

## Delight in good books

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## **Delight in Good Books: Family, Devotional Practice, and Textual Circulation in Sarah Savage's Diaries**

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# DELIGHT IN GOOD BOOKS



## Family, Devotional Practice, and Textual Circulation in Sarah Savage's Diaries

*Gillian Wright*

Sarah Savage (1664–1752) is one of the best-attested English diarists of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Beginning her diary in 1686, aged 22, she is known to have continued work on it until at least 1750, when she was in her eighties.<sup>1</sup> Though now extant only in fragments—and, for the most part, in scribal transcripts—Savage's diary is an important and intriguing resource for book historians and scholars of women's writing. Of especial interest to the former are the many references in her diary to the production, circulation, and reception of written texts, in both manuscript and print. Exclusively religious, these texts are in turn linked in numerous ways to the devotional practices of Savage's extended family: both her birth family, the Henrys, and her own direct and collateral descendants.

In this article, I trace the connections between textual production, family, and religion as witnessed by Savage's diaries. In doing so I also respond to, and complement, recent scholarship on early modern women's life-writing, especially diaries, and on the role of diary-keeping within puritan and nonconformist circles in the long seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> As Margaret Ezell, amongst others, has noted, life-writing (in all its forms) was one of the more acceptable modes of writing for women in the early modern period.<sup>3</sup> Savage can be compared with women such as Isabella Twysden, Elizabeth Jekyll, and Sarah Cowper, all of whom kept diaries concerned, to differing degrees, with both family relationships and religion.<sup>4</sup> For present purposes, however, Savage and her writings can most helpfully be compared with late seventeenth-century puritan and nonconformist diaristic practices as described by historians such as Tom Webster, Andrew Cambers, and Michelle Wolfe. Webster assesses the role of spiritual diaries as a means of self-regulation and self-construction, and also comments on the reception of diaries by later readers, including the diarist's older self.<sup>5</sup> Still more pertinent to Savage's diaristic habits are the notions of "family religion," life-writing, and textual

exchange discussed by Cambers and Wolfe. Cambers and Wolfe identify family religion—glossed as “a range of daily domestic spiritual practices involving a minimum of two family members and a maximum of the entire resident household plus guests”—as characteristic of both moderate Anglican and moderate nonconformist spirituality in the later seventeenth century.<sup>6</sup> At the heart of such spiritual practices were the related habits of shared reading and writing. Cambers and Wolfe argue that “[t]he essence of family religion was reading in the household,” while Cambers has subsequently discussed the circulation and reception of manuscript texts, including diaries and autobiographies, within the godly family.<sup>7</sup> Such accounts of puritan spirituality differ both from conventional emphases on the individualistic—as opposed to the social—experience of puritanism and also from traditional historiographies of late seventeenth-century Protestantism, which tend to stress denominational distinctions between Anglicanism and nonconformity.<sup>8</sup> They also understand puritan “family religion” as diversely and complexly constituted by textual production and dissemination.

Sarah Savage’s diaries clearly belong within the traditions of puritan life-writing, textual circulation, and family religion described by Webster, Cambers, and Wolfe. Savage’s brother, the presbyterian minister and devotional writer Matthew Henry, is cited by Cambers and Wolfe as a leading exponent of family religion, while both autobiographical writing and the circulation of spiritual manuscripts and printed books were advocated and practiced within the Henry-Savage family.<sup>9</sup> However, the copiousness of Savage’s diaries—especially when read in relation to her gender, her longevity, and her well-documented family—makes it possible to refine and modify some of the conclusions reached in existing scholarship on this topic.<sup>10</sup> In particular, Savage and her family can be shown to differ to some extent from the puritan norm both in their predominantly nonconformist reading choices and in encouraging individual, alongside familial, reading and textual circulation. The length of Savage’s writing life also makes it possible to read her own diaristic practices against her personal and familial history and to trace changes in her habits of reading and writing between the 1680s and the 1740s.

In this article I will initially summarize Savage’s family background, her own history as a diarist, and the extent and status of her extant diaries. I will discuss in turn her motives for keeping a diary, the production and circulation of texts within her family, and the role of family both in her choice of devotional reading and in her access to devotional literature. I will also consider Savage’s role as a mediating figure, inheriting some forms of devo-

tional literacy from older generations of her family—principally her father and brother—and passing them on to her children and grandchildren. Finally, I will consider the role of family in facilitating Savage's acquisition of and access to printed devotional literature and in the afterlife of the diaries.

## Family and Texts

Sarah Savage, like so many women of earlier periods, has often been known to academic scholarship principally through her connections with eminent men. Born Sarah Henry in 1664, she was the eldest daughter of Philip Henry (1631–96) and younger sister of Matthew Henry (1662–1714).<sup>11</sup> Philip Henry was among the numerous English clergy who were conscientiously unwilling to accept the Restoration settlement in the Church of England, and was consequently ejected from his curacy in North Wales in 1661. Henry's scruples about prelacy and liturgism within the Church of England were, however, balanced by qualms about Protestant separatism, and after his ejection he continued to attend Anglican services. In later years he took advantage of the Declaration of Indulgence (1672) and Act of Toleration (1689) to preach sermons and administer the sacraments, mainly in his own home, but still attended parish services throughout his later years. Comparable habits of principled negotiation between moderate Anglicanism and moderate nonconformity were subsequently to persist into the next generation of the Henry family. Philip's only son, Matthew, was ordained as a presbyterian minister in 1687 but his many published works—especially his biblical commentaries and treatises on family religion—achieved a wide readership among Anglicans as well as nonconformists. After her marriage, Sarah Savage regularly attended both her local parish church in Wrenbury and also the presbyterian congregation in Nantwich—despite disapproving of some of the Wrenbury priest's views and actions and even though the Nantwich church was more difficult to reach.<sup>12</sup> Her attendance at Anglican worship seems to have continued until at least 1736, when her own household was finally dissolved.

As a child, Sarah Henry lived with her parents, Philip and Katherine, at the family home in Broad Oak, Flintshire. In 1687, she married John Savage, a widower with one daughter who lived at Wrenbury Wood in Cheshire. Philip Henry died in 1696, as did his wife Katherine in 1707. Two of their daughters, Eleanor and Ann, died in 1697. Matthew Henry, after serving for many years in a presbyterian congregation in Chester, accepted a call to

Hackney in 1711, but died in Cheshire in 1714. Sarah Savage continued to keep in close touch with her remaining sister Katherine, her siblings-in-law, and her nieces and nephews for as long as they and she survived.

Sarah and John Savage had five children who lived to adulthood: Sarah (born 1689), Katherine (1691), Mary (1695), Philip (1699), and Hannah (1701). By 1714, their eldest daughter was married to William Lawrence and living in Motehouse, Shropshire, while Philip Savage was a student at Mr. Perrot's dissenting school at Newmarket. However, Phil (as he is always named in his mother's diaries) was forced to return home in August 1714, following the closure of the dissenting academies and schools under the Schism Act. In August 1715 he was sent to live with family friends, the Hunt family of Boreatton, Shropshire, and remained there until October 1716.<sup>13</sup> Over the following few years Phil spent most of his time either at Wrenbury Wood or at Chester; a proposal to apprentice him to an attorney came to nothing, and his parents were evidently anxious about his future employment. Such anxieties were concluded abruptly in February 1721, when Phil died of smallpox, aged twenty-one.

The girls of the Savage family proved more robust. By 1721, two more daughters, Mary and Katherine, had been married: Mary to the dissenting minister Thomas Holland of Wem, Shropshire, in November 1717; Katherine to a distant cousin on the Savage side of the family, in January 1718. Hannah Savage survived the smallpox that killed her brother, and remained at home with her parents, albeit making frequent extended visits to her sisters. John Savage died in 1729; and Hannah married Richard Witton, a dissenting minister from West Bromwich, in February 1732. Sarah Savage subsequently divided her time between each of her four daughters until September 1736, when she made a permanent move to West Bromwich to live with Hannah Witton and her family. She died in 1752.

