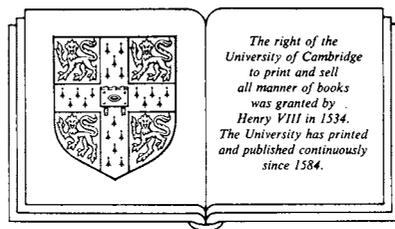


SIR ROBERT CLAYTON
AND THE ORIGINS OF
ENGLISH DEPOSIT BANKING,
1658–1685

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INTRODUCTION

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The title of this book represents a compromise of several topics, longer in time and greater in subject than the description suggests. More precisely, this study is a business history of two generations of a money-scrivener firm established by Robert Abbott in 1636 and taken over upon his death in 1658 by his nephew Robert Clayton and another apprentice in the shop, John Morris. The time-span of the book does not conform to the biographical contours of the three partners, as it begins with the Jacobean money-scriveners and ends with a description of private banking in London after the Bubble crisis in the 1720s. Clayton becomes in the title a banker, an attribution his contemporaries never bestowed. The title concentrates upon a category best explaining the role of the man and his work. Banking problems define all the chapters of the book, reiterating the greater framework absorbing the complex evidence from the Clayton papers. In ascribing a role to the money-scriveners in banking history – and to this one scrivener’s operation in particular – Robert Abbott and John Morris are deprived in the title of a recognition in banking history. Precise credit is difficult to assess. Morris and Clayton were so closely ravelled in their affairs that the individual efforts of each man to the firm are rarely apparent. It was not the intention of this book to assign each man his proper contribution, even if that were possible. Clayton was the most visible of all three partners, both then and now. Since the main sources of this book are known as the Clayton papers, his name became a likely subject for a title, concentrated at the same time upon the history of banking.

Memory of Sir Robert Clayton has not faded entirely. Today his fame rests upon his leadership of the City Whigs during the time of the Popish

Plot. By supporting the exclusion of the Duke of York to the throne, Clayton helped initiate the chain of events culminating in the Revolution of 1688–9. The most remarkable feature of Clayton's story was his rise to great wealth from a humble, rural origin, but details of his financial success were distorted by his critics, and then largely forgotten by later generations. Clayton's role in the history of banking is commemorated by his service as governor of the Bank of England from 1702 until 1707; upon his death the history of his own bank and the innovations he brought to mortgage finance were all but forgotten. No one who actually knew Clayton ever composed the facts of his long life into a whole, or left a reliable account of his character. He died in his seventy-sixth year, outliving the people who knew him best. No children survived him: his fortune descended through his nephew William Clayton. The family preserved Sir Robert Clayton's business papers, and were it not for this archive, little justification could be given for trying to rescue this man from his obscurity and for claiming that his greatest achievements were in banking finance.

Clayton himself encouraged posterity to remember his public life. He wrote his own epitaph for his tomb in the church of St Mary in Bletchingley, Surrey, where visitors encounter a family monument overwhelming the east end of the south chapel. Under a classical canopy supported with Corinthian columns stand two life-size figures of a man and a woman, with a baby between them, in striking contrast to the common recumbent funeral effigies of the past. Sir Robert Clayton and his lady, with their infant son Robin, were carved with meticulous attention to their persons and dress by Richard Crutcher in the early eighteenth century, but Clayton posed for the artist in his mayoral robes of 1679–80, and Lady Clayton's dress is from the same period. The Claytons chose to be remembered in marble splendor for their place some two and a half decades before their deaths, when events brought this rich money-scrivener into the political arena. *Non vultus instantis tyranni*: whatever else the observer might hear, Clayton wished to be remembered for the part he played in averting the rule of the Catholic Stuarts and the restoration of popery in England. Clayton dismissed the controversy surrounding the fortune he amassed with the comment that 'by the justest methods and skill in business he acquired an ample fortune.'

