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EMMA J. WELLS

**AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF SENSORY EXPERIENCE:  
PILGRIMAGE IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH, c. 1170–c. 1550**

**ABSTRACT**

Using a methodological framework built upon principles of recent socio-anthropological and archaeological analyses on the sensory culture of the past, this thesis provides an original interdisciplinary socio-sensual approach to illustrate how the medieval ‘pilgrimage experience’ was socially constructed for and by three separate participatory groups – royalty, laity and a parochial society – at four English cult churches. The tapestry of evidence used is woven together to create invented narratives from past visitors, highlighting the differences in perception and lived experience, in opposition to studies which have provided only impersonal analyses of structures as revealed through archaeological excavation. Thus far, studies have failed to consider how developments – whether initiated by the church, external patrons or visitors’ needs – transformed the physical aesthetic of church space and how this affected the experience of the medieval pilgrim. This thesis seeks to remedy this deficiency. Not only does it mark a departure from the ‘traditional’ practice of buildings archaeology, but the principal original contribution of this work is that the conclusions provide a fresh understanding of how and why the churches were built for and around the inherent cults and, accordingly, how pilgrims – of all statuses – developed and manipulated the decorative and architectural schemes of such buildings for their own needs and ideological agendas.

The research considers a church building not only as a complete sensory structure, but also how its construction was intended to impact/encourage devotion towards the resident cults as a continuation of ritualised practices: for example, how specific materials were chosen for their tactile qualities, shrines for their ability to allow bodily engagement with the holy, or galleries added for amplification. Significant research questions include: Were experiences created to suit different social groups and, if so, how did they impact on the archaeological record of the church building? Did the common layman have some influence on how cult churches were built and embellished? What imprint did these transient and ephemeral visitors leave? And, most importantly, how did pilgrims experience the cult churches and associated infrastructures differently?

**AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF SENSORY  
EXPERIENCE:  
PILGRIMAGE IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH,  
c. 1170-c. 1550**

TWO VOLUMES  
VOLUME I

EMMA J. WELLS

SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY

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## **STATEMENT OF COPYRIGHT**

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# ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Art Bulletin
AD	Archaeological Dialogues
Antiq. J	Antiquaries Journal
Arch. J	Archaeological Journal
ARC	Archaeological Review from Cambridge
BAACT	British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions
CAD	Computer Aided Design
CRO	Cornwall Record Office
CVMA	Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi
DB	Doomsday Book
HER	The English Historical Review
DDCA	Durham Dean and Chapter Archives
JBAA	Journal of the British Archaeological Association
JEH	Journal of Ecclesiastical History
JRIC	Journal of the Royal Institution of Cornwall
JWCI	Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute
MA	Medieval Archaeology
REED	Records of Early English Drama
Reg.	Register
SCH	Studies in Church History
WA	World Archaeology
YML	York Minster Library

*I do not believe in miracles. I have seen too many.*

—Oscar Wilde

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Although now advanced and reworked, the initial idea for this thesis was sparked during research for my Master's thesis at York University on the perception of architectural space in the medieval stained glass of York Minster. Whilst wandering around the gigantic cathedral and entering into the sacred environ of the crypt where St William's tomb now rests, I was struck by how little of the original medieval sensory stimulants of the shrine and its locale the modern day visitor encounters. I was therefore determined – as far as was possible – to understand and reconstruct just what the medieval pilgrim was exposed to and how the senses were bombarded in consequence of medieval perception and understanding (so different from ours today). Extracting the beliefs and social practices of medieval men and women, and how they affected the behaviour of varying social groups, has been a source of constant tension, often due to the naïveté of the modern mind and the difficulties in reconciling experience with thoughts, perceptions, environs, and habits, together with a combination of patronal and religious intentions. However, it has been a tremendously enjoyable challenge, providing me with the skills and knowledge-base to continue into further historical inquiries of a similar nature.

I must note that the journey chosen for this thesis was not a straightforward or simple one. It appears that the experience of a building is often seen as a secondary course of approach within the realms of art/architectural history and buildings archaeology. Although the subject is a rather new one, and all new ideas are bound to be subject to scepticism and criticism, the aim of this study is surely the primary premise of any approach to the buildings of our past? Indeed, understanding the architectural history of a building is important, yet the reason for it is to understand how the buildings were experienced by their inhabitants; how they changed in line with their needs, requirements and tastes. Ultimately, isn't it the historical scholar's aim to understand how *people* experienced their buildings? As such, I believe the concept of this thesis, although innovative, is crucial to the development of analyses of the buildings and, more importantly, the people of our past.

The interdisciplinary nature of this thesis is an element of which I am extremely proud, yet one that has been both a hindrance and advantage to my research. Following Aby Warburg's lead, I too was not going to be 'hemmed in by the restrictions of the border police'! Attempting to bracket my topic into disciplinary boundaries has been difficult but benefitted me with a wide range of opportunities, experience and recognition afforded by the support of a number of individuals and institutions – I cannot thank them enough. This thesis was generously funded by the British Archaeological Association Ochs Scholarship and two scholarships from Durham University, of which I am extremely grateful. The research could not have been completed without the Society for Church Archaeology who kindly awarded me the

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To my partner Luke, I am eternally grateful for spending hours of his free time and many, many subsequent drafts to produce the fantastic shrine reconstruction drawings, one of which was based entirely on documentary accounts. We made a great team!

Many other individuals have been kind enough to read over drafts of chapters, or have offered invaluable advice on specific arguments or points: a huge thank you must go to Dr Sarah Blick, Kenyon College USA for her constant enthusiasm and inspiration, but most importantly for her frequent emails (in which we could often be found complaining about the highs and lows of academia), as well as for her continual advice and encouragement towards the entirety of my academic work. Thanks to Dr Julian Luxford, St Andrews University who acted as a referee and constant source of advice for the entirety of my time at Durham, and without whose support and encouragement, this thesis could not have been completed, or my academic career begun. For the kind words he first spoke to me and the confidence they instilled from that day forward, I owe much to Professor Nicholas Vincent, UEA. Thanks to Dr Joanna Mattingly and her husband, as well as Dr Oliver Padel and his wife Isobel, for warmly accommodating me in their homes during my research at St Neot, and for subsequently going out of their way to help me gain a full grasp of Cornwall’s parochial past. I am also grateful to the respective incumbents of St Neot church for their permission to ‘invade’ the fabric. Moreover, the research at St Neot could not have been completed without the help of Matthew Champion, MJC Associates. Thanks must also go to John Allan, Exeter Archaeology; Jeff Veitch, Photographic Technician in the department of Archaeology, Durham University; Dr Jackie Hall and Dr Aleksandra McClain of the Society for Church Archaeology. And to the numerous individuals who kindly allowed me permission to use their images in my thesis – you are all fully credited in the captions.

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It is important to note that this is a thesis of three years work and although I have strived to cover all scholarship, every avenue and theoretical approach possible, there may be areas uncovered or works excluded simply as a line had to be drawn in order to complete. Still, I hope the reader feels the result is not too far from comprehensive.

#### AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

Earlier versions of parts of this thesis have previously appeared as articles: a large part of chapter 5 appeared as ‘Synaesthesia in Medieval Pilgrimage: The Case of St Neot’s shrine, Cornwall’, *Church Archaeology*, 14 (2012) and “‘...he went round the holy places praying and offering’: Evidence for Cuthbertine Pilgrimage to Lindisfarne and Farne in the Late Medieval Period’, *Newcastle and Northumberland: Roman and Medieval Architecture and Art*, ed. J. Ashbee and J. M. Luxford (Maney, 2013); a portion of chapter 6 first appeared as ‘Making ‘Sense’ of the Pilgrimage Experience of the Medieval Church’, *Peregrinations Journal* III, 2 (2011); portions of various chapters also appeared as panel of the month articles published throughout 2010 in *Vidimus* ([www.vidimus.org](http://www.vidimus.org)); and, finally, an overview of this thesis was published as ‘Kings, Commoners and Communities: ‘Sensing’ the Pilgrimage Experience of the English Medieval Church, c. 1170–1550’, *Monastic Research Bulletin*, 17 (2011).

*And finally...*

My hope for this thesis was to dispel L. P. Hartley’s claim that ‘the past is a foreign country’. I believe that the individuals who helped me along the way have gone far in aiding the negation of this myth, and have shown that our past can indeed very much be a part of our present.

*Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,  
My staff of faith to walk upon,  
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,  
My bottle of salvation,  
My gown of glory, hope's true gage;  
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage.*

—from *The Passionate Man's Pilgrimage*  
by Sir Walter Raleigh, c. 1603

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Lynne, father Ellis,  
my grandparents Ray and Joyce,  
and to Luke,  
without whom I would never have made it to the end.

*Open a book and you're a pilgrim at the gates of a new city.*

—Hebrew proverb

# 1

## INTRODUCTION: 'Sensing' the Medieval Church

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is an analysis of the archaeology of sensory experience. Based on the principles of recent socio-anthropological and archaeological analyses, the research provides an alternative socio-sensual approach to the understanding of pilgrimage sites to illustrate how the medieval 'pilgrimage experience' was constructed for and by a diverse range of visitors. Using an original interdisciplinary approach, it analyses how the visual and tangible infrastructures of four major cult churches (Durham Cathedral-Priory,<sup>1</sup> York Minster, Canterbury Cathedral and St Neot Parish Church, Cornwall) were received from three distinct perspectives: royalty, laity and a parochial society; a comparison which has, as yet, escaped scholarly attention. In order to understand how and why pilgrims participated in such sensory actions, an examination of the development and construction of the sites in which they worshipped is crucial. As such, the research envelops around the question of whether the settings of shrines were built for pilgrims and to accommodate the cults, or *vice versa*.

### 1.2 RESEARCH CONTEXT AND AIMS

As yet there has been little attempt to appreciate this medieval experience. Understanding the deeper meaning has escaped the majority of traditional scholarship on the medieval pilgrimage church with the small amount of work undertaken choosing to focus largely on the visual over other sensory stimulants (see below). Studies have failed to consider how developments – whether initiated by the church, external patrons or visitors' needs – transformed the physical aesthetic of church space and how this affected the experience of the pilgrim. It is a direct result of the inadequacies of past

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<sup>1</sup> Cathedral/Cathedral-Priory will be used interchangeably.

methodological approaches that research into the senses can provide us with a much more conclusive understanding of medieval pilgrimage. The challenge for the archaeologist is to invigorate analyses of our own subject matter with methodologies and theoretical approaches that allow a rigorous, fully sensory interpretation of these past devotional practices. This thesis seeks to expose and remedy the deficiency. By championing an experiential methodology built upon the concept of the sensory encounter of the human agent, I wish to highlight the potential in examining the religious experience of the medieval church, in contrast to scholarship that has been primarily concerned with its decorative or aesthetic aspects only.

Not only does this thesis mark a departure from the ‘traditional’ practice of buildings archaeology,<sup>2</sup> but its principal original contribution is that the conclusions provide a fresh understanding of how and why the churches were built for and around the cults, and accordingly, how pilgrims – of all statuses – developed and manipulated the decorative and architectural schemes of such buildings for their own needs and ideological agendas. The research considers a building not only as a complete sensory structure, but also how its construction was intended to impact on its visitors: for example, how specific materials were chosen for their tactile qualities, shrines for their ability to allow bodily engagement with the holy, or galleries added for amplification (cf. Meskell 2005). It is my personal estimation that an increase in the sensory aspects of the pilgrimage schemes of the church was a direct result of the demand by pilgrims for more ‘interaction’ with their devotion. By analysing the involvement in the construction of such schemes, as well as the experience generated by the churches, we can identify the differences and the reasons for these and, as a result, *why* the senses became increasingly integral to the construction of pilgrimage art and architecture. The church building may therefore be referred to as a theatre – its sensory stimulants: the plot; the art and architecture: the props (Swanson 1992, 240).

The majority of past scholarship has denied our ability to retrace the events and experiences afforded to the pilgrim via the church fabric left to us as archaeologists.<sup>3</sup> By uniting types of evidence and examining the experience generated by the medieval church to three different audiences, the intention is to give a voice to those who would

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<sup>2</sup> Although an umbrella term, ‘archaeology’ will encompass all architectural/decorative fabric of the buildings, documentation will refer to literary sources, and material evidence is all objects/artefacts separate from the actual buildings, i.e. votives.

<sup>3</sup> See Eamon Duffy’s work for the social history/realities of the medieval church (2003; 2005).

not normally have had one in medieval England; a perspective through the eyes of layman, monarch and parish, rather than tongue of kingmaker, advisor, official or fiction-author. Thus, this thesis attempts to uncover the pilgrim experience via an analysis of the sensory aspects of art and architecture that often left no visible or tangible remains in the historical record. From extant architectural, documentary and material evidence,<sup>4</sup> it seeks to examine the physical journey taken by pilgrims through the cult church and, accordingly, the distinctions between these journeys produced by pilgrims of differing status. It is this area of my study which requires an analysis of the medieval senses being the tools through which the pilgrim took his/her spiritual journey.

Following Richard Marks' approach by reference to Amos Rapaport, it attempts to understand 'a series of relationships between things and things, things and people and people and people' (Marks 2004, 1). Buildings are seen as 'representations' of social discourse: the shared meanings, ideologies, social and power relations/identities dominant within each society signified through a variety of media and practices or 'systems of representation' (Hall 1997; Skeates 2010, 26ff). The senses are thus the medium through which we interact with the world and construct and maintain this identity. This extends beyond the classic work in the field of sensory archaeology and history by e.g., Scarre and Lawson (2006); Woolgar (2006); Giles (2007); Graves (2007); and Skeates (2010) as it attempts to unravel the perspectives of various participants which, up to now, have only been found in separate analyses (e.g. Cohen 2008).

### **1.3 OBJECTIVES**

Several objectives formed the basis around which the research agenda was formulated. Firstly to compare the influence of hagiography, cult popularity and promotion on the construction/reconstruction of the devotional architectural frameworks at these locations. Second, to identify whether specific models were used in the formation of the styles and designs of the architectural and decorative cycles. The third sought to explain how a devotionally significant space, and an image of this space, came to carry power and meaning. The fourth objective, and the chief component of this entire study, was to develop an innovative archaeological methodology for the study of late-medieval

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<sup>4</sup> Terms objects/artefacts/materiality will be used interchangeably for describing the 'archaeology of the church' which includes every aspect of the building, whether they are for function, asceticism or aestheticism.

pilgrimage churches. Based on the principles of recent socio-anthropological and ‘embodied’ archaeological analyses it illustrates the need for an integrated approach to the evaluation of structures that unites theories across the sub-categories of archaeology and across a range of disciplines on the sensory culture of the past: ‘an archaeology of sensory experience’. Thus, correcting the limitations of past methodologies formed the basis of my approach. I must note that a detailed explanation of the senses in the medieval period is not undertaken in this thesis. Competent attempts at such are already extant and provide a large amount of background material for this project and the construction of its methodology (cf. Woolgar 2006; Masinton 2007; Milner 2011). Rather, the focus here is a sensory *application* to the medieval pilgrimage *experience* – the senses are the embodied elements through which I analyse how the various pilgrims moved through, perceived, and interpreted the changing infrastructure of the churches. Conversely, the core aim of this research is tackled using a methodology that puts focus firmly upon the concept of ‘synaesthesia’ in that it is approached through a unification and consideration of the overall sensory experience, rather than past studies which have often favoured a separation. The thesis therefore champions a theoretical methodology in a discipline that can often be slow to take up such applications. The latter leads me into my final objective: to understand how the above contributed and affected the total sensory experience of three separate participatory groups. Were experiences created in order to suit different social groups and, if so, how did they impact on the archaeological record of the church building? Did the common layman have some influence on how cult churches were built and embellished? What imprint did these transient and ephemeral visitors leave on the fabric? And, most importantly, how did pilgrims experience the cult churches and associated infrastructures differently?

To explain the importance of sensory and corporeal means of veneration towards the cults of saints, a discussion of the development of the decorative and architectural schemes will be undertaken in order to show how the senses became ever more influential on the fabric of the church building itself which, will be argued, was a direct result of the influence of the pilgrimage experience. By this, I seek to understand how visitors were involved in and affected the construction of the churches to prove that their design was produced for a wider audience in order to encourage devotion towards the resident cults as a continuation of ritualised practices. It must be noted that I will give equal analysis to considerations of architectural fashion and trends when discussing

the sensory elements of the pilgrimage schemes, yet focus will primarily be centred on how the structures were constructed to create an experience for the pilgrim.

## **1.4 AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF PILGRIMAGE: A RESEARCH CONTEXT**

### **1.4.1 AN EXPLANATION OF PILGRIMAGE**

An implicit question of this research is: what is pilgrimage? We may look to the *Middle English Dictionary* (MED 2001) for a definition in the context of this study. A wide range of meanings are attributed to the term ‘pilgrim’, including: a traveller to a holy place; a wayfarer; an alien/foreigner/stranger/sojourner/exile for the Christian faith; or man or soul as an alien etc., especially one whose home/destination is heaven (Fig 1.1).

However, the concept of physical travel to a sacred place for varying kinds of religious belief is not exclusive to Christianity. Most religions have adopted an idea of pilgrimage and, for many, it is, or has been, an important aspect of religious life (cf. Coleman and Elsner 1995; Coleman and Eade 2004). Throughout contemporary and medieval literature, the concept of ‘pilgrimage’ has acquired different meanings for different cultures, eras, levels of society and even religions. Accordingly a precise definition of the term has often eluded scholars. Although those such as Alan Morinis (1992, 10–14) and Edith and Victor Turner (1978, 17–20)<sup>5</sup> have alluded to as many as four or even six categories of pilgrimage, my personal contention is to follow Dee Dyas’ (2001, 6) suggestion of three principal strands:

- ♦ Interior Pilgrimage: this corresponds to the Contemplative Life; that is monasticism, anchoritism, meditation and mysticism. Therefore the spiritual road through which many monastics choose to view their life. This can also be referred to as ‘virtual or spiritual pilgrimage’ which encompasses numerous practices including imagination or motion without travel (Rudy 2000, 497, 509, 513; Gelfand 2011, 88 Hull 2005; Ehrenschtndtner 2009).).
- ♦ Moral Pilgrimage: this is the Active Life. Rather than continual service to God, one follows the life of daily obedience, avoiding temptation and the seven deadly sins.
- ♦ Place Pilgrimage: this is the strand by which we most commonly associate pilgrimage. It includes physically travelling to saints’ shrines or sacred/holy places to secure forgiveness, abolition of sins, indulgences, or for curative needs. It is an

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<sup>5</sup> The Turners’ categorisations (1978, 18–19) are fundamentally chronological and so not worth mentioning in detail; however, this research sits largely in line with their third category: medieval pilgrimage, dated 500–1400. It also encroaches onto their fourth category of modern pilgrimage.

expression of devotion. Modern scholarship often refers to this as ‘active pilgrimage’ as the pilgrim physically travels to a destination (Gelfand 2011, 88).

For medieval pilgrimage, the practice of place pilgrimage is most recurrent but was strengthened and imbued with elements of both moral and interior. An awareness that these different modes combine and conflict, yet are often given varying importance or remain in flux during a journey, must be remembered. This is key to an examination of the various perceptions of pilgrimage experience and significant when evaluating the differences between them and why.

Building upon the categorisation of place pilgrimage, Sarah Blick and Laura Gelfand (2011) identified three further categories which could be subdivided as follows: purely imaginative interaction, active physical interactions, and performative interaction. It is the latter two that we are concerned with here. Active describes a pilgrim walk around a church building, while performative considers walking through the labyrinth route of a pilgrimage church during anticipation; yet, ‘In all three types of experience, the pilgrim physically manipulates an object or is manipulated by an imaginative story of the physical space of the church’ (Blick and Gelfand 2011, xxxv–xxxvi). This process of ‘manipulation’ is what this thesis seeks to expose: how the pilgrims themselves contributed to it and how it impressed upon their experience.

Subsequently, medieval pilgrimage included ‘any journey undertaken for a specifically religious purpose, and which involved an overnight stay at the pilgrimage centre’, particularly the latter (Webb 2000, xiii). Canon law defined it as a mandatory journey imposed for penance for wrongdoing or a voluntary act which involved a preliminary vow – both had to be undertaken in the appropriate manner, i.e. carrying the pilgrim insignia of scrip and staff (Gilles 1980, 163–70). Evidence suggests many journeys were actually very short and so long-haul pilgrimages were seen as the exception rather than rule (Webb 2000, xiii). Additionally, the majority of lay pilgrims did not go on many pilgrimages during their lifetime; some may have journeyed to a cult site only once in their life, whilst cult churches often restricted the days on which (lay) pilgrims could visit. These were often the major feast days (although for a royal or elite visitor, such restrictions were often overlooked).

Pilgrimage was still considered pilgrimage so long as the concepts of self-abnegation and abandonment of everyday life or familiar ties were present, even in small form. Any durational length could earn the pilgrim penance or an indulgence, and for any purpose ranging from cures to hopes for better harvests or even simply to have a day out (Webb 2000, xvi)! In general, most pilgrims did not seek to make pilgrimages in expectation of miracles, but for more everyday eases and cures in a world without medicine. I do not believe a person had to set out to a church with the direct intention of worshipping a specific saint/shrine. One could be in the midst of travel or simply visiting a city when spontaneously deciding to visit the local shrine for a particular purpose important to a personal cause.

In accordance, Graves highlighted a further significant issue: ‘In the middle ages the majority of people would be involved in physical labour’ (Graves 2000, 15). We must be aware of the physical and mental state in which pilgrims visited shrines: they were often tired (both from the journey and their physical existence), hungry (often from fasting), and most likely relieved to be at the end of their journey.<sup>6</sup> Any form of sensory spiritual consciousness would be heightened by these bodily conditions. This issue was taken into consideration but deemed to be a circumstance of the period and one that cannot (at least productively) be recreated.

## **1.5 THE RITUALISTIC CUSTOMARIES OF SAINTLY VENERATION**

### **1.5.1 THE ORIGINS OF THE CULT OF SAINTS**

The historiographic background to the far-reaching and interdisciplinary subject matter of this thesis is substantial. As emphasis is on the architectural development of shrine edifices and their immediate environment, the body of literature on the concept of medieval pilgrimage, the cult of saints and the context of medieval travel/journeying will not be considered in detail. Existing publications on such subjects are vast and therefore too numerous to cite in this thesis. Where relevant, they are addressed in subsequent chapters in reference to individual case sites. Yet, the cults of saints and relics, and the act of pilgrimage were central themes in the religious practice of the Middle Ages. A belief in an absence or physical powerful presence of a holy or sacred being determined the rise of the cult of the saints in early medieval Christianity. These are not new subjects for study. A brief overview of such literature will follow.

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<sup>6</sup> Thanks to Dr Derek Craig for this insightful suggestion.

Pilgrimage and shrines as subjects of study rose to popularity at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and, in content, such literature appealed to the very audience it was aimed at: the general market (e.g. Heath (no date); Jusserand 1891; Wall 1905; Hall 1965), but apart from descriptive detail they make little more than a historiographical contribution to the cult of saints in England. Over the past few decades our understanding has been significantly strengthened by the release of many books of supreme scholarly note, essentially mapping out the background to medieval pilgrimage (e.g. Sumption 1975; 2003; Brown 1981; Rollason 1989; Abou-El-Haj 1994; Finucane 1995;<sup>7</sup> Webb 2000; 2001). The field of scholarship has become saturated with studies covering almost every aspect of the medieval phenomenon (e.g. Whalen 2011).

