

BENEFITTING THE SOUL: RELIGIOUS CONSUMPTION IN THE LATE MIDDLE AGES

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INTRODUCTION

THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT amongst historians that the economic and demographic changes which occurred in the late Middle Ages resulted in improved living standards.¹ Some historians had taken this further and claimed that the apparent evidence for increased wages during this period, combined with falling food prices and rents, led to rapidly rising standards of living for the majority of the population.² Chris Dyer, for example, claimed that in the fifteenth century a labourer's family could have fed itself for 3d a day, whilst family earnings could have exceeded 6d a day, leaving 'spare cash for housing, clothing and manufactured goods', so that 'the expansion of demand in the 150 years following the Black Death should not be underestimated', whilst Maryanne Kowaleski highlighted a 'remarkable rise in purchasing power experienced by the great majority of the English people – particularly the middling peasantry and working class'.³ More recent work, however, has indicated that although the late medieval period did see increases in the availability, variety and consumption of goods, the spread of consumerism was rather more restricted than had been suggested. Although *per capita* consumption undoubtedly increased, especially amongst the lower tiers of medieval society, this largely related to dietary improvements and, in particular, an expansion in the amount of wheaten bread and ale consumed, together with the addition of more protein into the diet in the form of animal products and fish.⁴ Any increased consumption of material goods was far more muted and probably did not expand beyond occasional purchases of cloth and a few basic household items.

A number of reasons have been given as to why rises in wages did not lead to a commensurate increase in consumer purchases. Of particular significance is recent work which has challenged the earlier methodology used to estimate real wages during this period and on which many of the claims of high standards of living have been based. Assessments by Phelps Brown and Hopkins and Clark had indicated major and sustained gains in real wages across the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, but revision work by John Hatcher, subsequently endorsed and developed by Jane Humphries and Jacob Weisdorf, showed that the rise in real wages and earnings occurred more gradually, over a longer period of time, and did not reach the optimistic estimates of Clark *et al.*⁵ Other factors which limited consumer demand have also been suggested, such as that before the imposition of a new factory discipline in the eighteenth century, people preferred to have more leisure time than higher income levels, and only worked the amount of time required to provide for their basic subsistence needs.⁶ Hatcher in particular noted a general feeling amongst contemporaries that an inverse relationship existed between high wages and the number of hours a person was willing to work, and that this was combined with a belief that members of the labouring classes set themselves a 'target consumption' level so that the amount of work which they were prepared to do was directly related to covering the cost of a basket of basic consumption goods.⁷

This paper contributes to this debate on living standards in the later Middle Ages by

considering one further factor in the consumption patterns and preferences of ordinary people; their expenditure on religious activities and rituals. It argues that this area of expenditure has been overlooked in the existing scholarship, and the oversight is important because religious consumption could absorb a significant proportion of household income and restrict what was available for expenditure on other commodities and material goods. It will use the Liberty of St Edmund, in the western part of Suffolk, as a study region and explore the very wide range of religious goods and services available to consumers in this area during the late medieval period.⁸

RELIGIOUS EXPENDITURE

Expenditure on religion was driven by three separate forces. The first of these relates to the integral role played by the parish in medieval society as the basic administrative and pastoral unit of the Catholic church as well as an ecclesiastical unit of taxation.⁹ Membership of the parish was compulsory for people living within its boundaries and imposed on the faithful the three obligations of maintaining the parish church, ensuring the provision of mass at the high altar, and providing the wages of the parish priest.¹⁰ The second factor relates to 'the late medieval cult of intercession for the dead', the concept that a place existed after death between heaven and hell where true believers completed their penance through a limited period of suffering.¹¹ These purgatorial sufferings could be diminished by grace accumulated by a living person through meritorious acts performed prior to death, or by acts of prayer and devotion performed by living persons on behalf of a deceased person and both of these could involve monetary payments. The final contributing factor was that religious expenditure could be a form of conspicuous consumption and a way in which status could be expressed. In much the same way that the wearing of a velvet doublet or possession of silver tableware might be used to convey the idea that the owner was a person of a certain status and wealth, generous spiritual bequests enforced the same perception of the donor amongst the local community.

Consumption on religion by both communities and individuals is recorded in a range of sources. The most revealing for community expenditure is churchwardens' accounts which record income and expenditure relating to the day-to-day running and administration of a parish church, and the related accounts, known as collections or gatherings, which document the collection of funds for particular projects such as the altering or rebuilding of sections of the parish church. Extant late medieval churchwardens' accounts and collections are rare, but a survival from the parish of Mildenhall consists of accounts for the first half of the sixteenth century, together with a record of the collections made by Mildenhall churchwardens between 1446 and 1454; whilst the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of Boxford from around the time of the Reformation are also extant.¹² The churchwardens' accounts do also contain some evidence of individual expenditure on religion, however, the most significant source of personal religious expenditure is the wills of late medieval people. These record the pious and charitable bequests by which the testator intended to fulfil his or her Christian duties, although it is worth noting that instructions contained in wills were not always executed to the extent that the deceased intended, and therefore provide an indication of intended expenditure rather than evidence of definite outlay.

INVOLUNTARY PAYMENTS

Payments of a religious nature were made both during and after life and included both involuntary and voluntary payments. Involuntary payments included the various sums payable by both individuals and collectively by the community to the parish priest,

archdeacon, bishop, archbishop and the pope. Of these, the most significant were tithes payments, which were liable to be paid by all parishioners on an annual and regular basis. The tithe was a tenth part of produce which was dedicated to divine service and, in effect, provided the basic income for most parish priests. Tithes were also expected to be paid from trade profits and personal wages so that within towns tithe payments in cash largely took the place of the tithes in produce found in the countryside.¹³ In addition to annual tithe payments, parishioners paid the parish priest to perform spiritual functions and other services on their behalf and these can be regarded as involuntary since they related to rites of passage which were essential aspects of late medieval religious life. These included baptism, the sacrament of marriage (at a cost of 4d per service), the purification or churching of women after childbirth (1½d), confirmation, and the various duties and commemorations associated with death such as the giving of the last sacraments, oblations at funerals (6d per service), burials, mortuaries, obits and anniversaries.¹⁴ In particular the mortuary fee, which took the form of a voluntary payment to the church at death, could absorb a fraction of a deceased's estate and many of the wills from the study region include provision for a mortuary payment with amounts ranging from 4d to 100s.¹⁵ In a very few cases, mortuary payments were made in kind, such as the two pecks of barley paid by Adam Colakyr to All Saints' church in Newmarket.¹⁶ Other involuntary payments were paid on an individual or collective basis for other services provided by the various tiers of the church hierarchy and included amounts for probate fees (paid to the archdeacon, bishop or archbishop), for visitations to the church by the archdeacon to review the parish clergy and the fulfilment of their duties (paid to the archdeacon), Peter's Pence (paid to the pope), and payments to the cathedral church of the diocese.¹⁷ The Mildenhall accounts contain evidence of the amounts paid by the community for all of these: between 4d and 8d would be contributed on an annual basis towards the cost of the visitation; between 2s 3d and 2s 6d was paid twice yearly to Rome as Peter's Pence or 'Romeschot'; whilst a sum of 2s 3d or 2s 6d was paid twice yearly to the cathedral church of the Norwich diocese.¹⁸ The money required for these external payments was raised from the local community with predefined arrangements usually in place to support the levying of such sums.¹⁹

VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS

In addition to involuntary contributions, there existed an enormous range and scope for voluntary contributions to be made towards items of religious consumption such that there was a 'substantial spiritual economy based on voluntary donations'.²⁰ Whilst these included payments made during life and pious bequests at death, the nature of voluntary religious expenditure made during life was such that few records remain which enable the amounts spent on such activities to be identified. However, many of the acts performed during life could also be undertaken after death on behalf of the deceased in what has been described as 'the mutuality of living and dead', an essential characteristic of late medieval catholicism.²¹ Provision for these undertakings was often contained within wills and consequently these provide the main source of evidence for personal religious consumption, although this is supplemented by evidence from other sources.