With rightful pride Clayton could point to a record of public service and benefactions few of his contemporaries could rival. He rarely chose to do things by halves. His political career began in 1670, with his election to the Court of Aldermen, where he sat until the City's charter was withdrawn in



Fig. 1. Tomb of Sir Robert and Lady Clayton, Church of St Mary, Bletchingley, Surrey. By permission of the National Monuments Record

1683. After the revolution he was elected alderman again and continued to be re-elected until his death. In parliament Clayton was returned to the House of Commons in the three successive assemblies of 1679, 1680 and 1681, and after the revolution he sat in the legislatures elected in 1690, 1695, 1698, 1701 (February) and 1701 (December), 1702 and 1705. Upon his election as one of London's sheriffs in 1671, he was knighted, and in 1679–80 Clayton served the City as Lord Mayor. He was colonel of the Orange Regiment of the militia in 1680–1, 1689–90 and 1694–1702, and President of the Honourable Artillery Company from 1690 to 1703. Supplementing these civic positions Clayton was Commissioner of the Customs, 1689–97, and an Assistant to the Royal African Company, 1672–81.

When the Tory pamphleteers attacked Clayton in the years before the Revolution, they ignored his philanthropic commitments. The Whig politician and plutocrat had softer, charitable instincts encouraged by his friend Thomas Firmin, who appealed to his self-help sympathies. From 1676, when he first supported Firmin's workhouse school in Little Britain Street, Clayton became vice-president of the workhouse. Firmin was probably responsible for Clayton's connection with Christ's Hospital, where in 1672 he became involved with the foundation of the Royal Mathematical School. According to John Strype, Clayton told him he had first come to believe in the idea of a mathematical school by reading an account of how Louis XIV had established schools in maritime towns in France to teach children the principles of navigation. Clayton became a governor of Christ's Hospital in 1675. He and Morris donated money to build a new Girls' Ward in the hospital, and the two men may also have contributed anonymously to the rebuilding of some of the hospital's wards in 1676–7.¹

In 1689 Clayton became a governor of Brideswell Hospital, but his interest in that institution as well as Christ's Hospital waned after the revolution, as the opportunity arose for him to run St Thomas's Hospital. In 1692 he was elected president and held that position until his death. The historian of St Thomas's gives Clayton credit for rebuilding the hospital during his presidency, but until his death, when he bequeathed £2,500 to the hospital, his support was probably not so much in the form of cash as in starting a subscription fund for that purpose.

The personality behind this largesse and power is difficult to capture. His critics held a somewhat ironical view of the man's politics, when they

¹B. D. Henning, *The House of Commons 1660–1690* [History of Parliament] (London, 1983), 84–7; S. M. Macfarlane, 'Studies in Poverty and Poor Relief in London at the End of the Seventeenth Century,' Oxford D.Phil. thesis, 1982, 283, 287, 362 and ch. 7, *passim*.

saw, darkly, his business dealings to be in contrast with his public life. Swindler and at the same time purifier was Nahum Tate's verdict in the second part of *Absalom and Achitophel*:

'Mongst these extorting Ishban first appears,
Pursued by a meagre troop of bankrupt heirs.
Blest times – when Ishban, he whose occupation
So long has been to cheat, reforms a nation!
Ishban, of conscience suited to his trade,
As good a saint as usurer ever made.

Once he acquired a critical audience this ambiguity pursued Clayton to his end. From 1659 to 1672, when he built his fortune, he lived modestly, unnoticed by those writers who described the social scene. His reputation invites comparison with a fellow self-made Midas, Sir Stephen Fox (1627–1716). Their long lives both spanned the political turmoils of the century of revolution. Whereas Fox could describe himself as 'a wonderful child of providence,'² for whom the doors of success opened so easily from his childhood to his mature age, Clayton's future was never quite so self-assured until 1666, when he and Morris appropriated Abbott's bank from his heirs. Clayton was unable to discard the rudeness of his background. His wealth never brought him much into court circles. Fox was an amiable man, able to absorb the intricacies of court life, and this ability brought him to the coffers of state, where he made his fortune. Only after 1671 did Clayton begin to display his wealth in his new mansion in the Old Jewry and his country seat at Marden Park.