All of Savage's birth family were writers. Although the prolific Matthew was the only Henry of his period to venture into print, manuscript writings by both of his parents and all of his sisters are extant. Family correspondence over several decades survives in manuscripts now held by the Bodleian Library, Dr. Williams's Library, and the British Library.<sup>14</sup> In addition, several members of the family kept diaries. Philip Henry began a diary in 1657 and maintained the habit until his death.<sup>15</sup> Of his five children, at least three—Matthew, Sarah, and Katherine—were diarists. The remaining two children, while not known to have kept diaries, produced other kinds of spiritual autobiography. Ann Henry, at the age of nineteen, wrote a spiritual memoir of her childhood, while Eleanor kept "a constant register . . . of all

her approaches to the Lord's Supper."<sup>16</sup> All the siblings were taught from an early age to keep sermon-books, taking notes on sermons heard at church and in the home.

Over the centuries, many of these manuscript compositions have been lost, and are now known of only at second-hand. The papers of Eleanor Henry, for example, can be glimpsed only through extracts quoted in a memoir written by Matthew.<sup>17</sup> Where manuscripts do survive, they are frequently copies, and often represent comparatively short portions of what were once much longer works. Matthew Henry, for instance, kept a diary from 1690 until his death in 1714, but only one original volume and one partial transcript have been located.<sup>18</sup> The younger Katherine Henry, probably also a lifelong diarist, is now represented only by a portion of her devotional diary for the 1720s.<sup>19</sup>

By comparison with those of her parents and siblings, Sarah Savage's devotional writings are relatively well—though still fragmentarily—represented. Her diary, which she kept for over six decades, now survives in four seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century manuscripts, collectively representing nearly forty years. Chester City Record Office, MS D/Basten/8, covers the period 1686-88, while Bodleian MS Eng. misc. e. 331, Harris Manchester College, Savage MS 4, and Dr. Williams's Library Henry MS 90.2 respectively represent the periods May 1714-December 1723, January 1724-December 1745, and April 1743-April 1748.<sup>20</sup> Of these, only one—the Chester manuscript—is known to be in the diarist's own hand. The Harris Manchester manuscript and the passages for 1722 and 1723 in the Bodleian manuscript are in the hand of a single scribe, possibly the diarist's granddaughter, Sarah Brett.<sup>21</sup> The earlier sections in the Bodleian manuscript are also scribal, while the Dr. Williams's Library manuscript, though generally assumed to be scribal, may possibly be autograph.<sup>22</sup> In addition, Dr. Williams's Library holds three further manuscripts by Sarah Savage—her personal miscellany, a collection of letters and a volume of sermon notes (Henry MSS 90.3-4 and 90.9)—while two other manuscripts of her sermon notes are held at Harris Manchester (Savage MSS 1 and 5).

For Sarah Savage, as for all the Henrys, personal devotion, reading and writing, and family were inextricably linked. Connections between domesticity and piety are implicit in the titles of some of Matthew Henry's best-known publications: *Family Hymns* (1695), *A Church in the House* (1704), *A Sermon Concerning the Right Management of Friendly Visits* (1704). For Matthew Henry, as for his parents and sisters, it was axiomatic that the family should nurture the piety both of the household as a collective entity

and of the individuals within it; and one of the principal means by which this was to be achieved was through reading and writing. As a result, literacy, for girls as well as boys, was considered essential. Philip Henry himself taught all his daughters to read, and at least two—Sarah and Ann—were given some instruction in learned languages.<sup>23</sup> In later years Sarah would express either pity or disapproval of young people who were unable to read, and would regard an unbookish household as tantamount to an ungodly one. Visiting a cousin's family with her husband in 1716 she described it as "well fixed, (a wife and 5 children) but I discern no footsteps of religion, could not see a book in the house, how do the most live without God in the World" (Bod. MS, 123).<sup>24</sup>

As an adult, Sarah Savage was both an avid reader and an assiduous writer. Once established as a diarist, she seems rarely to have let more than a few days pass without writing an entry. Given her responsibilities as a daughter, wife, mother, and grandmother, her persistence in compiling her diary is a remarkable achievement. For this achievement to be understood, her motives not only for beginning her diary but also for sustaining it over so many years require consideration.

## Why Keep a Diary?

Why did the young Sarah Henry decide to keep a diary? Unsurprisingly, a key factor for her in making this decision was the example of others. She began the first volume of her diary by explaining: "I have had it long upon my thoughts to do something in the nature of a Diary—being encouraged by the great advantages others have got thereby and by the hopes that I may thereby be furthered [in] a Godly life" (Chester MS, fol. 1r). Personal influence seems to have been a frequent motive for diary-keeping in the late seventeenth century. Cambers argues that the stimulation for undertaking a diary was often "as likely to have been personal as it was divine," and was frequently due to "a charismatic individual."<sup>25</sup> In Sarah's case, either her father—both well-respected and an established diarist—or her brother may have acted as an inspiration in this regard.<sup>26</sup> Her other stated reason for embarking on a diary—that it would contribute to her own spiritual progress—is also typical of puritan diarists of the period. Writers hoped that diary-writing would provide a focus for self-examination, and would encourage them to be honest about their own difficulties and failings.<sup>27</sup> The "autobiographical abstract" in which Sarah explains her reasons for beginning her diary is itself characteristic of the genre.<sup>28</sup>



Also typical of seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century diarists is the spiritual benefit Savage associated with rereading her diary.<sup>29</sup> The first leaf of her Chester diary preserves annotations from later years—1727, 1729, 1741, and 1743—when she had evidently revisited her youthful entries and reflected on their application to her later life. Just as writing her diary became an established part of Savage’s devotional practice, so too did habits of rereading, reflection, and self-application. Various entries in later years cite and comment approvingly on allusions to devotional books, notes on sermons, or meditations on the Bible which she had turned up in old diaries, finding them “helps to good thoughts—matter for prayer” (HMC MS, 261).<sup>30</sup> In 1739, reading in Joshua 4 about the pitching of the stones of Gilgal as a memorial to the dividing of the Jordan, she was reminded of “my old diary Books, which I thought somewhat like the fixing those stones, to bring to remembrance the kindnesses of God to me in my youth, which I cannot be enough thankful for” (HMC MS, 255). Savage’s image of the stones of Gilgal strikingly illustrates Webster’s argument that the “material site of [the] past self in the diary seemed to make past experience concrete and accessible” to the rereading diarist. For Savage, such rereading enabled a spiritually productive “dialogue between past and present” in which she was both reminded of past blessings and stimulated to reflect further on past experiences.<sup>31</sup> Significantly, these past experiences were often of spiritual reading.

Over Savage’s many years of diary-keeping, however, a gradual change in her priorities can be detected. As a mother and grandmother, she had concerns and responsibilities that would have been almost inconceivable to her in 1686 when she was still living in the Henry family home and conscious of her duty to learn from and defer to her parents. In January 1726, when remembering a piece of advice learnt from her mother, her motive in recording it was less to instruct herself than to be of benefit to others: “I had this thought lately which I would record that it may be of use to some of mine when my Head is in the dust” (HMC MS, 33). In January 1740, when reviewing her blessings at the beginning of the year, she was still more explicit about the importance of her diary as a means by which she could subsequently be useful to her children and grandchildren:

I cannot express my thankfulness for Continued use of Eyes, use of reason, peace of Conscience, so great a measure of health, comfort in children and relations, an ability thus to record the several passages of my life, which I trust will be of use to some of mine hereafter. If one has but one talent it should not be buried but improved.<sup>32</sup>

Usefulness to others was one of Savage's most frequently expressed aims in life on her own account, as well as one of her highest terms of praise for other people.<sup>33</sup> In July 1734, having returned to Wrenbury Wood after a visit to her sister, she wrote: "I would endeavour to be useful and doing good here so as not to be a burden but a treasure in the house, according to the exhortation to the aged women Titus 2.3" (HMC MS, 174-75). Paul's exhortation in Titus 2.3 is that "aged women" should endeavour to be "teachers of good things," particularly to younger women. Especially in later life, as she had less direct responsibility for childcare, Savage seems to have seen her diary as an important means of fulfilling her duty in this respect. She not only expected but hoped that her "diary Books" would be read by others, and that the spiritual instruction she had received through her early education, the books she had read, and the sermons she had heard would thus be made available to her descendants. Implicit in such expectations is the practice of textual circulation within the Savage family, to which her diaries frequently attest.