The main focus of voluntary payments both before and after death was on the parish church. The parish was responsible for the maintenance of the structure of the church with the exception of the chancel which was maintained by the owners of the rectorial land within the parish. This maintenance included repairs to the actual building as well as to vestments, bells, pews, books, the church organ and the church clock. In addition to the ongoing maintenance of the fabric, many communities undertook substantial reconstructions of their

parish church during the late fourteenth, fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the 'great age of parish church rebuilding'.²² For example, changes to Mildenhall church during this period saw the building of the tower, two porches, arcades, clerestory and the roof which incorporated a carved and gilded angel roof, whilst further elaboration was added in the form of traceried stone parapets, a corbel table with intricately carved human and animal heads and a chequered flushwork on the external walls of the north aisle.²³ This work relied heavily on weekly donations from the local community and many of these are recorded in the collections.²⁴ These donations could raise quite considerable sums of money; weekly collections held between 1449 and 1452 raised a total of £12 10s 9½d.²⁵ The Mildenhall collections rarely record expenditure and so it is difficult to identify exactly what funds were being raised for, however, it is possible to link the dates given to contemporaneous testamentary bequests to church reparations which enable the aspect of the building being constructed at that time to be identified.²⁶ For example, bequests to the building of the church tower start to feature in wills from 1441 onwards, such as the 40s given to the reparation of the tower by William Gelham in 1460 and the 6s 8d given by William Fullere in 1477 (Fig. 131).²⁷ By the beginning of the sixteenth century bequests to the bells start to appear, such as the £3 10s given by Henry Pope in 1535 'towards the making of the great bell', which suggests that by this time, the tower had been completed and thoughts had turned towards the acquisition of bells to be hung from the bellframe in the new tower.²⁸

The Boxford churchwardens' accounts record that a play staged in Boxford in 1535 raised over £18 for church funds, a considerable sum which Northeast suggests was used to help finance repairs on the church.²⁹ As with Mildenhall, events such as this one were not the only means by which funds were raised from parishioners for such projects. In the years between 1441 and 1536 several wills record testamentary bequests to building work at Boxford church, for example, Richard Smyth gave five marks 'to the payntyng of the new Candellbeme in Boxford', John Clerk left 20s to the 'gyldyng of the Rodeloft', John Kyng gave five marks each to the 'kervyng of the trinitie' and 'the payntyng of the roodeloft', Henry Steruppe left £6 13s 4d 'to the paynting of the Roode Lofte', Symon Newton bequeathed 'to the warkes of the body of the same churche xxvjs viijd', Thomas Coo gave £4 'to be spentt upon suche thing within the same churche as shalbe thought most expedient and necessary by the discrecion of the wardens of the same churche', William Whityng left 40s 'towards the reparacon and amendeing of the Lantorn upon the Stepull of the Churche of Boxforde' and John Grene gave 40s towards the 'reparacon of the churche'.³⁰

Within a typical late medieval church there would have been a number of separate altars, together with other side altars used by **guilds** and perpetual chantries. All of these would have been decorated with a variety of paintings, statues, embroidered coverings, hangings and lights. The masses and prayers conducted within the church would have required the use of various vessels, whilst the clergy leading such services would have worn a range of vestments. The community was keen to ensure that all of these items were all of the finest materials available with inferior materials only used in the poorest parishes.³¹ An inventory of St Mary's church, Mildenhall, taken in 1508 shows that the church possessed a total of seventeen copes which were made from a variety of expensive cloths including cloth of gold, cloth of tissue, white damask, red damask, blue velvet and red velvet.³² Many of these liturgical ornaments and other paraphernalia were donations from parishioners, either through gifts of the articles themselves, or by sums of money which enabled the articles to be acquired and were not only given to beautify and glorify the church, but also to raise the profile of the donor within the community. Few records exist of gifts given to the church by parishioners during life, but the wills provide ample evidence of *post mortem* bequests: Matilda Wibrugh gave two long forms to the church of Our Lady, Withersfield; whilst Thomas Stotevile of Dalham gave 'a chales

of the whigght of iiij unce' to his local parish church.³³ Whilst many of these items were given by parishioners, others were bought by the churchwardens. In 1543 the Mildenhall churchwardens spent £1 9s on buckram, silk and gold lace for replacement copes and this sum excluded the cost of the wages and board of the embroiderer appointed to complete the garments.³⁴

The wills also show that testators were keen to bequeath specific items or sums of money to churches other than that of their parish of residence. These were usually churches in the vicinity of the home parish, churches with which the testator had some personal connection, or the mother church of the diocese in which the testator resided. Residents of Sudbury, for example, often left sums to other churches in the town in addition to their parish church, so that in 1454/55 John Broun gave 3s 4d to the high altar of the church of All Saints and 20d to the high altar of St Gregory's church.³⁵ Other testators left

money to churches which they would have known during their lifetime. The wealthy draper William Aylnoth of Coggeshall in Essex, who had previously resided and owned land in Hundon in Suffolk and held a shop and landholdings in Newmarket, left 6s 8d to his parish church in Coggeshall, as well as to the church of Hundon and the chapel of St Mary's, Newmarket.³⁶ Testators were also keen to bequeath money to the mother church of their diocese; in the Middle Ages the Liberty of St Edmund lay within Norwich diocese and the wills of people living within the liberty often provided for sums to be given to the cathedral church, such as the 12d which Nicholas Furmage of Stanton gave to 'the mother churche of Norwiche'.³⁷

Payments relating to the parish church also included a wide range of other items which included donations relating to certain religious ceremonies, such as the making, maintenance, lighting and watching of the sepulchre for Holy Week and Easter, gifts to the parish box and contributions towards payments to parochial officers.³⁸ In addition, the practice of renting or purchasing pews began in the fourteenth century and could be a further religious expense for many members of the community as well as being a source of income for the church.³⁹ Seating



FIG. 131 – Tower of St Mary's church, Mildenhall, which testamentary bequests suggest was built in the mid- to late fifteenth century.

within the church began to reflect the social hierarchy of the local community, with the gentry and burgesses within towns paying to secure pews located at the front of the nave and nearest to the altar.⁴⁰ People from the next social tier took the pews behind the parish elite and so on, with the lowest peasants or labourers sitting at the back of the nave and furthest from the altar. This practice appears to have been adopted within the region so that, for example, Thomas Grene of Clare requested burial 'yn the church of Clare before the Image of owre lady yn the Ile where at I am wont to sitt'.⁴¹ It has not been possible to establish how much people paid for seats in the region, nonetheless, Andrew Brown notes that 6d was charged for seats in the prestigious areas of the church of St Laurence, Reading, and 4d for seats in the less desirable areas of the church.⁴²