Recently, the field has been woven with more specific publications across a broad repertoire of disciplines, but the topic of pilgrimage as a key facet of the religious experience of humanity has become a particularly large trend within the discipline of anthropology and psychology. These studies rested on the idea that the actual process of pilgrimage was difficult to understand from a single disciplinary perspective – the empirical view of the historian or archaeologist is too limited. This led many anthropologists to take the lead in one respect by comparing the act of pilgrimage across religions, cultures, societies and, more importantly, time periods in order to uncover any similarities and relationships (Coleman and Elsner 1995; Eade and Sallnow 2000). Medieval pilgrimage thus contains several interlinked dimensions which demand exploration for a more complete picture of this process to be developed.

Status or, more specifically, analyses of various levels of society are particularly lacking in extant pilgrimage scholarship (Finucane 1977 and Webb 2000 made brief attempts to deal with broader issues of the social aspects of pilgrims). Due to the complexities and differentiations between the experiences of the poor versus the elite, focus is often geared towards one or the other, thus neglecting other social levels in the process (e.g. Morrison 2000 on female pilgrimage, and Chieffo Raguin and Stanbury 2005; French 2008; Peters 2009 on women's space in the medieval church). This narrow focus is no doubt a passive product of the complexities of the concept of pilgrimage in general. From its numerous definitions to its multiple understanding, pilgrimage is extremely elusive. Although coming from a literary perspective, Dee Dyas makes an astute point

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<sup>7</sup> This is essentially a later medieval version of Rollason's *Saints and Relics in Anglo-Saxon England* (1989).

for why different perspectives should be included in our complex analyses. She asks: 'Chaucer's Parson and the Wife of Bath take the same road to Canterbury but are they in fact on the same journey? How does her experience of 'wanderynge by the weye...relate to his vision of 'parfit pilgrymage'...?' (Dyas 2001, 2). Even Chaucer noted the importance of the varying interpretations of his protagonists during the pilgrimage journey. As yet, there has been little or no attempt to understand such differences in the broad discipline of medieval studies.

Accordingly, a number of issues have been overlooked: most notably, the actual experience of pilgrims as described in the medieval literature (not only Chaucer), and secondly, that a crucial aspect of the medieval peregrination was the 'gallery of social types' (Webb 2000, xi) who took such journeys and who are so vividly represented in Chaucer's own narratives. While the Canterbury Tales are largely historical fiction, their issues are representative of the concept of pilgrimage as a whole and, with that, the fact that every social group of the period partook in these sacred excursions.

Thus far, scholars from a variety of disciplines have rendered negligible the practices that occurred within the medieval church by the past societies who created, interpreted and used them, choosing instead to study the buildings themselves as abstract constructions separate from their wider contextual locale and rituals (cf. Gilchrist and Reynolds 2009 for an early medieval theoretical overview and McClain 2012 for the later period). As a result, art historians and archaeologists particularly, have paid little attention to understanding the people who inhabited these ritualistic structures and how the space of the buildings was used to express and mediate the relationship between the worshipper and God/saint (Masinton 2007, 29). In accordance, there are even fewer analyses of how churches were actually used by their visitors, other than those that focus on their recurrent inhabitants, i.e. nuns, and monks (i.e. Gilchrist 1994; 2005; Lehfeltdt 2005; Hill 2010; Woshinsky 2010).

It is of utmost importance to consider various intentions and perspectives in order to try to reflect the multiple interpretations of pilgrimage in medieval society. The people of our past were flexible, independent and affected by social structure which, in turn, informed their behaviour, beliefs and understanding – political environmental or economic factors are only the tip of the iceberg of influences on changes in behaviour. Examining the relationships between other people and social groups as well as the

world around (buildings, material culture and landscapes), is significant in understanding what role these relationships played in defining and affecting experience and agency (McClain 2012, 142). Most notably, an attempt will be made to illustrate that understanding the difference between pilgrimages made by laymen and monarchs is a far more significant phenomenon than has been ascribed in past scholarship. A consideration of how cult sites were experienced and perceived by royalty may dissuade us from drawing too rigid a distinction between how and why monarchs, and the rest of medieval society visited saints in order to receive salvation from their sins.

These are the kind of encounters and consecutive social relations with the past which I wish to uncover in relation to how they have impacted upon archaeological material remains over contexts and time. This follows the post-structuralist/-processual principle by which actions, objects or structures are to be read as ‘texts’, known as the ‘fusion of horizons’ (Ricoeur 1981; Barrett 1991; Shanks and Tilley 1992; Gilchrist 1994; Johnson 1999; Layton 2006). The concept acknowledges influencing cultural and historical factors on both the analyst’s thoughts of meaning and meaning in historical circumstances (the original intentions) suggesting that neither hold the ‘truth’, but that an interpretation is just that – a hermeneutic understanding. In agreement with this theoretical principle, I disagree with Masinton’s proposition that historical events do not leave unambiguous physical traces on the fabric of our churches (Masinton 2007, 30). They do; in reaction to the circumstances of the time, the complex underlying social discourses shaped the fabric itself.

However, we cannot be blind-sided by idealism. Certainly how the fabric of a church became shaped and developed was akin to social and cultural practices and, accordingly, the intentions behind such did not necessarily lead to them being perceived and experienced in the original way intended: ‘Architectural space, especially that which is specifically religious, is an expression of the norms of *general* practice’ (Masinton 2007, 30, own emphasis). What follows therefore is an understanding of the intentions behind the creation of pilgrimage spaces in idealistic terms (from the modern archaeologists’ perspective), which were used to form encounters that produced experiences. As the latter was informed by many circumstances and discourses which affected interpretation, it is clear that pilgrims encountered a variety of experiences (reflective of their status), that may be uncovered today in varying degrees.

This view follows that of Shanks and Tilley (1992): that an objective historical truth of our past societies cannot be achieved (cf. Graves 2000, 14). Our own modern thoughts and principles certainly influence our understanding of the existing data used to understand the past, yet it is not the thoughts and feelings of people the archaeologist wishes to uncover. These are neither constructive nor within the realms of possibility, and would be useless given the subjectivity of such a study. It is the encounters with material culture and structures, in addition to the documentation which, however subjective, provide an insight into a person's experiences at that particular moment and, as such, should not be confined to separate disciplines. All historical analysts seek to interpret our past. This integrative approach to evidence derives from the belief that all are informed and imbued with the cultural, political and social discourses of the period, which overrides the subjectivity found in the criticism of other disciplines.

An important contribution of this thesis is its redress of the often-neglected attention paid to the uses of religious space in the material, cultural and experiential discourse of the lives of medieval men and women. It has significant implications for research, not only in the buildings archaeological field, but also for the disciplines of material culture and even medieval studies in that it seeks to understand the experience of all statuses (and experience generally), in addition to using evidence and methodologies often categorised under separate disciplines. Acknowledgment of the differences between medieval communities (whether religious or secular) has often been disregarded in favour of social homogeneity (cf. Bossy 1970; 1973; Mason 1976; Rosser 1988; Brown 1995; Duffy 2005). Throughout this thesis these are revealed as aids to the shape, identity, mobility and, above all, building of a parish or larger religious community, the behaviour of which was expressed in the literal representation of both past and present piety: essentially, 'the architecture of community' (French 2001b, 142). More simply, following Matthew Johnson's premise (2002, 12), *people created the church as much as the church created people*.

In order to understand this complex underlying nature of space, this thesis takes a fresh approach to both the archaeological and documentary (and material) evidence in that rather than following traditional functionalist approaches to architectural history with a focus on dating or style, it uses the evidence to understand why the buildings were built and used in the way they were and, as such, how they impressed on their visitors and how the visitors' experiences influenced the creation of the cults. The buildings, as

noted, are seen as texts; the meanings and coded patterns within are deciphered through the process of ‘reading’ the archaeological record (Barrett 1991, 1–9). This cannot be achieved by perceiving the churches as mere conglomerations of functional or material aspects or as direct reflections of behaviour, but as dynamic objects of social power and cultural symbols as revealed through the recovering and interpretation of the archaeology (cf. Geertz 1973). In turn, it illustrates that ‘cognitive and symbolic approaches are essential ... [and that] meaning [is] more important than instrumental function’ (Rapoport 1990, 187). Fragmented analyses of specific sites, peoples, materials or locations should be quashed as this only leads to an isolation of our disciplines. Consequently, this study seeks to diminish compartmentalisation in medieval archaeology (Austin 1990, 14).

### 1.5.2 RELICS, SAINTS AND ARCHITECTURE

The literature on the meaning and development of the medieval church is abundant. This type of research has favoured analyses of the liturgy and social practice on the design and planning of the medieval church (e.g. Graves 2000; Doig 2008), often overlooking the influence of saints and their cults. The traditional iconographic approaches were put forth by, e.g. Krautheimer (1942); Sedlmayr (1950); Panofsky (1951; 1979); von Simson (1956); Frankl (1962);<sup>8</sup> Mâle (1972); Bony (1983); Kidson (1987); Erlande-Brandenburg (1989); and Sauerländer (1995). These approaches relied on the decoding of the conceived symbolism of the medieval church through the writings of contemporary theologians and came to be subsequently critiqued (Crossley 1988, 121; 2000). It is clear that intricate, often rather complex meanings were an inherent element of medieval church architecture (tangible and visual) – one only has to read Abbot Suger’s writings on the rebuilding of the west end and choir of St Denis, Paris to see just how intricate these explicit links between form and meaning could be (Panofsky 1979). Suger associated a mystical architectural symbolism with the interior of the church where the windows were multicoloured, luminescent and jewel-like entries, emulations of the precious stones of the walls of New Jerusalem (cf. von Simson 1956; Gage 1982; 1995). Still, the attempts to search for meaning (largely metaphysical symbolism of the architectural materials used and their form/style) have led to many studies, largely art historical, so far removed from reality that their idealistic conceptions become unfeasible in the modern and medieval world (Kidson 1987).

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<sup>8</sup> Revised by Paul Crossley in 2000.

The affective property of the components of ‘pilgrimage architecture’ schemes in the singular also attracted much attention (e.g. shrines, wall painting, screens, glass: Hearn 1971; Coldstream 1976; Brown 1981; Sekules 1986; Hahn 1997; Nilson 1998; Jung 2000; Fawcett 2007). More recently, attempts to reconstruct medieval shrine structures have populated the cult of saints’ repertoire. Building upon Coldstream’s seminal 1976 article, John Crook’s *English Medieval Shrines* (2011) moved focus onto the structures themselves more so than his 2000 book on their architectural settings. Veneration of saints has long been undertaken through a physical embodiment of this expression, be it a location, reliquary shrine or even a well chapel (cf. Blick and Tekippe 2005; Spicer and Hamilton 2005). This arose from the need or requirement to touch and be touched by the holy via such objects or structures, which was generated by the pilgrimage process (see below). In turn, the construction, embellishment and development of these receptacles were a continual part of the medieval devotional process. Relics and shrines had a multitude of purposes during the Middle Ages. They were the reason for the cults. Essentially, they determined the architectural form of the church including its interior arrangements, decoration, and display. Yet, in previous scholarship, they have remained secondary, often mentioned only in passing (Nilson 1998; Crook 2000; 2011).

Despite various approaches to medieval pilgrimage art and architecture, the wealth of studies have followed previous art and architectural works, producing only functionalist descriptions or construction-phase analyses often with an inherent visualist bias, thus rendering negligible the influence of cult churches on their visitors and on *all* of the senses, and *vice versa*. Each side of the scholarly coin is guilty of not considering the other. Such interpretations separate the component structural elements, dismissing the meaning of cues, motifs or, more correctly, the hermeneutics behind the aesthetic of architecture so significant to the audience of the time (Binski 1995, 7; Kieckhefer 2004).

An attempt was made to fill this lacuna in 2011 when pilgrimage, saints and relics became the focus of a major international exhibition (and catalogue monograph) held at the British Museum: ‘Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe’. At the time of opening, the exhibition’s curator also published a further short volume on saints and relics (Robinson 2011). Together with Charles Freeman’s somewhat comprehensive social history of the cult of relics in Europe over the course of

the first millennium (2011), these works demonstrated how the mania for these objects penetrated all aspects of medieval society; essentially, they made the world and economy happen.

The authors of the *Treasures of Heaven* monograph (Bagnoli *et al.* 2011) found that the presence of relics was essential in defining the symbolic significance of medieval places of worship (e.g. Angenendt 2011, 24; Palazzo 2011, 99). The physical church structure was seen as a representation or image of theology; a monumental reliquary in itself for the relics it housed, while portable reliquaries were viewed as miniature versions. Palazzo also considered the idea that relics were defined by the senses, therefore making some effort to consider their effect on the medieval devotee. Hahn suggested the acquisition of sensory knowledge, termed ‘aesthetics’, was paramount to medieval devotion, and therefore patrons became more like artists as they consciously desired to engage worshippers more effectively (Hahn 2011, 164). In addition, separate from the catalogue, Bissera Pentcheva’s body of work on Byzantine icons (2006; 2010; 2011) also acknowledged the sensory ‘lure’ of devotional objects. Pentcheva illustrated the idea of saintly artefacts as performative objects that engaged the viewer via a multitude of synaesthetic triggers. These then saturated the material and sensorial world, and enacted a presence in devotional absence through interaction with the faithful. Such studies highlighted how the church building could inspire devotion, bedazzle pilgrims and honour the saints housed within through more striking designs which led patrons to continually strive to invest in the specific details of these artistic reactions to create ever more beautiful works of art, developing on the idea that beauty inspired devotion.

The outcome of this patronal strive for an ultimate devotional ‘aesthetic’ – the impact on worshippers or pilgrims – is largely overlooked in scholarship, but aesthetics are clearly both historically and culturally contingent. Yet what is often proposed instead is that the relics were the foci around which the building was spatially organised and constructed, rather than the experience of them. Many studies have, however, claimed to understand this experience from the perspective of the pilgrim through analyses of sacred travel, space and the associative art and architecture (Morris and Roberts 2002; Candy 2005; 2009; 2010; Lee 2008; Ashley and Deegan 2009). These arguments, often structured by theological and sociological methodologies, paved the way for multidisciplinary studies on the subject of pilgrimage. For example, although focus was largely on eastern philosophies of worship, Hahn’s 1997 article ‘Seeing in Believing’

provided one of the first analyses of the sensory experience of saints' shrines and how their cult constructed a sacred geography of localities connected to them. Through a range of audiences (eastern and western), the author discusses how shrines and their surroundings became sanctified, and how this was used to control response.

More specifically, studies have also generally given insufficient emphasis to the potential effects on pilgrims of the architectural, decorative and material aspects of the devotional site (*Peregrinations* Journal has attempted to reignite this topic). Graves argued (2000, 9) that the reason for the little amount of work produced on the social effects of the medieval church, or the relationships between religious discourse and secular patronage, is a result of scholars overlooking medieval forms of worship and the inherent rituals due to a false sense of familiarity. Recognition of the effect of ritual on its audience has been lost in consequence of its continuity and essentiality (Vaughan 1980, 99). Although scholars such as Rosenthal (1972), Bossy (1973; 1983; 1987) and Marks (2005) have examined the impact of patronage on social and religious discourses, including gifts of indulgence, notions of kinship and the social advantages of noble endowments, they are yet to consider the perspectives and influence of patronage on different social groups, while ritual and worship have subsequently been left unexplored in any depth.

Still, these studies acknowledge that buildings had 'social lives' and human contexts that need to be uncovered. Phenomenological analyses developed from anthropological and philosophical theories in order to uncover such human encounters, experiences and understandings (Thomas 2006, 43; Frost 2009; Johnson 2012). Although initial works were predominately confined to prehistory, such as the seminal studies by Shanks and Tilley (1992); Tilley (1994; 2004; 2010); Bender (1998); and Ingold (2000); and its effective analysis by Brück (2005), gradually these types of methodological approaches transferred over to the medieval domain. The 1998 *Archaeological Review from Cambridge* (Jones and Hayden 1998) introduced the theme of perception and the senses, combining prehistoric case studies with the medieval period (although only one article on the latter period) in order to understand the ways in which people of the past perceived and conceptualised their surroundings through analyses of the material culture and structures with which they interacted.

This type of approach argues that there was a relationship between the perceptual framework of a building, environment or object and a person. More simply, perception derives from experience but also from foreknowledge and preconception, may that be status, identity or gender. Understanding did not occur post experience but through initial perception. Many scholars combined these phenomenological methodologies in order to understand how buildings were experienced through their inhabitants' identities and agencies, with Matthew Johnson (1993; 1994; 2002) and David Austin's (1984; 2007) work largely focussed on vernacular structures and castles, Roberta Gilchrist's (1993; 1994; 1999) and Amanda Richardson's (2003) on the gender divisioning of built space, and Graves' (1989; 2000; 2007) and Kate Giles' (2000a; 2005; 2007) work on parish churches and guildhalls. These more poststructuralist approaches identified internal relationships within buildings, often through the use of access analysis diagrams. Wherever people went or were allowed to go ultimately exposed who they were and how they experienced the buildings; essentially, space and material culture were active in social relations. Therefore, the 'meaning of a building [was] not fixed or exclusive to a particular social group, but [was] rather contingent on its inhabitants and their experiences' (McClain 2012, 145).

Although such conclusions quantified space in a hierarchical manner, limitations were apparent. Like the structuralist approaches before them, space reflected behaviour as the analyses were too limited. Understanding experience at different times, or at certain events was overlooked as reliance was too heavily put on exactly what the architecture could inform about its inhabitants rather than how its inhabitants understood and perceived it.

By moving this project towards the lived sensory experience of medieval ecclesiastical architecture from the development of the historiography, typology or style of these structures, it shall further the current work across archaeology, art history and history on the relationship between the art and architecture of built environments and their perception, interpretation and experience of the real audience. I wish to follow this line of enquiry throughout to prove that form and design explains far less about the understanding of a building than its cognitive meaning. Buildings need to be considered in three rather than two-dimensional forms and as spaces of live encounters, over a multiplicity of stylistic categories. This type of analysis is also under consideration in recent work on funerary art and artefacts across a range of past societies and cultures

(Gilchrist 2008; Standley 2010), and follows on from the recent upsurge in interest in material culture studies, materiality, material agency and human-object engagements in archaeology (cf. Mirzoeff 1999; 2002; Standley 2010, 14–23).

Originating from this approach is an exploration in new ways of narrating or writing about the past. Through the embodiment of various persons, tenses and perspectives, there is a growing trend in using object/experience-based narratives or ‘multivocality’ wherein the author takes an event, structure or artefact, and from initial detailed analyses, creates a biography or story centred around it (e.g. Edmonds 2004; Finch 2008; Mytum 2010; Tatlioglu 2010). One such study used the events of a prehistoric community in Malta to understand its buildings. Robin Skeates’ (2010) study reconstructed key events within the history of the Maltese community, walking the reader through them as they would have unfolded, whilst describing the sensory elements and their affect on various social groups. Skeates unites a historical and archaeological perspective in order to place the prehistoric archaeology in its real-time context experience.

This type of approach is, however, lacking in medieval studies, bar Jeanne Nuechterlein’s examination of the word/image relationship in her ‘Fictionalized Histories of Early Netherlandish art’ (forthcoming). With the exception of Malcolm Vale’s (2001) broad study of the material and non-material aspects of the medieval courtly culture of western Europe; the visual aspects of pilgrimage to medieval Chartres explored by James Bugslag (2004);<sup>9</sup> the two small sections given in Ben Nilson’s account of the pilgrimage experience of English cathedral shrines (1998; 1999) – perhaps the most comprehensive overviews of the subject so far – and Marks’ (2005) brief experiential account of the cult image (both of which form a prelude to my own study), it is rather Early Modern historians who have been open to this ‘experiential’ endeavour. Examples include Rupert Goulding’s (2007) gender analysis of Henry VIII’s court architecture, together with the innovative – if a little short and of a guidebook format – detailed hour-by-hour account of courtiers during Henry VIII’s residence at Hampton Court Palace by Christopher Gidlow (2007). Additional historical studies include Karant-Nunn’s (2010) exposition of religious feeling and emotion in Early Modern Germany, and Eric Ives’ (2012) recent endeavour into the experience of life

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<sup>9</sup> Other chapters in this monograph also take an ‘experiential’ approach, e.g. Blick; Gaposchkin; Harris; Lee; Tekippe.

through the turbulent events of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Few archaeological examples exist in the form of Roberta Gilchrist's work on gender in medieval nunneries (1994; 1999, and some consideration to this topic is given in Woshinsky's 2010 volume), yet predominantly, studies that claim to seek 'experience' fail to produce more than mere descriptions.

Essentially, what most research declines to fully exploit is context. This is largely a product of object or building-specific studies which lead to specialised subject analyses, e.g. cathedrals (Frost 2009; Malone 2004; Gilchrist 2005), chantry chapels (Roffey 2007), pilgrimage souvenirs (Spencer 2004; Koldeweij 2005; Blick 2007; Anderson 2010), and shrines (Crook 2011), rather than considerations of subject repertoires or assemblages, i.e. medieval cult cathedrals. As a result of this negligence, concern for the wider significance of buildings to their inhabitants is devoid throughout medieval research as interest has been directed towards the 'practical' elements of architecture of the most evidence-rich sites, or the intricacies of built space, such as glass (e.g. Caviness 1977; Brown 1999; Marks 2000), wall painting (e.g. Rosewell 2008) and masonry (e.g. Holton 2010).

Although the tide is certainly starting to turn with an increasing number of studies claiming to uncover 'experience' or 'perceptions' (Jones 1998; O'Keefe 1998), a significant amount of further research is needed in this subject-field of abundant documentary, testamentary and archaeological evidence. As undertaken in the thesis, this research needs to be combined with fresh and innovative theoretically-led methodologies to fully grasp the human application, meanings and use of medieval built and material culture,. The artefacts and buildings that comprise my data set *will* be viewed as pawns in the creation and manipulation of identities and therefore experiences.

## **1.6 KEY TERMS**

### **1.6.1 ROYAL PILGRIMAGE**

The phrase 'royal pilgrimage' (and, indeed, the subject of royal sacrality) has often been considered a dirty word in the historiography of kingship, with some scholars arguing that the concept did not even exist (cf. Vincent 2002). Visits to cult sites or churches are often seen simply as part of an overall progress or campaign; the intentions of which were intertwined with the politics of kingship. Many royal pilgrimages were classed as

‘last minute’, but many were also scheduled and accompanied by large processions where lay pilgrims were invited to observe. The result is that this act of royal devotion has been overlooked, either being completely dismissed as an inexistent practice, or analysed as a small aspect of the wider religious tendencies of the monarch. Yet the evidence for the opposite is abounding. For example, in 1283 Edward I visited Worcester on pilgrimage ‘*gratia visitandi*’ to St Wulfstan (Webb 2000, 125) and following Henry VI’s visit to Durham in 1448, the king himself described both his reactions and those of his court as ‘right merry in our pilgrimige [sic]’ (Fowler 1903, 122–3). Henry also made frequent visits to Canterbury throughout his reign diligently recorded by John Stone, leaving no doubt in the historian’s mind as to the official purpose of his visits. In 1440 Stone recalls, ‘On the fifth day of March this year...King Henry VI...came to Canterbury on foot for the purpose of pilgrimage’ (Connor 2010, 70–1). The original Latin states specifically that his intention was ‘*causa peregrinationis*’ (Searle 1902). Henry II’s visits to Canterbury were also described as peregrinations (Scott Robertson 1880, 504). Finally, during King John’s visits to the shrine of Bury St Edmunds and St Albans (and also Canterbury), the terms ‘*orationis gratia*’ or ‘*voto et devotione*’ were applied (Vincent 2002, 18).

As this evidence denotes, the participants involved in the visits – the church, monarch and his subjects – describe the events specifically as ‘pilgrimages’. Suggestions that the intentions were not for worship of a particular saint can surely be negated. Even those for which the word is not recorded, there can be little doubt of the intention behind the visit. Margaret of Anjou visited the shrine of St Thomas Becket specifically on more than one occasion which are recounted as ‘*ad feretrum*’ to pray and make an offering ‘*ad altare & postea ad cononam*’ (Woodruff 1925, 126–7; Connor 2010, 80), while Edward IV visited in 1471 ‘to receive an indulgence’ (Connor 2010, 131).