## Family Reading I: Manuscript Circulation

The Henrys and Savages were far from alone in circulating textual material—including life-writing of various kinds—around the family. Bequeathing one's spiritual papers to one's descendants had been an established puritan practice since the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Webster cites the example of Grace, Lady Mildmay (c.1552–1620), and Cambers argues that the circulation of manuscript diaries and autobiographies was "a social experience for the godly family."<sup>34</sup> But whereas both Webster and Cambers point to diaries and autobiographies circulating within the writer's lifetime (both among the writer's own family and his/her wider circles), it seems to have been customary within the Henry-Savage family for such confessional material to be shared only after the writer's death. Thus while scribal copies of more public texts (sermon notes, for instance) appear to have been freely circulated soon after transcription, Savage evidently anticipated that her own diaries would be read by her family only after she was dead and buried.<sup>35</sup> She equally anticipated that after her death her papers would be read by her bereaved relatives for their own spiritual comfort and edification.

Across Savage's diaries there are numerous references to her reading the papers of a recently deceased relative or friend. Thus in 1723 she read the

papers of her step-granddaughter, Betty Keay, who had just died of smallpox, and was much struck by their spiritual acuity: “this from a girl of 19 with no more outward helps, I cannot but think extraordinary” (Bod. MS, 325). Savage did not merely peruse Betty’s papers and then forget them: many years later, in 1734, a meditation on Psalm 116.8 (“thou hast delivered . . . mine eyes from tears”) would remind her of a comment in Betty’s papers on her preference for “the tears of godly sorrow” over all worldly joy (HMC MS, 170). This process whereby a spiritual text, once read, becomes part of one’s inner library of spiritual wisdom, its insights henceforward available to be recalled by a life-event, a sermon, or another text, is typical of Savage’s habits of reading, though unsurprisingly such connections seem to have been especially potent for her when the text had been penned by someone she held dear. One such person was Savage’s niece, Katherine Tylston, whose death in June 1735 was apparently followed by the circulation of her spiritual manuscripts among the family. Visiting their former minister, Mr. Vawdrey, in June 1736, Savage was reminded of a phrase used in praise of him in Katherine’s papers (HMC MS, 204).<sup>36</sup> In August/September 1738 she mentioned finding comfort in Katherine’s collections from Richard Baxter’s *Family Book* (HMC MS, 244). *The Poor Man’s Family Book* was a favorite volume with Savage, who had cited it five times previously in her diary; now, however, she clearly found fresh benefit in reading the passages selected and transcribed by Katherine.<sup>37</sup> Another posthumously-circulated manuscript from which she derived spiritual satisfaction was “an old paper” written by her daughter Hannah’s late mother-in-law Mrs. Witton (HMC MS, 252). Although Savage does not appear ever to have met Mrs. Witton, her regard for her son-in-law seems to have guaranteed her respect for his mother’s piety: she thought of Richard Witton, “a great blessing to this place,” as testimony to his mother’s prayers on his behalf (HMC MS, 253). She also found Mrs. Witton’s meditations on approaching death applicable to her own situation.

Reading another person’s devotional papers after his or her death might provide comfort other than one’s own spiritual benefit. Though Savage did not say so explicitly, it is likely that her pleasure at finding such advanced spiritual reflections among Betty Keay’s papers was heightened by a sense of relief. Earlier, in 1721, Savage had written in her diary that Betty seemed to be a “hopeful” young Christian, but evidently worried that the girl might yet turn out badly: “I have spoken to her, and to God for her—that she may not miscarry in the pangs of the new-birth,—she is now past 17 come 20 years to make a choice, Lord make her a wise virgin” (Bod. MS, 277).

Reading Betty's papers reassured Savage about the young woman's spiritual fate: "she ripened apace for Heaven and is soon translated there" (Bod. MS, 325). A still more poignant example of such posthumous comfort can be found in the entries that follow the death of Savage's son, Phil, in February 1721. Phil's death and its aftermath are described at some length in Savage's diary, which witnesses eloquently if implicitly to her struggles to reconcile herself to God's will amid her intense grief.<sup>38</sup> Letters from her daughters provided her with some consolation, but a deeper kind of comfort was attained only when she read Phil's diary, several weeks after his death:

Sabbath day: April 9th - at home, read a book of my son's Diary — some account of him-self which both pleased and profited, though it oft drew tears from my Eyes, yet I think 'twas tears of joy — such things as I did not expect to find ———

O' what comfort and satisfaction to think all is safe and well — he has lived long enough on Earth who is fit for Heaven<sup>39</sup>

Savage's relief was probably all the greater because of the persistent worries she and her husband had had about Phil in the years before his death. For the most part Phil seems to have been an exemplary son, but the few misgivings Savage expresses about him contrast with the spotless records of his four sisters. Negative reports about him from friends in Chester in 1715—"fears of a careless, slothful, temper, which somewhat disturbed me" (Bod. MS, 39)—would have been exactly calibrated to stir up his parents' anxieties on his behalf, especially given the difficulty of obtaining education and employment for the son of a dissenting family in the early eighteenth century.<sup>40</sup> Anxiety mingled with encouragement: Savage was greatly reassured by the good reports she received about Phil from the Hunt family while he was living with them, and she also regarded his admission to communion in early 1717 as a matter for rejoicing (Bod. MS, 140). In her account of his death, Savage affirmed her belief that he had gone to join the heavenly choir he had spoken of in his last moments (Bod. MS, 271). What she discovered in his diary on 9 April, however, completed her assurance that all was "safe and well," and that amid her grief for her own loss she need no longer fear for the salvation of his soul.

Other privately-circulated texts provided some comfort for Savage in the weeks after Phil's death.<sup>41</sup> On 12 March 1721 she recorded reading a funeral sermon preached by Dr. Benion of Shrewsbury in 1706 for a young man who had died of smallpox, describing it as "very proper and useful

now” (Bod. MS, 274). Benion was a family friend, who had known Matthew Henry in London and had preached a funeral sermon on Katherine Henry in 1707. As his sermons were never published, Savage must have used a manuscript copy of his work. Of even greater comfort were tributes to Phil himself from family and friends. In April she mentioned transcribing a funeral sermon which had been preached on Phil by his brother-in-law, Thomas Holland (Bod. MS, 277). In May she made a copy of another funeral sermon on Phil which had been preached at Stych and Wem by Mr. King, explaining: “I could not hear the sermon but have got a copy of it, and transcribed it, I trust not without some spiritual advantage” (Bod. MS, 279). Mr. King, the nonconformist minister at Stych, had been a particular friend of Phil’s—Savage refers to him elsewhere as her son’s “2nd self” (Bod. MS, 270)—and had prayed with him as he was dying. Savage presumably cherished his and Holland’s sermons because their authors had known her son well and could thus offer ministerial endorsement of his virtues. Both sermons continued to be a source of comfort to her in later years: in 1724 she mentioned reading Thomas Holland’s sermon for Phil with her daughter Mary (Holland’s wife), while in 1733, on the anniversary of Phil’s death, she recorded rereading both Holland’s and King’s sermons, finding in the former “many affecting things . . . which I had forgot” (HMC MS, 11, 157).<sup>42</sup>

Another collection of spiritual papers which circulated among the Savage family after the writer’s death receives considerable attention in Sarah Savage’s diary. These were the devotional manuscripts of Jane Hunt of Boreatton, mother of the family to whom the Savages had entrusted their son in August 1715. Mrs. Hunt’s unexpected death in January of the following year was described and lamented extensively by Sarah Savage, who seems to have mourned the loss of this much-admired friend scarcely less than the demise of her brother Matthew Henry in 1714. As with Philip Savage’s death in 1721, comfort came in textual form. In her diary entry for 12 February, Savage noted: “Dear Mrs Hunt left my Mary her Papers, a mark of true love, and distinguishing favour” (Bod. MS, 87). Mary Savage, like her brother, had spent time at Boreatton and had been close to Mrs. Hunt; her inheritance of the Hunt papers is consistent with a regular trend amongst the Henrys and their friends whereby women’s devotional papers were bequeathed to other women.<sup>43</sup> Once received at Wrenbury Wood, however, the papers seem to have been shared more widely and to have become Savage family property. By 12 February, Sarah herself had begun to read them, and in an entry for 14 February also mentioned Mary reading aloud to the family from Mrs. Hunt’s papers. A March entry similarly implies communal

reading: “sweet pious remarks we daily meet with in these Papers” (Bod. MS, 92). For much of the rest of the year, Mrs. Hunt’s papers seem to have assumed an important role in Sarah Savage’s own private devotions. Savage referred to Mrs. Hunt’s papers nineteen times during 1716, often at some length, quoting her friend’s meditations on subjects such as taking the sacrament, prayer, worldliness, being found in Christ, and God’s mercy. On at least one occasion she used Mrs. Hunt’s meditations as part of her preparation for taking communion, and was subsequently inspired by remembering them at the service itself (Bod. MS, 99, 101).

