will of 1347, Nicholas Le Peautrer de Ludgate of London left to his son Thomas "one best chest and two chests less strong," the implication being that a "best chest" was a particularly strong one. Interior drawers and even false bottoms created possibilities for organization and storage of commercial wealth within the chest. A surviving fifteenth-century walnut chest from Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Italy, in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum has multiple small drawers and compartments, as well as a false bottom, a common feature of many other surviving chests (Figure 2).[8]

Figure 2

Such security features, along with the possibility for multiple interior storage spaces, allowed chests to become containers for surplus commercial wealth lent to borrowers at a rate of interest. Significant monies for loans stored in chests were recorded in the letter books maintained in the archive of the London Guildhall. In 1386, several individuals "entered into a bond in the sum of £10 with Richard Odyham, a pepperer, in the presence of the Mayor, the Aldermen, the Recorder, and the Common Council, for replacing in the chest of John Biernes, late mercer, lying in the chamber of the Guildhall, the sum of £500 borrowed

from the funds deposited in the said chest in order to safeguard the city." Thus, the chest reveals its importance in the action of the loan. The money and bond was extracted and enacted in front of witnesses, taken from an object that stood as both a container of loanable monies and a protector of the city of London, helping to avoid a threatened French invasion.[9]

Yet chests did not become meaningful objects only by facilitating loans; they also became spaces for preserving records of debt, which was in the later Middle Ages, as it is today, a source of nagging anxiety. Ruling elites, as well as commoners, worried about their debts. In 1412, the chronicler Enguerrand de Monstrelet, writing about the "reformation of abuses" in the government of the French King Charles VI, lamented the pillaging of money from royal hands by certain money lenders, "who for usury, make a traffic of money, and supply your wants on having your plate and jewels in pawn, and at an exorbitant loss in the interest paid for these loans." Indeed, multiple chests were utilized to provide security for a substantial loan of £10,000 advanced to the young King Richard II of England by the merchants Nicholas Brembre, William Walleworth, John Philpot, and John Haddely. The letter patent of 1377 made the significance of the chest for the loan clear: "By way of further security for the said loan, certain jewels and other articles of value, [were] deposited in divers chests locked and sealed with the seals of William [Courtnay], Bishop of London, Thomas [Brantingham], Bishop of Exeter and Lord Treasurer, Edmund [Mortimer], Earl of March, William, Lord Latimer, and Roger de Beachaumpe."

Occasional wills link chests to the debts of London testators. In 1294, John de Angouleme specified the payment of all his debts, which were "to be found in his book in his chest, the keys of which are in the custody of the Company of Luka." In both the letter patent and the wills, the chests became meaningful objects by being physically sealed from tampering and explicitly categorized by contemporaries as spaces for the record of a testator's debt.[10]

Despite the increase in commercial transactions that occurred without face-to-face contact as the Middle Ages progressed, a plea recorded in the London Guildhall accounts in 1378 indicates that the material forms of chests constrained commercial changes and encouraged face-to-face transactions and interactions based on personal impressions of trust. For example, John Grey was obliged to answer a plea of deception from John Tilneye, a "Paltok [a doublet or tunic] maker," regarding the purchase of two

"Paltockes" or "Jackes" of black satin for 100s. "Wishing to show one of them to a friend," Grey obtained permission to take the jacket, contingent on giving security for it in the form of a gold farthing and showing Tilneye fifteen other farthings of gold, which he placed in a purse and deposited in a chest called a "trussyng-coffre." However, although he ostensibly handed these coins to Tilneye, "Grey craftily made off with the said purse with the farthings in it, and put into the chest 15 counters, in another purse, resembling the first; and then gave the chest to the same John Tilneye, first locking it with a key, and then taking the key away with him. And afterwards, on the same day, . . .Tilneye, [still without] sufficient security for the said jacket, requested [Grey] to give him some more money, by way of security; whereupon John Grey shewed him other fourteen farthings of gold, which he engaged to put in the chest as before. . . and then as before, fraudulently made off with them, substituting and leaving fourteen counters in the chest in their place." [11]

After Grey confessed to the attempted fraud, the mayor and aldermen, "seeing that many purses and new counters in imitation of farthings of gold, were found upon him" put Grey in the pillory for an hour with the purses and counters strung around his neck. In the court plea, the chest was at the center of the narrative as integral to the commercial transaction: Grey had to place his fake money in Tilneye's chest. Hence, the purchase of clothes rested on a face-to-face interaction between the manufacturer of the product and the prospective buyer.[12]

Just as chests became meaningful objects by facilitating and constraining essential aspects of a later medieval commercial society, so they also acquired significance as objects that could respond to individual and collective worries about the effects of increasing monies, means of credit, and loans. Young reports that intellectuals of the period were uncertain about the morality of usury, wrestling with the idea that the love of money was not a sin, if such money was put to good or pious use. Chests could embody these principles in social practice. In 1350, the will of John Salesburi, son of Adam a pepperer, mentions a chest used in the distribution of charitable loans within a parish church of London. John had requested in his will that "an iron bound chest" be deposited in the church of St. Mary de Bothaw and that in it "be placed forty pounds sterling to be lent to poor parishioners of the same upon certain securities, to be repaid at a fixed time, so that no loan exceed sixty shillings and the security must be greater than the loan." The chest was the thing

that ensured the security of the money and allowed physical supervision of the loans. John specified that three parishioners were to have a key to the chest, "so that it might be opened and closed with the assent of all three."[13]

In 1361, the chest containing the large sum of 1,000 marks, bequeathed by Michael Northburgh, the Bishop of London, to the treasury of St. Paul's "for advancing loans," is more evidence of a chest as material object securing the terms of a loan, which related a loan's value to the social status of its recipient. On the Bishop's instruction, "a poor man of the lower orders might borrow ten pounds; the dean and the greater canons, twenty pounds, the bishop forty or forty-five pounds and other nobles or burgesses of the city twenty pounds." The instruction lays bare the meaningful role of the chest in addressing tensions surrounding the social effects of commercial expansion. As monies began to multiply, some people felt that access to the money in the chest, and its potential benefits, should be strictly regulated according to social status and gender, subject to public, visible scrutiny.[14]