Payments to the church could also be made on behalf of a deceased person, with bequests of this nature frequently referred to in wills. These included sums made to secure inclusion on the bede roll, the list of deceased parishioners read out from the pulpit on Sundays and other special occasions so that they could be the focus of prayers by the congregation, thereby shortening the time that these departed members of the community remained in purgatory.⁴³ Payments were also made for a 'quetheword', the announcement of the death of a parishioner which was supported by a bequest or legacy to the parish church. Both the Boxford and the Mildenhall churchwardens' accounts show that this was a popular tradition with the Mildenhall accounts in particular containing regular and ongoing payments for quethewords. The amounts recorded as being paid by the executors of the deceased for this service ranged considerably from just 4d to the 26s 8d which John Skote paid to the Boxford churchwardens for the quetheword of the wealthy clothier Symon Newton.⁴⁴

Community activities such as church ales, plays, May ales and May games were also held on behalf of parish churches to raise funds for maintenance and rebuilding schemes. The collections for Mildenhall show that these were regularly held throughout the spring and summer months and raised quite sizeable amounts from the community, for example, four separate church ales held in three of the townships of the parish in 1452 raised a total of £5 10s 2½d, whilst a play of St Thomas performed in 1505/6 produced a sum of £7.⁴⁵ Churches also raised money through the sale of indulgences (frequently referred to in England as pardons) to parishioners. These offered remission of some, or occasionally all, of the penance or temporal punishment which it was believed was still owed to God after a sin had been effectively repented, confessed and forgiven, and could be obtained in various ways including acts of devotion, pilgrimages and charitable giving (including the maintenance of the parish church).⁴⁶ Indulgences were usually sold by authorised pardoners, but could also be purchased from ecclesiastical institutions. No evidence of any official pardoners within the study region has been found, although Robert Swanson noted that many of these had dual occupations so that the selling of indulgences may have been the secondary occupation of men who specialised in other trades and are thus harder to identify within the sources.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the number of religious foundations within the area suggests that they were both freely available and widely purchased, with the abbey of Bury St Edmunds in particular known to have been selling such items and in 2016 a seal matrix was found which seems to have been used by the abbey to validate indulgences (Fig. 132).⁴⁸ The churchwardens' accounts show that Mildenhall church annually held five pardon or indulgence days at which between 2s and 5s was raised on each occasion.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, the names of the donors and the amounts of the donations are not recorded, but Swanson suggested that indulgences may have cost from around 1d each which indicates that between twenty-four and sixty parishioners were purchasing them on each occasion that they were offered.⁵⁰ Swanson also identified that indulgences were often carved into churches to encourage devotion and donations.⁵¹ This was the case in Mildenhall where an indulgence granted by the pope to the church and its

congregation had been carved or painted on the wall of the church. In 1539 a mason was paid 2s 6d 'for the leying of the pament and the rassyng owht of the bysschoppys of Rome pardon on the wall'.⁵² This sale of indulgences by Mildenhall church was one example of a practice which was so widespread that by the 1530s England was 'saturated with indulgences'; they were mass produced in both their handwritten and printed forms and could be obtained by individuals, married couples or even families or parishes.⁵³

In addition to payments made to the fabric of the church itself, offerings were also given to the various statues, images and relics of saints and martyrs which were an essential feature of the late medieval Catholic church in England. These gifts could take various forms including

straightforward monetary offerings, donations of money or objects designed to adorn the relevant icon and payments to support lights before them and could be given to objects within the parish church of the donor, or associated with other churches or shrines. Wills from this period contain plentiful examples of such gifts, for example, John Syday of gave 3s 4d each to the 'painting of the Trinite' and the 'painting of our Lady of Pyte' in his church at Waldingfield, Ralph Forster gave two bullocks to maintain the light before the image of Our Lady in St Mary's church, Great Bradley, and Jane Grene bequeathed 'a brannche of laton that hangith in my hall to hang a fore seint Dorathe in the Church of Clare'.⁵⁴ In addition, places which held an important relic, or which had a particular religious significance, were often the focus of pilgrimages. Although the most common reason for such pilgrimages was simply that a contribution to the shrine or church visited would earn the donor an indulgence, other reasons included to request healing, seek a miracle or give thanks for one which was perceived to have already taken place.⁵⁵ Testamentary evidence suggests that pilgrims from the study region travelled to regional pilgrimage sites including the Holy House of Walsingham, the shrine of St Edmund at Bury St Edmunds abbey and the shrine of St Etheldreda at Ely cathedral; to significant national sites including those as far away as Our Lady of the Park, Liskeard, St Michael's Mount (both in Cornwall) and the shrine of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury Cathedral; and even to international pilgrimage sites at Compostela and Rome (Fig. 133).⁵⁶ Pilgrimages to places such as these could absorb large amounts of cash since expenditure included travel and accommodation expenses for the journey, monetary gifts and the purchase of votive offerings at the shrine, and the buying of mementos such as lead



FIG. 132 – Medieval ecclesiastical seal matrix found at Bradfield St George (formerly known as *Bradfield Monachorum* because it belonged to Bury Abbey), which seems to have been used to validate indulgences and was probably associated with the sale of pardons by the abbey
(reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service; © SCCAS).



FIG. 133 – Pilgrim badge found at Ousden bearing the images of Saints Peter and Paul, suggesting that the owner had been on pilgrimage to Rome (*reproduced by kind permission of Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service; © SCCAS*).

pilgrimage badges, written indulgences and certificates confirming the completion of the pilgrimage.⁵⁷ The offerings made at important pilgrimage sites were substantial; David Sherlock noted that offerings made at the shrine of St Edmund amounted to £32 12s in 1520/1 and £26 10s in 1524/5, whilst those made at the shrine of St Etheldreda in the previous decade had been significantly higher.⁵⁸

Pilgrimages were not only undertaken by individuals, but could be performed by third parties paid to undertake them on behalf of those who, for various reasons, were unable to perform the pilgrimage themselves. Indeed, Swanson claimed that ‘a pool of semi-professional pilgrims’ existed for this very purpose.⁵⁹ The wills confirm this was a commonplace practice since a number contain specific instructions for pilgrimages to be undertaken for the testator after their death. The most comprehensive example is contained in the will of Thomas Fullere of Mildenhall who provided for a pilgrim to go on his behalf to ‘le Roode de Northdore in Cimit’ london to the Roode of grace, to Seynt Thome’ of Cant’ and to Walsyngham and to the Vicary of Seynt Stephne’ of Norwiche and to seynt Nicholas of Thebenham and to seynt Walston’.⁶⁰ Whilst pilgrimages were undertaken by a wide section of society, a very few men also went on crusade to the Holy Land. The crusades which had received the most popular English support had ended with the Ninth Crusade in 1272 so that subsequent crusaders were largely self-funded.⁶¹ There is no evidence to suggest any men from the study region joined these later crusades, but the Holy Land evidently retained its significance to late medieval Christians; the mercer Laurence Smyth left 20s for men taken in the Holy Land and imprisoned ‘for the feith of oure lord Ihsus Crist of the paganes’.⁶²