For this study, the phrase ‘royal pilgrimage’ will encompass those journeys made by the monarchs of the period that are either expressly termed ‘pilgrimage’ in the documentary accounts, or which can be defined as such via the same sources. This encompasses references to sovereigns offering or worshipping at a particular shrine or commissioning work in order to enhance the locale of the reliquary. Entries in the royal itinerary records which list only a visit made to a city, or where a brief account is given of the monarch being present at a city with a noteworthy shrine, do not fall under this category as it is too difficult to definitively prove they were for the chief purpose of worship if

there is no record of the actual devotional event and, accordingly, cannot be counted as an act of pilgrimage.

#### 1.6.2 FERETORY

The architectural settings in which shrines/tombs were located were largely known as the feretory and situated towards the east end of the church, usually behind the High Altar (although as we will come to see, this was not always the case). Throughout this study I will take the English, or more specifically, the Durham definition of feretory: the entire chapel space containing the shrine and the western altar (these were most often located or attached to the end of the structure).

#### 1.6.3 FORAMINA-TYPE SHRINES

The shrine monuments discussed throughout refer to those of a reliquary coffin (known often as a feretrum) on a supporting base of either columns or a solid structure. Many shrines were of the rather open *foramina*-type design or contained niches designed for pilgrims to interact with the sarcophagus. *Foramina*-type shrine structures consisted of a stone chest pierced with large holes known as ‘apertures’. Although St Candida’s is the only English example to survive, early images of Becket’s tomb (made 1171) as illustrated in the Trinity Chapel glass, are of this type with two holes per side, as opposed to the more regular custom of three (cf. Crook 2011).

The *foramina*-type design then developed into a structure with shallower niches with the introduction of the highly decorated solid base-plinth in the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century, pierced with two/three-feet tall niches in which praying pilgrims could kneel and rest their elbows inside, as St William of York’s is depicted in York Minster’s glass (cf. Coldstream 1976; Nilson 1998, 43–9; Crook 2011).

#### 1.6.4 VOTIVES, SOUVENIRS AND AMPULLAE

Votive objects (or *ex-votos*) were offerings of largely any medium (e.g. jewellery, wax, wood, stone/metal objects or small images), which were brought to relics or sacred images to seek blessings or to give thanks for vows made when purchasing, making or donating the item (Blick 2011, 21–2). Hence the term *ex-voto*, which is short for *ex voto suscepto* meaning ‘from the vow made’. These could often be in the shape of infected limbs or miniatures of symbols or objects associated with their story of thanks. The use

of replicated body parts in devotional worship is a long-standing tradition in religious practice and characteristic in ancient Greece, Rome, and other ancient religions (Merrifield 1987; van der Velden 2000). The presence of discarded *ex-votos* around a cult site proved its efficacy and so pilgrims were encouraged to present such gifts so that their presence would continue the credulity of the cult.

Pilgrim souvenirs were more simply mementoes which, similarly for today's tourists, commemorated one's visit to the site. The most common form of souvenir was the pilgrim badge or brooch. Made of lead or pewter, they depicted either a miniature of the shrine itself or carried depictions of the saint or instruments of martyrdom. Many had pins or clips so the pilgrim could display evidence of their peregrinations on their hat, cloak, staff, knapsack or scrip (Spencer 2004; Nilson 1999, 111–2; Blick 2007; 2011). In the fulfilment of the vow, these objects would often be folded in two and deposited in water, or were even displayed above thresholds in the house.

At the majority of the most popular shrines of the later medieval period, lead ampullae could also be obtained. These small metal objects, resembling scent bottles, were filled with holy water or oil associated with the saint. Blood from Becket's body was infused with holy water and sold in such keepsakes. At York, sweet-smelling oil that seeped from St William's tomb from 1223 onwards was sealed in ampullae and sold to pilgrims as thaumaturgical souvenirs (Blick 2007, 48–63; Spencer 1968, 137–47). Brian Spencer noted (2004, 14) that in England ampullae were the chosen memento (particularly during the late 12<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> century), often sold in town shops or stalls by the gates of the cathedral as in the examples of Canterbury and York, until they were overtaken by pilgrim badges in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## **1.7 ORGANISATION OF THESIS**

The thesis is split into six chapters with this introduction forming the first. A critical discussion or 'historiography' of past approaches to the medieval church encompasses the subject of chapter 2. The chapter involves a critical assessment of past trends in archaeological approaches to built space and their relationship to various disciplinary theories concerned with the nature of social and sacred space, material culture, ritual, devotional practice and the senses (including an outline of the medieval approach). I argue that a combination of these perspectives provides the ideal practice from which we may be able to analyse the meaning/experience of sacred architecture. A

methodology framework for this interdisciplinary investigation is then established as a result and culminates the analysis under the conceptual term ‘an archaeology of sensory experience’. I hope to challenge the large amount of secondary literature existing on each subject, highlighting its methodological flaws and, most notably, its gaps. The intention is not to provide a comprehensive historiography of past contributions, but to illustrate where certain research areas are still lacking and consequently situate my own study within the obvious research lacunae.<sup>10</sup>

The main body of analysis forms the subsequent three chapters. The thesis attempts to take the modern viewer literally through the steps of the medieval pilgrim, whoever they may have been. In broad terms, chapters are arranged around the same structure: thematically, with each separate foci/spatial locale of the pilgrimage church examined separately, yet not necessarily in the order that they would be experienced along the pilgrimage route taken by the particular participant of that chapter focus (although most chapters follow the routes in a general manner). After an initial introduction and context section outlining the research objectives of the chapter, a methodology and source section are followed by outlines of the surviving documentary/archaeological evidence as well as an analysis of how the chapter will be examined, including key themes in relation to the lacunae left by previous scholarship.

A broad chronology is attempted throughout the main body of analysis. Examination of the four churches is conducted individually, each church standing as a case study of a specific component in the larger discussion of the experience of late-medieval sacred space, yet with York and Canterbury combined for the ‘royal’ analysis. Starting with the royal experience of Canterbury and York (chapter 3), then follows the lay experience of Durham Cathedral-Priory (chapter 4), which is succeeded by the parochial experience of St Neot – the church completed at the latest date (chapter 5). The reconstructed narratives are followed by discussion sections which conclude each of the main data chapters, the latter outlining how the specific research goals have been confronted and the potential for further research still remaining. The final chapter of the thesis, chapter 6, comprises a discussion and comparison of all three experiential analyses, critically evaluating the conclusions of the project and examining how the founding research aims were met using the data and thus whether they were viable. As a conclusion, the merits

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<sup>10</sup> The date terminus for scholarship reviewed was mid-2012 in order to include key recent works and provide a comprehensive account of the literary landscape without overwhelming the study by including every new argument/debate/theory published until the final submission.

of the research aims, objectives and methodology are discussed and, where limitations have prevented outcomes, recommendations for further work are outlined.

# 2

## FROM THEORY TO METHODOLOGY: AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF SENSORY EXPERIENCE

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

My approach is, by design, interdisciplinary and, as a true interdisciplinary approach should, combines and draws upon a variety of subjects, theories and methodologies. As such, it is difficult to categorise this study into a single disciplinary field such as archaeology or history as it gives weight to both documentary and archaeological/material evidence. It is, however, a study of medieval pilgrimage. Although no defined discipline in itself, it is an umbrella term for relevant investigations into peregrinations to the parish church and cathedrals of the Middle Ages.

This chapter attempts to root this study in its academic context, to show where the project comes from but also where it intends on going. Having outlined the background context, my aim is then to move forward from the recurring questions and dilemmas, and attempt to create a different analytical approach. This involves a debate of the theoretical discourses often used to tackle the subject across disciplinary boundaries, not simply confining myself to archaeology. The objective is to construct an inclusive framework of ideas that serves as a platform for a sensory investigation into the pilgrimage experience of the medieval church or ‘an archaeology of sensory experience’. As such, the final part of this chapter combines the theoretical agenda argued before with an overview of current methodological trends for the medieval church to show how one can affect the other. Through this, my method of enquiry is defined.

### 2.2 THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO THE MEDIEVAL PILGRIMAGE CHURCH: A BACKGROUND

#### 2.2.1 STRUCTURALIST/POST-STRUCTURALIST APPROACHES

With the publication of a number of texts in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, space and spatial analysis are now often considered as crucial areas of study and essential to the development of understanding in spatial environment studies. To begin, it is perhaps appropriate to look at the modern equivalent of the term ‘space’ in relation to architecture and the built environment. It has been used by contemporaries to describe the area in which social relations and actions are created and reproduced (Zieleniec 2007, 60). The determinant forces in space are thought to be the religious, economic, political and ideological issues which structure it into domains of power. The meaning and value of space is therefore in constant conflict due to the social and historical structures which underpin society and its practices. In this sense, space and architecture are prominent means to structure social relations and are thus mutually dependent (Hillier and Hanson 1984; Kent 1993; Zieleniec 2007, 144).

My approach to this thesis builds upon the main premise of more analytical investigations of architectural space. These types of approaches are superior for understanding social function and status over those based on symbolic or functional characterisations (Fairclough 1992, 348; cf. Rapoport 1969; 1990; Hillier and Hanson 1984; Johnson 1986; Gilchrist 1994; Grenville 2000; 2008). For structuralists, culture is like a language and the rules that govern this language are *implicit* within the brain. In relation to this study, structuralism helps to understand the production and reproduction of practices across time and space in relation to the material settings of those actions (i.e. a building or landscape), and what social practices occur within them.

Hillier and Hanson’s structuralist concept of ‘access analysis’ or ‘space syntax’ (1984) is useful for considering the spatial arrangements of a building, including the amount of access and penetration of each social group, or to understand how buildings ‘represent social organisation as physical configurations of forms and elements that we see’ (Hillier 1996, 4). Gilchrist used the principles of the theory to evaluate the archaeology of gender in relation to the categorisation of physical space via the premise that ‘Space forms the arena in which social relationships are negotiated, expressed through the construction of landscapes, architecture and boundaries. The resulting spatial maps represent discourses of power based in the body’ (Gilchrist 1994, 43–61). This analysis of access is a more simple method or diagrammatic format for understanding the functional use of space and physical exclusions, but this is where its primary limitations lie. It cannot be used to understand the total and chief function or interpretations of a

building; the tendency is to ignore social conventions of behaviour that limit space and the changes that may occur. As Graves correctly explained,

... the method has limited application with regard to any dramaturgical definition or use of space, such as is suggested by ritual. By their rejection of the “semantic illusion” of culturally ascribed meaning to space, Hillier and Hanson deprive analysis of essential historical contingency (Graves 2000, 11).

The methodology initially pertained to and found advantage in the investigations of prehistoric contexts but, for the medieval period, access analysis debases our understanding of architectural use, encounter and reception into a simplistic meaning of universal patterns and relations in and of spaces, disregarding a proper consideration of room function, and ignoring any socially contextual evidence.

Artefacts and buildings are another expression of this human culture which, to be explained, requires an unveiling of the cognitive, inherent rules that generate cultural forms (Johnson 1999, 91). Culture in this respect comprises the social relationships inherent within society. Anthony Giddens (1984) developed on this idea by uniting individual acts with social forces, yet denoting that neither one determined social life on its own. Giddens’ post-structuralist theory of Structuration argued that humans are agents whose conscious actions produce effects and structure society across time and space (Giddens 1984, 9–11). Giddens described the conscious process of how we come to unconsciously know what to do or say, or ‘how to go on’ in society. Repetition of the acts of individual agents reproduces this broader human agency and social structure. Social life is more than random individual acts but is not merely determined by social forces. Accordingly, a social structure exists – traditions, institutions, moral codes and established ways of doing things – which can be changed when people start to ignore it, replace it or reproduce it differently. ‘Society only has form, and that form only has effects on people, in so far as structure is produced and reproduced in what people do’ (Giddens and Pierson 1998, 77).

In essence, architectural space and material culture are active in creating and transforming social relations. The built environment, claims Rapoport, provides ‘cues’ for behaviour and how the environment was and perhaps still is ‘a form of nonverbal communication’ (Rapoport 1976, 10). Accordingly, the buildings of our past are the principal evidence for reading culture and society; the concretisation of the existential space in which actions and meanings occurred. This understanding became permanent

via the material markers of experience, value and history which were attached to the space. The type of space could thus be perceived and then experienced by separate social groups by the markers that occurred when viewers interpreted a space. These markers elucidated the relationships of one's self to one's self; and one's self to others. Defining space consequently tended to prescribe the behaviour within (Camille 2000, 9).

Consequently, space is a crucial element in the organisation of society and the built environment, today and in the medieval period, and thus a fundamental part in the implementation of power (Zieleniec 2007, 128). In relation to how users perceive space, give it meaning and use it, people are influenced by the social groups, identities, institutions and cultures they are members of and these affect the way they communicate in or value space (Bynum 1991; 1995). These can, in turn, be affected by the built environment and may shape the decisions about its form (Rapoport 1976, 8). However, the meanings attributed to such space and how it is interpreted, alters with social change (Gilchrist 1994, 45). Similarly, I show that in the later Middle Ages the Church used many forms of material culture (with already established underlying discourses) and its context, to create a language through signs, symbols and, most importantly, forms and areas of space to manipulate and convey various meanings and, thus, a certain experience on its visitor. Simply, by using architectural space to convey information, the power embodied in the fabric through *habitus* (see below) produced social identities and structured relations.

The concept of discourses changing over space and time has been developed by Pierre Bourdieu who draws on Michel Foucault's concept of the *episteme*: 'the unconscious, positive and productive set of relations within which knowledge is produced and rationality defined which are in constant flux of meaning' (Foucault 1974; Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 12). In his analysis of *habitus*, Bourdieu explains how the inherent symbolic codes, meanings and instincts of medieval society can be understood. *Habitus* is a structure of social practice or 'a socially constituted system of cognitive and motivating structures' (Bourdieu 1987, 72) which give agents 'an endless capacity to engender products – thoughts, perceptions, expressions, actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production' (Bourdieu 1987, 95). Actions or practices of *habitus* – the embodied projections of the space we inhabit – are socially conditioned and produced by a group, however unconsciously. These

behavioural actions become laws through repetition of interplayed ritualised human practices and the space which both facilitate and restrict them (Bourdieu 1990, 53). Space and material culture accordingly represent/are embedded with and make manifest the internal structures and rules of social/communal organisation, e.g. age, gender and status. Whether high or low, all aspects of society contribute to the structuring of power in a community through a process which makes them imperceptible (Chieffo Raguin and Stanbury 2005, 4). Although there need not be an identifiable cause, ‘harmonization’ occurs – the principles practiced by cultural agents which, in turn, underpin others’ actions (Bourdieu 1990, 80).

Bourdieu terms this a ‘structural apprenticeship’ which we all must engender in order to cope and act within our particular culture or society, and which leads us to a body enabled to appropriate the world (Bourdieu 1990, 89). Meaning is produced and reproduced within a culture through human agency, various practices, phenomena and activities which serve as systems of signification of that society. This, Michel de Certeau terms, is the search for an ‘*acquisition of knowledge*’ (1988, 57).

Thus, the cultural meanings and practices of social order, status and use of material culture (objects and movements through the built environment) are learned and signified over time by actions, and through the body the world is perceived via symbolic meanings and social mnemonics. Hence a person can function and socialise in their society or, more precisely, within the architectural space of a building. It acknowledges the recognition and understanding of social decorum – how to act in a given situation (be it social or religious) by reference to yourself individually, and to the people around. It is a social construct that has been developed over time and for different places in conformity with the underlying discourse of the situation, period, class structure and intentions of the inhabited space.

As exemplified, the concept of *habitus* is based on the gaining of knowledge through experience and, as a result, one can act according to convention, acceptability and what is seen as ‘proper’ (Barrett 2001, 153). *Habitus* is learned through observation and emulation; through the actions of daily life as well as a product of history and the schemes thus generated (Bourdieu 1990, 54). It survives in practice – not by a set of rules but what Bourdieu terms ‘regulated improvisations’ (Bourdieu 1987, 78). Rather than a rigid set of structured conventions, *habitus* allows for the formation of experience

to be made and changed as we act, and is therefore not controlled but informed by an understanding of both our own position and our relationship to others. ‘Regular improvisation’ illustrates that as *habitus* is a ‘system of open dispositions’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 133), it may be transformed or modified through the endless productions of individuals’ interactions and choices within their social milieus as well as new environments or fields. In turn, perception is inevitably adjusted by social interaction and experience. *Habitus* structures life actions without determining them.

Bourdieu’s model is extremely useful to understanding the experience of architectural space. Perception and acknowledgment of status and social hierarchical ordering were of paramount importance to the medieval person, but equally an understanding of the symbolic-theological codes that the forms of the church produced had to be assumed. The daily experience one would encounter in a church could not be learned at home. The spatial order of the building – a result of its internal partitioning through tangible and intangible means – led to a diversified and segregated space resulting in the assignment of specific areas of the church to participating groups (including genders) (Kleinschmidt 2000, 47). The space and material culture of the church was used to reinforce, redefine, control and maintain structural relations and, consequently, ‘the subject, then, [was] both active in interpreting material culture, and complicit in being conditioned by it’ (Barrett 1988, 7; Gilchrist 1994, 46). The medieval church may be similarly interpreted: the actions and practices of the pilgrimage experience were determined by the plan and therefore the access provided to separate social groups. In this way, the fabric of the building is seen as evidence of systems of belief in addition to the ‘mind-sets’ or ‘mentalities’ of social groups (Johnson 1999, 96).

### 2.2.2 THE POWER OF EPISTEMOLOGY

The principles of Marxism imply that ‘people make their own history’. Marx (1983, 12) claimed that people do not choose the circumstances under which the past is created, but via the circumstances directly encountered, transmitted and produced from the past itself. Many of the structuralist theories, some of which also employ ‘spatial analyses’, disregard this concept of change and, instead, view practices and experiences of space as homogenous, coexistent across societies, rather than as changeable. They dismiss certain studies that have illustrated that attitudes towards space are cultural, gender, locally and socially specific (Gilchrist 1988; Pearson and Richards 1994). As Giles identified in her study of medieval guildhalls,

In order to understand the organisation and meaning of space it is therefore necessary for archaeologists to engage with the specific cultural and ideological context in which architecture and architectural space is produced and experienced by individuals in the past (Giles 2000a, 6).

The changing nature of space, both physically and ideologically, meant that initial ideas had to accommodate its development. Between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century these changes were most prevalent. Kleinschmidt proposed (2000, 61) that the perception of space transformed from a collective abundance of diverse places to an ordering device bound and dependent upon the most significant monuments, not only for individuals but also for groups and material culture. The church was therefore the container in which this ordering took place and which would be quantified, in every respect, in relation to the 'form and dimensions' of the building (Trachtenberg 1997, 151).

The church's ability to govern and alter its immediate and external world is manifested in this idea. It acted as the ultimate control mechanism in manipulating both its own space and the space it resided in. Through the manner of the 'mastery of space', Camille identified how the church's architectural space aimed to control the minds as well as bodies of its audience by the use of its inherent devotional elements: the 'medieval pictorial narrative' (Camille 1996, 27). The term is used to explain how the world functioned and was understood by a code of discourse illustrated by way of signs and symbols of all means. Not only the ordering of space but the practices of daily life were identified and created through signs bound together in time and space. For example, distance was not measured by mathematical calculations, but by the number of days it took to travel to a place; liturgical bells would identify times of day; and light descending on the architecture of the local church would signify the end of a day or season (Camille 1996, 71).

This illustrates that spatial environments are determined by religious, social or political ideologies which are also dynamic and in constant flux. To overcome this, focus must be given to the context of the architecture being studied. If we are to understand experience, we must acknowledge the different social practices, meanings and values that are imbued within different areas of society. This hypothesis is crucial to the study of the medieval church and the underlying discourses with regard to pilgrimage, as even within the physical space of the interior, the distinction between social class and gender is clear and impressed onto the space of the building. Such an awareness of the participants of the cult church must be upheld throughout, as the perceptions and experiences felt towards the tangible and intangible devotional infrastructure could vary

immensely between the elite (or royalty for this thesis) and the laity. I must acknowledge this as a potential problematic issue for my thesis. However, Frieman and Gillings' suggestion will be employed: although each medieval person would have their own interpretation and perception of these sensory stimuli, the differences 'can be understood to have fallen within the variable scope of the community's shared identity' (Frieman and Gillings 2007, 12).

### **2.3 THE IDEOLOGY OF PILGRIMAGE**

A significant methodological problem with a large portion of past religious scholarship is a focus on society in the general sense. This has relegated each social group, gender or even religion in some cases into oblivion. This type of agenda ran throughout the movement of religious thought of the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. Mircea Eliade (1959) theorised the two worlds of the sacred and the profane (or non-religious world) by exploring how the religious individual acts and why throughout various circumstances, and also why we come to worship in the way we do. Medieval concepts of visuality and sensuality were then applied to pilgrimage in the past by Edith and Victor Turner in *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture* (1978). Drawing on Emile Durkheim and Arnold Van Gennep's philosophical model of pilgrimage as a *rite of passage*, the Turners' work proposed the devotional journey as a stage of liminality which they suggest is an inherent aspect of any rite of passage. They argue that during pilgrimage people are free from social standing as they move from real into sacred time and space, temporarily transcending mundane social structures.

Although the majority of the argument is rather extreme, the concept of transcending the stages of reality, of time, place and space can be applied to the sensory experience of the cults of saints. For example, the ritualistic display of royal pilgrimage emphasised the separation between monarchs and their subjects. In fact, Victor Turner's (1969) analysis of ritual performance may be applied to inform this view and disprove the existence of a liminal state during such events. He argued that ritual actually involved

a dialectic between "structure" and "antistructure". By organizing and managing the passage of persons from one set of normative positions, roles, rules, and social states to another, ritual serves social order and continuity (MacAloon 1984, 3).

As such, when comparing the various protagonists used in this study to each other, the idea that liminality exists, for example in either royal or lay experience, cannot be upheld. Neither can Turner's idea of *communitas* which represents 'the desire for a total, unmediated relationship between person and person, a relationship which nevertheless does not submerge one in the other but safeguards their uniqueness in the very act of realizing their commonness' (Turner 1974, 274). More simply, it is a spontaneous liberation from conformity to general norms, yet it is a transient condition that, if permanent, would overthrow the structure of society – society operates around individuals experiencing *communitas* (Theilmann 1984, 255). It is seen as social antistructure; it emphasises spontaneity, unity, homogeneity and comradeship between all sections of society. *Communitas* is 'a mingling of mental rather than physical identities' (Theilmann 1984, 269). Thus, each separate social group likely experiences *communitas* together during their visit – a heightened solidarity – but little intersubjectivity exists across the pilgrim population as a whole (cf. Turner 2012) – i.e. the social disconnection between the royal and layperson was even greater.

As monarchical subjects were accustomed to particular traditions, this gave a privileged approach to the shrine locale thus illustrating that the royal experience of pilgrimage did not exude much sense of *communitas* or autonomy from the normal social distinction that set sovereigns and subjects apart. Lay pilgrims saw royal visits 'as an opportunity to enhance their religious experience of visiting the main shrine' (Schnitker 2004, 105). Similarly, Duffy claimed that elitist and popular religion should not be distinguished from the masses in the later medieval period (2005, 1–8). Margaret of York's devotional activities were used by Harry Schnitker (2004, 116) in agreement with Duffy, suggesting that she participated in several mass devotional pilgrimages such as during a visit to Our Lady at Aachen in 1496 when no fewer than 142,000 pilgrims were in attendance. Moreover, St William of York was seen to be a generally 'local' saint, yet the favour paid to his shrine by kings such as Richard II and III illustrate his appeal as a 'popular' cult for all social classes.