In the City Clayton lived on a grand scale, as he climbed the political ladder. John Evelyn attended one of his lavish feasts in the Old Jewry in 1672, where he was duly impressed with the wealth expended to build and equip the scribes' quarters. He returned there in 1679 with Lady Sunderland for a celebration of Clayton's election to the mayoralty, that 'she might see the pomp & ceremonie of this Prince of Citizens, there never having been any, who for the stateliness of his Palace, prodigious feasting & magnificence exceeded . . . ' Two years earlier Evelyn had visited the Claytons at Marden Park, where the new house, built at great cost, was surrounded by gardens and plantations of a lushness and design which impressed even his discriminating taste in such matters.³

²C. Clay, *Public Finance and Private Wealth: The Career of Sir Stephen Fox, 1627–1716* (Oxford, 1978).

³John Evelyn, *Diary*, ed. E. S. deBeer (6 vols., Oxford, 1955), Vol. III, 625–6; Vol. IV, 110–11, 121–2, 170, 173, 185–7, 191, 195.

This great display of wealth reflected an immense fortune. At the time Evelyn was the guest of the Claytons, in the City and country, the scrivener's annual rents amounted to £3,869, and his yearly interest on loans was £3,515.⁴ His disposable income was greater than those figures indicate, for after his election to the mayoralty, he gave several lavish feasts costing £6,955.⁵ No accounts of his income and expenses survive after 1685. At his death Luttrell reported that he had left about £7,000 in legacies and an annual income of £5,000 to his heir,⁶ which seems a low estimate. By the standards of his own time Clayton was seriously rich, comparable today to a millionaire.

For Daniel Defoe, observing Clayton's ostentation at a greater distance than Evelyn, qualms arose as to how this great wealth arose.

And yet he Covets without Rule or End
Will sell his wife, his Master, or his Friend –
To boundless Avarice a constant Slave,
Unsatisfy'd as Death, and Greedy as the Grave.⁷

Death and the grave – the metaphor could translate to another reference of Defoe, in *A Journal of the Plague Year*. According to the novelist, Clayton bought the land used for a burial pit during the Plague in 1665. So anxious was he to get on with his building schemes that he excavated the site before some of the corpses were fully rotted.⁸

This rich scrivener's political career and his benefactions never succeeded in erasing suspicions that his wealth came through exploitation of a particularly unscrupulous kind. His greatest victim was thought to be the Duke of Buckingham, though Clayton was also accused of ruining Lord Peterborough's fortune.⁹ Sir Stephen Fox loaned money on a grand scale also, without suffering the criticism directed toward Clayton. Clayton became vulnerable to charges that his wealth was ill-gotten because of the novelty of his particular sort of banking, coupled with his ostentation.

Part of the complexities of any system involving credit is that it is not

⁴J. R. Woodhead, *The Rulers of London 1660–1689* (London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, London, 1965), 48.

⁵Henning, *House of Commons*, 85.

⁶N. Luttrell, *A Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs from September 1678 to April 1714* (Oxford, 1857), Vol. VI, 193.

⁷Quoted in M. E. Novak, *Economics and the Fiction of Daniel Defoe* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962), 131.

⁸*A Journal of the Plague Year*, ed. A. W. Secord (New York, 1935), 233.

⁹Henning, *House of Commons*, 84; and see below, pp. 198–205.

understood completely by individuals outside the operation. Deposit banking was a relatively new form of finance in Abbott and Clayton's time. Known commonly as scribes and conveyancers, these men stood somewhat outside the ordinary perception of banking. Their contemporaries were more likely to regard bankers as offering specific services, such as moneylending and cash-keeping, than they were to view their operations as integrated within a complete cycle of credit, where bankers made their fortunes on the use of their deposits. With this fragmented view their clients did not always accept the necessary part of the process of true banking, even at its most basic levels. To cite one example, from the moment bankers accepted money on deposit they also offered to store valuables, including coins, for their clients, to keep the distinction clear that in one instance they returned different coins of equal value to the original deposit, and, in another, they returned a parcel, such as a bag of gold, preserving the same coins intact in their chests. As late as 1672 Morris had to state this same-or-similar principle to one of his clients, who demanded the original coins he had placed in his ordinary deposit.¹⁰