CHARITABLE GIVING

Most of the examples of religious consumption previously discussed can be considered to have been personal professions of piety by the individual concerned. However, these were considered insufficient to secure God’s grace as late medieval Christians believed they would also be judged by their benevolence towards the comfort of other members of the community, particularly the poor and the weak, as concern shown to the less fortunate members of society weighed in the balance at the Last Judgement.⁶³ As a consequence pious and charitable gifts were given in accordance with the seven corporal acts of mercy with significance attached to

all of these, but with particular emphasis on the giving of alms to the poor.⁶⁴ Evidence for such gifts made during life is limited, however, there is abundant testamentary evidence of *post mortem* charitable grants to the poor including gifts of money, clothing, fuel, bread and ale, or of other forms of benevolence.⁶⁵ Some of these were made on a general basis so that Thomas Collys of Eriswell bequeathed outstanding debts owed to him to his executors, whilst asking them to show 'greate favor to poure men'; whilst others were more specific such as the bequest of William Gelham of Mildenhall who gave 'le stak' of loppings to be distributed among the poor, presumably as firewood.⁶⁶ As the prayers of the deserving poor were considered to be highly beneficial to the soul, other wills encouraged their attendance at church so that Robert Barrett of Monks Eleigh requested that 'my maser be sold and be disposed to ij poore folks eche of theym a peny every Fryday with that condicion that they will goo to church and here masse and pray for me and all my frendes till the money be spent'.⁶⁷ Whilst these are single bequests which would have provided short-term relief, there is also some testamentary evidence of long-term funding of poor relief in west Suffolk. Dyer cites a concentration of bequests to the poor in Lavenham wills of the mid-fifteenth century as evidence of a coordinated campaign to lift people out of poverty through providing weekly distributions, and suggests that similar schemes may have been operating in Stoke-by-Nayland, Clare and Great Waldingfield.⁶⁸ A related feature of such measures was the foundation of small almshouses and whilst none survive in west Suffolk from this 'significant period of almshouse foundation', a number of testamentary bequests confirm that these were being established in the region and the Mildenhall churchwardens' accounts include entries indicating that the parish was contributing towards the building of an almshouse in the town.⁶⁹ In some instances testators even made provision for the poor to be accommodated within their houses. In his will of 1452 Simon Wellys of Woolpit required that a chamber should be reserved for the use and accommodation of the poor, for all time, whilst in 1469 John Eryswell of Eriswell bequeathed his tenement to his son Thomas on condition that he keep two beds in which to provide hospitality for the vagrant poor, and assigned an acre of land to maintain the beds.⁷⁰

Gifts such as these can clearly be regarded as charitable gifts in accordance with the seven corporal acts of mercy, but other categories of charitable donations, such as to bridges and highways and for educational purposes, initially appear to have been rather more secular although the benefactors clearly regarded their offerings as analogous to other charitable gifts and considered that they had a religious significance. Eamon Duffy observed that testators made no distinction between gifts of this nature and other works of mercy and this is reflected in wills.⁷¹ Bequests to build or maintain roads and bridges in particular are frequent and often of a personal nature in that the highways for which the bequests were made would have been travelled by the testator. The Newmarket innkeeper John Withall left 20s for the reparation of the way between his inn, The Ram, and All Saints' church in Newmarket, whilst Thomas Femnal of Cowlinge gave 20 marks to the mending of the highway from his pasture to Newmarket as well as 26s 8d to the making of a bridge within his parish.⁷² Charitable donations for educational purposes could include bequests to educational buildings, to scholars generally, or to specific named individuals.⁷³ Education does not seem to have been a popular concern for residents of this area of Suffolk, despite the existence of schools at Bury St Edmunds and Lavenham and the proximity of the university town of Cambridge, and only a handful of wills contain educational bequests, although Robert Gerard of Fornham St Genevieve gave £10 to his son William 'for to fynde hym to scole', and Thomas Stotevile of Dalham asked that 'Thomas Kenerell my childe goo to scole ij yere at Cambrigge or in other place and that my saide executours pay for his comons'.⁷⁴

PERSONAL AND HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

Consumption of a religious nature also encompassed the purchase of personal or household items which could include such items as prayer beads (widely known as paternosters), liturgical texts, statuary and also relics, and which were owned by the laity as well as by the church.⁷⁵ Quasi-religious items were also in existence such as manuscript prayer rolls worn as girdles to secure safe childbirth.⁷⁶ With the exception of prayer beads, however, testamentary evidence suggests that religious items were not commonly owned by people within the Liberty of St Edmund, except by members of higher status households. Prayer beads served both religious and display purposes and were especially popular amongst widows as they were considered to be the only form of jewellery which it was appropriate for them to wear.⁷⁷ Whilst they could be made from a range of substances, jet, amber and coral were especially popular materials as they were all regarded as having various additional quasi-religious apotropaic properties.⁷⁸ Testamentary evidence from the study region suggests that these were commonly owned, particularly by both widows and clerics, with bequests of beads of jet, coral, amber, white amber and crystal including 'a pere of bedis of gete gaudid with silver & corall betwene' and 'a pere of bedis of Corall the gaudees silver and gilt' both given by the widow Jane Grene of Clare, and a pair of amber beads and a pair of beads 'next the best', given by Sir George Gatynebe, priest of Mildenhall.⁷⁹ Similarly, many of the liturgical texts referred to in wills were gifted by members of the clergy, although these were also owned by some high-status testators. Margery Howton of Mildenhall, a draper's widow, referred to books in her will, whilst Thomas Stotevile, esquire, of Dalham gave 'my booke callid Decretals' to the parson of Dalham.⁸⁰ A small number of clerics held other religious goods, such as the chalices bequeathed by both Sir George Gatynebe and John Mason of Mildenhall.⁸¹ Other than prayer beads and books, only a very few other items bequeathed by the laity can be clearly identified as being religious items which had actually been in their possession, rather than items to be purchased by executors on their behalf. A handful of testators refer to ownership of the small alabaster tablets portraying the head of St John the Baptist which were popular at this time, including Agnes Maldon, widow of Sudbury, who gave a 'seynt John hede of alabastir' in her will of 1507, whilst a very few others bequeath items in their household which were probably small statues or alabaster tablets, such as Jane Grene, widow, of Clare, who gave 'a ymage of seint darathe', 'a tabill of the death of oure lady' and 'a table of the pitie of our lorde our lady on the one side and seint John on the toder side'.⁸²

POST MORTEM RELIGIOUS CONSUMPTION

Most of the categories of gifts and donations referred to above could be made both during and after life, but some other offerings were specifically related to the period after death to ensure that appropriate provision was made for the soul. Significant amounts could be spent on funerals and associated rituals and wills often provide detailed information about the costs to be spent. Although this expenditure was not strictly that of a living consumer, many people expressed their wishes about their funeral arrangements before death and money spent on funerals was either disposable income which had been set aside by the testator during his or her lifetime, or was money which would otherwise have been distributed to legatees. In either case, earned income was spent on religion rather than on other consumption goods. In addition, *post mortem* religious consumption clearly reflects the three forces which drove late medieval religious consumption and which were outlined at the beginning of this paper. Whilst the main preoccupation of the wills was undoubtedly to enable the testator to secure a reduction of time spent in purgatory and to ensure ultimate salvation, they were also a

means by which the testator could support the parochial obligation to the church and exhibit status, albeit after death.