This approach is also based on Abercrombie and Turner's 'Dominant Ideology Thesis' (1982). Their argument turned the conventional ruling ideas model (of Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, 1932) on its head by suggesting that the dominant

ideology had a greater impact on the dominant classes than on the dominated, yet still served to demonstrate authority over others. More simply, methods of transmission of beliefs were more effective on the monarchy than on the laity. As a result, ideology was a cultural mechanism which protected the 'dominant class from the threats of intra- and inter-class struggles' (Abercrombie and Turner 1982, 412). The dominant class became a unified social group as the imposition of a code of morality ensured that members predominantly believed the same things as each other – values and practices were integral to its continuation as long as they remained constant. These 'dominant moralities' effectively separated the dominant from the other classes. In regards to religion, this stemmed from the fact that the guilt and confessions of the elite (under the guidance of spiritual directors or made on the person's behalf by them) were recurrent and permanent aspects of piety as opposed to the short and infrequent shrifts of the peasantry, which defined the wealthy elite as 'the religiously saved' (Abercrombie and Turner 1982, 406, 412).

My contention is that this was also the case in regards to pilgrimage. One only has to compare the few times that the ordinary medieval person went on pilgrimage to the numerous peregrinations listed in the royal itineraries and accounts. Perhaps this was a result of the practices of the Church. The Church was a major player in transmitting the ideological structure of society which, it would appear, was enforced by establishing and exemplifying the ritual barriers and practices (including the language of the Church) between the laity and the clergy, and then onto the wider social structure (Abercrombie and Turner 1982, 407).

As will be illustrated, the tangible and intangible practices and structures of the church building (e.g. access, ritual, performance, services) worked together in order to project and construct itself as a microcosm of the wider medieval society. Analyses of the church building as a hierarchical structure and as a physical reflection of the human body (including its focus on the head and hands as an embodiment of the symbolic life force (Graves 2008, 42)) also illustrate this concept in more detail. The 'mystical body', which originally represented the Eucharist, increasingly found a new metaphorical meaning signifying the Church and its supreme position among the body of the faithful from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The Body also became a pre-eminent symbol of society or, more specifically, social order (cf. Kay and Rubin 1994). The monarch was seen as the head of the body. As such, the physical and social body affected one another;

actions that affected the social were reflected back on the physical (James 1983, 6–7). Each separate element therefore made a whole but was made up of a hierarchical structure which reflected social differentiation and which could not survive without the other.

In sum, this thesis seeks to build upon and further develop the already diverse field of approaches extant on pilgrimage in medieval England, particularly the analysis of the cult churches themselves. Yet it departs from the abundant tendency of past literature to concentrate on the architectural or social history of individual churches or parishes, and rather offers an understanding of how the churches were used by pilgrims and patrons in order to create sensory experiential encounters. This synthetic approach draws on the methods, approaches and ideological concepts of a variety of disciplines including archaeology, art/architectural history and history proper, whilst taking findings from as far disciplinary fields as musicology, sociology, and psychology. Although the English church has been academically studied in vast detail, gaps are still apparent and, as such, this study developed through recognition of these gaps whilst hoping to make a significant contribution to filling them. Through uniting the principles and analyses from the disciplinary fields outlined above, it starts and continues to depart from where most art or architectural historians would normally cease.

## **2.4 ‘SMELLS AND BELLS’: THEORISING ‘SENSORY’ ASPECTS OF DEVOTION**

### **2.4.1 THE MEDIEVAL SENSES**

Medieval theories and attitudes towards *all* of the senses were very different to our modern-day notions. The separation, and indeed presence, of the five senses recorded in modern Western classifications was much less significant for many past societies, and even many today (Classen 1993; Giles 2007, 107). To the medieval person the five senses were like five towers or gates: ‘just as nothing can enter a city except through the gates, just so may nothing enter your soul, good or bad, except through one of them’ (John Drury, c.1434, *Lenten instruction in the content of the faith*, quoted in Swanson 1993, 54). It is clear that as the medieval period drew on the senses became an ever more inherent part of daily devotion. In fact, Drury suggests that sins were committed due to ‘badly [sic]’ use of the senses and therefore one must keep the sensory gates closed in order for sins to be kept at bay.

The five bodily senses or ‘sensus carnalis’ were just one strand of the Latin term ‘sensus’ (Rahner 1979). In the medieval period, not only were senses seen to ‘team-up’, but sensory experiences were thought to be reciprocal processes, allowing transference of tangible, as well as spiritual or intangible qualities to be passed between parties (Biernoff 2002; Woolgar 2006, 2). In separate terms visibility, for instance, was immediate in that objects reflected light and were immediately perceptible, yet hearing was dependent on the actions of the environment – something needed to happen to cause auditory perception (Chidester 1992, 10).

The sensory aspect of medieval art and architecture was therefore not coincidental; it demanded interaction. Patrons, artists and visitors looked for such connections in order to heighten and create an ultimate experience. Artists and architects designed their work with specific interactive goals in mind so that churches could physically and mentally ‘touch’ visitors through ‘pushy’ reciprocal performatory means. For example, it demanded movement through certain routes, whilst creating elaborate games through its art and architecture, concealing and revealing en route through both two- and three-dimensional outputs (Blick and Gelfand 2011, xxxvii). Sensory stimulation was the means through which the devotional functions of such churches could then be communicated to and understood by the devotee through images, sounds, and smells, etc. The church building (both inside and out) was seen as the performance space through which this process could evolve. In his *Apologia* of 1125, Bernard of Clairvaux (1090–1153) highlighted the importance of the function of sensory aids for the experience of the devotee by stating, ‘We know that the bishops...use material beauty to arouse the devotion of a carnal people because they cannot do so by spiritual means’ (Rudolph 1990, 318–9). In this way, complex and theological discourses could be grasped through the engagement of congregants turning the church into an institution of performance with the building acting as the spatial arena (cf. Stevenson 2009). In his *Mitralis de officiis*, the liturgical commentator Sicard of Cremona (1155–1215) compared the windows of the church building to the five senses, to facilitate the understanding of the Word (Sarbak and Weinrich 2008, 13–26).

Yet it was not only during the Mass that theatrical spectacles were used; the pilgrimage infrastructure of churches was also designed to convey drama and devotional captivation. For example, shrines were revealed only at certain times of the day by pulley systems with bells that rang out into the entire body of the church. Moreover,

ritual entrances and exits were located to create specific routes while art and sculpture located along the route, were designed to be seen or worshipped at. Together such art projected information (largely soteriological for pilgrims) and provided backdrops for the devotional rituals that were taking place in front of and around them. Thiofrid, abbot of Echternach (d.1110) in his *Flores epytaphii sanctorum*, even construed relics as objects defined by the senses (Palazzo 2011, 103). In summary, a theatrical pilgrimage environment (and route) was created through setting the scene for experience by developing the architectural and visual frameworks of the churches, primarily to preserve the *memory* of each site within the mind of the pilgrim (Marks 2004, 216).

The importance of the senses to memory owes its roots to classical antiquity. Scholars such as Cicero (106–43 BC) discussed the importance of the visual in the retention of memories. He believed that

The most complete pictures are formed in our minds of the things that have been conveyed to them and imprinted on them by the senses, but the keenest of all our senses is the sense of sight, and that consequently perceptions received by the ears ... can be most easily retained in the mind if they are also conveyed to our minds by the mediation of the eyes (*De Oratore*, 2.87.357 (LCL 1:469), quoted in Frank 2000b, 170).

Memory was central to medieval devotion (as well as secular experience in general). It played a significant role in conjuring up the experience of Christ, the Passion, Holy Family and the cult of saints. The shrines and reliquaries of saints were seen as physical and metaphorical containers through which the memories of the saints could be made manifest (Carruthers 1990, 35–42). Devotional events had to be sensorially ‘alive’ in order for a memorable experience to be fully comprehended and thus retained (Hagen 1990, 103). As will be illustrated, this is perhaps the background to the visually-orientated scholars’ thinking, but it is an important point to note in relation to the medieval period as most saintly devotional events were experienced, firstly through the eyes and then exaggerated by sounds and smells and so forth (in order for the experience to be properly retained).

Understandings of how objects, images and buildings were received by the medieval viewer have significantly expanded over the past few decades with scholars such as Michael Camille (1989; 1996) and Madeline Caviness (1992; 2001a; 2001b; 2006) leading the way. These coincided with a shift in focus from the process of construction or stylistic value to one which considered how the viewer interpreted and understood

the religious images placed in front of them (cf. Jauss 1982; Recht 2008; Olsen 2011). Art history followed literary criticism in this respect so that the history of art turned into a history of images (Caviness quoted in Bryson *et al.* 1991, xvii; as championed by, e.g. Freedberg 1989; Belting 1990; Biernoff 2002; Kamerick 2002). The branch of inquiry now known as *rezeptionsgeschichte* (or reception theory) swept across disciplines (Kemp 1998), encompassing as it went the issues of spectacle (Hanawalt and Reyerson 1994), devotional performance (Young 1933; McMurray Gibson 1989; Ashley and Hüsken 2001; Muessig 2002; Hayes 2003; Bagnall Yardley 2006; Stevenson 2010), and integration (Chieffo Raguin *et al.* 1995). A significant problem arose out of these types of approaches: an overt focus on vision above the other senses.

The prioritisation of sight predominantly began with the Greek Philosophers Plato and Aristotle, in addition to Descartes who suggested that ‘the sense of science was to be sight’ (Skeates 2010, 2). It also became embedded within the concept of aesthetics. Interest in the individual’s visual reaction to devotional images became increasingly popular in the Middle Ages after the emergence of texts such as St Augustine’s *De Genesi as litteram* (401–15), St Gregory’s 8<sup>th</sup>-century edict regarding the use of images, St Bernard’s *Cantica* (1088–1102), and Thomas Aquinas’ *Summa Theologica* (c.1225–74). All of these scholars psychologically typified human sight and perception (Ringbom 1965, 11–31) as so powerful they could leave a tactile print (Camille 1996, 19), and through the eyes everything was known to humanity.

Augustinian theory (upon which medieval theology rested) categorised three types of vision: corporal, spiritual and intellectual. The eye was viewed as ‘a powerful sense-organ of perception, knowledge and pleasure; the top of the hierarchy of the five senses’ (Camille 1996, 11). In England, Robert Grosseteste’s (1175–1253) *De Colore* (c.1225) formed the first comprehensive discussion of the aesthetics of light: it was the bearer of form with the ability to generate itself (Sekules 2003, 477; Recht 2008, 177). Medieval scholars, such as Roger Bacon (c.1214 – c.1292), also developed on the ancient optical theories arguing that truth could only be revealed if it is presented to the eyes (Camille 1996, 22). As such, the increasing emphasis on sight and light stemmed from the idea that medieval seeing was thought to provide the beholder with the sense of touching the object of their vision (Merleau-Ponty 1968, 130–55; Pentcheva 2006, 631; Graves 2007, 516).<sup>11</sup> A hierarchy and regulation of ‘sensory environments’ therefore existed, imbued

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<sup>11</sup> The basis of the theory of extramission (cf. Nelson 2000).

with didactic, symbolic and social meanings which, when experienced through various sensory stimuli, could project an affective power (Miles 1985, 96). Essentially, sensation was the means by which belief was to be experienced through this reciprocal process (Biernoff 2002, 133ff).

Seeing devotional images evoked a deep emotional experience from the viewer which Ringbom called ‘the emphatic approach’ (Ringbom 1965, 12). Images initiated powerful connections between humanity and God which were interpreted and deciphered by the medieval viewer, and subsequently they became ‘a mediator between “earth” and “world”’ (Harris 2008, 17). It is not surprising that the period saw an increase in emphasis on sight. Examples included a need/requirement to view the Elevation of the Host during the Mass and the increasing visibility of relics, some of which resided in transparent crystal containers. Or simply the embellishment and illumination of shrines and reliquary caskets which again emphasised the desire to view something special, no doubt a product of the medieval ‘yearning...for physical intimacy’ (Camille 1994, 77).

In consequence, the reasons for the precedence of certain senses in academic studies of the medieval world stem from the idea that in the modern Western world, vision is often primary in the mode of appropriation which has clouded the way we consider past architecture – more than 80 percent of sensory input is visual (Brück 2005, 20; and e.g. Classen 1993; Duncan 1993; Thomas 1993; Devlin *et al* 2002; Tringham 2005; Goudling 2009). Additionally, religious material culture, as well as churches, have been viewed as works of art perceived purely through vision and analysed in accordance with modern lighting and display techniques (Hamilakis 2011, 212). Yet the wealth of past scholarship has led to a reaction within sensual culture studies for analyses that go against the grain of the visual bias and out of the constrictions of the ‘tyranny of the gaze’ (Classen 1993; Classen *et al.* 1994; Gosden 2001; Blesser and Salter 2007; Freiman and Gillings 2007; Giles 2007; Jenner 2011; Parkhurst Ferguson 2011; Rosenfeld 2011). The anthropologist Howard Morphy (1992) sought to regain the concept of aesthetics, removing the predominance of visuality and returning its definition to understanding the effects of the physical properties of materiality or objects on *all* of the senses, whilst noting its ability to recognise beauty as involving various senses (Skeates 2010, 2–3). A similar equal sensory priority will be given next.

#### 2.4.2 AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SENSES

The significance of studying the archaeology of the senses lies in the large differences between the modern ‘sensory’ understanding and those of the past. There are inherent difficulties encountered when attempting to analyse how people both used and perceived their surrounding ‘sensory’ locales. The primary problem encountered is that we live in a 21<sup>st</sup>-century society filled with sensory stimuli that not only influence our understanding of the world, but also reflect on the way we understand the past. Modernity is centred around the concept of visual culture; it penetrates every area of our world in this media-obsessed society. Daily events, wherever they occur, can be visually seen whenever and virtually wherever one desires. Gosden (2001) and Mirzoeff (1999) suggest that the archaeologist must ‘unlearn’ this behaviour in order to appreciate the sensory worlds of others. Although an interpretation of the past is always subjective – a primary criticism of using a phenomenological approach to understand it – it is, however, important to understand how an experience was created to establish what embodied practices and sensory aspects were used to generate it and why.<sup>12</sup>

For an understanding of the role of the senses in archaeology, it is evident that sensory perception has been considered and evolved within the related subjects of anthropology (e.g. Howes 1991; 2005; Classen 1997; 2005), geography (e.g. Rodaway 1994) and in museum studies (Edwards *et al.* 2006). However, different disciplines have offered particular sensory perceptions (Rivlin and Gravelle 1984; Renfrew 1998; Stahl 2002; Scarre and Lawson 2006 – historiography and histories can be found in Ackerman 1991; Corbin 1995; Hamilakis 2004; Jütte 2005). In recent years the development of a ‘sensory’ archaeology has proliferated (from e.g. Foucault’s investigations into the body). This type of exploration has long been the preserve of prehistoric studies which have elucidated that the embodied experience of monuments, artefacts and landscapes are more fully understood by engaging with the visual hermeneutics and sensory perceptions of them. From initial phenomenological methodologies (Kus 1992; Tilley 1994; 2004; Stoller 1997; Brück 2005), the discipline is now wide-ranging, encompassing the new aspect of ‘sensual culture’ which centres on the importance of *all* the senses and their interplay (synaesthesia) (Howes 2006a; Hurcombe 2007; Skeates 2010), including archaeoacoustics (Scarre and Lawson 2006; Blesser and Salter 2007, 88), acoustemology (Sullivan 1986; Feld 1996, 97; Webb 2004), and musicology

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<sup>12</sup> Even today the cultural evolution of the senses are explored, e.g. the recent BBC Radio 4 series: ‘Noise: A Human History’.

(analyses of the Reformation-era's disruption of church music from the majority, e.g. Temperley 1979; Kisby 2001; Marsh 2010; Willis 2010a; 2010b, but some medieval studies still pervade, e.g. Harrison 1963; Routley 1978; Temperley 1983).<sup>13</sup> These later works stress that although the acoustic properties of medieval churches were 'accidental', sound was still central to perception and therefore edification, how to act in the world and experience it. Discussions of the haptic (tactility) (Hetherington 2003; Classen 2005; Howes 2005; Paterson 2007), taste (Bynum 1988; Sutton 2001; Weiss Adamson 2004; Korsmeyer 2005; Woolgar *et al.* 2006; Colquhoun 2012), olfactory senses (Corbin 1986; Classen 1993; Classen *et al.* 1994; Bartosiewicz 2003; Howes 2006b; Jenner 2011), artistic vision and bodily interaction (Classen 1993; Thomas 1993; Edmonds 2006) are also prevalent for understanding the human experience of our multi-faceted cultures. As a result, the literature crosses disciplinary boundaries like never before and 'sensuous scholarship' (e.g. *The Senses and Society Journal*) has become an integral aspect in the social construction of past societies (Tuan 1977, 1993; Jones and Hayden 1998; Nelson 2000; Howes 2003; 2005).

Thus far, 'sensory' research has tended to follow either one specific sense or aspect of society – primarily the elite, e.g. Woolgar 2006; Goulding 2007 – or has comprised analyses of the definition and use of the senses throughout the medieval/late-medieval period with little actual application of the conclusions to the wider social context, e.g. Milner 2011. Successively, more recent studies have recognised the importance of medieval issues of visibility and spatiality for studies of the historical archaeology of architectural space and experience as primarily developed by, e.g. Biernoff (2002), Giles (2007), Graves (2007) and Stevenson (2010); and of the historical construction of meaning within fully sensory environments (Giles 2000a; Graves 2000; Hanawalt and Kobialka 2000; Blick and Tekippe 2004; Pallasmaa 2005; Woolgar 2006; Blick and Gelfand 2011). Although these past 'spatial' works have provided an excellent insight into medieval 'ways of seeing', they have tended to isolate single senses in their analyses of devotional experience, giving predominance to vision and touch above others (Camille 1994, 2000; Frank 2000a; Hahn 2000). This thesis shall build upon these and other canonical works on image and devotion (e.g. Baxandall 1987; Klukas 1995; Camille 2000; Marks 2004; Fassler 2010), by considering the experience of the senses in a holistic manner and as a continuous experience (Frank 2000a, 109). As

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<sup>13</sup> This is likely due to little recorded evidence of church music before the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Temperley 1983, 7).

Goulding argued (2009, 1), the way we study architecture should be interconnected with the way it was envisioned when built. By this we need to consider it as a multi-sensory space in which it was intended.

Consequently, the limitations of these past approaches illustrate the need for a ‘sensuous archaeology’ in its correct definition; that is to engage all of the senses and their complex and subtle interweaving as having equally important roles, even in vision-dominated experience and representation (Hurcombe 2007, 539). My approach to the material must not echo my criticisms of past studies, although in a discipline that demands a written analysis, my sensory investigation and concluding reconstruction narratives can only achieve so much. A visual perspective must not become primary. Pallasmaa summarises this point well: ‘an architectural work is not experienced as a series of isolated retinal pictures, but in its fully integrated material, embodied and spiritual essence’ (Pallasmaa 2005, 12). I will build upon this modernist position towards sight which has been borne out of its success, yet will infiltrate this with a more encompassing analysis including all of the senses and their interplay: therefore I will literally be practising what I preach!

## **2.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY: AN ARCHAEOLOGY OF SENSORY EXPERIENCE**

The challenge that lies ahead is to devise a methodology that accommodates, develops upon and is closely aligned with the theoretical stances discussed above. What follows is an expansion of the current debate regarding methodological approaches to buildings archaeology before an outline of the tools and devices utilised in this project. The aim of this thesis is to help construct a new sensory and social analysis of ritual and religion as expressed in the work of recent theorists through an archaeological analysis of the role and use of built structures (Barrett 1984; de Certeau 1984; Giddens 1984; Bourdieu 1987; Lefebvre 1991; Tilley 1994; Johnson 1994; 2006). Nonetheless, the application of sensory study to buildings is still in its infancy with approaches up to now producing only a handful of important conclusions. For a true understanding of a building of our past we must begin to move towards analyses of how it was experienced.

A large amount of evidence will be drawn together to explore a meaningful interpretation of a built structure. Three archaeological research methods will be used to consider the specific issues regarding senses and experience in the analysis of my data set (archaeological, documentary and material evidence). They are as follows: the

method of phenomenology, the analysis of display, and the application of the analysis of synaesthesia. Together these methodological strands complement each other, yet bring different aspects of the sensory experience to the forefront of this project.

### 2.5.1 PHENOMENOLOGY

Despite academic critique of some of the principles of the phenomenological approach, the concept of ‘embodied’ experience can nonetheless provide valuable insights. As Skeates argued (2010, 2), the theory has favoured solitary over group experience, and has prioritised sight and proprioception over other senses in shaping experience, limiting its archaeological practice (Berger 1972; Grimshaw 2001). The latter point is a problem recurrent throughout a variety of studies on medieval experience, and one I wish to acknowledge.

Phenomenology will be used with caution, but as a starting tenet of my approach. By recognising the conditions and actions the body undergoes at my case sites, I wish to explore Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1962) and Christopher Tilley’s (2004 1, 10–12) idea of the sensing body being at the centre of the experiential world and through it we may perceive and understand materiality. This principle also serves to explain how architecture makes ‘visible how the world touches us’ (Pallasmaa 2005, 46). Merleau-Ponty’s theory prioritised corporeality in perception of ‘the Other’s body as a dynamic engagement which defines being’ (Kay and Rubin 1994, 7), rejecting older principles of the perceptual framework<sup>14</sup> wherein the relationship between individuals and the environment was enacted without the intervention of the mind (Jones 1998, 8–10). Merleau-Ponty redefined phenomenology as a consideration of the relationship between the physical body and human knowledge and perception through underlying discourses (Skeates 2010, 2).

My view follows that of Thomas (2004, 143, 216–17) who argued that the act of perception is also the act of interpretation (Ingold 1992, 46; Johnston 1998). As Masinton correctly identified in relation to his examination of the social space of parish churches, ‘perception acts as the intermediary between meaning and form...But the guidance and channelling of perception is by material which is the manifestation of the intentions, purposes or meanings of the creators’ (Masinton 2007, 39). Many scholars attempting to understand the theatrics of performance in medieval devotion have

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<sup>14</sup> Such as Descartes’ separation of the body and its senses (Skeates 2010, 2).

recognised that the body is understood as an ‘agent of theatrical experience’ and the mediator through which devotion is perceived and experienced, and sacred meaning interpreted (Beckwith 1994; Garner 1994, 5). Accordingly, we perceive the world through our body, and that perception and experience is created by ‘being in that world’, therefore recognising oneself within it through its materiality and being reflective of it through our body (Gilchrist 1994; Rubin 1994, 115–16; Johnson 2002; Stevenson 2010, 18). The human body becomes a ‘product of social relations and cultural values... [forming] a locus for the construction of identity and the mediation of the relationship between individual and society’ (Brück 2005, 55). Materiality is the product.

The range of early work by Johnson (1993; 1996), although focused on vernacular architecture of the middling sorts, aimed to reflect upon the construction of identity produced by space, and how architecture was used as a tool for wider social and cultural change. His use of the body as an aid to the archaeologist for decoding social practices of the past culminated in his 2002 book, *Behind the Castle Gate: From Medieval to Renaissance*. Although limited in its use of phenomenology (or particularly forthcoming or explicit in its approach), his preface stresses the need for one to walk in the shoes of past societies. This emphasis on experience and encounters with the architecture of our past also resonates for this study.

The principles of these particular phenomenological theories can substantially aid analyses of pilgrimage experience. As devotion is viewed through the lens of performance or ritual during which the body is the agent, not simply a representational form but a means by which experience and subjectivity can be examined, sensual encounters are pushed to the forefront of interaction. Moreover, the theory allows for individual and group mentalities to be discussed. Each human agent arrives at the point of devotion and during mass pilgrimage with their own intentions, needs, wants and status. For example, there is an acknowledgement that each person’s, or perhaps each group’s experience, could be different as they interpret the meanings of their surroundings and devotional cues.