Mrs. Hunt’s papers are by no means the most frequently cited spiritual text in Savage’s diary, but they are probably the most liberally quoted. Most of these lengthy quotations occur in the diary for 1716, when the papers were first being read, and it is possible that their length and frequency is due to uncertainty on Savage’s part as to whether she would always have access to the originals—officially, of course, the property of her daughter. Nonetheless, even after Mary Savage’s marriage in November 1717, allusions to reading “dear Mrs Hunt’s papers” continue to appear in her mother’s diary.<sup>44</sup> Several years later, another entry reveals that the Wrenbury Savages had gone to considerable trouble to retain a copy of these much-valued papers. In February 1725, Savage recorded: “Came to us from the binding at Whitchurch good Mrs Hunts papers which we have been writing out these many years, her dear remains, very acceptable to us” (HMC MS, 22). Later references in the diaries show that Mrs. Hunt’s papers continued to be used: Savage alluded to them again later in 1725, and also in 1735, 1742, 1743 and 1744. Some of these allusions—like those for April/May 1725 and July 1744—are clearly based on a rereading of the original manuscripts (HMC MS, 24, 315; DWL MS, fol. 31r). Other instances suggest rather that a memorable expression, read years earlier, had lodged in Savage’s mind, to be recalled when necessary or appropriate. Thus a maxim of Mrs. Hunt’s first quoted in July 1716 was recalled in July 1735 when she received a visit from her granddaughter, Lucy Savage: “I am minded of a saying of dear Mrs Hunt her desire for her children, not that they might sit at Christ’s right hand and left hand, but that they might be any where in his Kingdom. the same is my desire for my dear young ones” (HMC MS, 181; compare Bod. MS, 109, HMC MS, 295).<sup>45</sup> The sentiment clearly struck home.

## Family Reading II: Philip and Matthew Henry

The influence of family is also strongly felt elsewhere in Sarah Savage's choice of devotional reading. The two writers most frequently cited by Sarah Savage are, by a wide margin, her father and her brother. There are over eighty references to writings by Philip Henry in his daughter's diary for these years, mostly to his sermons. A few allusions to her father's "expositions" on biblical passages probably refer to the informal sermons he preached at daily family worship.<sup>46</sup> Since Philip Henry did not (print-)publish, all of these citations must refer to manuscript material. On only one occasion does this material appear to be an original document, and then its holograph status is a cause for special joy: in September 1716 Savage wrote of being "much elevated and delighted to night with the return of one of my good old books dear Fathers legacy of his notes wrote with his dear hand" (Bod. MS, 117). On other occasions she referred to reading sermons or expositions by her father which she had herself transcribed during the 1670s and 80s—occasionally remarking on how legible her handwriting had been in her youth.<sup>47</sup> Most of this reading—as with Mrs. Hunt's papers—seems to have taken place in her own private closet, where her father's texts—with her brother's *Expositions*—were among the most frequent of the resources she used as commentaries on her daily Bible portion. However in 1723 she also referred, with evident satisfaction, to hearing one of her father's sermons repeated in public (Bod. MS, 303).

Matthew Henry is even more of a presence in his sister's diaries. Between 1714 and 1748, Sarah referred over 170 times to texts by her brother. Many of these references are to sermons (typically cited according to date, place, and biblical text) which are not known to have been printed, so in such cases Savage was again presumably drawing on a store of manuscript material. However, Matthew Henry's printed publications were also not only well known and greatly valued by his sister, but a considerable source of pride to her. In the memoir of her brother included in her diary after his death in 1714, she reserved to the end a list of his many publications, which she had evidently monitored closely; she specified that the fifth volume of his *Expositions* on the Bible was "now in the press," and that another of his books, *The Pleasantness of a Religious Life*, had "come out the very Week he dyed" (Bod. MS, 6).<sup>48</sup> Of all Matthew's publications, the most valued and frequently used was undoubtedly the *Expositions*. On almost every page of her diary, from 1714 to 1748, Savage refers to reading the Bible "with the expositions" or "with the annotations."<sup>49</sup> In 1721 she delightedly recorded

receiving the posthumously-published volume 6 of Matthew's *Expositions*, and on finishing it in December 1724 she immediately began again with volume 1 (Bod. MS, 295; HMC MS, 20). On at least one occasion, when reading Leviticus chapter 6, she seems to have found Matthew's commentary of more interest than the biblical text, describing the latter as "not so profitable as some other parts of scripture yet has many excelent practical notes" (HMC MS, 34). Other publications were also valued for their practical usefulness. In October 1716 she mentioned reading her "Brothers book of the sacrament" (presumably his *Communicant's Companion*) as preparation the day before taking communion (Bod. MS, 121), while in 1726 a "hint" in Matthew's *Sermon Concerning the Right Management of Friendly Visits* provided timely advice as to how to organise her intercessory prayer around her correspondence (HMC MS, 33).

The influence of family is apparent in yet another aspect of Savage's reading: her strong predilection for authors with a biographical connection to the Henry men.<sup>50</sup> Many of the authors cited most frequently in her diary had been personally known to either Philip or Matthew Henry. The "Mr Lawrence" whose sermons she read repeatedly between the 1710s and the 1740s was Samuel Lawrence, minister at Nantwich between 1688 and 1712. A childhood friend of Matthew Henry's, Lawrence had received religious instruction from Philip Henry.<sup>51</sup> Like his teacher, Lawrence did not publish his sermons, so Savage must have used manuscript copies, prepared either by herself or another member of the family.<sup>52</sup> Favored print authors similarly tended to have a family connection. Richard Baxter had been another long-standing friend of Philip Henry, and was visited in prison by Matthew Henry in 1685.<sup>53</sup> Savage quotes several of his books, including the *Christian Directory* (1673), the *Breviate* of the life of Mrs. Baxter (1681), *The Christians Converse with God* (1693), and the *Reliquiae Baxterianae* (1696).<sup>54</sup> She also loved his poem "Ye holy angels bright," and mentioned singing it both by herself and with other members of the family.<sup>55</sup> The younger Edmund Calamy, whose history of the ejections of 1662 was cited by Savage in 1728 and 1743, had been a correspondent of Matthew Henry's, as had Cotton Mather, whose *Magnalia Christi Americana* (1702) Savage cited seven times in 1720–21 and twice in 1730–31.<sup>56</sup> Isaac Watts, whose hymns and psalms she frequently quotes, had also been known to Matthew Henry.<sup>57</sup>

Another of Sarah Savage's favorite books from 1721 onwards had a double connection with her brother. Samuel Bury's biography of his wife Elizabeth was read by Savage within months of its publication in 1720, and was still being regularly cited in her diary in the 1740s. Samuel had been



a student with Matthew Henry in London in the 1680s, while a funeral sermon on Elizabeth by William Tong, Matthew's friend and memorialist, was included as an appendix to her husband's biography.<sup>58</sup> Savage's family loyalties would have been further gratified to find that Elizabeth Bury had used Matthew Henry's *Expositions* as part of her daily devotions, describing them as "the most plain, profitable, and pleasant she ever read, and the last Books (next to her Bible) she should ever part with."<sup>59</sup> John Reynolds, whom Matthew Henry considered outstanding for his learning and piety, was also much admired by Savage.<sup>60</sup> Reynolds's funeral sermon for Matthew and his poem "Death's Vision" are both cited several times in her diaries, the latter attaining further significance for her after her move to West Bromwich, where Reynolds's burial site could be seen from her window in the Wittons' house (HMC MS, 221). After making extracts from a biography of Reynolds in 1744, she recorded telling the Wittons that she wanted to be buried beside "this good man" in Bromwich Church (HMC MS, 316, DWL MS, fol. 35v).