Prior to the Black Death, the common law was quite rigid regarding the disposition of a man's possessions after death.⁸³ After the payment of debts, one third was to go to his widow, one third to his children, and the remainder could be used for pious provision intended to benefit the testator's soul.⁸⁴ If there were no children, the widow was expected to receive half of the estate and half could be spent on religious observances.⁸⁵ However, later legal opinion was that a testator could dispose of his goods in whatever way he or she chose, whilst the church took the view that a testator's duty to use chattels for pious uses took precedence over other forms of bequests.⁸⁶ It seems appropriate to assume that this changed scenario, combined with the late medieval preoccupation with purgatory, resulted in pious provisions generally forming a larger proportion of testamentary bequests. Evidence of cash bequests contained in the wills from the study region supports this suggestion as it is apparent that bequests for pious purposes consistently constituted a large percentage of total cash bequests and this was particularly the case when the testator did not appear to have a widow or other dependants. Thomas Sigo of Mildenhall, who does not refer to any dependants in his will of 1439, left cash bequests in excess of £24, all of which were donated to various religious recipients including ten marks to the fabric of the church, alms to the poor and twenty-four marks towards the keeping of an obit for the souls of himself, his parents and the souls of all the faithful departed.⁸⁷

Payments to ensure that masses and prayers were celebrated for the soul of the benefactor were a particularly popular form of *post mortem* religious consumption as it was believed that these hastened the progress of the soul through purgatory.⁸⁸ Masses for intercession could actually begin before death, including the ritual mass of the last communion, known as *Viaticum*, which was administered to the dying as a means of provisioning them with the spiritual grace required for the journey about to be undertaken. Once death had occurred, masses and prayers were an essential component of the funeral service. The standard pattern was the saying of the Office of the Dead, beginning with the *Placebo*, the vespers, celebrated on the eve of the burial, and subsequently the *Dirige*, the matins, held the following morning. These rites were then followed by the Mass for the Dead, the *Requiem*, and finally, the internment.⁸⁹ For those who could afford it, this basic service was supplemented by other commemorations and in particular the celebration of anniversaries or obits which re-enacted the Office of the Dead with requiem masses.⁹⁰ Whilst bequests for masses and prayers within the wills from the study region are less common than, for example, bequests to the parish church or to religious houses, they are still numerous and could absorb quite large sums or other gifts. Ralph Foster of Great Bradley left four cows 'to the keping of myne obite yerely for evermore', and Robert Copynger of Woolpit required that his executors keep his 'yereted ... with Placebo Dirige and masse of Requiem' and asked that money be given 'to preestes and clerkes comyng to my Dirige and to the poore people and for all observantes', such that his request for forty shillings to be distributed yearly and for a period of five years amounted to a total cost of £10.⁹¹ The most popular form of *post mortem* commemoration was a trental, the celebration of thirty masses on consecutive days, which could be said either in the parish church or, more frequently, in a religious house. These cost ten shillings for the full thirty requiem masses, or just five shillings for a half-trental, for example, William Croby of Stradishall gave 10s to the friars of Clare for a trental, and 5s to the friars of Babwell for half a trental.⁹² The trental of St Gregory, which required the celebration of masses for the deceased for a whole year, was also requested by a handful of testators including William Folkys of Newmarket who left 10s to have it performed on his behalf by the Greyfriars of Cambridge.⁹³

The saying or singing of the Office of the Dead and the requiem masses were forms of

corporate intercession, a practice which was regarded as particularly valuable and beneficial to the soul.⁹⁴ The importance of this form of observance is also reflected in donations to religious houses which were given with the expectation that the communities would remember the benefactors in their prayers and services. Religious houses were a significant focus of bequests from within the study region with a number of testators leaving at least one offering to a religious house or its brethren, whilst many wills included multiple bequests. The will of Margaret Odeham of Bury St Edmunds included the following instructions:

Item I bequeathe to every hows of ffryeres in Cambredge, Lynne, Norwiche, Thetford, Clare, Sudbury, to eche of thes howses vjs viiid. Item I bequethe to every nunne in the howsys of the townys of Thetford, Shuldham, Wignale, Blakbowr, Cambredge, Chaterys, Swaffham, Denney, Iklyngton, Crabows, Broseyerd, Campsey, and Flixton xiid. Item I bequeathe to the howsys of ffryers in Colchester, Ipswyche, and Walsynghan, to eche of them vjs viiid. Item I be quethe to the couent of Ixtorthe xiijs iiiid.⁹⁵

This was exceptional, however, as most of the testators who left bequests to religious houses limited themselves to a small number of bequests, or even just one. Most of these were to local institutions, particularly the priories at Babwell, Clare and Sudbury, whilst some testators living to the north of the county left sums to the various religious houses at Thetford, and some of the testators from Bury St Edmund gave bequests to the abbey of St Edmunds. The wills also include occasional gifts to a range of institutions which were further afield, including those at Cambridge, Ipswich, Norwich, Fordham, Ely and Chelmsford, as well as to Sheen Priory near Richmond and Mottenden Priory in Kent.⁹⁶ It should also be acknowledged that masses and prayers for the souls of deceased family members and friends were also commonly funded by the living in the hope that such intercession would hasten the passage of their souls through purgatory, however, such payments leave fewer records than those contained in wills.

For the wealthier members of society, the desire to secure prayers after death was also reflected in the founding or supporting of endowments for the chanting of masses for their souls. These masses were known as chantries and the name extended to the foundations set up for their performance, however, the form that chantries took varied quite considerably. Most chantries took the relatively basic form of a service chantry, which was simply a mass said at an altar for the soul of the founder, often for a specified number of years, but some were established as perpetual chantries intended to run for eternity and which utilised the rent from an endowment of property to provide an ongoing income for a stipendiary chaplain or chaplains to perform perpetual daily masses for the soul of the founder, occasionally in a chantry chapel or even 'college of priests' set up to provide a special place for priests to pray for the founder's soul.⁹⁷ The wills indicate that service chantries were a popular form of religious consumption as they contain numerous bequests for chantries which were mostly for one year (usually at a cost of eight marks), but could be for as little as a quarter of a year or for as long as ten years. Margaret Chadnole of Mildenhall gave 26s 8d for a priest to celebrate for a quarter of a year, whilst John Parsey of Bury St Edmunds left eighty-five marks to fund a priest in St James' church at a rate of eight marks per annum.⁹⁸ The investment required to establish perpetual chantries was such that they were only founded by the very wealthy and none were established by testators whose wills have been used for this study, although a number did exist within the region. Mildenhall had at least two which had been set up by Edmund de Mildenhall and Ralph de Walsham, whilst a chantry priest was also employed to say masses in the charnel house near to the church.⁹⁹ No physical evidence remains of any of the building associated with these chantries, but features associated with some others do still

exist: St Mary's church, Newmarket, had originally been built as a chantry chapel for the souls of the Argentein family, as lords of the manor; whilst St Mary's church, Bury St Edmunds, still contains the cadaver tomb of John Baret, together with the chantry ceiling, housed within the chantry chapel which he had converted within the church.

As has been noted, burial in the late Middle Ages was in itself a highly ritualised ceremony, nevertheless, those who could afford to do so were keen to make additional arrangements to secure a decent Christian burial which they believed would not only facilitate the progress of the soul through purgatory, but also ensure that the ceremony reflected their status. Consequently, this rite was frequently enhanced and embellished to the extent that the burial process could be an expensive occasion. Before the service expenditure was required on wax candles, known as 'soul candles', a shroud for the body (ranging from a simple linen shroud to clothing of an appropriate rank, or even embalming), and a coffin (although for the less affluent members of society this was just used for the funeral service as the body would be removed from it before being buried). The burial service itself usually began with a procession to accompany the body to church which was itself a display of prestige since it included as many people and of the highest rank as possible, with the processors expected to be attired in mourning clothes. The coffin was either carried in the procession by pallbearers, or pulled along on a cart and the procession was accompanied with torches and bells whilst **guild** banners would also be displayed if the deceased was a **guild** member. Once inside the church the body would be placed on a wheeled bier or hearse which would be covered by a hearse cloth or 'pall' and taken before the altar for the Office of the Dead.¹⁰⁰ The body was then interred. Funeral sermons were said as the actual burial was taking place and memorial sermons took place on various times after death (usually on the seventh day, thirtieth day and on the anniversary of death).