A significant contribution to this theory comes in the form of *Thinking Through the Body: Archaeologies of Corporeality* (Hamilakis *et al.* 2002), a collaborative volume which illustrates the advantages in understanding experience and social structuration through the human body. Of key importance is the ability of the body and its extremities

to move, manipulate, inspect and explore, with all senses cooperating in experience (Rodaway 1994, 28). The most significant perspective given was by Thomas who explained that ‘Materialisation is the process by which the world reveals itself to us in an intelligible form’ (Thomas 2002, 22). It is a sensory extension to the body and ‘part of a melding of mind, body and objects which cannot be disaggregated into Cartesian dualities of object/thing and subjective/objective’ (Hurcombe 2007, 536). The space of the medieval church can consequently be understood as a habitation of ‘privileged imagining’; a non-Cartesian construct of legitimated communal metaphor (Hart 2006, 36). It embodies the concept of ‘experiential duality’ in that the differing experiences of visitors require the same phenomenal space or elements of that space to be realised through the senses (Garner 1994, 3–4). Medieval devotion may be seen as theatre: its literal meanings are often embedded with symbolic import and, as such, placement, gesture, relationships between movements and visual elements are learned and, accordingly, combine to produce an experience. The devotees are therefore the performers.

Thus, this sits well with the notion of Bourdieu’s *habitus* (1977). As outlined above, the nature of *habitus* is the ‘sense of one’s (and others’) place and role in the world of one’s lived environment’ (Hillier and Rooksby 2002, 5), which is learnt via bodily practices including particular ways of moving and gesturing, all of which are intimately associated with specific social categories of people (Bourdieu 1977, 93–4; cf. Gibson 1968; Ingold 2000; 2007, 166–7). *Habitus* will form a central element of my theoretical approach as it recognises the diversity of human experience and the principle that only through an understanding of the discourse of social relations that connect and support a building and its society, can we ‘read’ the evidence of its archaeology (Gilchrist 1994).

I must note the value of phenomenological approaches for the understanding of architecture as a metaphor for social structure. Both architecture and landscape can be used to control; that is the movement of people, as well as hierarchies and genders within the space (e.g. Tilley 1994; Barrett 1994; Giddens 1984; Gilchrist 1994; 1999; 2005). For example, restrictions to access within the interiors of buildings or monuments maintained interpersonal differences. As such, the embodied encounters of the participants with the monuments or building, reproduced dominant ideologies.

This argument is particularly significant for this study and resonates throughout my research. The concept of a ‘dominant ideology’ has already been discussed, but in conjunction with phenomenology, to reiterate, this type of theory can provide an explanation of medieval pilgrimage experience via the differences that a person constructs and brings to their visit in terms of interpersonal relationships, rather than seeing the self as a bounded individual (Brück 2005, 61). This means that human agency (here, performative devotion) is the product of social relationships between people, yet those who exercise social power ‘are themselves subject to the demands of others’ (Brück 2005, 61). Of course, external practices, attitudes and values outside of the bodily limits also comprise important elements of a person providing them with resources to produce alternative interpretations and experiences of space. Once again, this highlights the flux inherent within social identity due to the constant shifting boundaries between self and others. Still, in regards to medieval pilgrimage, this latter point is rather futile as not only was social mobility difficult to enforce during this period, but my research considers the three major contemporary social groups. It therefore provides as much of a universal account as is possible (due to the subjective nature of the topic) of the distinctions between identities, hence, the values and attitudes which formulated interpretation and experience. As such, the phenomenological method (and corresponding theoretical principles) is useful for exploring the social, religious and political implications of spatial layout, access and setting.

### 2.5.2 SYNAESTHESIA – THE INTERPLAY OF SENSES

The second part of my methodology focuses on synaesthesia, or ‘intersensoriality’. The foundation of past research stemmed from the hypothesis that the sensory experience of the medieval pilgrimage church was largely synaesthetic or ‘intersensorial’. Deriving from the ancient Greek term for ‘sensation’, synaesthesia refers to ‘the simultaneous body-mind interplay of multiple senses’ (Drewal 2005, 4; Skeates 2010, 22) or, simply, a unity or convergence of the sensory metaphors (Chidester 1992, 53). In the modern sense the effect is neurological or psychological as specialised regions of the brain are activated and then trigger involuntary responses in another (Sullivan 1986; Skeates 2010, 21). For example, the synaesthetic phenomenon allows sound to take on visual qualities so that one may associate certain colours with music and thus ‘hears colour’ (Chidester 1992, 14–15). For this thesis, however, synaesthesia is viewed as a sensory experience ‘in which perceptual modes come together in unexpected combinations, create new sensory configurations, or interpenetrate in unusual transsensory perceptions

of lights that are heard or sounds that are seen' (Chidester 1992, 15). It is therefore a 'consonant sensation' or experience through a 'simultaneity of senses' (Pentcheva 2006, 631).<sup>15</sup>

The concept is crucial to any analysis of the medieval devotional experience given the synaesthetic element inherent within the Christian symbolic universe within which a symmetry and interpenetration of the visual coordinates with the verbal, aural, or auditory (Chidester 1992, 15). Such convergences of multi-sensory stimuli are prevalent throughout religious doctrine as well as in medieval literature. Synaesthetic metaphors were a common staple of dogmatic vocabulary (the greatest example being the visual and aural concept of the Word) as religious symbolism was (and still is) grounded in sensory perception (Chidester 1992, 22). Many religious practices, such as ritualistic performance or the sacralisation of relics, involved multi-sensoriality in a variety of designed culturally and socially significant ways. Medieval art and architecture were indeed synaesthetic as they were often experienced through more than one sense, or one sense involuntarily triggered experiences in another – many saw and heard that which was visible; a point which cannot be ignored in regards to pilgrimage. Aural and visual symbolism came to be tightly linked in the medieval church service due to the development in the sensory qualities of its art and architecture (Blessner and Salter 2007, 93). Accordingly, medieval hagiography was often represented by visual and architectural means, and pilgrimage was described as 'seeing with the senses' (Frank 2000b, 9). Yet as Georgia Frank noted, 'With such an emphasis on seeing, it is puzzling that these pilgrims tell us little about what they actually saw' (2000a, 105).

How this belief was enforced may be explained by the concept of hypermediacy which acknowledges a multiplicity of acts of representation in an attempt to reproduce the rich sensorium of human experience. This type of experience is expressed through the simultaneity of two or more sensory systems in play at once (synaesthesia) (Lavender 2006, 55–6). The Middle English term *sentir* further helps in this understanding of sensing, far removed from the modern Western concept. 'To sense' could literally be employed for thinking, tasting or even smelling. Previous to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *sense* was not generally held as 'a faculty of perception', but senses were often seen in combination, such as *taster/tasten* for both touch and taste (Woolgar 2006, 6). The use

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<sup>15</sup> This version of the term derives from *syn-* meaning together, and *aesthesis* meaning sensual apprehension (Pentcheva 2006, 631).

of *sentir* therefore refers to almost all of the senses suggesting that a distinction between the five (although defined in literary convention) was not believed in practice, and an amalgamation or unification of the senses was how experience was generated.

There has also been a trend in recognising the importance of kinetics and proxemics of performance experience (Stevenson 2010). Kinaesthesia, in particular, has become an integral part of work on medieval mystery plays, texts, and literature (Jones 2008). Drawing on evidence from art and iconography, medieval dramatic texts have been shown to prescribe specific movements as a means of expressing externally a character's internal moral state (another category of visual culture studies) (e.g. Wright 2008). Here kinaesthesia has the ability to communicate socio-cultural mores, and express individual identity.

More recently, many scholars interested in bodily experience have turned to cognitive theory or science, often supplementary to or in conjunction with phenomenological inquiries.<sup>16</sup> Bruce McConachie argued that the theory helps to legitimise and establish the usefulness of understanding experience in the work of historians, as it 'does not ultimately universalize experience across time, place, or event' (McConachie and Hart 2006, 571). It attempts to argue that human minds process relationships between brain and world rather than produce meaning, which differ between each individual as they are formed by active, creative and personal participation (Rokotnitz quoted in McConachie and Hart 2006, 140). In relation to this study, the theory asserts that mentally constructing devotional images is dependant on the participant's ability to reflect upon their experiences with images and then

do things with those images – choose, ignore, combine, revise. Cognitive theory proposes that the mental activities of visual piety develop out of our bodily structure and experiences, and therefore from our conscious and unconscious (Stevenson 2010, 20).

It is thus in agreement with Merleau-Ponty's challenging of the Cartesian mind/body separation 'by replacing the dualistic person with an inherently embodied mind whose reasoning processes are shaped by the body' (Stevenson 2010, 20).

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<sup>16</sup> There is an issue as to whether the theories can work together effectively due to the limitations of a 'naturalistic account of consciousness' within phenomenology. Recent theories have negated this and drawn upon the combinatory value, coining terms such as 'naturalised phenomenology' or 'neurophenomenology' (Stevenson 2010, 20).

However, again these studies further highlight the tendency of past scholars to concentrate on one sense primarily over the importance of analyses of all five and their interplay. These categories often fall under the realm of ‘visual culture’ which seeks to expose the dynamic forms and processes through which people construct themselves (Skeates 2010, 8). Such studies encompass all approaches concerned with the social, symbolic, cognitive and political dimensions of visual communication (cf. Mirzoeff 1999; 2002). Not only the body, but objects and artefacts (including art and architecture) fall under this category (Berger 1972). All are constructed and communicative of the people who made, used or performed them as they are interwoven with the bodies’ experiences. This area of visual culture studies promotes the idea that objects for example, can be analysed to reveal how they were used as active aids to a person’s perception of the world and the intricacies of their life – their collective and personal social identity (Skeates 2010, 13). Such scholarship has evaluated how ordering areas of buildings and materiality can provide information on the divisions and ordering of spaces and individuals that may not have been revealed in single classifications (Hooper-Greenhill 1992, 6ff). An approach which is, however, useful for this analysis.

The sensory omission and individualistic method of analysis present in academic disciplines is argued to be a result of the convenience of analysis, but is, in fact, not part of the reality of a holistic sensory system whereby sensations perceived via one mechanism act as cues or signs for the reception of other sensations (Merleau-Ponty 1962; Ingold 2000, 268) and, accordingly, where intersensoriality is recognised (Howes 2006b). I wish to counter this balance using the premise that humans experience the world multi-sensorially and in analysing it we cannot single out perceptions and experiences. The recent work by Bissera Pentcheva (2006; 2010; 2011) promoted the notion of synaesthesia in our understanding of devotional encounters and opened the gateway for the study of the other four senses within medieval art. It is hoped that this thesis will act as a medieval equivalent to Pentcheva’s work in terms of breaking the boundaries for approaches to historical devotion.

### 2.5.3 DISPLAY

‘Display’ is the final strand of my methodology. The act and process of display is one of the fundamental parts of this project and underlies the majority of the analysis. Recently, it has been used within studies of visual culture as either a noun (an event of

spectacle) or verb (a process of exhibiting, demonstrating or flaunting material resources). For this project I shall use the term in so far as ‘an active social performance, which requires both the agency of a displayer and a viewing audience’ (Skeates 2010, 9). The ‘displays’ employed at my case sites were certainly used to convey messages, meanings and information which the spectator had an emotional response to (e.g. Woolgar’s analysis of the great households of the Middle Ages: 2005, 248–66). More simply, through the projection of ‘display’, ‘buildings...structure[d] experiences in order to imply thoughts on others’ (Piotrowski quoted in Hanawalt and Kobialka 2000, xiii). Emotional responses as well as preconceptions and relationships are therefore embodied within the concept. For example, the *raison d’etre* of the medieval church was worship; the fabric of the building and all its embellishments are the metaphors for its inherent symbolic and metaphorical meaning as a physical representation of the Kingdom of Heaven (Coldstream 1987; Martindale 1992, 144). Each element served to inform the viewer of the means of salvation and the vision and promise of the heavens beyond (Martindale 1992, 144). On a social level, the buildings served to order and structure; thus the art and architecture conveyed information, educating and representing identities and relations through spectacles and aesthetics so that one may understand how to act within. In this way, ‘display’ orders, projects power, constructs identities and authorities, but most importantly for this topic, it aesthetically pleases and ‘asserts[s] or den[ies] a particular...religious ideology, and...remind[s] us of past images’ (Skeates 2010, 9). The church building becomes a ‘theatre’; a spatial chamber in which a multiplicity of practices and perspectives could be projected onto the immediate and wider social environment. In consequence, display may be viewed as a strand of *habitus* and is also innate within the concept of synaesthesia in that it is open to multiple interpretations, its meanings change over time, are ambiguous, and in flux.

Together these three strands of my methodology complement each other, yet bring different aspects of the sensory experience to the forefront of this project. Establishing an understanding of the wider context of sensoriality is perhaps the primary intention and difficulty faced by the majority of archaeologists, sociologists and anthropologists. Yet despite the scope that such methods provide, broad archaeological studies that aim to understand and interpret the sensual culture of a past society (or, like my own study, the collective ‘sensoria’ of various social groups), the interdisciplinary nature of both the data and the presentation of the evidence means that in order to formulate a more

realistic and informed understanding of past perceptions and experiences, a combination of individual approaches is required under a communal model.

In order to circumvent such limitations of past approaches to sensory studies, my methodological approach also builds on past theories towards architecture and sacred space, and 'ways of seeing'. By merging these with archaeological methods of analysing the meaning and experience of data or monuments, together with more post-structuralist theoretical approaches to social structure, this thesis creates an innovative multidisciplinary methodology that combines form and design with meaning, perception and experience through the analysis of space and its influence on human agency. Indeed, it draws on principles of both phenomenology and empiricism, and although it acknowledges the relativism inherent within many phenomenological analyses and the overt subjectivity of empirical systems, it exemplifies that architectural space is a material medium through which any number of meanings or multiplicities of purpose can be sensibly expressed (Masinton 2007, 39).

## **2.6 CASE SITES**

The thesis will consider the following aspects of four case sites: how lay pilgrims experienced Durham Cathedral Priory (Fig 2.1), how royalty showed their devotion at York Minster (Fig 2.2) and Canterbury Cathedral (Fig 2.3), and how the parochial community of St Neot in Cornwall (Fig 2.4) not only venerated its local saint but helped create the sacred environment in which the cult originated.

The four major pilgrimage churches were chosen primarily for the prominence of the shrines they housed in buildings of significant archaeological preservation. The sites also ranged in the levels of extant documentary and archaeological evidence with varied degrees of confidence and inferential arguments. For example, St Neot has virtually no existing documentary evidence or secondary sources, yet a rather complete structure. In contrast, Durham holds significant offering accounts, yet no shrine structure. This allowed for my methodology to be carried out on sites that retained either documentary or archaeological evidence, thus further proving the effectiveness of the application of sensory approaches. The sites also allowed for a comparison of Northern and Southern English pilgrimage churches (Fig 2.5), and saints of local, national and even international reverence. Successively, the churches provided evidence for a range of patrons: royal, elite and lay statuses.

St Thomas Becket was widely revered throughout both England and Europe with Canterbury becoming a centre of national pilgrimage importance. Furthermore, Canterbury Cathedral possessed the prestigious shrine of Our Lady of the Undercroft, and a multitude of additional shrines which largely decreased in eminence following the martyrdom of Becket (notably SS Alphege and Dunstan). It is widely accepted that Becket overtook St Cuthbert in popularity, although evidence suggests that Cuthbert remained the rival northern cult throughout the Middle Ages, no doubt helped by the complement of sacred sites scattered across the Northumbrian landscape associated with the former Bishop of Lindisfarne.<sup>17</sup> Although St William of York's status penetrated only to the city walls, the prominence of his cult to the city's inhabitants is extremely interesting for this study, providing the analysis with a more local angle. Finally, St Neot was chosen due to the local reputation of the saint, and the complex background of the cult within Cornwall (see below for further discussion). I must note here that this thesis is not an examination of the route(s) through and/or landscape(s) surrounding or leading to each pilgrimage site. A wealth of approaches to the archaeology of the sacred landscape (which may certainly be applicable to these sites) have already been tackled (e.g. Carver 1993; 2005; Candy 2009; papers in Jones and Semple 2012; Locker 2013; Morris 1997; Turner 2006) but, for this thesis, the associated topographical elements will only be considered where appropriate to the wider discussion of sacred space.

Although male saints are primarily considered within this thesis due to their resonance at my chosen case sites, the popularity of female saints, most notably the Virgin Mary, was unquestionable throughout Europe. This can be largely attributed to a burst of devotion under Pope Innocent III during the first years of the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Stanley 1868, 203), thus both before and after the period focussed upon here, and so must not be disregarded. The shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham was one of the most prominent shrines of the medieval period, attracting almost equal adoration to that of St Thomas Becket at Canterbury (cf. Finucane 1995, 196ff), while the list of *only* well-known Marian sites of veneration includes Canterbury, Ipswich, Doncaster, Caversham, Knaresborough, Worcester, Penrice, Westminster and Willesden (Finucane 1995, 196). This is without taking into consideration the cult of the Virgin's popularity in France (cf. Fassler 2010) or central Europe (cf. Webb 2001). Case sites housing female saints

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Wells 2013.

were not intentionally disregarded from the thesis data-set; the four churches simply housed male saints and so the above reasons were seen to overcome the fact that the main patron saints all transpired to be male. There are, however, secondary female saints housed within my case sites (e.g. the cult of Our Lady at Canterbury) and these are given careful consideration and reference where necessary.

The decision not to breach country borders was made for a number of reasons. Primarily, the heart of this study lies in the analysis of the relationship between the development of English ecclesiastical architecture and cult popularity on the creation of the pilgrimage experience. I was therefore aware that stylistic changes or changes in priorities in regards to cult sites may have occurred at very different times if consideration was given to sites in varying countries that may have significantly coloured my examination. Moreover, the archaeological and documentary evidence does not survive as well for many sites outside of England as for the sites chosen in this thesis.<sup>18</sup> Related to this was the substantial survival of the art and architectural cult infrastructures of the four case sites chosen which were of extreme archaeological significance in themselves and which had been devoid of scholarly attention in relation to pilgrimage. The research undertaken here contributes much to the knowledge of the churches, in some instances writing as well as rewriting their architectural histories or helping to define their uses in the past. The need for this type of analysis thus cemented the decision.

As I have chosen churches located throughout the geography of England, comparisons may be made of the doctrinal priorities of each institution in regards to the pilgrim visit via examination of the contexts, sanctioned liturgies and architectural and decorative evidence within each church. This is particularly significant for interpreting differences between the understanding of each participant during the services and processions often held on the days that pilgrims were allowed access to the shrine locales. It also provides the opportunity to assess local and regional similarities and distinctions between the architecture and aesthetic frameworks. Also, whether specific models were used in the formation of the styles and designs of the architectural and decorative cycles, if these were directly related to the intentions of patronage and, consequently, how these affected experience. Once again, this allowed for comparisons on a social and liturgical level.

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<sup>18</sup> The language barrier of foreign documentation may be considered another potential issue.

All research projects must be limited in their scope in order to ensure focus. The chronology I chose to examine (late 12<sup>th</sup> to mid 16<sup>th</sup> century) encompassed a vast proportion of medieval history. A further particular aim was therefore to dissolve the traditional attitude towards what constitutes the ‘medieval period’. I make no attempt to deny that technically my study thwarts the usual time-frame for what is typically considered as ‘late-medieval’ and extends into the period referred to in this country as Tudor or, more technically, ‘early modern/post-medieval’. However, I hope to prove that such restrictions cannot, and *should* not, be that simply imposed.

Initially, the terminus date for the study was 1530; however, this was extended to 1550 to include the major work on the fabric of St Neot. This also provided an ability to assess the impact (if only briefly) of the Tudor reformations on both the construction of a pilgrimage church and, more importantly, on the sensorial aspects of devotion. Such a broad time period was therefore required to make a full analysis of the construction of the physical settings of each cult. For example, St Thomas Becket’s tomb was created around 1190, yet the stained glass of St Neot was installed in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century. Key moments in religious, political, social and even economic history were therefore covered, such as social crisis, when competition between dioceses was prevailing, or when new theories of vision by theological scholars were emerging and the use of the senses was changing.

#### 2.6.1 THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL CHANGES ON PILGRIMAGE

Several key events affected the process of English daily life and impacted on medieval devotion, specifically pilgrimage, which had to be taken into consideration. The establishment of England’s patron saint as St George and, according to Vincent, his cult centre within Edward III’s re-use of Dover Castle in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, gave the country a new patriotic dynamic reaching more than the military population (Vincent 2011, 272–3). It also secured England’s position and dedication towards the saints for the entire country. Essentially, it gave England a new title.

The foundation of a patron saint came at a time when saints’ cults were flourishing. Then, the devastating outbreak of plague in 1348 was followed by successive countrywide cyclical pandemics between 1361–2 and 1387, and then another national set of outbreaks in 1390, 1399–1400 and 1405–06 (Vincent 2011, 338–9). These

outbreaks reduced the population by half and had a profound impact on building work, halting any construction or alteration in England for around fifty years. The Black Death was particularly detrimental to parish church building activity, rendering it virtually stagnant. Rising labour costs of the late 14<sup>th</sup> century were crippling following the demise of the population (Vincent 2011, 405). With the decline in population caused by the plague, inestimable social and economic changes were brought, leading to problems such as the 14<sup>th</sup>-century Peasants' Revolt amongst other circumstances, causing a feeling of nostalgia among both the ruling classes and populus. Consecutively, building trends followed this sentiment. Transformations in the Romanesque and then prevailing Gothic styles which filtered across from France occurred rather than rebuildings of cathedrals and churches erected by the Normans in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (Camille 1996, 31; Vincent 2011, 404–05). This was indeed a sign of the times. The most devastating event was evidently the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Henrician Reformation which wiped out pilgrimage and traditional devotion to the cults of saints, just ahead of the Wars of the Roses which, Lomas argued, caused the population to be directly affected by political warfare between 1444 and 1485 (in terms of economic hardship resulting from soldiers' wages and a lack of farmers as most men went off to fight) (Lomas 1996, 171–3). The destruction caused by the reforms is clear yet rebellion was evidently a recurrent aspect of the Tudor reigns.<sup>19</sup> Finally, I must note the profound consequences of John Wycliffe's actions in 1382. Wycliffe translated the bible into the vernacular in order to reprimand the church for its theatricality, wishing instead for the liturgy to return to simple scriptural teaching, bereft of the props of statuary, pilgrimage or relics (Vincent 2011, 384). Although it could be argued that his teachings led to Lollardy in England, even so, as a puritan creed, Wycliffe's insights had much influence throughout the country, penetrating the social elite as high up as the royal court (Vincent 2011, 384).

These events were particularly important for this study given their influence on the devotional behaviour of the period, but the localised intentions and needs of the institutions will be shown to have an equal/greater impact. The 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries marked an increase in the contact and interaction of devotional objects. The experience of individuals during the later medieval period was therefore very different to the earlier period when fewer individuals interacted during their devotion; a practice returned to

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<sup>19</sup> Cf. Hutton 2011, 67–76 for rebellion in Tudor reigns.

following the imprimatur of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Henrician Reformation which set to limit such devotional interaction (Blick and Gelfand 2011, xxxvi) (see chapter 6).

## 2.6.2 YORK MINSTER AND CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral were chosen as case sites as they house two of the most complete schemes of medieval stained glass in England and include detailed hagiographical cycles of their patron saints; one of whom was a very locally venerated saint and the other who was perhaps the most popular saint in the country for the majority of the Middle Ages.<sup>20</sup> They also allowed for a comparison of the architectural and decorative devotional campaigns of one major Northern and one major Southern pilgrimage church, and at different scales of analysis due to their varying religious functions: York being a secular minster and Canterbury, a Benedictine monastery.