This interpretation of Clayton's role in the history of banking is based largely upon his business papers, which happened to survive his death. The later Claytons preserved this archive until 1929, when the collection was carelessly dispersed. The Clayton papers in their scattered state comprise the earliest and largest of all the archives of private banking in England. In their range, depth and diversity the mountain of Clayton documents make the surviving archives of the goldsmith-bankers seem like molehills. The Clayton papers score several archival achievements, for the earliest examples of checks are among this evidence, as are the first bankers' notes, the first statements of account, the earliest banking cashier's book and the first banking ledgers, supplemented by the most extensive surviving banking correspondence and a welter of documents relating to mortgage finance. In their chronological range of banking material the Clayton papers begin with the cashier's book which Robert Abbott kept from 1634 to 1636 during his apprenticeship. The last major source of the bank is the ledger of the firm, kept to 1686, though there are fragments of family papers of the Claytons and Abbotts before 1636 and after 1685. Within this large assortment of papers there are disappointing gaps, most serious in the sequence of ledgers. After 1685 the papers of the bank end abruptly, with only a few family records of the Claytons in the following period. The

¹⁰See below, p. 97.

last twenty-two years of Clayton's life and the fate of the bank cannot be drawn so clearly as the period when his fortune was established.

The embarrassment of riches which are the Clayton papers confound as much as they clarify, leaving a trail of imprecise answers to questions vital to the banking process. Partly this is due to the passage of time, to the accidental loss of evidence and to obscurities buried in the language and practice of the seventeenth century. At the same time, these records were at times deliberately destroyed and falsified in their own day by men aiming to disguise parts of their business from their clients and the government. There were no rules about what records were kept in good faith, and the modern researcher must be especially cautious about the evidence in account books and contracts. The gaps and omissions in this material present difficulties of their own, apart from the problem of the dispersed archives, where parts of what were originally single letters now lie separated by the Atlantic.

This modern analysis restores Clayton to his rightful place in banking history, which would surprise neither Evelyn nor Defoe. Both men understood that the man known as a scrivener performed the functions of a banker. In his novel *Roxana* Defoe presented Clayton as the only real figure amid fictional characters, to explain what he understood about private banking. No evidence ties Defoe directly to Clayton, but even if he observed the scrivener from a distance and based his impression upon hearsay, his characterization in a work of fiction comes closer than any other contemporary description to an accurate perception of the scrivener's business. Certain references in *Roxana* conform to the workings of the bank as reflected in the Clayton papers. For instance, when Roxana makes a deposit, Clayton presents her with a receipt, making an oral promise to repay her with interest. This accords with the scrivener's peculiar note-issue, which was unlike the corresponding forms surviving from the goldsmith-bankers. In another example, Clayton calculates the possibilities of Roxana's investment with his interest tables. Later, Defoe refers to Clayton's specialty as investing in mortgage loans.¹¹ The two references to moneylending with real security at the base come closer than any other contemporary analysis of the actual nature of Clayton's business.

The courtesan Roxana described Clayton as faultless, 'thoroughly versed in the arts of improving money, but thoroughly honest . . .' Twice she refers to him as her 'faithful counsellor' for his advice on how to

¹¹ *Roxana, The Fortunate Mistress*, ed. D. Blewett (New York, 1982), 207-8, 210.

increase her capital. She confesses to 'acknowledge myself much a debtor, not only to the justice of his dealings with me, but to the prudence and conduct which he guided me to, by his advice, for the management of my estates.' In her first encounter with the scrivener, Roxana deposits £14,000 with Clayton who then invests the capital at five per cent in an estate worth £1,800 a year, bound to the lady. Clayton then advises her to add to her investment £1,000 every year, to accrue with compound interest. Roxana lacks the scrivener's prudence, wishing to spend her capital at once rather than wait until her old age to reap its reward. Later, she appears with £1,400 which Clayton takes in on deposit, promising to pay six per cent on the money until the following year, when the deposit can be put out on good mortgage. Then, at another juncture, Clayton advises the woman to marry a wealthy merchant he had found.¹² (The scrivener's role of marriage broker in rich spouses is documented in the Clayton papers.)¹³

Defoe described the two roles which Clayton's clients and the general public observed of the banker: that of a cashier who received money and accounted for it, and that of a loan-broker who found borrowers for his clients' capital. What they did not witness, however, were the complex series of events between the time his clients' deposits reached Clayton's hands and the time their capital was placed out on loan in their names. During the interval Clayton loaned his deposits for his own purposes. In this intervening stage Clayton's role transcended that of cash-keeper and simple broker to assume the functions of a banker, giving him the means to lend money which was not his own capital.