CONSUMER ENTANGLEMENTS A key contributor to the expanding commercial society of the later Middle Ages was consumer demand, exacerbated by the concentration of wealth among fewer people after the Black Death from 1347 to 1352 and subsequent outbreaks in the 1360s and 1380s. Consumer demand resulted in new and greater product lines. The range of chests in the later Middle Ages is reflected in the collection housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum's Medieval and Renaissance Collection. One tiny leather chest dating from the late fifteenth century with three clasps on the front—7.5 cm high, 11.5 cm wide, and 12 cm deep—could only have held small personal items (see Figure 3). A fourteenth-century chest made of oak—53 cm high, 111cm wide, and 49.5 cm deep—decorated with three large roundels, seems suitable for the storage of clothes, linen, and plate (see Figure 4). A fifteenth-century French chest of wood and leather with metal locks and iron bandings—97 cm high and 159 cm long, with an arched top and a layer of waterproof leather to shed water, might have been a travel bag (see Figure 5).[15]

Figures 3, 4, and 5

The mention of the materials used in the manufacture of chests by contemporaries in wills, accounts, and inventories testifies to the chest as an object of meaning, rather than simply a "thing" to be passed over

unnoticed. The work on surviving medieval English chests by Pickvance, Bridge, and Miles demonstrates increasing levels of skill with dendrochronological analysis that can reveal provenances from Germany, Poland, Belarus, and the Baltic States (see Table 1). The ninety-one Dijon household inventories from 1390 to 1408 contained chests made of oak, beech, walnut, cane, leather, jet, iron, steel, and "de Mez" (which indicated either a kind of wood or the chest's place of origin). The Burgundian ducal accounts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries include similar materials—oak, leather, and metal—as well as Danish and cypress wood, ivory, gold, and silver. The inventories of Margaret of Burgundy in 1405 and Charles the Bold of Burgundy in 1468 record "coffrets" of ivory, but innovation in the object was also possible by producers other than "chest makers." In 1456, Philip the Good of Burgundy commissioned Ector Van Himsseghen, goldsmith of Brussels, to create a writing table of cypress wood in the "fashion of a chest." Written descriptions of chests in Burgundian ducal accounts and Parisian guild statutes reveal a careful choice of linguistic terms to identify specialist craftspeople—especially the use of the terms *archier* and *coffrier*. In 1379, Put Hoste, archier and resident of Chastillon, was paid 8 *sols,* 4 *deniers tournois* for making a chest for the silver vessels of Margaret, daughter of Margaret and Philip of Burgundy. In the same account, Huguenin Le Serrurier (literally Huguenin the locksmith) received 20 *sols tournois* for the ironwork "of the said chest." In 1381, Jean de Sainte Menaor, a saddle maker, was paid to cover chests with leather and toile for Margaret of Burgundy.[16]

The variation in materials and skills involved in the making of chests is attested in the monetary valuations attached to chests in accounts and inventories. In the Burgundian accounts, the financial amounts paid to chest makers often ranged from 1 *franc* to 8 *francs*. In 1388, Symon Le Ganier of Dijon was paid 1 *franc* for making a chest of leather for Philip the Bold's daughter. In 1390, Jean le Heron, *coffrier*, was paid to produce a large chest, closed with two locks, for storing the robes of the future John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy. The Dijon inventories in a similar period contain chests that range in value according to size, material, and condition. In the 1390 inventory of Jean le Roy, one large chest of iron was appraised at a lowly eighteen *gros*, whereas the 1392 inventory of Philippe, son of Phelippe Geliot, bourgeois of Dijon, recorded a chest of new plate at a much more substantial two *francs*. According to Smail, the proliferation in

chest types and nomenclatures "attests to the importance of the container, throughout Europe, both as metaphor and practice."[17]

Moreover, surviving household inventories from Dijon suggest that chests became *the* desired objects for the storage of the possessions increasingly acquired by consumers. A large oak chest in a chamber of Lady Julienne in 1403 held twenty-five separate items, from articles of female clothing like cloaks and gloves to room furnishings like covers, curtains, wall hangings, and cushions. A chest of oak with iron bandings in the upstairs chamber of Marguerite and Jean Martin in 1434 contained multiple covers and linens, several of which the clerk and witnesses rated as extremely low in value. They described two napkins, one linen and the other Chenove, as "old" and worth the paltry sum of 3 *gros*. The 1405 inventory taken at the death of Margaret of Flanders, duchess of Burgundy, had so many chests and items therein that in certain rooms the chests had markings presumably to identify the owner and the contents. For example, given that the inventory contained ten chests, the compiler of the inventory included the helpful note, "Robes found in the chests of the garde robe of the late lady in her hotel, of which chests are marked by letters." Two of the chests held a total of thirty-four books; several of the most precious religious texts themselves were in what are termed "chests," or covers of silver.[18]

The material characteristics of chests could establish an assumption that finery was locked inside (even if it was not) or a collection of valuable things. However, these characteristics also drew attention to the problematical relationship between ownership and display. Indeed, the mere presence of a chest in a room served only to emphasize that more things than ever before were "ready to hand," bringing to mind the cultural complexities surrounding their use, display, and transmission.[19]

Medieval chests also became meaningful through their ability to hold things that elicited memories, emotions, and biographical moments. As Gilchrist points out, the very "act of packing and securing a chest can be likened to compiling family memory." Textiles were often "highly emotional for their makers and owners." The documentary evidence about the Dijon residence of Marguerite and Jean Martin in 1434 describes a piece of baptismal white silk wrapped in another piece of green silk, suggesting that the owners took care in placing and storing the textile, possibly because of an emotional association with a rite of passage in a child's life. A "large chest of plate with two borders" in the 1398 inventory of stonemason

Jacques de Nulley performed and maintained familial ties even after death. The inventory directed that the chest be given to a relative of Jacques' wife who "had helped in her illness and certain times in her life" and had passed away. In 1385, the will of John de Coggeshale, a corder of London, left two "Trussyng-kofrers" (chests for packing goods) and a "great chest of Gascony formerly belonging to his father." The language used in the will establishes the chest as an object of meaning, describing its passage through familial generations and giving it a provenance of manufacture, and possible biography, by linking it to another country.[20]

In the Burgundian inventories and ducal accounts, the material form of chests could serve as a reminder of long-dead members of a dynasty, as well as a means for transmitting things between the current members. Just after the death of his father in 1468, Charles the Bold ordered that Estienne Michiel, his *valet de chambre*, bring to Lille by chariot "all the chests of the garderobe of the late duke," which were likely to be inventoried and transferred to the the new duke of Burgundy. In Charles' inventory of 1467, under the heading "church ornaments," the language used to describe a "small [wooden] chest of marguerites," "embellished with gold and silver seated on four small unicorns of silver and gold leaf," explicitly connects the chest with Charles' grandmother Margaret of Flanders by also mentioning the daisy that adorned it, her favorite flower and namesake. Because Margaret had brought the wealthiest territories to the Burgundian dukes, the chest was designated as a meaningful object to be transmitted across generations.[21]