Personal acquaintance was, however, less important than similarity of outlook. Among Savage's favorite books were several whose authors Philip and Matthew Henry either could not or may not have known, but whom they held in high regard. George Herbert's poetry, much loved by Savage, seems to have been appreciated by both Philip and Matthew.<sup>61</sup> Edward Polhill's *Precious Faith* (1675), probably the most frequently cited single text in Savage's diaries (apart from the Bible and the *Expositions*), had been highly esteemed by Philip Henry, who made extracts from it in his commonplace book.<sup>62</sup> Polhill may, in fact, have been known to Philip Henry. Biographical connections between them are unproven, but there is a hint of direct acquaintance in a remark attributed by Williams to Sarah Savage: "I read in Polhill's Precious Faith; of which book dear father once said, - It was hard to say which excelled, the gentleman, or the divine." John Flavel was also extracted in Philip Henry's commonplace book; Sarah Savage read several of his books, including *A Saint Indeed* (1668), *Husbandry Spiritualized* (1669) and *Divine Conduct; or, The Mysterie of Providence* (1678).<sup>63</sup> A life of George Trosse, a minister in Exeter, was appreciated by both Matthew Henry and his sister.<sup>64</sup> Trosse was known to Matthew Henry, though possibly only by reputation.<sup>65</sup>

Savage also seems to have been drawn to clerical authors who, like her father, had been ejected from the Church of England in 1662—though perhaps less because of the biographical similarity in itself than because of the doctrinal position which ejection implied. Ejected ministers frequently cited

in Savage's diaries include Joseph Alleine, Samuel Annesley, John Barret, James Janeway, and Thomas Manton, as well as Baxter and Flavel. The anniversary of Black Bartholomew Day, when her father and his nonconformist colleagues had been legally ejected from the Church of England, was frequently commemorated in her diary, and she read Calamy's *Continuation* of his history of the ejection soon after its publication in 1727 (HMC MS, 61, entry for February 1728). Savage's continuing interest in the ejection and preference for ejected authors, as well as for a younger generation of nonconformist ministerial writers such as Calamy, Doddridge, Reynolds, and Watts, undoubtedly helped to consolidate her sense of identity as a moderate nonconformist, and strengthened her sense of the dissenting community across England, from Calamy and Watts in London, to Barret in Nottingham, Doddridge in Northampton, and Flavel and Trosse in Devon. By contrast, Savage seems to have read very few post-1660 Church of England authors. Polhill is a rare example of a conformist author whom she greatly admired, and he was notably sympathetic to nonconformity.<sup>66</sup> In this she differs from most family religionists of her period, whose reading more typically spanned the denominational divide.<sup>67</sup>

### Family Reading III: Wider Circles and the Next Generation

Just as Sarah Savage valued her brother's publications on her own account, she also took an interest in their reception by others, both inside and outside her own family. In 1715 she recorded hearing one of her children reading from her brother's exposition on the gospels, while in 1731 she was pleased to discover that her granddaughter, Lucy Savage, had learnt all of Matthew Henry's catechism—even though, as Sarah conceded, the child was too young to understand what it meant (HMC MS, 120).<sup>68</sup> In August 1739 she noted with pleasure that six young men from the locality had clubbed together to buy a copy of the new edition of Matthew's *Expositions* (HMC MS, 264). In September 1719, remarking on a reissue of Matthew's *Disputes Review'd*, with a preface by Isaac Watts, she echoed Watts's hope that her brother's irenic text might contribute towards reconciling the bitter differences currently afflicting English nonconformity: "the presant differences among the London Ministers being such, it is hoped this may be of use towards healing, it seems to savour of such balm" (Bod. MS, 234).<sup>69</sup> She similarly took an interest in publications commemorating her adored broth-

er. On 15 and 22 August 1714 she recorded receiving copies of the funeral sermons on Matthew Henry by William Tong and John Reynolds (Bod. MS, 15).<sup>70</sup> In February 1715 she mentioned having written notes about her brother's life and sent them to Mr. Tong, presumably for use in his biography of Matthew Henry (Bod MS, 31).<sup>71</sup> She received Tong's biography the following December "with Tears of joy," and later drew on it in her meditations for the new year at the start of 1716 (Bod. MS, 72, 77). In February 1716, in the midst of her mourning for Mrs. Hunt, she recorded spending an afternoon reading to her neighbor, Mary Robinson, from Tong's biography of Matthew, "to our mutual Comfort" (Bod. MS, 90). Savage evidently had confidence in Mrs. Robinson's interest in Matthew Henry: she had already read to her from Reynolds's funeral sermon in September 1714 (Bod. MS, 16).

Similarly, just as Sarah Savage's own devotional reading can be traced back to the influence of her father and brother, these same preferences were subsequently transmitted to her own children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews. Thus she referred in her diary to Mary Tylston reading Cotton Mather, Daughters Holland and Lawrence reading William Bates, Daughter Savage reading Mr. Steel, and Daughter Holland reading Mr. Reynolds (Bod. MS, 290; HMC, 10, 71, 127, 48).<sup>72</sup> Philip Savage is said to have quoted John Reynolds and Isaac Watts on his deathbed (Bod MS, p. 271). Later, Savage was comforted to find that Daughter Lawrence's children "incline to seriousness love good Books," and that another of her granddaughters, Sally Holland, would rather read a good book than "join with young ones in their recreations" (HMC MS, 121, 192). She seems to have found especial reassurance in her daughter Katherine Savage's love of reading, as Katherine had married into an Anglican branch of the Savage family, and her mother feared that she might fall away from the pious habits in which she had been reared. Visiting Katherine after the birth of the latter's son Samuel in 1729, Savage wrote: "that which most refreshes me is to find that she keeps her savour of good things, greatly delights in good Books" (HMC MS, 90). For Savage, Katherine's bookishness was a sure sign that she was remaining true to Henry principles.

Delight in good books was also fostered by habits of communal reading within the Savage household.<sup>73</sup> On Sundays when more than one of the family stayed at home from church, they read devotional texts together. Thus Savage noted her son Phil reading aloud from a sermon by Dr. Manton one Sunday morning in 1718, while sermons by Dr. Annesley and Isaac Watts were later read, respectively, by "one of the young ones" and by John Sav-

age (Bod. MS, 203, 208, 282). Sermons by Philip and Matthew Henry were also read aloud to the family. Other texts read collectively include Isaac Jaquelot's *The History of the Sufferings of the Blessed Confessor and Martyr, Mr. Louis de Marolles* in 1715, Thomas Ellwood's autobiography and the life of Joseph Barret in 1717, William Burkitt's expositions in 1718 and 1719, and Calamy's history of the ejection in 1728 (Bod. MS, 58, 138, 170, 189 [sic], 217; HMC MS, 61). Numerous other references in the diaries testify to habits of shared reading among the Henry-Savage family and their close friends. Daughter Lawrence, writing to her mother late in one of her pregnancies, compared herself to "poor Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress, with a burden on his back," confident that her mother would recognize the allusion (Bod. MS, 189). The local minister, Mr. Vawdrey, is reported as quoting Archbishop Ussher, elsewhere cited by Savage via a quotation in one of Matthew Henry's sermons (Bod. MS, 239; HMC MS, 315). Mr. Illidge, a family friend, sent Savage a transcription from a book by Nathaniel Vincent, one of the ministers who had ordained Matthew Henry in 1687; he also quoted a sermon by Philip Henry while catechising (Bod. MS, 18, 239). Daughter Holland in 1731 sent her mother an extract from a book about early piety. This may be John Evans's *Sermons . . . Designed for the Promoting of Early Piety* (1725), which Savage later (re)read at Daughter Witton's house in 1736 (HMC MS, 116, 209).

## Acquiring Books

The sharing of texts around the extended Henry-Savage family may also help to answer the otherwise puzzling question of how Sarah Savage gained access to so many printed books—many of them new, some of them expensive. For the most part, Savage's diaries are frustratingly silent on the subject of acquisition. Generally, she simply refers to a text she has read without any explanation of how it has come into her hands. A bare reference such as "to day I read divers of Mr Rutherfords Letters which lately came to me" (Bod. MS, 307) is scarcely more illuminating.<sup>74</sup> A few scattered references throughout the diaries, however, tend to confirm that at least some of the books she read were loans from other family members or close friends. In October 1715, for instance, she recorded: "I dined this day at old Mrs Starkys . . . she gave me a good Book to read in, Bishop Halls contemplations—which edified me more than what I heard at Church" (Bod. MS, 68). "Church" in this case is the Wrenbury parish church, which Savage

often found unsatisfactory; elsewhere in the diaries she frequently admitted to finding more spiritual benefit in reading in her closet than in attending church services.<sup>75</sup> Savage did not say whether she simply looked at Hall's book while in Mrs. Starky's house or was able to take it home with her, but later entries show that she continued to find the Bishop's books edifying. In March 1717 she quoted a passage from Hall which she had found copied in "my old Collections," while in 1744 she reread the *Contemplations* itself, quoting an apostrophe on the love of God (Bod. MS, 141; DWL MS, fol. 34r).