Some of these provisions are likely to have been made and paid for during life without any formal record being made, so that the deceased's family did not have to incur the expense, but many wills contain bequests which reflect the testator's desire for a proper burial. John Ray of Newmarket gave twelve marks for the expenses of obsequies and mass on the day of his burial and for commemorations on his seventh day and thirty days, and Thomas Hull bequeathed 'to the byeng of a vestiment to be for the church of Myldenhale xxvjs viijd for a preste to sing in it the tyme of my service and after to remayn to the sayed church off Myldenhale for ever'.¹⁰¹ Costs were also associated with the actual burial which could be within the churchyard, within the church itself or within the precincts of a religious house. Most people were buried within the churchyard of their parish church, although some locations within the churchyard were considered to be more desirable, whilst some people were keen to be buried near to deceased relatives. Baldwin Coksedge combined the two and asked to be buried in the churchyard of Felsham church, near the entrance to the chancel on the south side by his forefathers.¹⁰²

Burial within the church or in a religious house was largely reserved for higher status individuals, particularly since the 1292 Statutes of Chichester stated that burial within the church should only be accorded to lords of the village, patrons of the church and their wives, and the rectors and vicars.¹⁰³ The most desirable location was before the altar so that the deceased would be remembered during mass and priests in particular were frequently buried in the chancel near to the high altar where they had celebrated mass.¹⁰⁴ Many other wealthy testators used their wills to stipulate the actual location of their burial within the church, for example, Herry Turnour asked to be buried 'in the Chauncell of the nether church of our lady in Haverhill by the Sepulture of Johane late my wife'.¹⁰⁵ As an enhanced cost was associated with burial within the church, some of the testators that requested such a burial bequeathed sums of money to facilitate it, while the Mildenhall churchwarden's accounts record a number



FIG. 134 – Font at St Mary’s church, Mildenhall, with the coats of arms of Sir Henry Barton, the City of London and St George.

of payments of 6s 8d for ‘berying ... in the church’.¹⁰⁶ The practice of erecting some form of memorial at the burial place had been largely reserved for the very wealthy, however, from the 1460s onwards commemorative brasses were increasingly adopted by people lower down the social scale and, in time, grave markers in the form of gravestones were also erected within the churchyard.¹⁰⁷ Only a handful of the testators whose wills have been used for this study made provision for the erection of memorial, but where they did it was an expensive undertaking. John Withall of Newmarket asked that ‘myn executours shall bye and provide a grave stone to the value of xxx to be laide upon my grave’, and Robert Broke of Sudbury requested that his executors ‘buy a stone of marbyll for my grave the price xxvjs viijd’.¹⁰⁸ A very few of the wealthiest members of society also paid for other physical reminders within the parish church such as inscriptions around the church, the incorporation of a coat of arms or merchant’s mark in the church building, service books,

vestments, stained glass, fonts, or even memorial tombs.¹⁰⁹ The extant font of the parish church of Mildenhall incorporates the coat of arms of Henry Barton, former resident of the parish and subsequent Lord Mayor of London (Fig. 134), whilst a memorial tomb was also placed in the church at the base of the tower despite his being buried in St Paul’s, London.¹¹⁰ The clothier Thomas Spryng II, who died in 1486, left three hundred marks to the rebuilding of Lavenham church tower and his merchant’s mark and initials appear frequently around it’s base. Like his father, Thomas Spryng III was also involved in the reconstruction and embellishment of the church, such that his coat of arms appears in abundance throughout the church in stained glass, and carved in wood and stone.¹¹¹

The cost of burial could fall on the living if the deceased had not made sufficient provision for his or her funerary arrangements and this could prove to be a heavy burden. Many people anticipated this cost by belonging to socio-religious **guilds** which, amongst other things, provided for the burial needs of deceased members. **Guild** membership was highly popular in the medieval period, but participation required expenditure on entrance fees, levies and other charges. These **guilds** were generally founded on a parish basis for the purpose of meeting various religious and social needs of their members, but, in particular, as a response to the significant role played by the doctrine of purgatory in the late medieval period. They enabled men and women to come together on a voluntary basis to undertake three main functions

summarised by Duffy as honoring a particular saint and maintaining lights before images and the Blessed Sacrament; securing attendance by members of the **guild** at the funerals of deceased associates and saying intercessory prayers and masses; and celebrating the saint's day of the **guild** through an annual feast, although other social and charitable events which aimed to benefit their members were also held.¹¹² **Guilds** became deeply integrated into their local communities and it has been estimated that there may have been as many as thirty thousand in late medieval England, although the spread and density of **guilds** varied considerably. Using references in contemporary documents, Northeast was able to identify around five hundred **guilds** in Suffolk, although his evidence suggests that they were far more prevalent in the west and north-east of the county than in the south-east.¹¹³ Surviving returns for a national **guild** enquiry indicate that in 1389, eighteen separate **guilds** existed in Bury St Edmunds alone, whilst smaller numbers are recorded for some other towns and parishes.¹¹⁴ Some **guilds** levied some form of a joining fee, but all required the payment of ongoing annual fees and other dues, so that, for example, members of the **Guild** of St John the Baptist in Barton Mills were asked to give yearly ½d in offering at the Feast of St John the Baptist, ½d at the mass of a dead brother, and ½d for alms for the soul of the deceased.¹¹⁵ Many peasants and poorer townspeople would have found it difficult or even impossible to afford the various **guild** fees so that membership was generally the preserve of the middle order of society such as yeomen, merchants and traders, however, the importance of **guild** membership to these groups within the study region is reflected by the large number of testamentary bequests to the **guilds**. A number of wills contain sizeable cash gifts, such as the 20s left by John Deye to the **Guild** of St John the Baptist in Mildenhall, and the same sum given by Laurence Smyth to the **Guild** of Corpus Christi in Bury St Edmunds.¹¹⁶ Other wills contained other generous bequests; Ralph Forster bequeathed twenty lambs to the **Guild** of Our Lady in Great Bradley, and John Gotche bequeathed all his lands in Worlington to the **Guild** of Corpus Christi in Mildenhall.¹¹⁷