Chests also became meaningful to medieval users by carrying signifiers of biographical moments. Surviving chests, like that of Richard de Bury in the Burrell Collection Glasgow from c. 1340, carried familial markers and armorial bearings. On the inside of the lid are shields depicting the arms of de Bury and of the Percy family, as well as a shield for England and one for France. These arms represented the career of de Bury, who had acted as a diplomat for the English Crown and for the Percy family during the wars against the Scots. De Bury, along with Ralph Neville and Henry de Percy, was part of a commission sent to York by Edward III in 1340 to collect taxes and payments for the King's army in the north. The chest may well be connected with this commission: The placement of the arms on the inside of the lid suggests that the chest was intended to be seen with its lid open to an audience, perhaps in the act of collecting taxes.[22]

Armorial decorations on chests of the Burgundian household displayed dynastic biographies. References to chests of Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy, from 1369 carried his armorial bearings on the outside, as did a chest "from the church" in the inventory of Charles the Bold in 1468. Charles' chest was silver with gold embellishment, two armorial bearings on the lid, and the French *fleur de lis* everywhere else, reflecting the dual, and at times, uncomfortable biography of the Burgundian dynasty as suzerain lords in their own right and as princes of France.[23]

Chests transformed from thing to meaningful object when setting the scene for social encounters. Many later medieval residences had multiple individuals living in them—families from multiple marriages, apprentices, and servants. Chambers were the most common place to find chests in the Dijon inventories, often more than one being listed per chamber. The five rooms designated as a "chamber" in the household of tanner Hugenot Alerdot, inventoried in 1439, had at least one chest in each chamber. One chamber had four *arches* of oak valued at a low 18 *gros*. Chests were also present in other spaces, including parlors and halls. In the 1361 London will of William De Macchyng, the parlor was the site of a large chest bequeathed to his daughters. A chest called the "Cornenchest," left to Richard Groom's wife and daughter in 1377, belonged to the fittings of a hall.[24]

Occasionally, the records convey a sense of how chests might have interacted with other objects in a room. In 1348, Richard De Dounmowe, a joiner, left to his daughter Johanna "divers household chattels," which included a chest that stood at "his feet" in the chamber. The 1421 Dijon inventory of Pierre Sancenot listed in his chamber upstairs on the *rue des changes* a small chest placed at the feet of a couch. Another Dijon inventory of Belot, wife of Jean de Beaufort, in 1404, gave the location of two chests in her bedroom, "one between the windows of the chamber and the bed…the other at the foot of the bed." Chests could provide additional seating space, often painted in different colors and decorated with iron work and gold or silver embellishments. Appraisers listed several chests in the Dijon household inventories as red, yellow, or blue. A Burgundian ducal account of 1443 says that Gilles Bonnier, a resident of Lille who made wooden chests, received 14 *francs* 12 *sols* for a large leather chest "with vignettes and other diverse flowers." In 1372, John Somersham, a London woolman, bequeathed to members of his family "divers household goods and chattels including a long painted chest of Flemish work." Though the precise relationship of these chests

with residential spaces is not always evident, the concern to state their location, relation to other items, and physical and decorative characteristics indicates that appraisers were intent to honor the significance that owners accorded to them.[25]

Some chests became meaningful objects because they allowed individuals within households to share spaces. In Alerdot's 1439 inventory, the appraiser mentioned that "the chamber where sleep the apprentices of the said residence" had two beds with cushions and covers, an old table, and "one old ironed chest of oak." Although the chest had no listed items, it probably stored the personal items of the apprentices. The space-sharing issue was far more complicated for the "multitude" that inhabited the Burgundian ducal household in 1467, which numbered more than 1,000 individuals, spilling out of palace residences into surrounding urban households, and included the attendants to the female and male members of the dynasty, current and former mistresses, and illegitimate offspring. The 1405 inventory of Margaret of Flanders lists chests specifically attached to former female members of her household: a chest of cypress wood belonging to the "mother of Robert the bastard of Flanders"; a chest of black leather "that is said to belong to *demoiselle* Jehenne de Poissy"; and a chest "where there are several goods of Lyele, formerly lady in waiting of my said lady."[26]

Not surprisingly, chests and the things in them often became sources of friction, especially when extended families were concerned. In a plea brought before the mayor and aldermen of London in 1309, Stephen, son of Stephen Asstewy, noted as underage, complained that, after the death of his father, his mother Isabella and her second husband Sir Roger Hegham (also deceased), who had custody of Stephen's property, had "not taken an account as they should have done, according to the law of the city." Now the executors of Roger's estate were threatening to remove Stephen's property. The sheriff sent to attach the goods of Roger declared that he could find only "a closed chest, the contents of which he knows not, which chest he has sequestered." Nonetheless, the unopened chest clearly has the capacity to "speak" about possible contents of value and elicit feelings of mistrust. The sheriff's lack of knowledge about the chest's contents intimates anxiety about potential acts of theft and identifies the chest as a meaningful object. The plea reveals the chest and its contents to be a critical component in the resolution of a familial conflict.[27]

POLITICAL ENTANGLEMENTS Chests also became meaningful objects through political engagement, enabling the mobility of noble households and fulfilling the political needs of ruling dynasties. The itinerant Burgundian household from 1363 to 1477 offers an excellent case study in this respect. It frequently traveled between numerous residences in the territories of France, the Low Countries, and Burgundy, since the dukes ruled over fragmented territories, with differing peoples, and linguistic and legal traditions. Their northern lands in the Low Countries were the most densely urbanized area in Northern Europe, home to powerful cities un-ashamed of asserting their independence. Rule over these territories and peoples involved a complex web of "interdependency" between the ruling families, their cities, and their peoples, especially between the nobility and the urban elites. When chests accompanied members of the ducal household on their travels or relocations to various residences, they rendered visible the wealth and right of the house of Burgundy to govern territories to which the Burgundian family had fragile, or only recent, claim.[28]