Distinctions between simple brokerage and banking are rarely apparent from public view. Sir Stephen Fox was a broker, receiving money from his clients which he placed in both royal and private loans. In this instance brokerage is entirely profit-based, the broker's capital deriving exclusively from interest and fees, regulated in the Usury Acts.¹⁴ A broker who has only his profits to reinvest is no more a banker than a merchant who invests his profits in loans. Such a broker is like a banker, for both intermediaries take money on deposit, while most merchants do not accept deposits from their clients. If the intermediary is unable to extend his brokerage functions to tap his deposits in other ways, for other reasons, to

¹²*Ibid.*, 204, 207–12, 223–4, 240, 246, 303–4.

¹³See below, p. 48.

¹⁴The interest rate was reduced from ten per cent to eight per cent in the Usury Act of 1625 and from eight per cent to six per cent in 1652. The brokerage rates remained constant, however. Brokers were allowed 5s. per £100, 'or forbearing of £100 for a year, and so ratably . . .' The conveyancing charges were set at 12d. for the original contract as well as its renewal, 'or forbearance thereof . . .'

create a system of moneylending greater than his ordinary source of capital, he has not fulfilled the role of banker.

In a modern context bankers borrow from some in order to lend to others, and this process is regular and ordinary. A broker like Sir Stephen Fox might receive sums of money from friends and others to invest in loans, but only occasionally. The money-scriveners Abbott, Clayton and Morris were bankers in the true sense. In one capacity they acted as brokers and realized large profits from interest and fees, but the bulk of their wealth derived primarily from their role as depositaries, where they manipulated the capital of their clients to create their own source of lending capital.

Clayton and Morris acted as cash-keepers and accountants when they received and paid their clients' capital and kept records of this activity. These demands led them to issue notes and checks, receive and collect inland bills of exchange, issue statements of account and receive valuables for safe-keeping. In merely handling their depositors' capital they executed other services, making themselves their clients' London agents. They could act in a steward-like capacity when they ran the household affairs of clients absent from the capital. And they often paid bills their depositors incurred with tradesmen. This range of services derived from the depositing nexus of banking, which was by no means limited to the passive receipt of capital.

Like their services as cashiers, which implied several functions beyond the ordinary use of that term, loan-brokerage initiated a sequence of actions following the placement of lenders and borrowers in conjunction with each other. Usually the scriveners and their clerks wrote the indenture forms of contracts and thus became conveyancers. For legal actions arising from lending contracts, the scriveners drew upon their own expertise and either acted themselves (before 1660) as attorneys or hired lawyers to do this work. In this connection as money-brokers Clayton and Morris specialized their role and achieved their greatest innovation in banking history by introducing the mortgage in fee to banking practice. This depended upon an accurate form of land assessment which they perfected. To their basic function as money-brokers, scribes, conveyancers and lawyers, the scriveners added further stages and, as a result, they and their agents acted also as land-valuers, rent-collectors and estate-managers.

The conventional account of early banking does not make a clear distinction between functions commonly associated with banking and the various groups of money-men who practiced as bankers during the seventeenth century. The term 'banker' at that time was not a precise word, but the laws forbidding the taking of usury made a distinction between the

roles of broker, conveyancer and moneylender. The usury laws were framed to control simple, direct moneylending as practiced by Shylock, and brokers who did no more than pass money between lending parties. Fees charged by brokers were regulated apart from the maximum legal interest rate, though both actions were controlled in the same pieces of legislation.