CONCLUSION

One purpose of this paper has been to identify and consider some aspects of the very wide range of both voluntary and involuntary forms of religious consumption that existed in the late medieval period and to show that, combined, these constituted a significant and important consumer activity. Inevitably, many of the examples given relate to the more affluent members of society who, given the pattern of survival of late medieval sources, are far more likely to have left evidence in the form of written records or even within the church environment itself. Nevertheless, given the religious developments and priorities of the late medieval period, and the fact that the very nature of the church at this time was highly inclusive and much religious expenditure made on a collective basis, it seems reasonable to conclude that some forms of religious consumption would have been practiced by everyone. For most people this expenditure would have been in the form of small and largely unrecorded sums made on a continuous basis throughout life, rather than the larger bequests recorded in wills. It is impossible to calculate the total amounts individuals were spending, or what percentage of their disposable income this comprised and, in any case, the sums spent would have differed widely according to personal wealth and individual levels of spirituality, however, the evidence presented here suggests that religion was the focus of significant and ongoing expenditure by all groups of late medieval society. As a result, in the words of Swanson, 'if taken at its widest extent, [*the spiritual economy*] must have been a major economic force involving massive amounts of cash'.¹¹⁸ This leads to the second purpose of this paper which is to contribute towards the debate on the living standards in the later Middle Ages. As has been noted above, the claims that have been made for a rapid expansion in

consumer demand during this period have already been dampened, both by Hatcher and Humphries and Weisdorf, who showed that the rise in real wages, on which many of these assertions were based, was much more muted than had been previously believed, and by the work of a number of historians, including Hatcher, who determined that people preferred more leisure time to higher income levels and were only prepared to work what was required to afford basic consumption items, with no desire to work more hours for more, or better, goods. This paper demonstrates that religious consumption was another reason why many of the earlier claims for high living standards in the late medieval period cannot be substantiated. In its many various forms, religious consumption restricted consumer demand for material goods, since it absorbed much disposable income and restricted what could be spent on these items, with the consequence that late medieval consumer demand was far more restrained than has been suggested.

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NOTES

- 1 See, for example, Dyer 1989 and Bridbury 1962.
- 2 Many of these studies were based on the real wage indices compiled by a number of historians, most notably those of Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila Hopkins, which indicated that the purchasing power of the daily wages of urban building craftsmen doubled between the first half of the fourteenth and the third quarter of the fifteenth centuries, and of Gregory Clark, which showed that the real wages of agricultural labourers at least doubled and occasionally almost trebled during the same time period, see Phelps Brown and Hopkins 1955 and Clark, 2007.
- 3 Dyer 2007, 132 and 156; Kowaleski 2006, 242.
- 4 See, for example, Sear and Sneath 2001.
- 5 Hatcher 2011; Hatcher 2019; Humphries and Weisdorf 2017.
- 6 For examples, see Hatcher 1998, 68.
- 7 Hatcher 1998, 72–3.
- 8 The area of the original Liberty of St Edmund included the hundreds of Thingoe, Lackford, Risbridge, Thedwastre, Blackbourn and Babergh (both double hundreds), together with the half hundred of Cosford; in her work on death and remembrance in Dunwich, Judith Middleton-Stewart considered the range of religious goods and services available within the deanery, see Middleton-Stewart 2001, whilst John S. Lee wrote a study on monuments and memory in Cambridge, see Lee 2018.
- 9 Although it should be noted that the vill was the secular taxation unit, not the parish, and the parish and vill were not necessarily coterminous.
- 10 Farnhill 2001, 1.
- 11 Duffy 1992, 338.
- 12 Middleton-Stewart 2011; Northeast 1982; pre-Reformation churchwardens' accounts have also survived for the Suffolk parishes of Brundish St Lawrence, Bungay St Mary (from 1523), Cratfield St Mary, Horham St Mary (from 1530) and Walberswick.
- 13 Swanson 1989, 210–11.
- 14 Swanson 1989, 215.
- 15 For example, [S]uffolk [A]rchives / [B]ury St Edmunds, IC 500/2/10/518 (Wareyn), [T]he [N]ational [A]rchives, P[re]rogative C[ourt] of C[anterbury] PROB 11/7/118 (Coket).
- 16 SA/B, IC 500/2/11/107 (Colakyr).
- 17 Swanson 1989, 220, 221.
- 18 Middleton-Stewart 2011, 46, 47, 48, 52, 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 80 and 118.

- 19 Kümin 1996, 48.
 20 Swanson 1989, 225.
 21 Swanson 2003, 2.
 22 Dyer 2003, 300; Kümin 2006, 100.
 23 Middleton-Stewart 2011, xxviii, xxix, xxx.
 24 Middleton-Stewart 2011, 1–39.
 25 Middleton-Stewart 2011, lxiv; the collections do not stipulate what the money was being raised for, however, the number of contemporary testamentary bequests to the building of the tower suggests that this was the purpose of the funds. Evidence from other church tower rebuilding projects confirms that they were expensive undertakings, for example, a building contract for the tower of Helmingham, dated 1490, agreed a price of £30, Bodleian Library, Tanner MS 138, fol. 87 cited in Salzmann 1992, 547–49.
 26 For further examples of such bequests, see Cotton 2019.
 27 Northeast 2001, 46 and 489; SA/B, IC 500/2/11/175 (Fullere).
 28 SA/B, IC 500/2/20/ 51 (Pope).
 29 Northeast 1982, xiii and 19.
 30 TNA, PCC PROB 11/14/329 (Smyth), TNA, PCC PROB 11/18/146 (Clerk), TNA, PCC PROB 11/18/212 (Kyng), TNA, PCC PROB 11/18/536 (Steruppe), TNA, PCC PROB 11/24/119 (Newton), TNA, PCC PROB 11/24/77 (Coo), TNA, PCC PROB 11/25/402 (Whityng), TNA, PCC PROB 11/26/37 (Grene); for further examples of testamentary bequests to Boxford church, see Cotton 2019, 30–1.
 31 Middleton-Stewart 2011, xxxvi.
 32 Middleton-Stewart 2011, xxxv.
 33 TNA, PCC PROB 11/11/271 (Wibrugh); TNA, PCC PROB 11/15/23 (Stotevile).
 34 Middleton-Stewart 2011, xxxv.
 35 SA/B, IC 500/2/9/227 (Broun); Sudbury had two parish churches, St Gregory’s and All Saints’, however, the chapel of St Peter’s in the marketplace acted almost as a parish church, although it remained a chapel until the sixteenth century, see Northeast 2001, 20.
 36 TNA, PCC PROB 11/14/745 (Aylnoth).
 37 TNA, PCC PROB 11/17/437 (Furmage).
 38 Duffy 1992, 31; Middleton-Stewart 2011, xliii.
 39 Swanson 1989, 258.
 40 Gilchrist 2014, 175.
 41 TNA, PCC PROB 11/9/287 (Grene).
 42 Brown 1995, 87.
 43 See Daniell 1997, 17–19.
 44 Middleton-Stewart 2011, 50, 58, 61, 65, 66, 67, 86; Northeast 1982, 6; Newton’s will makes no provision for such a payment, TNA, PCC PROB 11/24/119 (Newton).
 45 Middleton-Stewart 2011, lvi.
 46 Swanson 2003, 2; Duffy 1992, 288.
 47 Swanson 2003, 5.
 48 Swanson 2003, 5; see Minter 2017, 104, and the website of the Portable Antiquities Scheme <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/811892>.
 49 Middleton-Stewart 2011, lxvii.
 50 Swanson 2003, 8.
 51 Swanson 2003, 5.
 52 Middleton-Stewart 2011, xxxiii, lxvii and 85.
 53 Swanson 2003, 6 and 9; see the website of the Portable Antiquities Scheme <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/253637>.
 54 SA/B, IC 500/2/11/417 (Syday), unfortunately the will does not clearly specify whether this was the church at Great Waldingfield, or that at Little Waldingfield; TNA, PCC PROB 11/09/393 (Forster), TNA, PCC PROB 11/12/33 (Grene).
 55 Swanson 1989, 247 and 295.
 56 For examples, see TNA, PCC PROB 11/16/568 (Parsey), SA/B, IC 500/2/11/ 349 (Fullere) and Northeast 2001, 412–3, 187–8, 105–6.
 57 Swanson 1989, 247.
 58 Sherlock 2020, 588.
 59 Swanson 1989, 272.
 60 SA/B, IC 500/2/11 349 (Fullere); most of these references are to popular medieval pilgrimage locations: ‘le Roode of Northdore’ was at St Paul’s cathedral, London; the ‘Roode of Grace’ was at Boxley Abbey,