Chests had considerable importance for a dynasty that, in Stein's words, was constantly seeking legitimacy and that often achieved territorial expansion by purchase and the appearance of fiscal soundness. The historical record contains numerous references to the transportation of the Burgundian dynasty's administrative and portable wealth. In 1468, Gilles Boudins was paid to transport the "chests containing books, registers, papers, letters and other things relating to the finances" of Charles the Bold. In the same year Perquin Lanchals, clerk of the *argentier* (the Burgundian ducal finance office) was reimbursed for travels to Bruges to collect chests that had contents necessary for the running of the financial office. Language in the Burgundian ducal accounts explicitly connected chests with the wealth that underpinned the Burgundian right to rule. In 1388, Pierre de Fou, a chest maker from Paris, produced two chests specifically to transport cloths of gold, velvets, satins, and vessels of the duke when he traveled to Brabant. A year later, Jean Le Heron, another chest maker from Paris, supplied six chests for Philip the Bold to carry his "cloths of gold," "his books," his crystal, his "cloths of silk, satin and velvet," and his resting jackets to the duchy of Guelders. Fifty years later, chests were still performing the same function for Duke Philip the Good, Philip the Bold's grandson. In 1432, Giles de Willies of Lille took payment for two wooden chests covered in leather to keep the "jewels of [the duke's] body." Finally, in 1468, Jean du Bois of Ghent brought two chests of Charles the Bold filled with "books and other things" from Lille to Bruges.[29]

The language of the ducal accounts also reveals the fear that the chests and their contents, as meaningful objects embodying the portable wealth of the dynasty, would prompt acts of theft. Ducal accounts frequently detail the locking mechanisms, as well as the particular valuables that were to be placed inside each chest. A chest of Philip the Bold used to transport six figures of the apostles in silver for his chapel in 1389 was "closed with two locks." In 1451, the "security" of chests carrying church decorations from Mons to Bruges for a meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece, founded by Philip the Good in 1430, was explicitly entrusted to Jean Screnel and Loys de Leatre. In another Burgundian account, dating from 1468, several chests containing the jewels of castle Vilvoorde were to have an armed guard during their transport to Leuven. That the theft of goods from a chest was a real possibility is demonstrated by a plea brought before King Edward of England in 1314: William de Mortone was called to answer a charge of "having forcibly abstracted various articles of jewelry, silver plate, linen and woollen cloths, also certain bonds and deeds of aquitance [release] from two chests lying near the church of St Magnus in the ward of Bridge."[30]

Chests did more than render members of a ruling household visible; they also helped to create a visual spectacle of a ruling household's majesty. For instance, Italian marriage chests played a symbolic role in transporting a bride's dowry to her husband's house as part of a public procession through the streets. Likewise, the Burgundian ducal accounts attest to the pomp of "public procession" whenever the ducal household moved. In 1421, Hue de Boulogne was paid to paint not only the chariot of Anne and Agnes of Burgundy, sisters to Philip the Good, in yellow and green but also the chests that belonged to the chariot, as well as the collars and saddles of the horses pulling it. The chariot, chests, collars, and saddles were to bear letters of fine gold and silver and the duke's devices and standards to appear in their customary flint and steel showing flames and sparks. The chariot in procession, with its chests painted like the duke's devices, bespoke the unity and nobility of the Burgundian house. Agnes and Anne inside the color-coordinated chariot symbolized the potential marriage alliances that their brother sought to arrange for them, and the chests pointed to the material wealth that a dynastic partnership would accrue. Indeed, when Hue de Boulogne agreed to paint the chariot, negotiations were already underway for Agnes' marriage to Charles,

Count of Clermont (duchy of Bourbon), and Anne's marriage to John, duke of Bedford, who was in control of Lancastrian France.[31]

A chest could serve as a meaningful agent of the Burgundian dynasty even when no member of the dynasty was present, as did the one that Philip the Good installed in the Cathedral of St. Donatian's in 1454 to hold the taxes to be collected in Bruges for the duke's planned crusade. The ducal account states that Anthoine Gassin, "master carpenter" of Bruges, was employed to build the frame from Danish wood, "in the manner of a trunk," and Guiselin Feure, also of Bruges, to band the chest with iron and make its three keys. The placement of the chest in Bruges' most prominent cathedral, which was close to the main commercial square, was a reminder of ducal authority in a city that had not long ago rebelled against it, as well as a tacit acknowledgement of the Burgundian dynasty's need for the support of its urban elites, particularly its most prominent bankers. The trunk's function of holding the "alms of the good people for the advancement of [the duke's] travels to Turkey, where he has the intention to go, at the pleasure of Our Lord for the security and defence of our Christian kingdom," identified the tax-paying citizens of Bruges as active partners in the Burgundian enterprise.[32]

MORAL ENTANGLEMENTS Chests became even more powerful objects when drawn into moral arguments about the sins of commerce, avarice, and adultery in literary and visual culture. Although in the late Middle Ages, commerce became more a means of livelihood than ever before, as Howell remarked, people "did not live entirely comfortably in it." In Boccaccio's *Decameron*, compiled c. 1350, Landolfo Rufolo, a greedy merchant of Ravello, was saved from drowning after a shipwreck by clinging to a floating chest and eventually brought back to health by a woman on the island of Corfu. Leaving the chest with the woman, he returned to Ravello to sell the jewels that were inside and sending some of the proceeds back to his rescuer on Corfu. Sharing the wealth from his chest made Landolfo a reformed man: "The rest he kept for himself and, with no desire to engage any further in commerce, he lived out his days in becoming dignity."[33]

The social meaning of chests was redolent of the anxieties that surrounded the extension of commerce and the uses of financial surpluses; it was often represented in written and visual depictions of the sin of avarice, which medieval moralists from the eleventh century onward regarded as one of the "worst of

all vices." In Book XIV of William Langland's *Piers the Plowman* (c. 1370 to 1390), the chest is all but a metaphor of avarice itself. In the words of one character, "[I]f Avarice tries to injure a poor man, he has little power, for Poverty only has sacks to keep his possessions in, while Avarice keeps them in ambries and iron bound coffers. And which is the easier to break open, a beggar's wallet or an iron bound chest? The wallet would surely make less of an outcry."[34]

As Little observed, when contemporaries chose to visualize avarice, they frequently coupled it with Piers the Plowman's "ambries and iron bound coffers," either seated on the chest or caught in the action of storing profits. Visual depictions of avarice also contain serpents hanging on moneybags and necks as well as devils poised to consume souls in the afterlife. A late thirteenth-century French miniature from the *Somme le Roi* (Survey for a King) portrays avarice as a male figure, dressed in rags, shown transferring his gold coins from a chest to a larger chest with a lounging devil regarding the man's insatiable longing for sinful material gain before his inevitable descent into hell (see Figure 6). The chest thus associated the proliferation of mercantile and commercial activity with the moral pitfalls of avarice and usury. A miniature dated c. 1330-1340, based on a Latin treatise about the seven vices and enhanced with moral warnings from Christ, shows a large wooden chest being used as a repository for a banker's ill-gotten gains. The chest has three locks on the lid with metal studs adding to its appearance of high security (see Figure 7). In several contemporary miniatures, avarice was linked with covetousness. Guillaume de Lorri and Jean de Meun's *Roman de la Rose* (c. 1380) represents covetousness as a chest either closed, suggesting hoarded wealth, or open, with three miniatures representing Felony and Villainy, Covetousness, and Avarice (see Figure 8). Such visual representations of chests as sinful objects standing for the desire for material possessions reveal the medieval chest as a trope for misgivings about commercial activity.[35]