Banking arose after the first usury laws were enacted. During the careers of Clayton and Morris, however, these bankers performed a range of functions – as conveyancers, scribes, rent-collectors and estate-managers – that could be explained away as fee-paid services but which in fact were so close to interest and the usury laws that distinctions became muddled. The complex entrepreneurial activities which deposit banking gradually presented, especially after 1660, created a gulf between the intent and limitations of the law and the realities of the brokerage aspect of banking absent from simple and direct moneylending. Evasion was not merely a question of blatant disregard for control of a cultural and ethical position: banking created problems and changes unaccounted for in the ‘just profit’ principle of the usury laws. The categories of moneylender and broker as conceived in legislation were too narrow to accommodate the functions deposit banking could adopt. Once brokers assumed direction of a series of credit operations culminating in loans, they often performed a variety of services more extensive than merely transferring capital between their clients.

Legal regulation of the interest rate clearly did not retard the growth of banking. Private banking emerged over a long period when the usury rate was falling. When the maximum level fell from eight per cent to six per cent in 1652, the profits from moneylending would decrease likewise, or so it would seem. Lenders to the Protector and later to the Crown received a subsidy in addition to the maximum rate, but during the same time other banks appeared bearing little or no relation to governmental finance. It seems unlikely that bankers as a general practice disregarded the usury laws by charging excessive rates; if the government pursued the matter, as it did in 1672, each usurious contact made the lender and his broker liable to prosecution through the courts. Evasions might have been widespread yet carefully concealed, but after 1672 the goldsmith-bankers suffered few criticisms that their loans exceeded the legal rate – whereas in the early part of the century, money-scrivens were suspected of being masters of usurious deceit. On the other hand, the profit rate may have fallen alongside the interest rate; while many private banks were founded after 1660, few of them managed to survive to 1700.

The context of Clayton’s bank lay outside the royal castles, the mint and

the ports. Throughout the seventeenth century deposits of private bankers came from country gentlemen, giving banking a connection with the rural economy it never lost. Country capital was the thread binding the scriveners to the goldsmiths. At the same time, banking in its earliest stages followed a course of expansion at variance with the general state of agriculture. Scrivener-banking grew during a rural depression. The price of wool leveled off during the early years of the Stuart age, and England's retail markets in the Baltic suffered, but during the peaceful years of Charles I's reign the scriveners enjoyed their greatest prosperity. Regardless of how dislocated agriculture became during this period, fortunate landowners still required London agents to receive their capital in town and to provide a series of services in their absence from London. Social life in the capital and the growth of consumer trades in luxury articles continued to attract landowners to the court and City. Both civil wars were followed by severe depressions which hit a cumulative bottom in 1651. Robert Abbott's bank flourished during those hard times. If disorder did not support banking, neither did it interrupt its progress.

The rural economy was resilient to temporary upsets. Sheep-farming and the woolen industry did not decline in the early seventeenth century to the degree once thought. As long as the population rate remained stable, demand for woolen textiles was built into the domestic consumption market. The export trades, especially in the Baltic markets, were hit harder than the home trades. Where distress was most common, long-term leaseholders paying rents set at the high woolen prices of the early part of the century found it difficult to meet their rents. Unless there was a surfeit of tenants nearby to take up the deserted tenancies, few landlords wished to depopulate their lands and thereby reduce their rent rolls. If deserted copyholds were common during this period, there is no reason to believe that this was a permanent movement, directly connected with resolute landlords determined to force tenants to meet rents they could not pay. Pillaging and looting of the armies dislocated agriculture, and the prospect of a military career encouraged farmers to leave their holdings for another life. But in the same period of rural dislocation, tenants took their plows to the meadows to revive arable farming. From the same bleak picture of the Interregnum economy, where deposit banking grew, changes in the countryside were slowly to bring the means to offset the long-term effects of too much sheep-farming.

The change from less pasture to more tillage became increasingly common after 1650. Revival of arable farming encouraged changes that went beyond leasing transformation. Waste land came under the plow as

swamps were drained and primitive forms of irrigation were laid out near river and stream beds to water fields during floods. Before the new agriculture evolved, permanent pasture and permanent tillage were common. As new lands were plowed, the arable culture implemented tended to be temporary. Grain was raised for one year, then the lands were untilled while flocks were herded to the fallow lands to manure them. This was up-and-down husbandry. By taking fewer of the natural nutrients from the soil and by adding manure, farmers increased grain production dramatically. Up-and-down husbandry was centered in the Midland counties where farmers were more likely to have leys for raising grain and fodder, thus keeping in tandem a relationship between stock-farming and arable farming. In another part of the agricultural sector, a brisk business was done leasing pasture lands to shepherds fattening Irish and Welsh cattle on a long journey to London. Market gardening was well advanced in the Home Counties and directed toward a captive clientele in London.¹⁵