A rich body of evidence related to lay and elite medieval devotional culture also survives from both cities. For example, both have extant texts relating to devotional instruction. At Canterbury we have one of the most infamous texts of the later medieval period: Desiderius Erasmus' satire, *Peregrinatio religionis ergo* (A pilgrimage for Religion's sake). Printed in 1566, the text relays his 1512–14 visits to the shrines of Our Lady of Walsingham and St Thomas Becket of Canterbury (Nichols 1849). Although unmistakably important as a visual description of the cathedral's composition and experience encountered by late 16<sup>th</sup>-century pilgrims, the text is a satire and so has to be taken at an 'objective length'. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* are also consulted wherein references provide significant detail, either on historical fact in relation to pilgrimage practice or protocol, or for relevant information on experiential description. Similarly, Margery Kempe visited York in the 15<sup>th</sup>-century (1413–33) and so her brief account of the church is useful (McAvoy 2003) – if only a little – for understanding the significance of the shrine during this period and the treatment of women within the Minster.

Perhaps more credible are the chronicles of John Stone (Connor 2010), William of Glastonbury (Woodruff 1927) and Dom Thomas Anselm, a warden of St Mary's altar in Canterbury's Undercroft in 1510–11 (Woodruff 1926, 159–71). Written by clerics, they provide vivid accounts of high-status visits to the shrine of St Thomas Becket (including

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<sup>20</sup> However, in relation to St William and York, it is wise to retain the following: '...in medieval Christendom [we] have to face the paradox that more often than not the spiritual and temporal power of a saint could be at its most formidable when restricted...to a particular town or region' (Dobson 2003, 37).

the aesthetic locale) and, accordingly, are invaluable sources for understanding the monarchical pilgrimage rituals of the later medieval period. Moreover, as reliable is the surviving 'Customary of the Shrine of St Thomas Becket' (Turner 1976), compiled in 1428 by two monks of the cathedral, which outlines in detail the duties of the two feretarians who acted as guardians of the martyr's shrine (one spiritual and one temporal). Antiquarian and secondary literature is just as rich. Willis's (1845), Stanley's (1868) and Scott-Robertson's (1880) architectural analyses are heavy in detail, as are Eveleigh Woodruff's examinations of the various financial accounts (1932; 1939). The usefulness of the shrine accounts for Canterbury (Treasurers', Priors' and feretrarian's) are limited even though they are the earliest and most complete set in England, continuing pretty consistently from 1198/9 to 1384/5 (cf. Nilson 1998 for full analysis). Although they provide a sense of the peaks and troughs in the shrine's popularity, and thus the impact of the various royal commissions on the infiltration of pilgrim numbers, specific royal gifts/patronage are not recorded and so sources directly related to the Crown are instead consulted for such details (see table on p67).

The documentary records are punctuated with references to visits made by royalty to both York and Canterbury throughout the medieval period. Although the documentation proffers that there were more frequent visits by royals to Canterbury than to York, there is a significant distinction between the types of commissions afforded by the monarchs to each church's fabric. At Canterbury, offerings tended to be more materialistic, with jewels, plates, money and statues serving in place of full structures, whereas at York, monarchs contributed entire building campaigns and often embossed the patronised areas with their own symbols.

It is clear that Canterbury's reputation as the English premier cathedral church which housed the foremost saint's shrine in England made it an appropriate place for monarchs to express their devotion and to mark major religious occasions. Following the approval endowed to Becket's shrine in 1179 resulting from Louis VII's visit, no monarch between Henry II and Henry VIII failed to appreciate the significance of St Thomas and Canterbury's reputation, meaning that between the early 13<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century, visits to the cathedral by royalty were a regular occurrence (Dobson 2002, 142).

Royal pilgrimage to York Minster was less frequent than Canterbury. Apart from that of Margery Kempe, there are few visitor records to the shrine of St William. Additionally,

there is very little evidence of offerings made at York apart from the oblations section in the forty-five fabric accounts surviving from 1359/60 to 1543/4 (YML, E/3/1-45). Unfortunately, the receipts are not grouped separately and so all sources/stations of offerings fall under this heading.<sup>21</sup> Appendix I provides detailed records of medieval/Tudor royal pilgrimage visits to the sites including dates and offerings given.

Although many scholars have considered the pious propensities of individual monarchs,<sup>22</sup> there have been very few examinations of royal pilgrimage as a general subject. Nicholas Vincent's (2002) study of the Angevin kings is the only study that stands as an in-depth investigation into the single subject of pilgrimage in order to uncover further thoughts regarding kingly sacrality. Yet, the visits of sovereigns to the major pilgrimage churches of England are better documented than most of the common lay visitors. The pomp and ceremony of royal pilgrimage emphasised the separation between monarchs and their subjects; there was nothing egalitarian or unmediated between regal displays and the on-looking lay spectators. Monarchs also tended to make more substantial offerings ranging from elaborately gilded riches and jewels, to commissions of entire chapels – a stark contrast to the ephemeral wax votives in shapes of infected or broken limbs most commonly proffered by the masses of lay pilgrims.

It must be noted that 'Even a king did not have a free hand in determining how or where a gift or money would be used' (Norton 1997, 57). An analysis of the royal contributions and experience of these two cult churches will go some way to understanding how far this statement is true. The royal influence afforded through cult commissions can tell us a great deal about a site and its development. My investigation is not concerned with the particular intentions behind the construction of the cult infrastructures of York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral by the large number of monarchs who contributed to the respective fabrics. Neither will consideration centre around the political or economic propaganda behind the schemes – comprehensive analyses of the pious implications of many medieval rulers are already abundant. Rather, the main premise is to consider the interaction between the visual and tangible campaigns of saints and their patrons, in addition to the construction of the churches

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<sup>21</sup> Guild offerings to the tomb are noted separately (YML, E/3/12).

<sup>22</sup> Saul 1997a; 1997b for Richard II, Webster 2011 for John and Henry III, Ormrod 2012 for Edward III, Carpenter 1996; 2007 for Henry III, Harvey 1971; Wilson 1997; and Dobson 1996 for Richard II, Vincent 2001; 2002; 2005 for Henry III, and Schnitker 2004 for Margaret of York.

without direct royal input, in order to understand how this eclecticism informed the wider aesthetic vision of the pilgrimage routes.

### 2.6.3 DURHAM CATHEDRAL-PRIORY

The Benedictine Cathedral-Priory of Durham was chosen as the case site for chapter 4 for a multitude of reasons. The *Rites of Durham*, written in 1593 by an unknown author, are an account of all extant monuments, glass, architecture and processions prior to the Reformation (Fowler 1903). Without this text some of the most significant decorative and architectural masterpieces of our medieval ecclesiastical history would be lost and so its importance cannot be underestimated. Still, as the text was written to commemorate the cathedral following the destruction of the Reformation, the author may have overstated his description and so one must be cautious of its validity, particularly its accuracy and idealism.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the surviving antiquarian texts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries can tell us a great deal about how the building looked during this period and are predominantly reliable in terms of description; most notably as they include more detailed descriptions of the windows, some of which contained medieval glass (Hutchinson 1787; Raine 1828; Billings 1843). These accounts also feature a handful of engravings and drawings of this glass and thus form the only visual evidence for the compositions.

Durham also possesses the longest and most complete set of feretrar's accounts of any cathedral, extending, almost continuously, from 1376 to 1461, and an additional sporadic set of entries from 1480 to 1538 (DDCA, 'Feretrars' Rolls'). The offerings derive distinctly from the pyx of St Cuthbert located at the shrine. This data will be used to understand the development of the construction of the pilgrimage infrastructure in relation to visitation numbers.

Finally, both Durham and Canterbury had imposed on them the customaries of Archbishop Lanfranc's *Decreta Lanfranci* and, accordingly, comparisons may be made between how these liturgical requirements impacted on the physical structures which housed them (Klukas 1983, 136–71).

### 2.6.4 ST NEOT, CORNWALL

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<sup>23</sup> The author was clearly writing from memory/hearsay given the date of publish.

Located within the second largest parish in Cornwall, St Neot parish church was initially chosen for having the second largest surviving scheme of medieval stained glass of any parish church in the country, second only to St Mary's, Fairford (Gloucestershire). Yet the church was also innovative in itself given that the decorative elements of the fabric were funded primarily by the parochial population. The glass was certainly funded by specific groups, such as the young men and wives of the parish and even possibly a group of miners, all of whom appear in the compositions (Orme 2007, 96, 99). This provided my study with the opportunity for distinction between the experience of males and females at one particular location.

After researching the substantial amount of scholarship existing on the glass (Rushforth 1927; Doble 1929; Mattingly 2000; 2001; 2003; 2010), I then discovered the lack of scholarship on the cult of St Neot (Doble 1929, 1).<sup>24</sup> Particularly overlooked was the alleged *c.*14<sup>th</sup>-century 'shrine' of the saint (Doble 1929, 26), and the wall painting adorning its niche, in addition to analyses of the building's chronology. The church was created into the building we see today predominantly between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the early 16<sup>th</sup> century – the termination of the 'medieval period'. The glass dates from between 1480 and 1530 (the latest recorded inscription is 1529), and the St Neot window to 1528 (Rushforth 1927, 150–90; Mattingly 2000, 10).

The church is particularly interesting for the wider study of ecclesiastical history as the terminus of construction fell *after* the Henrician Reformation including, most notably, the reduction of saints' days in 1536 and prohibition of pilgrimage, relic veneration and offering to images elicited by the royal injunctions of 1536–8 (Whiting 1995, 203). But, more specifically, the construction took place just before the Western Prayer Book Rebellion of 1549, therefore proving that collective piety still remained and survived the first and subsequent iconoclastic reforms in this area. John Leland, visiting the county in 1542, did imply that pilgrimage had discontinued, as in reference to Our Lady in the Park, Liskeard, he noted, 'where *was* wont to be great pilgrimage' (1907–10, I, 208, own emphasis). The shaping of the parish church and creation of its experience via sensory stimuli at the same time as successive Tudor monarchs were attempting to remove them from religion, highlights just how the church building serves as a tangible manifestation of the formation of a unique local religious culture through a combination

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<sup>24</sup> Although a local saint, his shrine was reportedly visited by King Alfred whom Neot was a relative and counsellor to.

of the obligations, intentions, and concerns of both individual and collective mentalities, based on the institution of the parish. It is a prime example of how a parish church was created, developed and, most significantly, endured the most conflicting and devastating time in English religious history. Apart from a few displacements, the glass has remained entirely extant, and the shrine itself is still structurally sound. In fact, most of St Neot's glazing was aided by the cooperation of the whole parish during the time of Revd. Robert Tubb (*fl.* 1508–44) whose incumbency almost matches the reign of Henry VIII exactly (Bourke 1986, 63). The outcome of this situation – the creation of the internal infrastructure of the parish church building – demonstrates that for this lay community, religion was much more than an ideological concept; rather, it was a set of activities and prescribed behaviour (French 2001b, 17). Accordingly, the church may be seen as a witness to the reactions of a parish towards the successive 16<sup>th</sup>-century reformation(s) and their resulting actions (as reflected in the church building itself). This provides a great amount of information on how the collective identity of a parochial community evolved and coped with such fundamental change. St Neot is a leading study for the practices of post-Reformation devotion at parish level and an example of 'collective spiritual and social aspiration' (Roffey 2006, 21).

In consequence, St Neot is the anomaly of the case sites in that the tapestry of evidence-types used previously is unavailable. The earliest surviving documentary record relating to the church is the register of baptisms beginning 1549, but the source most *relevant* to its fabric is the churchwardens' accounts which do not commence until 1602 and throughout give vague, sporadic and inconsistent entries (CRO P162). Registers of the Bishops of Exeter (1257–1455)<sup>25</sup> were consulted for references to the church, particularly any accounts of money that may have been used to develop the shrine structure itself yet, once again, these provided minimal information, but the little information was used where appropriate. The hagiography (largely dating from the 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> century) clearly outlines the many *vitae* of St Neot and his first resting place in Cornwall, yet the saint disappears from the records in the high Middle Ages.<sup>26</sup>

There are also no offering accounts extant for the church even though the architectural heritage of the saint appears well established by the survival of the church and its shrine, a holy well, and chapel(s) dedicated to the saint. Examination is therefore

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<sup>25</sup> The counties of Devon and Cornwall were under the Diocese of Exeter until 1876.

<sup>26</sup> See Appendix I.

predominantly archaeologically-based at St Neot and thus the interpretation of the chronological development of the church fabric is key as the conclusions rest on it almost entirely. In addition to documentary records, we are also unfortunate not to have any contemporary visitor accounts like those of Durham, Canterbury, and York. This is, however, the only case site of this thesis with extant remains of a supposed shrine structure. The original appearance of the other three shrines have been virtually obliterated from the history books, yet here we have physical evidence for a cult that may be archaeologically examined in a practical manner. An understanding of the history of medieval pilgrimage to St Neot is thus based exclusively on various pieces of surviving archaeological evidence and site comparanda with interjections of piecemeal documentary evidence used to uphold the argument where relevant. This makes the chapter a rather innovative case, while it illustrates just how significant buildings archaeological analyses can be in reconstructing our heritage without the aid of documentation which, when present, scholars can often rely too heavily on. This is one good example where the archaeology had to speak for itself in order to compensate for such limitations.

St Neot provided me with a case site of intrigue and mystery surrounding both the church construction and the hagiography. I believe it requires, as much as it desires, an in-depth analysis in order to understand both the chronology of the church's construction, as well as the history of St Neot's cult. Thus, chapter 5 forms the first detailed archaeological examination of the church of St Neot and the reputed shrine of the saint. For that reason, the significance of the conclusions cannot be underestimated and the chapter stands as an important contribution to church archaeology in itself, as well as to the wider context of this thesis.

## **2.7 EVIDENCE – DATA AND SOURCES**

### **2.7.1 RESEARCH METHODS**

Evidence from contemporary documentary accounts and from the two- and three-dimensional imagery that adorned churches is particularly important. Thus, my research strategy had two parts: first, to draw a detailed picture of the construction and development of the architectural and decorative schemes at each location in order to compile a rich and varied data set. The assemblage of data included the entirety of the buildings: the interior and exterior, furnishing, paintings, textiles, and documents etc., which together formed the three categories of evidence: archaeological, material and

documentary. The second part of the strategy was to combine this array of evidence into an interpretation of the buildings that allowed for a reconstruction of the sensory experience such locations provided the medieval pilgrim, which was undertaken using the theoretic-analytical methods detailed above. This marks a progression from the traditional practice of buildings archaeology as examinations of architectural space often stop at the first part of my methodology.

Existing data sets were approached in an entirely new way. The period and data set were chosen for three reasons. First, the richness and quality of surviving archaeological remains, and the profusion and detail of contemporary illustrative and documentary material – particularly royal itineraries, church records and pilgrimage accounts. Secondly, this data set allowed for the development of an approach and synthesis that will resonate with scholars dealing with cognate issues in different cultures and periods. Thirdly, although the affective property of the individual components of ‘pilgrimage architecture’ schemes has attracted much attention in the past, the majority of this work has focussed on the physical architectural settings of individual saints located throughout the Christian East, or architectural patterns relating to the growth of saintly cults from before the first millennium (Brown 1981; Crook 2000; Yasin 2009). This research moves beyond previous work by considering how the architectural and decorative elements, in addition to the material aspects of the settings, acted *together* as an overall assemblage (*gesamtkunstwerk*),<sup>27</sup> whilst illustrating that the relationship between the built environment and people was dynamic and interdependent (McClain 2012, 143): an account which is yet to be written.

Although the document is a vital source of our historical past, we cannot ignore the actual ‘nature of history and the pace of material culture in its making’ (Austin 1990, 10). The need for an evidential consideration of the pilgrimage elements of a church *in toto* stems from the idea that,

To select only monuments suppresses at one stroke the reality of the land and that of its people, it accounts for nothing of the present, that is, nothing historical, and, as a consequence, the monuments themselves become undecipherable, therefore *senseless* (Barthes 1972, 76, own emphasis).

A holistic examination of the totality of the materials available for analysis was undertaken to draw out the ‘attention’ and narrative issues within the available and

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<sup>27</sup> A unified work of art.

produced repertoire of data-media. The production of multiple narratives/discourses helps to highlight the subjective nature of human experience in addition to its diversity, therefore forming a large body of evidence to aid the interpretation of multiple collective mentalités and thus the reconstruction of perception and experience. More simply, the more information and variety of sources considered, the better chance we have to understand the past: integration is key. I see this study as an advocator of the need for buildings archaeology to understand the ‘stories’ behind a building. By failing to do so through the application of practical methodologies, the architecture and its component elements become constrained, while the past inhabitants of these spaces are lost forever.

### 2.7.2 ‘THICK DESCRIPTION’: METHOD OF APPROACH FOR DATA COLLECTION

Economics, the reception of images and space, the function of space and its furnishings, as well as politics, history and liturgy, are all critical facets in our understanding of pilgrimage architecture as functioning spaces. Evidence of which my data set comprises was gathered using a post-processual mindset to expose the collective mentalité of specific social groups, building upon Clifford Geertz’s (1973) notion of ‘thick description’ or ‘web of significance’:

the placement of cultural products or signs within a multiplicity of complex structures – which might be social, economic, religious, ethical, aesthetic, mythological – in such a way as to suggest their fullness of meaning within the public domain (Binski 2004, xi).

Likened to ‘interpretative archaeology’ and the practice of ethnography, the term attempts to describe human behaviour as well as its context of social practices and discourses. Essentially, it seeks to expose the difference between the observed and the experienced. It aims to sense the emotions, thoughts and perceptions of the participant’s experience; not only their meaning and interpretations within their own culture, but also their intentions and the evolution/development of their actions. Detail, context, emotion, and webs of social relationships that join persons are examined; it establishes the significance of an experience including voices, feelings, actions, and meanings of interacting individuals (Denzin 2001, 83). ‘Thick description builds up a clear picture of the individuals and groups in the context of their culture and the setting in which they live’ (Ponterotto 2006, 541). The approach allows the archaeologist and the reader a ‘way into’ a past society; to expose its semiotic cultural and periodical context.

For sensual culture studies, the method can be used to understand ‘how a culture’s sensory resources were used by different people at particular places and time, but also reflecting on the significance these had for those people’ (Skeates 2010, 6–7). Through an analysis of the material, archaeological and documentary evidence, a similar holistic approach was applied to the data in order to challenge how broader social, religious, doctrinal, economic and even architectural effects, influenced by the veneration of saints, created the total sensory experience of the pilgrim. A consideration of how the senses were socially constructed and how the sensory discourses of the social groups relate to the wider context of status, identity, material culture and physical experience, was undertaken. This included a consideration of how and why the medieval senses differ from modern western uses and definitions, and thus how they were taught, controlled, used and performed. Finally, how the medieval sensory order was understood across society, including how it shaped identities, practices, materials and, most importantly, an experience, was considered.

### 2.7.3 FABRIC

The chief sources upon which this study relies are the churches themselves: their stone, glass, altars, screens, paintings, shrines, and objects. Primary focus is on the devotional ‘furniture’ to borrow a term from Paul Binksi (1995, 8). The architecture is examined in relation to its contents which are viewed as the background or ‘encasement’; a main body of evidence rather than an additional. Other sensory aspects of the pilgrimage experience will also be included in so far as they can be reconstructed.

Examining the fabric of the churches formed the first stage of my methodology. Unfortunately, a significant problem lies in the fact that a large amount of this material no longer survives or what is extant has been severely altered and modified over the centuries. Due to the complexity of the objectives, the approach required several stages of application. The first involved reconstructing a visual picture of the pilgrimage schemes of the churches. Throughout the summer months of 2010/11, extensive investigations were undertaken at each church, with sporadic visits to York and Durham occurring throughout the year (being in geographical reach). However, in order to give an equal amount of analysis to each site, and to reflect the small amount of times pilgrims would have visited such sites on peregrination, I made the conscious decision to visit each site a similar amount of times. This limited the opportunity to gain too much of a close relationship with a particular site and less of another and, to ultimately,

try and put myself in the medieval pilgrim's shoes as much as was physically possible. In addition, I also aimed to visit each church at different times of the day to assess the differentiations in sensory impact provided by the variations in temperature, light etc. All visits for the purpose of sensory analysis were undertaken during the day in order to gain a realistic experience of the medieval pilgrim who would also have primarily visited the church during the daytime. However, I did visit St Neot during the late evening on a few occasions to photograph the shrine structure and wall painting in the most appropriate conditions for the use of the infrared camera.

The investigations involved recording and interpreting the structural architectural history of the buildings through the use of personal and professional surveys, stylistic/construction-phase analyses, and extant documentary evidence. As such, a large amount of knowledge is contributed to each case site, in some instances forming the first architectural history as well as identifying specific past devotional uses.

An example investigation procedure and results are as follows: in August 2011, the author spent time at St Neot church with UV lighting equipment to see if there was potential for more detailed study of the shrine's wall painting remains, as well as an examination of the stone structure itself. Previous scholarship identified it as either the shrine of St Neot or an Easter Sepulchre (Doble 1929, 18, 34, 45; Loftus Brocks 1877, 445; Pevsner and Radcliffe 1970, 197). This made determining the subject matter of the painting ever more significant in identifying, and therefore proving, the hypothesis for the original function of the structure as St Neot's shrine. Valuable initial results were obtained from the painted recess with a normal camera lens (18–55mm), but close and distance-range analysis of the painting using a UV lamp (400w) added little new evidence, with only slightly better results obtained from a small 40w UV strobe lamp. Little of the pigment fluoresced, and no further details were recordable. Further negligible results were also obtained using an infra-red camera and so were discarded.

The second stage of the methodology comprised analysing the particular sensory elements of the buildings: how the particular pilgrimage art and architecture impacted to form the pilgrims' experience. A certain anthropological element was needed for this aspect of my approach. To truly attempt to reconstruct a pilgrim's encounter with architectural space, a phenomenological approach was required. Although I am aware that the medieval church as it stands today is vastly different to how it looked in the

Middle Ages, I felt that, crucial to my study, were my own encounters with the spaces and their material, decorative and architectural aspects. Following Jill Stevenson's line of approach (2010, 71), I too used the divine spaces as 'means of historical inquiry' in themselves. This aspect of my methodology involved walking through the churches, following the medieval pilgrimage routes, examining light and sight lines, stopping and genuflecting at each station and subsequent shrine or rood/altar screens. More specifically, I undertook the following methods:

- ♦ An initial visit (before any detailed examination of the archaeology or literature) following what I first thought was the medieval route around the churches and stopping at the pilgrim stations. Here I noted what sensory stimuli impacted me in the modern day.
- ♦ A further visit with a clearer idea of the route taken – this visit was used to formulate and determine a definite and clear route for each participant, and to understand the archaeological development of the sites over the medieval period.
- ♦ Final visits to understand the sensory aspects of the visit – which sense was impacted when and where, whilst following my interpretation of the medieval route.