Figures 6, 7, and 8

This artistic use of chests was firmly grounded in the use of chests as real places for the storage of numerous items of value. In the tale of Lady Fee's downfall in *Piers the Plowman*, Reason's counsel closes the lid on the chest: "It's no use asking me to have mercy till lords and ladies learn to love the truth, and turn away from filth and ribaldry; and Lady Peacock casts her finery off, and locks her furs away in her clothes chest." Another contemporary narrative depicts the chest and its items as participants in the sinful act of

theft alongside adultery. In the *Decameron*, Ambrogiulo steals "a purse, a tunic, a ring or two and the odd belt" from his lover's chest. The inference is that the chest is so full of items that Ambrogiulo has the leisure to take his pick of them. In another *Decameron* narrative, three sisters steal a "fortune in jewels and cash," from "a large chest of their father's" to vacation with their lovers in Crete. Again, the chest becomes a meaningful object that holds jewels and cash ready to hand and ready to spend.[36]

Closed chests spoke to medieval individuals of a "wealth of goods hidden from view" that could attract sinful actions. Young wrote that medieval moralists blamed avarice for the corruption of emotional norms that ruined relationships with God, fellow Christians, and family members. Emotional loyalties in marriage were especially "vulnerable to the disruptive influence of avarice." The contemporary literature portrays the anxiety about how chests could both conceal and facilitate the sin of adultery through the plot device of locking people in chests. In Boccaccio's *Decameron*, Zeppa enacts revenge on his friend Spinelloccio for sleeping with his wife by instructing his friend's wife to shut her husband in a chest and then "[laying] her down on top of the chest inside which her husband was shut, and [taking] his pleasure with her, and she with him, to his heart's content" (see Figure 9 for a German woodcut of the scene c. 1534). Boccaccio also tells the story of how a woman drugs her adulterous lover Ruggeleri with the intent of removing him from her house in a chest that her maid suggests would allow them to stab him when trapped. Before they can complete their plan, however, two usurers appropriate the chest with Ruggeleri inside. The usurers absconding with the sinner is clearly an oblique reference to the medieval epidemic of greed and the weakening of the emotional bonds in marriage by avarice.[37]

An interdisciplinary consideration of the evidence about the use and representation of chests in inventories, guild accounts, court pleas, contemporary writings, images, and material culture, reveals chests to have been ubiquitous in the later Middle Ages. Applying Brown's thing theory to this evidence reveals the myriad ways in which the "commercial revolution" and the development of "consumer societies" caused the transformation of chests from mere things into meaningful objects through their entanglements in commercial, consumer, political, and moral life. Thus, this study throws new light on the "commercial revolution" and development of "consumer societies." Responding to Rublack's call to arms, its conceptual

approach and interdisciplinary methodology illuminate how one common but generally overlooked commodity participated in everyday life.

The material forms and characteristics of chests both facilitated and constrained commercialization: The very things used to store and display money, advance loans, and preserve records of debts also encouraged face-to-face transactions, not faceless credit, and ensured that a significant volume of trade remained focused on personal, public, and socially sanctioned interactions. Those forms and characteristics, meant that chests—however exotic and ornate, whether constructed for ceremonial display or private utility—were the ideal repositories for consumers' multiplying possessions. They could also help to organize shared spaces, support the movement of itinerant households, and forge political relationships. Yet, in meeting those needs, chests became a focus for the moral anxieties surrounding societal changes—the ever-present threats of theft, avarice, concealment, dishonesty, and injustice. As such, they may even have prompted people to action.

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[1] John F. Benton (ed.), *Self and Society in Medieval France: The Memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent* (New York, 1970), 165-166. The word *bin* was changed to *chest* in my English translation in accord with the word *arche* in the original Latin text. The 1825 French translation of Guibert de Nogent's work correctly translated the Latin in this passage, using the term *coffre*. See *Collection des Mémoires relatifs a l'histoire de France Suite de la vie de Guibert de Nogent, par lui-méme vie de Saint-Bernard, par Guillaume de Saint-Thierri* (Paris, 1825).

[2] Chris Briggs, "Manorial Court Roll Inventories as Evidence for English Peasant Consumption and Living Standards, c. 1270-*c.*1420," in Antoni Furio and Ferran Garcia-Olivier (eds.), *Pautes de Consum i Nivells de Vida al Món Rural Medieval* (Valencia, 2010), available at https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/79789/.

For the urban household accounts, see Dijon household inventories c.450 (1389-1588), *Série B*, BII 356, Archives Départementales de la Côte-d'Or. Guihem Ferrand and Jean-Pierre Garcia, *Les Inventaires après décès de la ville de Dijon à la fin du Moyen Âge (1390-1459). I. 1390-1408* (Toulouse, 2018), 611-657; for the guild and corporation accounts, Étienne Boileau (ed. René de Lespinasse and François Bonnardot), *Les métiers et corporations de la ville de Paris au XIIIe siècle* (Paris, 1879); for the Burgundian ducal household accounts and inventories, Burgundian ducal accounts, *Série B*, Accounts of the *recette*