- Kent; ‘St Thomas of Cant’ refers to the shrine of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury cathedral; ‘Walsingham’ was the shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham; ‘the Vicary of St Stephen of Norwich’ refers to the shrine of Richard de Castre, formerly rector of the church of St Stephen in Norwich, a popular pilgrimage site which Margery Kempe writes about visiting; St Nicholas of Thebenham was St Nicholas of Tibenham in Norfolk; ‘St Walston’ refers to the shrine of the popular East Anglian saint, St Walstan at Bawburgh, Norfolk.
- 61 Previous crusades were supported financially in a number of ways including self-funding, clerical and lay taxation and donations from the laity, Powell 1986, 89–95.
 - 62 SA/B, IC 500/2/2/325 (Smyth).
 - 63 Duffy 1992, 357.
 - 64 The seven corporal acts of mercy are feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, giving hospitality to the stranger, visiting the sick, clothing the naked, ransoming prisoners and burying the dead.
 - 65 For further details, see Dyer 2012, 51–67.
 - 66 TNA, PCC PROB 11/24/234 (Collys); SA/B, IC 500/2/9/287 (Gelham).
 - 67 TNA, PCC. PROB 11/14/327 (Barrett).
 - 68 Dyer 2012, 68; see also Amor 2016, 212–5.
 - 69 Dyer 2012, 44; Middleton-Stewart 2001, 45, 118, 119; Middleton-Stewart suggests that there may have been more than one almshouse in the town, Middleton-Stewart 2001, 119.
 - 70 Northeast 2001, 259–60, Northeast and Falvey 2010, 200–1; cited in Dyer 2012, 64.
 - 71 Duffy 1992, 367.
 - 72 TNA, PCC PROB 11/22/268 (Withall); TNA, PCC PROB 11/22/666 (Femnal).
 - 73 Swanson 1989, 304.
 - 74 Orme notes that a number of Suffolk towns are recorded as possessing schools at this time, including Beccles, Bury St Edmunds, Eye, Framlingham, Hadleigh, Lavenham and Ipswich, and that there were probably others, Orme, 2011, 325; TNA, PCC PROB 11/12/295 (Gerard); TNA, PCC PROB 11/5/328 (Stoteville).
 - 75 Swanson 1989, 290; Gilchrist 2014, 156.
 - 76 Swanson 1989, 255; Gilchrist 2014, 138.
 - 77 Swanson. 2013, 5; Gilchrist 2014, 96.
 - 78 Swanson 2013, 179; Gilchrist 2014, 141, 143, 166; Sear 2017, 43–6.
 - 79 TNA, PCC PROB 11/12/33 (Grene); N[orfolk] R[ecord] O[ffice], N[orwich] C[onsistory] C[ourt] Ryxe 146 (Gatynbe).
 - 80 NRO, NCC Briggs 28 (Howton); TNA, PCC PROB 11/5/328 (Stoteville).
 - 81 NRO, NCC Ryxe 146 (Gatynbe); NRO, NCC Surflete 147 (Mason).
 - 82 TNA, PCC PROB 11/15/409 (Maldon); a St John’s head was a small alabaster statuary popular in the late Middle Ages, see Sear 2017, 46–9; TNA, PCC PROB 11/12/33 (Grene).
 - 83 Fleming 2001, 85.
 - 84 Burgess 1990, 24.
 - 85 Fleming 2001, 85.
 - 86 Fleming 2001, 85.
 - 87 NRO, NCC Doke 113 (Sigo).
 - 88 Duffy 1992, 338.
 - 89 Duffy 1992, 369; Middleton-Stewart 2001, 116.
 - 90 Middleton-Stewart 2011, lii.
 - 91 TNA, PCC PROB 11/09/393 (Forster); TNA, PCC PROB 11/13/620 (Copynger); as an extreme example, John Coket of Ampton asked that four thousand masses be sung on his behalf within eight weeks of his death, see TNA, PCC PROB 11/7/118 (Coket) and Amor 2018, 237.
 - 92 SA/B, IC 500/2/14 (Croby).
 - 93 TNA, PCC PROB 11/10/205 (Folkys).
 - 94 Duffy 1992, 368–9.
 - 95 Tymms 1850, 73.
 - 96 For examples, see SA/B, IC 200/5/11255 (Aleyn), TNA, PCC PROB 11/14/745 (Aylnoth), SA/B, IC 500/2/17/250 (Bateman), NRO, NCC Surflete 180 (Chadenalk), SA/B, IC 500/2/17/127 (Chadnole), NRO, NCC Popy 230 (Chistone), SA/B, IC 500/2/9/179 (Chyldriston), SA/B, IC 500/2/9/8 (Claydon), SA/B, IC 500/2/10/518 (Gardener), SA/B, IC 500/2/14/91 (Hoppere), NRO, NCC Jekkys 144 (Martyn), SA/B, IC 500/2/9/110 (Palgrave), TNA, PCC PROB 11/22/268 (Withall), NRO, NCC Cage 135 (Wynge).
 - 97 Middleton-Stewart 2011, xlviii.
 - 98 SA/B, IC 500/2/9/17/127 (Chadnole); TNA, PCC PROB 11/16/568 (Parsey).

- 99 Middleton-Stewart 2011, xlix; <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=38332>– accessed 15 May 2013; the will of William Reve, chancel priest, has survived, see SA/B, IC/500/1/10/81.
- 100 Daniell 1997, 43–8.
- 101 SA/B, IC 500/2/9/298 (Ray); TNA, PCC PROB 11/22/339 (Hall) cited in Middleton-Stewart 2011, xxxvi.
- 102 SA/B, IC/500/2/10/441 (Coksedge).
- 103 Daniell 1997, 96.
- 104 Rogers 2006, 263; Daniell 1997, 96.
- 105 TNA, PCC PROB 11/11/374 (Turnour).
- 106 Middleton-Stewart 2011, 49.
- 107 Duffy 1992, 332.
- 108 TNA, PCC PROB 11/22/268 (Withall); TNA, PCC PROB 11/9/97 (Broke).
- 109 Rogers 2006, 261.
- 110 *The Parish Church of St Mary, Mildenhall (Temporary Guide)*.
- 111 For further examples of merchant's marks in Suffolk churches, see Girling 1964.
- 112 Duffy 1992, 143.
- 113 Farnhill 2011, 30; Northeast 1988, 74.
- 114 As outlined in the return to the writ issued by Richard II in 1388; Westlake 1919, 225–30.
- 115 Westlake 1919, 225.
- 116 SA/B, IC 500/2/17/68 (Deye); SA/B, IC 500/2/2/325 (Smyth).
- 117 TNA, PCC PROB 11/09/393 (Forster); SA/B, IC 500/2/11/101 (Gotche).
- 118 Swanson 1989, 225.

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