Under the direction of Clayton and Morris the bank's operations became actively integrated into the rural economy, rather than merely receiving country rents which landowners delegated to the bank's money-chests. The main problem Clayton faced after 1660 was how the long-term mortgages which he negotiated could be repaid with expectations that rents would fall during the lives of the loans. This concern forced the scriveners to pay the closest attention to agricultural affairs. Throughout the 1660s the scriveners and their agents witnessed approvingly the changes of the new agriculture. Short-term arable rent-charges, set at current market prices, were more attractive credit than antiquated pastoral rents fixed at high woolen prices. Other problems arose during the 1670s when the consequences of the new agriculture meant that recent solutions could only be temporary. So much grain was grown that corn prices fell. During the 'hungry seventies' farmers again revived stock-farming, for meat, hides and dairy products. Success lay in maintaining both stock and crops, directed toward annual market expectations. From London Clayton commanded a communications network greater than the king's postal system. He knew, for instance, that letters could be sent to

¹⁵A. H. John, 'The Course of Agricultural Change, 1660–1760,' in *Studies in the Industrial Revolution Presented to T. S. Ashton*, ed. L. S. Pressnell, (London, 1960), 125–55; E. Kerridge, *The Agricultural Revolution* (New York, 1968); J. Thirsk, 'Seventeenth-Century Agriculture and Social Change,' in *Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. P. S. Seaver (New York and London, 1976), 72–110; D. C. Coleman, 'Labour in the English Economy of the Seventeenth Century', in *ibid.*, 112–38; D. J. Bowden, *The Wool Trade in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1962); *The Agrarian History of England and Wales*, ed. J. Thirsk, Vol. IV: 1540–1640 (Cambridge, 1967).

Kent by the water carriers at the Queen's Head, Billingsgate, and that the Egham coach at the White Hart in the Strand carried letters to Windsor and Staines, where other couriers could deliver correspondence to other points.¹⁶ Through his correspondence from the country during the growing season and his knowledge of market gossip in London, Clayton commanded a position to advise farmers how best to choose their options at the harvest.

The various service roles which Clayton and Morris assumed, such as those of rent-collector and conveyancer, have precise terms, more so than the portmanteau word of the profession. Abbott, Morris and Clayton were rarely referred to in their own lifetimes as 'bankers.' All three men were apprenticed as Scriveners and made free of the company, which claimed Abbott and Clayton as Wardens. In their own day they were all known by the honorifics as 'Scriveners' or 'scriveners' when their financial work was referred to. Robert Abbott was closer to the early tradition of money-scriveners than Clayton and Morris, and to refer to him as a scrivener is to allude to an activity somewhat different from that of the goldsmith-bankers. Clayton and Morris were transitional figures in banking history when the money-scriveners and the Scriveners' Company were in decline, yet they were the greatest of its practitioners and the last prominent members of the Stuart company. By the 1690s the work of a few goldsmith-bankers came close to their own operations as money-scriveners. Clayton's business lacked continuity beyond his own lifetime to acquire the more important and accurate term of 'bank.' To a modern mind the term 'banker' has a specific, relevant meaning which 'scrivener' lacks. In attempting to trace the scrivening traditions from which banking emerged, I have often used the word 'scrivener' to describe these men who in many ways executed the notarial and legal functions associated historically with the money-scriveners. 'Banker' I have used more in the modern sense to describe the practice of private banking once it was recognized as a business apart from the craft of goldsmiths and scriveners. For the sake of convenience, I have used the two words interchangeably.

These variants in terminology support the disjointed view of early banking which this study aims to unify. According to this book deposit banking in Stuart England grew as a linear development in the private sector; scrivener-banking of the early period and the goldsmith-banking of the

¹⁶Sir Thomas Culpeper to M. & C., August 9, 1671, Clayton MS A.1/2, Buc. R.O.; John Thynne to M., August 14, 1672, *ibid*.