générale de toutes les finances, comptes du receveur générale, trésorier et argentier (1363-1432), Burgundian dynastic inventories, *Série B,* B301-302, Archives Départementales de la Côte-d'Or, Dijon (hereinafter ADCO); Burgundian ducal accounts, *Série B*, Accounts of the *recette générale de toutes les finances, comptes du receveur générale* (1423-1496), Burgundian dynastic inventories, *Série B*, B3500-3514, Archives Départementales du Nord, Lille (hereinafter ADN); for printed Burgundian household accounts, Bernard Prost, *Inventaires mobiliers et extraits des comptes des ducs de Bourgogne de la maison de Valois (1363-1477)* (Paris, 1908), 2 v.; Chrétien César Auguste Dehaisnes, *Documents et extraits divers concernant l'histoire de l'art dans la Flandre, l'Artois & le Hainaut avant le XVe siècle* (Lille, 1886); Léon, Le Comte de Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne: Études sur les lettres, les arts et l'industrie pendant le XVe siècle et plus particulièrement dans les Pays-Bas et le Duché de Bourgogne* (Paris, 1849-1852), 2 v.; Anke Greve and Émilie Lebailly, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire duc du Bourgogne*. *I. Année 1468* (Paris, 2001); *idem*, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire duc du Bourgogne*. *II. Année 1469* (Paris, 2002); Valérie Bessey, Véronique Flammang, and Lebailly, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire duc du Bourgogne*. *III (1). Année 1470* (Paris, 2008); *idem*, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire duc du Bourgogne. III (2). Année 1470* (Paris, 2008); Sébastien Hamel and Bessey, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire duc du Bourgogne*. *IV. Rôles mensuels et fragments des années 1471-75 conservés aux Archives départmentales du Nord, Lille* (Paris, 2009); for the wills, Reginald Robinson Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting 1258-1688* (London, 1889), I, II; Alexandre Tuetey, *Testaments enregistrés au parlement de Paris sous le règne de Charles VI* (Paris, 1880).

Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Letter Books Preserved among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall* (London, 1912), A. 1275-1298, B. 1275-1312, C. 1291-1309, D. 1309-1314, E. 1314-1337, F. 1337-1352, G. 1352-1374, H. 1375-1399, I. 1400-1422. For the contemporary literature and visual images, see Giovanni Boccacio, *The Decameron* (London, 1993; orig. composed in Italian, c. 1348-1353); William Langland, *Piers the Ploughman* (London, 1966; orig. composed in the 1360s); the British Library Illustrated Manuscripts. The surviving chests are located in the Burrell Collection, Glasgow; the Museum of London; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

[3] Ulinka Rublack, "Matter in the Material Renaissance," *Past & Present*, 219 (2013), 42. Notable exceptions to the usual scholarly treatment of chests include Sarah Hinds, *Opening the Chest: A Cultural Biography of Chests in Late Medieval England*, unpub. M.A. thesis (York, 2018); *idem*, "Crossing Thresholds and Creating Boundaries: The Cultural Biography of Chests in Late Medieval England," in Wilson and Leah Clark (eds.), *Mobility of Objects Across Boundaries 1000-1700* (Liverpool, forthcoming); Christina Antenhofer, "Chests in Italian and Bridal Trousseaus (14th-15th Centuries)," *ibid*. For English, French, and Italian chests analyzed as single items and as special examples from the late nineteenth century onward, see Nicolas Asseray, "Maine-et-Loire: Brissac: le coffre d'escarpe du château," *Bulletin monumental*, CLXXV (2017), 162-166; Christopher Pickvance, "The Tracery-Carved, Clamp Fronted Medieval Chest at St Mary Magdalen Church, Oxford, in a Comparative North-West European Perspective," *Antiquaries Journal,* XCIV (2014), 153-171; Cristelle L. Baskins, Adrian W. B Randolph, and Jaqueline Marie Musacchio, *The Triumph of Marriage: Painted Cassoni of the Renaissance* (Boston, 2008); Gavin Simpson, "The Pine Standard Chest in St. Margaret's Church, King's Lynn and the Social and Economic Significance of the Type," in John McNeill (ed.), *King's Lynn and the Fens: Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology* (Leeds, 2008); Marina Vidas, "The Compenhagen Cassioni: Constructing Narrative Images for Quattrocento Audiences," *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, XXIX (2003), 55-65; Adelbert L. J. Van de Walle and R. Heughebaert, "De chest of Courtrai: Een diplomatieke koffer anno 1302. Zijn techniek en geheim. Een interim verslag," *Tijdscrift voor industriële cultuur*, XIX (2001),1-71; Nicholas Petit, "Le coffre de Jean de Pontoise, évêque de Winchester, à l'abbaye Sainte-Geneviève de Paris: une spoliation de Philuppe le Bel en 1294," *Bulletin de la Société nationale des antiquares de France* (1997), 217-226; Graham Hughes, *Renaissance Cassioni: Masterpieces of Early Italian Art; Painted Marriage Chests, 1400-1550* (Alferiston, 1997); Oliver Clottu, "Le coffre de marriage armoire neuchâtelois," *Scwizerjsches Archiv fur Heraldik. Jahrbuch*, XCVIII (1984), 57-76; Penelope Eames, "An Iron Chest at Guildhall of about 1427," *Furniture History,* X (1974), 1-4; Claude Lapaire, "Adam et Eve sur un coffre genevois du XVe siècle," *Geneva*, XXI (1973), 319-328; L. R. A, Grove, "A Chest of 13th Century Type from Wormshill Church," *Archeologia Cantiana*, LXXI (1957), 214-218; Albert van de Put, "A Renaissance Chest," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, LXII (1933); L. G. Carr Laughton, "An Early Naval Chest," *The Mariner's Mirror*, V (1919),

51-53; V. Goss, "Un coffre-fort du XVe siècle à Neuveville," *Anzeiger für Schweizerische Alltertumskunde*, XXX (1897), 132.

For works that encourage more research into new areas, see Stephanie Downes, Sally Holloway, and Sarah Randles (eds.), *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions through History* (New York, 2018); Alice Dolan and Holloway, "Emotional Textiles: An Introduction," *Textile*, XIV (2016), 152-159: Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective* (New York, 1986); Igor Kopytoff, "The Cultural Biography of Things," in Appadurai (ed.), *Social Life of Things*, 64-94; Daniel Miller, *Material Cultures: Why Some Things Matter* (Chicago, 1998); Stephanie Downes, Sally Holloway, and Sarah Randles, "A Feeling for Things: Past and Present," in *idem* (eds.), *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions through History* (New York, 2018), 8-26; Grazyna Jurkowlaniec, Ika Matyjaszkiewicz, and Zuzanna Samecka, *The Agency of Things in Medieval and Early Modern Art: Materials Power and Manipulation* (London, 2018); for the suggestion that things might influence human actions and behavior, Jamie Kreiner, "Pigs in the Flesh and Fisc: An Early Medieval Ecology," *Past and Present,* 263 (2017), 3-42, which explores pigs' effect on Merovingian economic culture; Rublack, "Matter in the Material Renaissance," 41-85, which explores the sensory and visual aspects of leather shoes and wallpaper through the letters of Hans Fugger of Augsburg (1531-1598).