Visiting friends and family evidently provided opportunities for encountering new books. On a visit to her youngest daughter, Hannah Witton, in 1732, Savage was pleased to find a copy of a sermon by Matthew Henry (HMC MS, 147).<sup>76</sup> Another book which she read during the same visit—"a new book of sermons of the London ministers upon the great duty of prayer" (HMC MS, 152)—was probably also borrowed from the Wittons. It seems likely that ministers' families such as the Wittons would have had better access to books than most other people; and it may be significant that the only other family member from whom Savage specifically mentions borrowing books is her third daughter, Mary, after the latter's marriage to the dissenting minister Thomas Holland. On one visit to Mary, in May 1732, she recorded finding a copy of John Howe's *The Prosperous State of the Christian Interest before the End of Time* (1726), and transcribed passages from it into her diary (HMC MS, 142). Two later visits to Daughter Holland also provided matter for reading and transcription. Savage's diary for August 1733 includes sentences from "a small book concerning the Lords supper wrote by Mr Earl a London Minister," which she had found in Mary Holland's closet (HMC MS, 161), while on a later visit to the Hollands in April 1736, she copied out passages from Richard Baxter's *Poetical Fragments* (1681).<sup>77</sup> Baxter, as already mentioned, was one of Savage's favourite writers, and she had quoted from the *Fragments* in diary entries for 1721, 1724, 1728, and 1735.<sup>78</sup> However, the 1736 reference indicates that—by this stage in her life at least—she had to take precautions against losing access to the original: "Some of these good things will be as meat to my soul when I have not the book, therefore I transcribe them and account this among my talents which I should not bury but employ" (HMC MS, 201). The allusion to the parable of the talents also suggests that she saw transcription within her diary as a means of bringing approved books to the notice of her anticipated posthumous readership.

Books might also be acquired through inheritance. Perhaps surprisingly, there is only one reference in the diaries to Savage obtaining a book by this means. In August 1735, two months after the death of her niece, Katherine Tylston, she wrote: "I am pleased with a Book that was Cousin K Tylstons and I love for her sake" (HMC MS, 194). The entry makes it clear that Savage valued the book—Isaac Watts's *Humble Attempt Toward the Revival of Practical Religion Among Christians, and Particularly the Protestant Dissenters* (1731)—both for its personal connotations and for its edifying message. After accounting for the provenance of her copy, she summarised some of Watts's arguments about the Protestant ministry, and added that she had drawn on them in her prayers. Mary Savage's inheritance of Mrs. Hunt's papers is a comparable example of textual material being left from one woman to another. Bequests of books and papers from men to women, by contrast, seem to have been rare. Philip Savage is a special case because he died before he could marry and have children; and even so, he arranged before he died for at least some of his papers to be set aside for his (presumably male) friends. Philip Henry left all his books and papers to his son Matthew, with only a few specified exceptions. His daughters were each to receive only a copy of Matthew Poole's biblical annotations and William Barton's "Singing Psalms," for their daily devotional use, plus one book of divinity.<sup>79</sup> Sarah, as eldest daughter, would have had first choice between "the Sermons upon the Parable of the Prodigal," "The Baptismal Covenant Explained," "The Four-and-Twenty Good and the Four-and-Twenty Naughty Spirits," and "What Christ is made of God to True Believers, in Forty Particulars." It is not known which she selected, but since all four appear to be Philip Henry's own compositions, Sarah's choice may be identical with "dear Fathers legacy of his notes" which she rediscovered with such joy in 1716. The three books left to each daughter, however, make a poor comparison with the huge theological library which must have passed to Matthew.<sup>80</sup>

On the other hand, there are several indications in the diaries that it was usual in the Savage family for devotional books to be shared around the household, irrespective of gender distinctions. In September 1719 Savage recorded, "at this time comes to us a sermon of my dear Brothers, lately reprinted," and in December 1728 she similarly wrote, "this week came to us a new Book of Mr Bennets" (Bod. MS, 234; HMC MS, 77).<sup>81</sup> In both of these entries, "us" appears to denote the whole Savage family resident at Wrenbury Wood, which in 1719 would have included both her son and her husband.<sup>82</sup> The many references to communal reading in the Savage household also seem to imply shared access to a family collection of books. For

the Witton family household, which Savage joined permanently in 1736, the evidence is more equivocal. In July 1739 Savage wrote, "There comes to us this week Dr Dodderidge's new Family Expositor" (HMC MS, 262). Dodderidge's *Family Expositor*, as Ian Green emphasises, was a landmark publication, "made possible by the hundreds of men and women, laity and clergy, conformist and nonconformist, who subscribed for copies in advance."<sup>83</sup> Among these subscribers was Savage's son-in-law, Richard Witton, who bespoke two sets.<sup>84</sup> Savage's diary entry shows that she had access to at least one of the copies bought by Witton, though possibly the purchase of two sets indicates that one was reserved for the minister's own use, the other remaining available to the rest of the family. Elsewhere in the diaries for her Bromwich years, Savage makes two references to Son Witton acquiring religious books following the death of a friend. In 1740, following the death of Philip Savage's friend Mr. King, his books were divided between his fellow ministers Mr. Holland and Mr. Witton (HMC MS, 274), while in 1741 Witton attended a funeral at Walsall, after which the books of the deceased were distributed among the congregation (HMC MS, 287). It would be pleasant to think that these books subsequently became available to Sarah Savage, but there is no evidence to suggest that this was the case. References to her reading for these and subsequent years continue to cite old favorites such as Watts, Calamy, Hall, and Polhill.<sup>85</sup>

Family connections may also have played a part in the purchase of new books. Two letters extant from Elizabeth Henry, Matthew's daughter, to her cousin John Tylston show that in the mid 1730s she was in the habit of buying books on his behalf.<sup>86</sup> She also seems to have made enquiries about books for their family friend, the minister Mr. King. Elizabeth lived in London, and so would have had much better access to new books than her family and friends in the midlands and northwest. It is likely that at least some of the books rejoiced over by Sarah Savage came to her, directly or indirectly, through the kindness of a relative based in London.

## Conclusion

Sarah Savage was in many ways typical of puritan diarists of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Her diaries testify to a domestic culture of shared spirituality both facilitated and underpinned by the production, dissemination, and consumption of devotional texts. Her own motives for undertaking a diary are characteristic of the genre and period, as are

many of her habits of writing and reading. At the same time, however, some of the practices—and, more nebulously, the emphases—in Savage's diaries do diverge from the puritan norm. Her emphasis, especially in later years, on the value of her diaries to other readers is no doubt due in large part to her longevity, as she lived to witness the births of many of her grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. It may also, albeit more speculatively, be linked with her gender, given that, compared with men such as her father and brother, she would have had relatively few opportunities to be spiritually useful outside the household. Intriguingly, her diaries testify to a familial devotional culture that facilitated and even protected individual reading and writing to a greater degree than is suggested by recent historiography.<sup>87</sup> They also imply reading practices which, despite the Henry family's accommodation with Anglican conformity, seem to have become more solidly nonconformist over time. This narrowing of denominational focus would have helped sustain the family's sense of collective unity and consolidate its theological identity, despite the physical separation of many of its members. Such theological consolidation would have been especially valuable during a period—the early to the mid eighteenth century—when the English presbyterianism espoused by the Henrys and Savages was perceived as coming under threat from forces such as anti-Trinitarian tendencies amongst the clergy and Wesleyan enthusiasm amongst the laity.<sup>88</sup>

Given the eminence and distinction of Savage's family, her experience of "family religion" was inevitably unusual. Few if any of her contemporaries would have inhabited a family culture so informed, and to some extent circumscribed, by the lives and writings of a father and a brother. Savage's self-perception as a mediator of familial wisdom to the next generation(s) is rendered more apposite, and also ironic, by the fact that so much of her extant diary survives only in scribal transcripts, most likely produced (perhaps selectively) by later members of her family.<sup>89</sup> Even her original diaries survive only because they were valued and preserved by her descendants. Their textual acts—transcribing and transmitting Savage's diary for posterity—fulfil her stated hope that her diary might "be of use to some of mine when my Head is in the dust." They also, paradoxically, ensure that the "Sarah Savage" who has survived to the present day is herself a family product, textually constructed by subsequent generations. The preoccupations and emphases of her surviving diary may be as much theirs as hers.