Although the intention of this study was to formulate an innovative methodology for an, as yet, under-developed, emergent field of archaeology, an inherent aspect was also to establish a well-defined framework through which this could be achieved. In practice, this thesis combines fresh and revolutionary methods and theoretical ideas with traditional, well-established approaches normally associated with the disciplines of architectural and art history. To understand/reconstruct the sensory experience of each site, special 'inventories' were created to record the sensory stimulants at different temporal and spatial scales (these are contained in Appendix II). These took the form of a brief summary list of the sensations (whether visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory and tactility/haptically and thus highlighting their synaesthetic interplay) experienced at the most significant pilgrimage stations, for example, the main shrines, altars, chantries, windows and wall paintings. Due to the significant number of alterations and additions that took place within the majority of the sites, the assessment needed to cover a long period of time so that diachronic patterns and changes in the sensory experience could be identified. The lists were compiled when the challenges to different sensory orders were most obvious – the later medieval period; the time in which the constructed

narratives were also set. The intention of this exercise was to compare the sensory infrastructures of the original medieval settings, which are often only revealed in the documentary accounts, with the underlying religious discourses provided by the surviving archaeology of the church building itself, wall paintings, stained glass etc. – any visible aestheticism that could confirm or perhaps shed light on the medieval pilgrimage practices and behaviour of different collective groups.<sup>28</sup> In order to make the *surviving* sensory aspects easily identifiable in the inventories, the stimuli only known through documentary evidence or archaeological analyses and comparanda with other sites, are italicised.

Due to differences in the functional occupations of each church, they are products of both their period and of the practices that occurred within them. Yet there are two problems that resonate throughout all of my case sites: the 16<sup>th</sup>-century (and mid 17<sup>th</sup>-century) Reformations and the 18<sup>th</sup>-/19<sup>th</sup>-century restorations. The first event particularly, had a significant impact on church fabric. Whitewashing of devotional images, destruction of shrines, removal of church accounts; the occupations and cults of some churches were virtually deleted from the historical record. Where devotional ‘furniture’ did survive, it was often reordered for new liturgical priorities, or even secular needs. Remaining fabric was turned into chantry/family chapels and some saintly shrines were turned into founder’s/benefactor’s tombs containing the bones of a prominent elite, yet secular benefactor. Original medieval arrangements can be very difficult to apprehend.

Perhaps even more destructive were the late 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century ‘restorations’ (at least this was their intention), which transformed the interiors of many churches. The real problem with this phase of change was that rather than repairing damaged or decaying fabric (conservation or preservation), they sought to promote the art of mimesis or ‘remaking...church fabric in the image of an idealised past, involving reordering of architectural elements bringing them into an artificial harmony’ (Masinton 2005, 25). Accordingly, it is difficult to separate and identify the Victorian modifications from the original medieval elements as their attempt was to ‘copy’ or follow the style and principles of the past. An example of such ‘Reformational rearrangements’ can be seen at Durham Cathedral (Fowler 1903).<sup>29</sup> Due to the

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<sup>28</sup> The inventories’ content is based on an individual’s opinion and so are subjective accounts. This was countered (as much as possible) by consulting contemporary visitation accounts for any anomalies.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Moorhouse 2008; Newton 2008 for impact of the Henrician Reformation.

destruction and damage caused by the Reformation and consecutive 17<sup>th</sup>-, late 18<sup>th</sup>-/19<sup>th</sup>-century ecclesiastical zeal, the cathedral contains little of its significant medieval pilgrimage art or architecture (Raine 1828; Coldstream and Draper 1980; Rollason *et al.* 1994). In fact, the entirety of the extant medieval glass now fills three smaller windows in the Galilee Chapel (Fowler 1903; Haselock and O'Connor 1980). In succession, the magnificent jewel encrusted, marble shrine of St Cuthbert no longer stands, with only the slab top signifying its original location. The fact that the documentation describes the Durham 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup>-century alterations as 'acts of vandalism' (usually in reference to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century 'improvements' by architects George Nicholson and James Wyatt), elucidates the popular feeling towards them. Only careful study of the fabric in conjunction with written and pictorial historical evidence can reveal the extent to which the forces of history and accident have altered a church.

As such, documents from the medieval as well as later centuries are required to uncover the original material traces of the pilgrimage infrastructure at the churches as well as historiographic and antiquarian sources, particularly in relation to the church fabric. Care must also be taken when evaluating evidence of pilgrimage through material donations, offerings and commissions as the documentation may be incomplete or systematic, or may not even have survived.

#### 2.7.4 DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

The fabric of the case sites does not comprise the solitary source material; it cannot stand alone as a witness to its own reconstruction and interpretation (Masinton 2005, 24). Following the convention of the medieval period – i.e. the use of writing as the ultimate recording device and, in essence, technology – I began my analyses with the most evident sources available to me: historical documentation and testamentary accounts, whilst being mindful of the problems that occur with documentary evidence, outlined below. The documentary evidence was approached with caution and its validity ascribed accordingly to complement and enhance the conclusions provided by the archaeology. This combinatory approach was a conscious effort to highlight, yet abolish these problems.

With regards to the ephemeral practices of the royal pilgrimage spectacle, material remains are virtually non-existent. However, supporting the archaeological evidence were a variety of documentary and pictorial records, including

Feretrars/Treasurers/Priors/Sacrists' accounts, fabric rolls, royal inventories, household/chamberlain/wardrobe accounts, close/liberate/patent rolls, issues of the exchequer, contemporary visitation accounts, and museum collections. Virtually all of these primary sources were studied in their original manuscript state (the Canterbury accounts were consulted but I felt that there were more than satisfactory published translations and edits of the texts to suffice) and provided a great deal of information; however, the descriptions in the royal records are much more formal with offerings serving in place of the ritualistic customaries of the visits themselves.

SITE	SOURCE
<b>Durham</b>	Feretrar/Sacrists' rolls, Durham Cathedral Muniments
<b>York</b>	Fabric rolls, J. Raine's publications, Margery Kempe
<b>Canterbury</b>	Treasurer's/Prior's/Sacrist's accounts, John stone's Chronicle, Chronicle of William of Glastonbury, Erasmus, Chaucer
<b>St Neot, Cornwall</b>	Churchwarden's accounts, Registers of the Bishops of Exeter, the Lysons' accounts, Archdeaconal accounts
<b>Royal pilgrimage</b>	Royal inventories; household, chamberlain and wardrobe accounts; close, liberate and patent rolls; issues of the exchequer. (PRO – National Archives and British Library)

A large majority of additional primary sources, such as contemporary documentary and literary accounts, were consulted throughout, primarily when of significance to the case sites or regions. Various accounts from other regions and sites have also been used to support arguments or aid interpretation. It must be noted that, in the general sense, pilgrimage is remarkably ill recorded. Literary documents are extant in small numbers, such as contemporary narrative accounts and guide books, most notably the Pilgrim's Guide section of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century *Codex Calixtinus* which details pilgrim routes through France and Spain to Santiago de Compostela (Stones *et al* 1998), and the itineraries of Sir John Mandeville (Seymour 1993) and John Leland (Toulmin Smith 1907–10), in addition to popular literary fiction (ie. Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*). These texts provide details of personal pilgrimages to various shrine churches, descriptions of routes taken, the construction of shrines and, most importantly for this study, the experience of the authors (PRO for monarchical records; Erasmus 1875; Fowler 1903; Kempe 2003; Schleif and Schier 2009). Finally, secondary sources, deriving from archaeological, architectural and art historical analyses, were used to

contextualise this information (Colgrave 1938; 1939; 1944–5; BL MSS Add. 39943 and Add. MS 9462). These were consulted together with much prescriptive literature on authorities such as hagiography, wall paintings and stained glass.

As a whole, this documentation was used for information on how the sites originally looked, including shrine structures, glass compositions and pilgrimage routes. For the lesser researched of my case sites, e.g. St Neot, secondary documentary records provided insights into construction, alterations or repairs. Combining this with archaeological analyses, I was able to deduce the original layout and design of the buildings. Numerous references to pilgrimage offerings at the various shrines and altars of three of the sites are also located in the accounts, including detailed records of gifts given to fabric funds by more elite donors. These were used as part of the analysis, where appropriate, although it must be noted that in the large repertoire of materials consulted, not one medieval find can definitively be attributed to the cult of St Cuthbert, and only a handful of finds actually survive from the entire north east.<sup>30</sup> Additionally, the *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi* (CVMA) archive was consulted for the composition/date of the glass, and detailed fabric recordings undertaken of the sites.

Previous analyses of the sites' documentary accounts – e.g. account rolls – have overlooked the significant relationship between historical patterns of visitation and the changing aspects of shrine architecture and surrounding locales. My contention is that we need to go further with the data to consider the human use and experience of the constructed sensory environment of the church in relation to its variability over spaces and over time – the *habitus*. This cultural interpretational approach, although conjectural and, of course, subjective yet extremely significant for understanding our past, is based on the premise that a study of the medieval church is not complete without inclusion of the human, ideological and artistic significances within which it was constructed.

There are several problems with using documentary evidence in order to understand past social discourses and meaning. Documents may have been written from elitist perspectives or subjected to acts of bias, colouration or to centuries of interpretation

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<sup>30</sup> This included an unpublished assemblage of 3000+ objects removed from the River Wear by Gary Bankhead. In 2012, he discovered a possible 14<sup>th</sup>-century Cuthbertine pectoral cross pilgrim badge, but its authority is conjectural. A medieval ampulla was also found in Spring 2013 which, based on size, appears to date from the late-medieval period (all pers. comm).

and/or reconstruction (cf. Fairclough 1992), particularly visitation accounts or testamentary evidence. ‘Like all medieval written records [... they are] subject to the accidents of time and survival’ (Masinton 2007, 26); simply, they both inform and constrain (Austin 1990, 11). Answering the research questions posed at the beginning of this thesis would not be possible by analysing the documentary sources alone. Many are composed purely of descriptive accounts of offerings, names of priors, feretrars etc., or lists of materials; the majority of which contain significant gaps or only sporadic entries. Canterbury houses some of the most complete set of shrine accounts of all the sites included in this thesis. However, it would be unhelpful to list the accounts in their entirety as although they cover the period between 1198/9 and 1384/5, they are broken down into offerings made at each consecutive devotional station within the cathedral and contain significant gaps (Nilson 1998, 147). Inconsistencies and vagueness of churchwardens’ accounts and similar ecclesiastical literature meant that although chronological occurrences and developments are evident, we are only left with half of the picture and therefore it is difficult to understand their meaning over the *longue durée*. Yet combining what separately may be useless documentation with broader archaeological analyses allows an expansion or further assessment of this contemporary documentation and aids conclusions on what is being expressed ‘in-between the lines’ – the cultural meanings inherent within the buildings.

No source is wholly complete or can act as a purely unbiased objective record of the past. Still, contemporary and secondary literary, as well as historical accounts, remained secondary and were not used to ‘fill in the gaps’ created by the material remains. They instead complemented and enhanced the understanding provided by the archaeology. This evidence was used to assist interpretation and thus viewed as a product of the age in which it was produced. I must note that in some specific cases, particularly the investigation of Durham Cathedral, the documentary evidence (*The Rites of Durham*) had to be given almost equal consideration due to the significant impact that the Reformation and later alterations had on the fabric. We are left with very little of the medieval pilgrimage infrastructure as the key pieces are missing and so need some help to solve the overall puzzle. Unfortunately, it is difficult to evaluate this change of intention in relation to the visitation patterns of pilgrims as the feretrar’s records (which contain the offerings made to the shrine) only begin in 1376, far later than when St Cuthbert’s new shrine was constructed.

## 2.8 PRESENTATION OF DATA

In order to amalgamate the archaeological, material and documentary data collated during the period of research into an appropriate written and visual form, several methods were used. Stemming from the theoretical perspective outlined in the formulation of research aims and my methodological approach, and the evidence gathered from the sensory inventories, in order to ‘bring to life’ the perceptual experience of each participatory group chosen, short narratives conclude each chapter. Additionally, the narratives draw together the key findings and distil the observations of each chapter. The tapestry of evidence used is woven together to create invented descriptive narratives from past visitors, highlighting the differences in perception and lived experience, in opposition to studies which have provided only impersonal analyses of structures as revealed through archaeological excavation. These outline the reconstructed sensory journey of the protagonist(s) as provided by the art and architectural frameworks along the pilgrimage routes within the interiors of the sites. This descriptive device – inspired by Skeates’ (2010) narratives of the Prehistoric Maltese sensescape and Johnson’s (2002, 144–54) ‘tour’ perspective of Kenilworth Castle – was employed to construct a better sense of the sensory stimuli encountered, to convey detailed archaeological and architectural information, and to produce an innovative examination of the medieval pilgrimage church through an interpretation and analysis of the available historical, archaeological and material evidence. The third-person perspective was deliberately used to describe the experience witnessed rather than feelings or emotional nuances so as not to confine the vocabulary to personalised or individual testimonies.

Digital photographs of the locations provide the clearest method of illustrating decorative and architectural aspects. As such, full photographic surveys were made of each location with scales to show the proportions of the sites;<sup>31</sup> however, I had to consider the limitations of contemporary images of the sites and thus the significant losses to the fabric. A large proportion of the pilgrimage infrastructure discussed in my examinations has been wiped from the church interiors, most significantly the shrines themselves, and so I had to evaluate the best way of reconstructing depictions of the medieval ‘look’ of the sites. After reviewing the current literature on pilgrimage art and architecture, the most detailed and striking device used to make a visual record of the original designs was through recreating them in reconstruction drawings (see plates).

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<sup>31</sup> As is the convention in representation of stained glass panels, no scale is given to denote their size.

Sarah Blick's (2005) drawn image of St Thomas Becket's shrine was, although perhaps not technically or perspectively sound, beautifully illustrated and showed the key decorative and structural detail required to convey the sensory interaction provided to the medieval pilgrim. Similar illustrations were made by J C Wall in *Shrines of British Saints* (1905). Using these drawings as frameworks, I adopted a similar approach to illustrating the shrines and their surrounding locales of St Neot and St Cuthbert (no longer extant)<sup>32</sup> by combining evidence gathered from archaeological remains and documentary evidence, including descriptions of their initial creation, together with contemporary photographic images. This was then used to make critical assumptions on their medieval design and form. Where lack of evidence pre-empted any substantial knowledge, personal judgment was enforced to create the compositions through comparisons with similar contemporary structures. The drawings act as significant tools in helping to reconstruct the sensory experience as visually seeing the sacred structures aids understanding of how the synaesthetic environments were created and used.

As the significance of the sensory interaction of the sites lies in the details, the use of computer-aided techniques (CAD) was avoided for the reconstruction drawings. The latter are used to accompany, not overshadow the narrative descriptions and textual analyses in order to provide the reader with the sensory journey made by the pilgrim through the sites. They are therefore to be used for impressionistic purposes in correspondence with the narrative passages. I believe that software such as CAD is unable to convey the detailed potential sensory environments and instead would have conveyed an overtly scientific appearance.

Illustrations and Plates referred to in the text are presented in a separate volume (II), while data records of the case sites (cult/pilgrimage history including royal visits/dates) form Appendix I, and the sensory inventories: Appendix II (volume I). A location map of the sites referred to is provided towards the beginning of the illustrations.

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<sup>32</sup> Drawings of these sites only were undertaken as substantial images of St Thomas Becket's and St William of York's shrines are already extant and so my versions would have made little contribution.



# 3

## ‘A CULT OF MAGNIFICENCE’: GREAT SHRINES THROUGH THE EYES OF THE KING

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to prove that the patronage of pilgrimage schemes was intended solely to provide a suitably grand setting for a saint’s shrine. Motives were complex, stemming from the involvement of a number of patrons. When such patronage derived from the Crown, devotion was only one aspect of a wider variety of complex religious and political intentions (Binski 1995, 1, 4). This chapter will argue that a full understanding of medieval pilgrimage cannot be gained without consideration of reigning monarchs due to the integral part that sovereigns played in constructing not only the cults themselves, but more notable for this study, their aesthetic and physical settings – a product of their individual fervour for particular saints. Monarchs endowed great amounts in commissioning works at cult sites as ‘votive interaction was regarded as necessary for English sovereigns’ (Blick 2011, 52). An extension of this ‘spectacular’ devotion was the building within which such events occurred. This royal patronage became extensions – tangible manifestations – of their extreme devotion to particular saints: their ‘acts’ or perhaps, more appropriately, ‘art’ of piety.

Neither York Minster nor Canterbury Cathedral can be categorised as singularly constructed schemes by the commission of an individual monarch. Yet a large proportion of the churches’ pilgrimage infrastructures was certainly created through building projects supported by successive monarchs.<sup>33</sup> This chapter seeks to understand how various royal patrons developed and manipulated the decorative and architectural schemes for their own needs, ideological and pious agendas. Essentially, it aims to uncover how such artistic contributions affected and influenced their visits. One question that will run throughout will be whether monarchical commissions resulted in

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<sup>33</sup> It is difficult to term the art/architecture as ‘schemes’ or ‘programmes’ as although various areas were conceived as one design, numerous elite contributions led to a conglomeration of motifs, styles and meanings.

a more personal royal pilgrimage experience. The aim is thus not to present a functionalist interpretation of patronage of the most significant royal cults and shrines. Rather, an investigation of royal sanctity and sacral experience, and the ways in which they impressed upon the church buildings and the associated devotional artefacts contained within, will be undertaken.

### 3.2 CONTEXT

Royal pilgrimage was often not a particularly structured ritual and, as a result, has often been overlooked in scholarship (see chapter 2). A large proportion of the pilgrimages made by medieval monarchs lacked the set of customaries enforced for liturgical events, although many imitated the enactments prescribed for major feast days when stipulations such as what psalms should be sung, vestments worn by clerics, processional routes to follow and Masses to be said were enacted.<sup>34</sup> Or, if customaries were prescribed, they were not systematically recorded and thus no longer exist. Yet clearly a ‘spectacular choreography’ was enforced through what may be referred to as ‘staged art’.<sup>35</sup> As Vincent noted, ‘The royal court, with its processions, ceremonies and particular traditions, mirrors many of the features of pilgrimage to the saints’ (Vincent 2002, 33). Ritualistic customaries and procession went hand-in-hand with royal pilgrimage – they often merged into singular festal expressions as both were commonly performed rites (Tekippe 2005, 693). Such vivid rituals brought the pilgrimages of monarchs to life through a multitude of sensory happenings. In turn, monarchs developed and adhered to the customs and rituals enforced by the specific cult church and tailored the actions of their visit to suit in response. This required a modification in behaviour as the sense of space and place transformed and evolved through both their own and others’ patronage. Each visit required learning an individual set of improvised actions.

The concept of *habitus* is used throughout this thesis to describe how experience was constructed for the three pilgrim audiences. With regard to royal pilgrimage, a particular aspect of the concept helps to explain the entire creation of the experience, as well as the patronage afforded to the churches by monarchs. As noted in chapter 2, *habitus* is not a rigid principle; it allows for experience to transform and change in accordance

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<sup>34</sup> Similarities to elite clerical visits are also present, e.g. Archbishop Chichele’s in 1439 (Woodruff 1925, 134–5).

<sup>35</sup> This is in opposition to the staged medieval French royal entries (Perret 2001, 188) and may be contrasted against the ‘experimentation’ fostered during the Lancastrian entry spectacle (Bryant 1994).

with actions or reactions to particular events. Bourdieu used the term ‘regulated improvisations’ to explain such behaviour. Royal pilgrimage may be better termed ‘*recursive* improvisation’ as through the ritualistic, yet ambiguous staged nature of the event, the royal learns and improvises his/her behaviour within the *habitus*. The rules are, essentially, made up as they go – they are drawn and improvised.

However, the nature of the royal pilgrimage experience is much more direct given their influence on the creation of the infrastructure through artistic and architectural commissions. As such, throughout the event there existed a certain battle of agency between those involved in the performance: the monarch and those around him. Each authority was involved in the creation of spectacle and ritual, and each modified aspects of behaviour in accordance with the unfolding elements. As this chapter hopes to show, this ‘experiential power’ was actually gained by the royal throughout their visit. This, it will be revealed, was largely a product of royal patronage of the pilgrimage scheme itself, in addition to their behaviour during the event. The act of display will feature as a critical element to the creation of the experience and will aid an examination of how the particular privileged rituals undertaken at each cult station distinctly set royal visits apart and affected other levels of society, both directly and indirectly.

This customary and, more importantly, constructed experience is explored in this chapter by illustrating how the sensory order and stimulation provided during the spectacle of royal pilgrimage created ritual and the resulting experience. Ritual here is thus presented not as an obsessional, repetitive state of action but as ‘an immense orchestration of genres in all available sensory codes’ (Turner 1984, 25). In order to illustrate the process by which the monarchical experience was created, an analogy will be drawn between royal pilgrimage, stage management and the concept of the royal *adventus* ceremony. The chapter will examine the accompanying customary sensory elements which were as vital to an *adventus* ceremony as any royal pilgrimage visit to a medieval church.

### **3.3 METHODOLOGY/SOURCES**

The entry and route taken around the church by the royal pilgrim may be compared to or characterised as a medieval *adventus* ceremony: the ritual structure underlying the majority of liturgical processions and public ceremonies of the medieval Christian world (Kipling 1998, 20; Fassler 2007, 13). The dominant model was replicated on

Christ's entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. In a similar ceremonial manner, princely receptions into the city were modelled in its image. The 'arrival' *adventus* ceremony included the following components: a gathering of people who received another; a procession for the coming and a ceremony of reception by prominent people who then escorted the received for vows or other formal rituals (Fassler 2007, 14). The *adventus* ceremony could be either a mundane affair with subjects fulfilling their duties as subjects, or it could also be regarded as a highly religious event as rulers were welcomed as saviours, benefactors, Lords, Christ's vicar on earth and even God-like marvels (MacCormack 1972, 721). As they were regarded in such a manner, this added religious overtones to the ceremony or even made it a religious event in itself, legitimising the liturgical metaphor for the ceremonial reception. In the later medieval period, the link between the reception of princes and the Advent insured that the *adventus* became the standard ceremonial for the reception of medieval princes (Bergeron 2011, 93).

Many royal visits to churches formed the ending to an ordered civic progress which began with the royal entry through the official entranceway to the city and climaxed with a ceremony inside the cathedral. In fact, a pilgrimage was often the culmination of a civic progress. Liturgical processions, royal entries and also royal pilgrimages, were all lavish ceremonies intended to inspire awe and provoke curiosity from onlookers. Following the introduction of pageantry in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, royal civic entries and, accordingly, church visits were transformed from splendid ceremonies into spectacular dramas (Kipling 1998, 28). Visits became more like triumphal affairs; the pageantry of the sensory display and ceremony became increasingly complex so that they turned into full-blown theatrical events.

The royal pilgrimage visit may therefore be offered as a form of an *adventus* ceremony as the monarch passes through a series of performed entrances accompanied by a staged procession which are in some sense organised. Through these grand processional ceremonies, they pass through a series of gateways and means of access in the same manner as would be undertaken during a standard *adventus*. Such events and actions are continual and, in accordance, the royal reacts to a series of improvisations in the *habitus* of the *adventus*. Evidence for the use of the ceremony as the model for the reception of medieval royalty is overwhelming (Kantorowicz 1944, 211) and therefore given that the

medieval life of the royal existed as a series of similar arrival events, why should the royal pilgrimage procession be regarded any differently?

Due to the complex nature of the methodological approach, this chapter will not be structured chronologically. Instead, examination will centre upon the following three areas: the pilgrimage routes taken around the churches, how the material offerings given to the shrines affected the overall experience and, finally, the synaesthetic aspects of the royal visit to the shrine locales and stations. Aspects of York and Canterbury will be compared and contrasted throughout rather than examined separately in order to highlight key strands and themes in various aspects of royal devotion and peregrinations.<sup>36</sup> This will aid the understanding of how these spaces originally looked. The chapter will terminate with a reconstructed narrative account of a medieval royal pilgrimage visit.