Jo Labanyi, "Doing Things: Emotion, Affect and Materiality," *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, XI (2010), 223-244 (quoted in Downes, Holloway, and Randles, "A Feeling for Things," 22); Daniel Lord Smail, *Legal Plunder: Households and Debt Collection in Late Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., 2016), 28; Miller, "Materiality: An Introduction," in *idem* (ed.), *Materiality* (Durham, 2005), 5.

[4] Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," *Critical Enquiry,* XXVIII (2001), 4; Ben Jervis, Briggs, and Matthew Tompkins, "Exploring Text and Objects: Escheators' Inventories and Material Culture in Medieval English Rural Households," *Medieval Archaeology,* LIX (2015), 185-186.

[5] Robert Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution of the Middle Ages, 950-1350* (New York, 1976), 78; Martha Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism in Europe 1300-1600* (New York, 2010); Maryanne Kowaleski, "A Consumer Economy," in Rosemary Horrox and W. Mark Ormrod (eds.), *A Social History of England: 1200–1500* (New York, 2006), 239; Bruno Blondé and Wouter Ryckbosch, "'In Splendid Isolation': A

Comparative Perspective on the Historiographies of the 'Material Renaissance' and the 'Consumer Revolution,'" *History of Retailing and Consumption,* II (2015), 105-124; Giorgio Riello and Rublack, *The Right to Dress: Sumptuary Laws in a Global Perspective c. 1200-1800* (New York, 2019); Frederik Buylaert, Wim De Clercq, and Jan Dumolyn, "Sumptuary Legislation, Material Culture and the Semiotics of 'Vivre Noblement' in the County of Flanders (14th–16th Centuries)," *Social History*, XXXVI (2011), 416; Lester K. Little, "Pride Goes before Avarice: Social Change and the Vices in Latin Christendom," *American Historical Review,* LXXVI (1971), 16-49. For social discomfort, see, most notably, Smail, *Legal Plunder*, 14, 90; Martha Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism*, 45-46; Samuel K. Cohn, "The Renaissance Attachment to Things: Material Culture in Last Wills and Testaments," *Economic History Review*, LXV (2012), 984-1004. Ian Forrest and Anne Haour, "Trust in Long-Distance Relationships, 1000-1600ce," *Past & Present*, 238 (2018), 190-213.

[6] Lopez, *Commercial Revolution*, 72; Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism*, 25, 10; Smail, *Legal Plunder*, 14, 136; Jan de Vries, "Luxury in the Dutch Golden Age in Theory and Practice," in Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (eds.), *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods* (New York, 2003), 41.

[7] Peter Spufford, *Money and Its Use in Medieval Europe* (New York, 1988); Brown, "Thing Theory," 1-22; René de Lespinasse et François Bonnardot, *Les métiers d'Étienne Boileau* (Paris, 1879), I, 53. Eames, "Iron Chest," 1. The chest can now be viewed in the Museum of London collection, which is available at https://collections.museumoflondon.org.uk/online/object/38061.html.

[8] Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Wills in Hustings*, II, 527, 541 (Frowyk was mayor twice,1435–1436 and 1444–1445); I, 502; Victoria and Albert Museum, Number 252-1864.

[9] Lopez, *The Commercial Revolution*, 78; Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Letter Books,* H, 1375-1399, ccii-ciii.

[10] Enguerrand de Monstrelet, *The Chronicles of Enguerrand de Monstrelet* (London, 1853), 233; Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Letter Books*, H, 1375-1399, lxxvi; *idem* (ed.), *Calendar of Wills in Husting*, I, 116. Company of Luka probably refers to Italian Luccese merchants resident in London.

[11] Forrest and Haour, "Trust in Long-Distance Relationships," 190-213; Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Letter Books*, H, 1375-1399, lxv-b. Translation of story from Henry T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London*

Life, in the XIIIth, XIVth, and XVth Centuries: Being a Series of Extracts, Local, Social and Political, from the Early Archives of the City of London, A.D. 1276-1419 (London, 1868). For another translation of the case, see Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Letter Books*, H, 1375-1399, lxv-b.

[12] Pillorying was the standard form of punishment for fraud in fourteenth-century London. Helen Carrel, "The Ideology of Punishment in Late Medieval English Towns," *Social History,* XXXIV (2009), 301-320.

[13] Lianna Farber, *An Anatomy of Trade in Medieval Writing: Value, Consent and Community* (Ithaca, 2006); Spencer E. Young, "Avarice, Emotions, and the Family in Thirteenth Century Moral Discourse," in Susan Broomhall (ed.), *Ordering Emotions in Europe, 1100-1800* (Leiden, 2015), 76; Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Wills in Husting*, I, 635.

[14] Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Wills in Husting*, II, 62; Farber, *Anatomy of Trade*, 1-3.

[15] The Victoria and Albert Museum's Medieval and Renaissance Collection has five categories for chests—coffret, coffer, chest, cassone, and box. See numbers 159-1894, W30-1926, and M13-1994.

[16] John Cherry, "Leather," in John Blair and Nigel Ramsay (eds), *English Medieval Industries* (London, 1991), 314; Christopher G. Pickvance, "The Canterbury Group of Arcaded Gothic Early Medieval Chests: A Dendrochronological and Comparative Study," *Antiquaries Journal*, XCVIII (2018), 149; Martin Bridge and Daniel Miles, "A Review of the Information Gained from Dendrochronological Dated Chests in England," *Regional Furniture*, XXV (2011), 51; Guilhem Ferrand and Jean-Pierre Garcia, *Les Inventaires après décès de la ville de Dijon à la fin du Moyen Âge (1390-1459)* (Toulouse, 2017), 611-657; Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, 466; B4011, f. 15, ADCO; Prost, *Inventaires mobiliers*, I, 58; B3157, f. 45, ADCO.

[17] B1495, f. 104, ADCO; Prost, *Inventaires mobiliers*, I, 606.BII 356/1, piece II and BII 356/1, piece XI, ADCO; Smail, *Legal Plunder*, 32.

[18] BII 356/1, Cote 3, piece XXIII; BII 356/1, Cote 17, piece XII; B301, f. 42; B301, ff. 33-35, ADCO; Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne,* II, 879-880.

[19] Martin Heidegger (trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson), *Being and Time* (London, 1962; orig. pub. in German, Berlin, 1927).