## Notes

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1. J.B. Williams quotes from Savage's diary for 1750 in *Memoirs of Mrs. Sarah Savage* (London, 1829), 33. Williams evidently had access to volumes and versions of the diary now lost, almost certainly including original texts. As Patricia Crawford points out, his description of the death of Philip Savage quotes passages of the diary which do not appear in the surviving transcript. See Crawford, "Katharine and Philip Henry and Their Children: A Case Study in Family Ideology," *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire* 134 (1985), 67–68.

2. Both "puritan" and "nonconformist"—as well as the related term, "dissenting"—are of course complex and contested concepts. I locate Savage in relation to both moderate nonconformity and moderate Anglicanism later in the article.

3. Margaret J. M. Ezell, "Domestic Papers: Manuscript Culture and Early Modern Women's Life Writing," in *Genre and Women's Life Writing in Early Modern England: Re-Imagining Forms of Selfhood*, ed. Michelle M. Dowd and Julie E. Eckerle (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 45–46.

4. On Twysden, Jekyll, and Cowper see, respectively, Adam Smyth, "Almanacs, Annotators, and Life-Writing in Early Modern England," *English Literary Renaissance* 38.2 (2008): 200–244, Elizabeth Clarke, "Elizabeth Jekyll's Spiritual Diary: Private Manuscript or Political Document?" *English Manuscript Studies, 1100–1700* 9 (2000): 218–37, and Anne Kugler, *Errant Plagiarist: The Life and Writing of Lady Sarah Couper, 1644–1720* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).

5. Tom Webster, "Writing to Redundancy: Approaches to Spiritual Journals and Early Modern Spirituality," *Historical Journal* 39.1 (1996): 33–56.

6. Andrew Cambers and Michelle Wolfe, "Reading, Family Religion, and Evangelical Identity in Late Stuart England," *Historical Journal* 47.4 (2004): 881. In their discussions of "family," Cambers and Wolfe draw on Naomi Tadmor's identification of the eighteenth-century family with the resident household, including servants (Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 18–43 and *passim*.) As will become clear, the concept of family invoked in Sarah Savage's diary primarily comprises her own relatives by blood and marriage (not necessarily coresident) though she was also keenly aware of her spiritual links with nonconformist coreligionists further afield. She rarely mentions servants.

7. Cambers and Wolfe, "Reading, Family Religion, and Evangelical Identity," 886; Andrew Cambers, "Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing in England, circa 1580–1720," *Journal of British Studies* 46.4 (2007): 815–16. See also Cambers's monograph, *Godly Reading: Print, Manuscript, and Puritanism in England, 1580–1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

8. Cambers and Wolfe, "Reading, Family Religion, and Evangelical Identity," 895–96, and Cambers, "Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing," 824–25.

9. Cambers and Wolfe, "Reading, Family Religion, and Evangelical Identity," 886–87. See also Cambers, "Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing," 812, on the Henry family as an instance of "dynastic diary keeping."

10. Although Webster, Cambers, and Wolfe all acknowledge the phenomenon of, and scholarship on, female life-writers, most of their case studies are male. The most significant exception, Alice Thornton—discussed by Cambers, “Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing,” *passim*—was a memoirist rather than a diarist, and also differs from puritan life-writers such as Savage through her commitment to a distinctively sacramental and liturgical form of Anglican piety. See Ann Hughes, “Thornton, Alice (1626–1707),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [henceforward cited as ODNB.] Cambers’s monograph also discusses the much earlier instance of Margaret Hoby.

11. My account of Sarah Savage and her family draws on Harriet Blodgett, “Savage, Sarah (1664–1752),” Richard L. Greaves, “Henry, Philip (1631–1696),” and David L. Wykes, “Henry, Matthew (1662–1714)” (all ODNB) and on Patricia Crawford’s important article “Katharine and Philip Henry and Their Children.” I have also used J. B. Williams, ed., *The Life of Philip Henry* (London, 1825), and the same author’s *Memoirs of Mrs. Sarah Savage* (London, 1829), and *The Life of Matthew Henry* (London, 1828).

12. One such disagreement between Savage and the Anglican clergy is described in Mary Morrissey and Gillian Wright, “Piety and Sociability in Early Modern Women’s Letters,” *Women’s Writing* 13.1 (2006): 50.

13. On the Hunt family, see Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, xii–xiii.

14. These include Bodleian MS Eng. lett. e. 29, Dr Williams’s Library Henry MSS 90.5, 90.7 and 91.24, and British Library Additional MS 42849.

15. Williams, ed., *The Life of Philip Henry*, 462.

16. Williams, *Memoirs of Mrs. Sarah Savage*, 294, 265.

17. For Matthew’s memoir of Eleanor Henry, see Williams, *Memoirs of Mrs. Sarah Savage*, Appendix V.

18. Crawford, “Katharine and Philip Henry”: 42, 64, n21. On Matthew’s commencing the diary, see Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, 58–59.

19. British Library Additional MS 42849, fols. 145–168v.

20. Henceforward denoted parenthetically as “Chester MS,” “Bod. MS,” “HMC MS” and “DWL MS.” Folio references are supplied for the Chester and Dr Williams’s Library MSS, which are unpaginated and unfoliated. British Library Additional MS 42849 includes two further fragments of Savage’s diary: extracts from 1694–1703 (fols. 109–111) and 1714 (fols. 109v–111v).

21. Dennis Porter speculatively identifies “S. Brett” as the likely scribe of Savage MS 4: see *A Catalogue of Manuscripts in Harris Manchester College, Oxford* (Oxford: Harris Manchester College, 1998), 251. Sarah Brett—daughter of Savage’s youngest daughter, Hannah—is known to have shared the family interest in its own history: Williams names her as an oral source in his *Memoirs of . . . Mrs. Sarah Savage*, iv.

22. Although the handwriting in DWL differs somewhat from attested examples of Savage’s hand, these differences may be accounted for by age. Savage was 77 at the point where the DWL diary begins, whereas all her attested autograph texts date from her young womanhood. If the DWL MS is a copy, it seems to have been carefully attentive to its copy-text, its meticulousness extending to the reproduction of an ink blot which Savage mentions in her text (DWL, fol. 106v).

23. For Sarah’s instruction in Hebrew see Williams ed., *The Life of Philip Henry*, 83; for Ann’s instruction in Latin, see Williams, *Memoirs of Mrs. Sarah Savage*, 285–86. Matthew Henry, Williams’s source, admits that Ann made no great progress with Latin but says that Sarah learnt to construe a Hebrew psalm.

24. In quotations from Savage’s diary and other early manuscript sources I retain original spelling and punctuation but expand early modern abbreviations and contractions.

25. Cambers, “Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing,” 812.

26. Matthew Henry would have provided a partial precedent: he began a regular diary

only in 1690, but had previously been in the habit of keeping occasional memoranda. See Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, 58.

27. See Webster, "Writing to Redundancy," 38–40; Cambers, "Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing," 812–15.

28. Cambers, "Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing," 803.

29. See Webster, "Writing to Redundancy," 47–48.

30. For similar comments see, for example, HMC MS, 128, 261, 274.

31. Webster, "Writing to Redundancy," 47, 48. Compare Savage's comment on her reading of Mrs. Hunt's spiritual papers (discussed below): "she being dead yet speaketh" (Bod. MS, 88; adapting Hebrews 11.4.)

32. HMC MS, 269.

33. Whenever she hears that anyone she values is seriously ill, her typical response is to pray "spare his/her useful life." This is her reaction even when the invalid is her own daughter Sarah (HMC MS, 63). Compare Bod. MS, 21 (Daughter Keay), 82 (Mrs Hunt), 222 (Mr King); HMC MS, 85 (Son Holland).

34. Webster, "Writing to Redundancy," 39; Cambers, "Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing," 816.

35. On Savage's reading of scribal sermon notes compiled by others, see, for instance, HMC MS, 207–8, 212.

36. On William Vawdrey (1695–1740), see A. Gordon, *Cheshire Classis Minutes, 1691–1745* (London, 1919), 211–12.

37. References to the *Family Book* occur twice in 1718, and once each in 1723, 1724 and 1731 (Bod. MS, 213, 321; HMC MS, 2, 125). On Baxter's popularity within "family religion," see Cambers and Wolfe, "Reading, Family Religion, and Evangelical Identity," 888–89.

38. For example, her entry for 12 March: "all day at home, sit alone, and keep silence, as indeed I ought, I would be dumb and not open my mouth, my heavenly Father means me no <sup>^</sup>real hurt by this severe dispensation" (Bod. MS, 274.)

39. Bod. MS, 276.

40. On the Savages' worries about Phil, see also Crawford, "Katharine and Philip Henry", 52. It should be noted, however, that the examples cited by Crawford amount to only a few instances in seven years, and can be contrasted with numerous other occasions when Phil is the subject of much more positive comment (e.g., Bod. MS, 61–62, 70, 228, 240, and especially 270–72).

41. She also looked for consolation to printed texts: Richard Baxter's poem "The Exit," James Janeway's *Invisibles, Realities, Demonstrated in the Holy Life and Triumphant Death of Mr. John Janeway* (1673), and John Flavel's *A Token for Mourners; or, The Advice of Christ to a Distressed Mother, Bewailing the Death of Her Dear and Only Son* (1674).

42. On the latter occasion she also reread Dr. Benion's funeral sermon on her mother.

43. Williams notes that the original copies of Mrs. Hunt's papers were later passed by Mary to Mrs. Hunt's youngest daughter—also the wife of a minister (*The Life of Matthew Henry*, xiii).

44. E.g. in the entries for 11 and 25 October 1719 (Bod. MS, 236, 237).

45. Mrs. Hunt's comment responds to the gospel story of James's and John's mother, Matthew 20.20–21.

46. Williams, ed., *The Life of Philip Henry*, 75.

47. E.g. Bod. MS, 64, 166; HMC MS, 72. These comments offer possible evidence that Savage's handwriting had changed in the course of her long life.

48. This list of Matthew's publications may also have been drafted with the benefit of future readers of the diary in mind.

49. As described below, Savage and her sisters had all been bequeathed copies of Matthew Poole's biblical annotations by their father, but Savage's paraphrases of lessons learnt from "the

Annotations” in the later years of her diary consistently match her brother’s commentary, not Poole’s. Evidently Matthew’s expositions, once published, superseded Poole’s as far as Savage was concerned—and were not themselves superseded by Doddridge’s *Family Expositor* in the 1730s.

50. It should be conceded that Savage’s many references to printed devotional literature include numerous books with no direct known connection with Philip or Matthew Henry. I will address the full range of Savage’s devotional reading in a subsequent article.

51. C. W. Sutton, “Lawrence, Samuel (*bap.* 1661, *d.* 1712),” rev. M.J. Mercer, ODNB.

52. Dr. Williams’s Library Henry MS 91.15 includes transcriptions of Lawrence’s sermons in Savage’s hand.

53. Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, 22.

54. Printed books read by Savage are cited according to date of first publication. In the case of texts which ran to multiple editions, there is usually no indication as to which edition Savage used.

55. Bod. MS, 35, HMC MS, 119.

56. Edmund Calamy, *A Continuation of the Account of the Ministers . . . Who were Ejected and Silenced after the Restoration in 1660* (1727); Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, 99–103, 173; Savage, HMC MS, 61 and 310 (Calamy), and Bod. MS, 243, 250, 257, 282, 290, 291 and HMC MS, 106 and 121 (Mather).

57. Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, 173.

58. *Ibid.*, 12.

59. Samuel Bury, *An Account of the Life and Death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bury* (1720), 7.

60. Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, 173.

61. Williams, ed., *The Life of Philip Henry*, 102.

62. *Ibid.*, 422. Savage also mentions reading *Precious Faith* while recovering from a miscarriage at her parents’ house in 1688 (Chester MS, fol. 31v).

63. Williams, ed., *The Life of Philip Henry*, 422.

64. Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, 161; Bod. MS, 79–81, 195.

65. Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, 268. It is also possible that the life of Trosse read by Sarah Savage in 1716 and 1718 was Isaac Gilling’s biography (1715) rather than Trosse’s own autobiography (1714), which must have been what Matthew read.

66. J. W. Black, “Polhill, Edward (*bap.* 1622, *d.* 1693/4?),” ODNB.

67. Cambers and Wolfe, “Reading, Family Religion, and Evangelical Identity,” 895.

68. Matthew Henry, *A Scripture-Catechism, in the Method of the Assemblies* (1703).

69. Compare Isaac Watts, *Disputes Review’d*, iv.

70. William Tong, *A Funeral Sermon Preach’d at Hackney . . . on Occasion of the Much Lamented Death of the Reverend Mr .Matthew Henry* (1714) and Reynolds, *A Sermon upon . . . Mr. Matthew Henry, . . . Preach’d at Nantwich* (1714).

71. Tong, *An Account of the Life and Death of . . . Mr. Matthew Henry* (1716). Williams’s claim that Tong’s biography—which he, of course, was hoping to supersede—was not well received by Henry’s family (Williams, *The Life of Matthew Henry*, vi) is not backed up by Savage’s diary, which is uniformly complimentary about Tong’s book.

72. Bates had written the dedication to Matthew Henry’s biography of his father. Daughter Lawrence, again following her mother’s pattern, read one of his sermons as a means of coping with the sudden death of her husband. Steel was Philip Henry’s “great friend and companion, and fellow-labourer in the work of the Lord” (Williams, ed., *The Life of Philip Henry*, 52.)

73. On the importance of communal reading within “family religion,” see Cambers and Wolfe, “Reading, Family Religion, and Evangelical Identity,” 889–91.

74. “Mr Rutherford” is the Scottish churchman Samuel Rutherford (1600–1661), who was suspended from his parish in 1636 for failure to subscribe to the Perth articles. Savage may have seen in his dispossession a parallel to her father’s.

75. E.g. Bod. MS, 103, 138; HMC MS, 50.
76. Matthew Henry, *A Sermon Preach'd at Chester, on Occasion of Opening the New Meeting-House There* (1726).
77. Jabez Earle, *Sacramental Exercises* (1708).
78. Bod. MS, 277, 280 (1721); HMC MS, 17 (1724), 58 (1728), 189 (1735).
79. Williams, ed., *The Life of Philip Henry*, 339–40. Philip Henry's grandchildren were each to receive an English Bible, as well as a book of divinity to be chosen for them by their fathers.
80. See Williams, ed., *The Life of Philip Henry*, 421–23 for the theological (and associated) authors extracted in Philip's commonplace book (itself later passed on to Matthew). If even a fraction of the books signalled by these names was owned by Philip, Matthew would have inherited a very substantial collection.
81. Matthew Henry, *Disputes Review'd* (1719); Benjamin Bennet, *The Second Part of the Christian Oratory* (1728).
82. By 1728 her son was dead, but her husband was still alive.
83. Ian Green, *Print and Protestantism in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 124.
84. Philip Doddridge, *The Family Expositor*, vol. 1 (1739), xxii. Savage's other ministerial son-in-law, Thomas Holland, also subscribed to the *Expositor* (xv).
85. However, in a diary entry for 1744, reflecting on the many advantages she enjoys in her daughter's household, she remarks: "I have all Advantages here—choice of good Books" (DWL MS, fol. 21v).
86. British Library, Additional MS 42849, fols. 63r–64r.
87. Though Cambers describes godly religious culture as "forged through the intersections of the public and the private and of the individual and the communal" ("Reading, the Godly, and Self-Writing", 802), the polemical thrust of his and Wolfe's work tends to stress the social over the individual.
88. For Savage's awareness of Trinitarian disputes, see Bod. MS, 225 and 234. References to Wesley and his followers proliferate in her diaries from 1742 onwards.
89. Differences between the HMC and DWL manuscripts of Savage's diary for 1722–23 confirm that the former, at least, is a selective copy.