[20] Roberta Gilchrist, "The Materiality of Medieval Heirlooms: From Biographical to Sacred Objects," in Hans Peter Hahn and Hadas Weiss (eds.), *Mobility, Meaning & Transformations of Things* (Oxford, 2013),

175; BII 356/1, Cote 17, piece XII, adco; Alice Dolan and Holloway, "Emotional Textiles: An Introduction," *Textile*, XIV (2016), 154; John Styles, *Threads of Feeling: The London Founding Hospital's Textile Tokens 1740-1770* (London, 2010); BII 356/1, Cote 2, piece XV, ADCO; Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of the Wills in Hustings*, II, 249.

[21] Greve and Lebailly, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire*, I, 85; Laborde, *Les Ducs de* Bourgogne, II, 134.

[22] Liz Hancock and Lindsey Robertson, "Reinterpreting an English Medieval Painted Chest," available at https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/media_276745_en.pdf; William Wells, "The Richard de Bury Chest," *Scottish Art Review*, X (1966), 14-18, 31-32; Ormrod, "The King's Secrets: Richard de Bury and the Monarchy of Edward III," in Chris Given-Wilson (ed.), *War, Government and Aristocracy in the British Isles c. 1150-1500* (Woodbridge, 2008), 163-178.

[23] Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, II, 134.

[24] Maryanne Kowaleski and Peter Jeremy Piers Goldberg, "Introduction: Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household," in *idem* (eds.), *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Medieval England* (New York, 2008), 1-13; BII 356/1, Cote 20, piece XXII, ADCO; Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of the Wills in Hustings*, II, 57-58, 199.

[25] Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of the Wills in Hustings*, I, 525, 146; BII, 356/1, Cote 11, piece XVII; BII 356/1, Cote 3, piece XXVIII, ADCO; Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, 389.

[26] BII 356/1, Cote 20, piece XXII; BII 356/1, Cote 20, piece XXII, ADCO; Andrew Brown and Graeme Small, *Court and Civic Society in the Burgundian Low Countries c. 1420-1530* (Manchester, 2007), 86; B 302, ff. 54-55, ADCO. The reference to "Robert the bastard of Flanders" possibly intends Robert, burgrave of Ypres, an illegitimate son of Louis of Male (father to Margaret of Flanders). His mother, whom the male complier of the inventory did not name, remains unidentified. See Jim van der Meulen, "Corporate and Collective Action and the Market Cycle of the Cloth Industry in Nieuwekerke, Flanders, 1300-1600," *Social History*, XLIII (2018), 375-399.

[27] Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Letter Books*, D, 1309-1314, xciii-c.

[28] Christopher Woolgar (ed.), *The Elite Household in England, 1100-1550* (Donningon, 2018); Robert Stein, *Magnanimous Dukes and Rising States: The Unification of the Burgundian Netherlands 1380-1480* (New York, 2017); Wim Blockmans and Walter Prevenier, *The Promised Lands: The Low Countries under Burgundian Rule 1369-1530* (Philadelphia, 1999); Stein, *Magnanimous Dukes,* 8-10; Élodie Lecuppre-Desjardin, *Le Royaume Inachevé des ducs de Bourgogne XIVe-XVe siècles* (Paris, 2016).

[29] Stein, *Magnanimous Dukes*, 51-52; Greve and Lebailly, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire*, I, 108, 225; Prost, *Inventaires mobiliers*, II, 398, 503-504; B1471, 46-47, 30, ADCO. In the account, Le Heron received payment for three large *males* (chests probably made of wood) and three *bahus* (chests probably made of or covered in leather. Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, 33; Greve and Lebailly, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire*, I, 115.

[30] Prost, *Inventaires mobiliers*, II, 506; B1486, f. 32, ADCO; Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, 412; Greve and Lebailly, *Comptes de l'Argentier de Charles le Téméraire*, I, 268-269 (Vilvoorde and Leuven are 22 km apart); Sharpe (ed.), *Calendar of Letter Books*, E, 1314-1337, xxvi.

[31] Caroline Campbell, *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence: The Courtald Wedding Chests* (London, 2009); Claudio Paolini, "Chests," in Marta Ajmar-Wollheim and Flor Dennis (eds.), *At Home in Renaissance Italy* (London, 2006); Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, 185; Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (New York, 1970), 7, 9, 123.

[32] Laborde, *Les Ducs de Bourgogne*, I, 429. In 1422, London had fourteen specialists listed under the iron-working guild—ironmongers, culters, armorers, clockmakers, lorimers, spurriers, wire-drawers, pinners, nail makers, lockyers, furbours, smiths, ferrous, and blacksmiths. See Jane Geddes, "Iron," in John Blair and Nigel Ramsay (eds.), *English Medieval Industries* (London, 1991), 182. Vaughan, *Philip the Good,* 143, 360. The original wording of the trunk's function is "pour y mettre les aumonsnes que les bonnes gens voudront faire pour l'avancement de son voyage de Turquie, ou il a intencion aler, au plaisir de Nostre Seigneur, pour les secours et deffence de notre foy crestienne."

[33] Howell, *Commerce before Capitalism,* 13; *idem* and Claire Billen, "Le credit au quotiden," *Histoire Urbaine*, LI (2018), 5-17; Boccacio, *Decameron*, 83, 86, 87.

[34] Richard G. Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed: The Sin of Avarice in Early Medieval Thought and Literature* (New York, 2000); Young, “Avarice, Emotions and the Family,” 69-84; Little, “Pride Goes before Avarice,” 16; J. F. Goodridge, “Introduction” to Langland, *Piers the Ploughman*, 11-12; Langland, *Piers the Ploughman*, 166, 174.

[35] For a study of the visual representations of avarice and chests, see Hinds, *Opening the Chest*; for Master Honoré’s *Somme le Roi*, c. 1295, 54180, f.136 v., British Library. Little, “Pride Goes before Avarice,” 26, 37. For Master of the Coharelli Codex, detail from a miniature with scenes of banking and usury, c. 1330-1340, see Ms. 27695, f. 8, British Library; for three miniatures of Felony and Villainy, Covetousness and Avarice, *Roman de la Rose, c.* 1380, Yates Thompson, 21, f. 4, British Library.

[36] Langland, *Piers the Plowman*, 58; Boccacio, *Decameron,* 150-151*,* 275.

[37] Elizabeth Danbury, “Security and Safeguard: Signs and Symbols on Boxes and Chests,” in John Cherry and Ann Payne (eds.), *Signs and Symbols: Proceedings of the 2006 Harlaxton Symposium* (Donnington, 2009), 29–41; Young, “Avarice, Emotions and the Family,” 70, 77; Boccacio, *Decameron,* 527, 305-309. For a depiction of Spinneloccio locked up in a chest on which his wife and Zeppa are seated, see Hans Schäufelin, Nuremberg c. 1534, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.