### **3.4 ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY OF THE CULT SITES**

#### **3.4.1 CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL**

The tomb-shrine in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral was made soon after Thomas Becket's canonisation in 1173 (Tatton-Brown 2002, 94). This coincided with the fire in 1174 which commenced the rebuilding of the eastern arm. Tatton-Brown suggests that the plan for the eastern arm evolved during building work and subsequently the design for the Trinity Chapel was not worked out until building began in 1180 (Tatton-Brown 2002, 96). Nevertheless, this two-storied structure was built to house the shrine, featuring underneath the original burial place of the saint (crypt) surrounded by its own ambulatory and high ribbed vaults. The Trinity Chapel resided above: a raised shrine chamber and, lying east, was the Corona. The latter building, of semi-circular design, was constructed to house the head-shrine or scalp reliquary of Becket in place of the head reliquary which had resided near the tomb in the crypt until the relics were translated (see Appendix I) (Tatton-Brown 2002, 96). The saint's body was then translated to the new shrine in 1220 which meant that the new Trinity Chapel did not become a site of veneration for several decades (Tatton-Brown 2002, 44). Prior to the translation of the relics, the main sites of veneration lay in the crypt in which the tomb, corona relic, i.e. the skull reliquary, and the image shrine of Our Lady of the Undercroft was housed. In the north transept, the martyrdom site was also revered (Fig 3.1).

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<sup>36</sup> A larger focus will be given to Canterbury due to a greater amount of surviving evidence.

Early images of Becket's tomb (made 1171) as illustrated in the Trinity Chapel and Corona stained glass (Fig 3.2), as well as the Becket window at Sens Cathedral (France), and the description given by Benedict of Peterborough, are of the *foramina*-type design made from ashlar with two holes per side and topped with a marble slab (Robertson 1876, 81). Most interestingly, it has been suggested that this design was not used for Becket's shrine once the relics had been translated in 1220 due to the recurrence of many pilgrims who had become stuck in the holes in their search for a cure. Although a window in the westernmost window of the Trinity Chapel ambulatory (Fig 3.3) and several pilgrim souvenirs (Fig 3.4) depict the new shrine as a *feretrum/theca* supported by pillars, no other evidence confirms the validity of the design, or suggests a reconstruction following 1220. Additionally, the popularity of the pillared structure was beginning to wane at this time and so I am in agreement with John Crook that the glass was likely designed previous to the translation ceremony and therefore the shrine depiction was based on typical contemporary examples (Crook 2011, 214–15). The few surviving depictions of the structure, such as the 15<sup>th</sup>-century image of Becket's shrine in Nettlestead parish church, Kent show the base in the shape of a long box containing three bays with recesses, twin columns and colonettes on niches (Coldstream 1976, 28) (Fig 3.5). One final piece of evidence (dated post-Reformation as 'Saint' is dropped from the description) is an illustration from a manuscript in the Cotton Collection (BL, Cotton MS Tiberius E.viii, f.278v) (Fig 3.6). The structure is depicted as a large stone base with five round-arched apertures and three at the end. Above it is a plain rectangular gabled box (likely the reliquary) with three finials on the roof. These are labeled as silver gilt (Crook 2011, 216).

Destroyed in the Reformation events of 1538, surviving accounts of the shrine's original appearance regularly comment on its riches, noted to be the best in the land (Blick 2005, 407–12). As Erasmus stated, 'The least valuable portion was gold; every part glistened, shone, and sparkled with rare and very large jewels, some of them exceeding the size of a goose's egg' (Nichols 1849, 55) (Fig 3.7). The latter, the great ruby – 'Le Régale' – was the centerpiece of the shrine and given by the French King Louis VII in 1179 (Scott Robertson 1880, 506; Nichols 1849, 49).

The most common description of the shrine was as follows: as tall as a man, of stone, then upwards of timber (a wooden cover), inside of which was an iron chest containing

the relics. The wood was covered in gold and garnished with brooches, images, chains, stones and pearls (Stowe's Chronicle, quoted in Nichols 1849, 165–6). The wooden cover was suspended by ropes (similar to St Cuthbert's shrine at Durham Cathedral) so that it could be raised to display the reliquary to elite visitors, although the bones resided in the upper part of the structure and were not visible without climbing a ladder. The structure was raised on a large platform of three steps, around which ran a rectangular band of pink marble, in which the marks made by pilgrims' feet may still be witnessed (Tatton-Brown 2002). Iron rails surrounded the shrine (Willis 2006, 113).

#### 3.4.2 YORK MINSTER

Following his death on the 8<sup>th</sup> June 1154, William FitzHerbert was interred in a Roman tomb of gritstone (following the destruction of the original wooden one by a falling beam) which was placed in the easternmost part of the nave of the Minster, behind the temporary High Altar as the choir and crypt were being remodelled at the time.<sup>37</sup> From 1223 onwards his tomb began to exude a sweet-smelling oil which was regarded as a sign of his sanctity and thaumaturgical prowess. As such, the tomb was fitted with spigots so that the oil could drip more easily for visiting pilgrims. In 1284 William's relics were then transferred to a new shrine in the 'higher location': behind the main altar in the new choir (Blick 2007, 50) (Fig 3.9). Edward I and Queen Eleanor were in attendance especially for his elevation. The tomb remained in the nave to provide another easily accessible focus for pilgrim attraction. Further embellishment of the cult monuments came during the reign of Archbishop Melton (1317–40) who clearly noted the potential of various cult stations and so had the now empty coffin in the nave elaborated with a richly decorated stone monument (Fig 3.8).

In 1471 a decision was made to build a new, grander shrine in a desire to entice the pilgrims to return and offer at the main shrine in time for the consecration. Regrettably the only mention of the shrine in the fabric rolls is to its cleaning in 1470–1 and so all that is known of its design is that it was composed of Teesdale marble (Raine 1858, 73, 77). However, several fragments still survive (housed in the Yorkshire Museum) which provide us with an idea (Fig 3.9). The width of the niche canopies suggests it was four bays long (common of the time). It appeared to have a quatrefoil base for pilgrims to interact with the reliquary, prayer niches located above, each separated by buttresses and statue niches, while each niche was vaulted with a different pattern. Ogee arches

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<sup>37</sup> See Appendix I for information on St William of York.

formed at the top of the prayer niches were supported either side by pinnacle heads (Crook 2011, 281–2; Wilson 1977, 18).<sup>38</sup> A western altar no doubt finished the arrangement (Fig 3.10). In addition to St William's sites, there were several other minor stations of pilgrimage. The most notable of these included Archbishop Scrope's tomb and the relics of the Holy Innocents which Richard II gifted in Easter 1396 enclosed in a silver reliquary.

### **3.5 INTEGRATED SPACE**

Before analysing the decorative and architectural elements so often considered in extant scholarship, it seems appropriate to examine the routes taken through the church by royalty when visiting on pilgrimage. Although there was certainly a structured route for high-status visits to any medieval cathedral, many monarchs were greeted by important clergymen or dignitaries in solemnity, processed around the stations by officials depending on the requirements or needs of the visit, and on to the altar for celebration of the office. In order to get a clearer picture of the route taken around Canterbury Cathedral we may look to the offering accounts given by the monarchs, the few descriptions we have of royal visits and, finally, Erasmus' 1513 eye-witness visitor account to the shrine of St Thomas Becket.

When Edward I visited he offered at the shrine in the Trinity Chapel, the sword's point in the north-west transept or Martyrdom, Becket's tomb and the image of St Mary in the crypt. The crypt contained many relics on offer to view including part of Becket's skull encased in silver which could be kissed, as well as his skirt and drawers of hair cloth (Stanley 1868, 178–9).

Detailed accounts of Henry VI's visits, together with the penitential visit made by Henry II, are also extant and can provide details of the events that occurred in order for an analysis of experience to be formulated. The descriptions are far from mundane records – they are filled with minute details from the sites at which monarchs made offerings, down to the specific hue of the robes worn by the greeting clergy. Yet many scholars have relied on Erasmus' account of the journey he took around the cathedral on which to base their own interpretation of high-status visits. However, further documentary evidence suggests that royalty very rarely took a specific route and so had

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<sup>38</sup> A reconstruction drawing by John Hutchinson testifies to its appearance, yet includes a reliquary cover suspended on strings, as was enforced at Durham and Canterbury.

a flexibility in their approach – an experience very much exclusive to the monarchy as the rest of the chapters in this thesis will illustrate.

For Henry II's visit on 12<sup>th</sup> July 1174, the king walked barefoot through the cathedral from the south-west porch straight to the scene of the martyrdom in the north transept. He then went to the crypt. He remained there until he rose and then attended the altars and shrines of the upper church. He then returned to the tomb after hearing Mass (Stanley 1868, 119–21). When Henry VI visited the cathedral in August 1460, a procession was held which advanced him to the shrine. He journeyed through the nave, then the cloister, through the monks' cemetery and thus into the main church (Connor 2010, 106). This was a very unusual course and perhaps reads more of a personal tour than a specific pilgrimage route. The inventories accounting royal pilgrimage visits simply record the names of the saints at whose shrines royalty made offerings and thus read more like a list of stations than a route and so Henry VI's path was perhaps more of a common practice than one may first assume. The evidence is simply too limited to draw more rigid conclusions.

The accounts frequently record monarchs travelling, either first to the main shrine followed by the lesser sites of veneration, or the shrine would culminate their journey. Edward III, on his annual peregrination, visited the tomb of Becket, the relic of the swords, i.e. the Martyrdom, and finally the Lady Chapel (Ormrod 1989, 858). Edward IV and Queen Elizabeth Woodville celebrated the news of Henry VI's capture at Ribblesdale by attending a sermon in Canterbury's choir and ended their visit with a procession to Becket's tomb (Connor 2010, 113). As noted above, Henry VI's numerous visits often followed the same protocol: after the king came on foot to the south-west entrance, he was greeted and taken to the shrine in full procession (Connor 2010, 68).

There is less evidence from York, yet during Richard III's 1483 visit to the Minster, the account notes the unusual practice by which the king entered the church: halting before a lay and clerical congregation at the prie dieu located specially by the font in the nave. He then commenced the service by reciting the Our Father which was then taken up by the clergy and followed by an office and anthem (Tudor-Craig 1986, 111).

Subsequently, there were two main courses taken by royalty: a visit to the shrine first, or one to the lesser areas of veneration ending at the shrine structure. Although both routes were likely used depending on the underlying nature of the visit, from the documentary evidence, it would appear that many chose to take a direct route around the many stations, worshipping at different stops on different visits in order to cater to the particular requirements and needs of each. Using this evidence, it may then be possible to understand what experience monarchs would have encountered on their journey.

### **3.6 STAINED GLASS**

One of the most sacred areas of the route around Canterbury Cathedral, and one at which many monarchs appeared to have visited, was the north transept in which Becket perished and the Lady Chapel originally stood. Here lies one of the most literal examples of the link between the cult of saints and royal patronage. Dated to *c.*1480, the stained glass of the north transept window originally depicted a composition of six saints associated with the English royal house, until a large portion of it was destroyed in 1624 (Wilson 1990, 189) (Fig 3.11). Its seminal location meant it shone before the eyes of all who observed it, expressing the splendour of kingly power and divine grace.

Not only does the scheme illustrate a visual link between the holy family, the celestial body of saints and the English monarchy of the later medieval period, but it also sanctioned a belief in the intercessory power of the saint by the monarchy. The significance of the window lies more, however, in that one of the lights, now in the tracery, is occupied by a depiction of Becket holding in his left hand a small conical vessel representing the sacred and holy oil of St Thomas, used to anoint monarchs from Henry IV until *c.*1509 (Wilson 1990, 189) (Fig 3.12).<sup>39</sup> Prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Becket's figure was located alongside a central image of the Trinity immediately above a crowned and kneeling figure of Edward IV who, together with his family members, was located in the tier below.

In 1318 Edward II sought papal recognition from John XXII for the ampulla of miraculous oil allegedly given to the saint for the consecration of English monarchs (Duggan 1982, 32; Wilson 1990). This story first appeared in a document of 1318 (BL MS. Royal 12 C XII) which told how the Virgin Mary visited Thomas in a vision when

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<sup>39</sup> The ampulla was lost for two centuries, but was discovered before Henry IV's 1399 coronation. However, the links between the oil's origins (which may have existed for centuries) and the manuscript are disputable (Coote 2000, 94).

praying at the Church of St Colombe, Sens and gave him an eagle made of gold housing a flask filled with oil. She told him it should be used to anoint future kings of England and those anointed with the oil would recover Normandy and Aquitaine without force and the first such would become ‘the greatest among kings’ (Sandquist 1969, 332–3). This harkened back to the Old Testament ritual showing divine approval in the hope that it would inflict a sacred character on the English monarchy, such as that of their Capetian rivals whose coronation oil was said to have been the chrism with which St Rémi had baptised Clovis on Christmas Day 496AD, thus inaugurating the catholic French kings (Duggan 1982, 32).

In the Canterbury glass, Becket is shown as patron of the king (in fact, the entire English monarchy) as he is the purveyor of the coronation oil, which became known as the *oleum sancti Thome* (Duggan 1982, 32). The belief in the power of sanction inferred by the oil meant the Lancastrian dynasty was firmly established under the patronage and protection of England’s premier saint. Wilson (1990, 186) even suggested that from the adjacency of Henry VI’s, the earl of Somerset’s and the duke of Clarence’s burial tombs to the shrine, the intention was to create a Lancastrian mausoleum within the cathedral, although perhaps somewhat ad hoc, in distinction to the carefully orchestrated mausoleums created by Henry III in the late 13<sup>th</sup> century at Westminster Abbey, for example (cf. Badham 2007).

The position of the window may be viewed as the second most significant or, perhaps, the most important location in the entire church (Fig 3.13). Lighting the locale in which St Thomas Becket was martyred gave the window an added visual and metaphorical symbolism. Primarily, it lit the space in which the dark act had been committed, therefore cleansing the area as the light shone through the glass and bathed the transept. Virtually every monarch would have paid his/her respects at the altar of the swordpoint, above which stood the window. It therefore united the regal and the sacred through placing the image of the royal family above the most significant space in the church associated with Becket’s cult. The addition of the panel depicting the oil further reinstated the link between the saint and the monarchy. Thus, the equation of light with the royal aura was made more explicit through the painting of these windows (Dixon-Smith 1999, 81). The glorious dignity of the royal family would shine before the eyes of all statuses (not only royalty as lay pilgrims stopped to visit too) ‘with the greatest splendour of kingly power...that it may seem to glow with the brightest rays and to

glitter as if suffused by illumination of the utmost brilliance' (Wilson 1997, 34). Its location further identified the monarch with their personal devotion and generosity to the saint and his resting place.

The glass highlights the interdependent nature of influence between royalty and the devotional practices of the medieval church. In fact, another of the largest windows in the cathedral represents a series of royal portraits from the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The great west window, dated to 1396–9 (Fig 3.14), depicts a line of kings and was most likely commissioned by Richard II, as indicated by his and his wives' armorials at the top of the window (Fig 3.15) and the account of 1397 which states that Richard forgave the £160 tax debt owed to the prior and chapter 'out of special devotion to the martyr Thomas...in aid of building of the west front' (Saul 1997a, 318). With this sanction, the king sought 'to promote his divine right as king in major public spaces...becoming the main patron of Canterbury Cathedral and the Becket cult' (Michael and Strobl 2004, 64). This was reaffirmed by his generous donation of a further £1,000 sterling 'to the fabric of the High Altar and of the nave...and to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the crypt' (Legg and Hope 1902, 109; Saul 1997a, 84, 318). The work was essentially complete by the end of Richard's reign with its culmination being the erection of the vaults in 1405. His commission was commemorated by the placing of both his and his two wives' arms in the tracery of the west window (Legg and Hope 1902; Woodman 1981, 249; Caviness 1981, 231–48). These displays of patronage illustrated the royal dynastic connection with Becket, reminding people of the prophecy of the coronation oil whilst showing that the saint was the monarchical champion and source of legitimacy (Blick 2007, 185).

The visual prominence of the west window is also significant. It would have been virtually the first image to grace the eyes on entrance due to its proximity to the south-western porch and its substantial size; it would have drawn the eye to the left upon entry. As visitors set foot into the church, they were immediately made aware of the regal grandeur of the luminescent space; as they passed through the porch and by the great window, its regal subject, size and embellishment illustrated the importance of the threshold between the outside world and the sanctified atmosphere of the space they were now entering (Dixon-Smith 1999, 81).

I must add here the additional significance of the transitional effect produced by the

physical movement through the porch into the space of the church. Goulding (2007, 348) found that at the Tudor royal palaces, the porch served to materialise male hegemony. For the medieval church, the function assumed was one of royal hegemony, regardless of gender. In a similar manner, the enactment of the kinaesthetic dialogue produced by moving from the outer courtyard or close of the cathedral, which harboured many transitory and fluctuating symbolic and social meanings, in to the sanctuary of the church building affirmed the authority of both the church or ‘hospitality [and sanctuary provider]’, as well as the status of the monarch who complicitly engaged with the space. Goulding argued that the movement through the porch itself meant renouncing any hegemony and subjugation between the monarch and his/her subjects. This is also enacted at Canterbury as the monarch’s authority is equalled or relinquished to that of the cathedral officials – perhaps the only minor appearance of liminality in the medieval pilgrim experience. This was certainly attempted during the royal pilgrimage visit as both subsumed official status yet recognised the authority of one another. Through the denouncement of authority they were able to cater and comply with the other’s devotional needs and rituals. The porch may thus be viewed as a ‘receptacle’ that mediated complex relationships within the religious negotiation of social identity.

### **3.7 EAST END**

The fact that monarchs often followed or visited the same stations as many lay pilgrims brought them to the same level in religious terms. Physically this was also the case. The long succession of ascents taken by pilgrims on their visit to Becket’s shrine was often remarked upon due to the two-storey arrangement of the Trinity Chapel: placed upon the crypt in which the tomb stood (Fig 3.16). Pilgrims therefore entered ‘church upon church’, from the original burial site of the saint up towards his current resting place (Stanley 1868, 225–6). The medieval royal experience would also have featured this hierarchical dynamism. Before the relics were elevated to the shrine, royal pilgrims had to descend into the dark crypt in order to worship at the tomb of the martyr and then ascend the stairs up to the altar to attend the offices. After the translation of the relics and construction of the Trinity Chapel, pilgrims mounted the steps behind the High Altar to the shrine. Yet only the most elite visitors could advance any closer towards the shrine and complete the grand ascension. Continuing on from the symbolic function of the porch, this was the first of many interior arrangements that comprised the series of processional or *adventus* entrances which, in effect, staged the medieval royal pilgrimage visit.

The form of the eastern end's design, both pre- and post-Trinity Chapel construction, embodied a hierarchical processional sense of movement. Not only did visitors move from the profane to the sacred following a rhythmic route comprising ascents and descents – from entry, passing the altar to the shrine – but, in such an ordered space, their actions also mirrored a metaphorical movement towards the most heavenly realms; a common feature of medieval ritualistic architecture. We may then relate this to Wulfstan of Winchester's (996 x c.11<sup>th</sup> century) description of the architectural alterations and liturgical designs for Æthelwold and Ælfeah's cathedral at Winchester.

Preceding his *Narratio metrica de sancto Swithuno*, was a series of dedicatory letters known as an *Epistola specialis ad Aelfegum episcopum* (Lapidge 2003, 372–97). Wulfstan's description of the crypts emphasised the dark nature of the space, only illuminated by the openings pierced into each apsidal compartment wherein the relics amounted to spiritual illumination (Palazzo 2011, 105) (Fig 3.17). The symbolic character of the relics is highly stressed and the crypts are seen as a labyrinth intended to disorientate visitors so that the prevailing darkness is only overcome as they make their way towards the light framing the area around the relics. The *Narratio* recounts the crypts as a spiritual metaphor: the path the pilgrim must take in their hope for salvation and the role of the relics as the guiding light on their journey. The route through Canterbury may also be viewed in this way. From the darkness of the crypt where Becket's body once lay, pilgrims journeyed along their path (and their own personal peregrination), recanting their sins as they made their way up to the light-filled Trinity Chapel. It must be noted that many royal pilgrims simply made their way straight to the Trinity Chapel, bypassing the crypt and so their journey was arguably less about redemption. As they were representative, chosen and anointed by God, monarchs were already on the same level, both physically and metaphorically as the saint, and so required less of an enduring metaphorical journey as the regular lay population.

Subsequently, a link between Becket's cult, Henry II and Dover Castle may also be proposed given that they were also vast architectural spaces intended for a multiplicity of functions and, thus, a similar phenomenon is apparent in a range of different periods. For ten consecutive years, beginning in the financial year 1179–80, Henry spent more money on Dover than on any other castle in England. Most notable is the entrance to the keep: the symbolic and ceremonial centre of the castle (Goodall 1999, 111) and the first

‘interior’ building encountered by any visitor. Arranged over three floors, a grand staircase wraps its way around two stories to a doorway opening into a main upper floor hall. A means of access at the foot is supported by a forebuilding (Fig 3.18). Kenilworth Castle also adopts a similar entranceway where the cross-passage is approached by an extended stair from a point directly outside the keep (Johnson 2002, 141). The forebuilding staircase at Dover therefore seems superfluous, but the elaborate nature of its design may suggest otherwise: it may have been used as a processional entrance space.

Many features may be presented as evidence for this. Not only was the entrance façade of the keep covered in blocks of Caen stone and therefore intended for display purposes, but, more significantly, the blocks were laid in regular bands giving the overall appearance of concentric stripes around three sides of the building and across the entire central section of the entrance façade (Goodall 2011, 141). Not only visually striking on impact as the deep white stone reflected in the sun, but they also had the effect of projecting the hierarchy of the building as the bands snaked upwards around the building illustrating the increase in the importance of the interior space through the rise.

The plan of the keep also included a hierarchical ordering reflective of social status. Two chapels were situated within: one on the first floor of the lower level of the staircase and the upper chapel was located on the floor above. Only the most elite visitors could progress up the stairs and into the most private areas, such as the upper chapel which Goodall (2011, 144) suggested was the king’s personal chapel as it was only accessible through a narrow corridor off the high end of the main hall and included an ante-chapel or nave (Fig 3.20).

Also, the chapels in the forebuilding architecturally emulated Canterbury Cathedral crypt (Goodall 1999, 112). This decoration included wall arcading, round-headed moulded arches with chevron ornament, cylindrical shafts with foliated capitals, and groined vaults (Allen Brown 1983, 33) (Fig 3.19). They could thus be viewed as miniature versions of Canterbury: smaller versions of the crypt in which Becket’s tomb was housed.

As patronage derived from the king, the act of emulation produced by Dover’s forebuilding served as a visual and tangible link between the king and the saint. Henry

showed his allegiance to Becket's origins, which are seen as deeply rooted in him and physically reflected in his architecture.<sup>40</sup> Goodall proposed that this use of similar architecture to Canterbury was 'a calculated act of appropriation – an allusion to the martyr and his cathedral' (Goodall 1999, 112). A similar architectural relationship occurs between the 12<sup>th</sup>-century rib-vaulted chapel of Newcastle Castle's keep and Durham Cathedral's Galilee Chapel which, again, provide evidence for the ceremonial connection between the architecture of pilgrimage and of power.

The significance of this may also be found in the functions of the castle keeps of Dover and Newcastle. Further comparative evidence for the use of forebuildings (which existed at both sites) as ceremonial entrances lies in the interplay of elements used within. At both sites, grand external staircases allowed access at second-floor level and, at Newcastle, the use of many steps, changes in orientation and an interplay of light and dark worked together to inflict an 'architecture of power' on the visitor, reminding them of their status through physical and psychological disadvantages as their ascent up and into the main hall could be visually monitored by the king (Graves and Heslop 2013). If the Dover forebuilding staircase did serve as a processional route ascending towards the symbol of Henry's kingship – the keep – then from similar architectural and decorative evidence at Canterbury, it may be concluded that Henry also built Dover Castle as a further status of his piety, and a symbolic gateway to the kingdom that may be passed by en-route to Canterbury from the coast (Constable 2004).<sup>41</sup> Perhaps Newcastle was also an additional symbol, for those entering the country from the north. The first thing they would see would be the castle and the first place they would enter would be the forebuilding. At Dover, immediately the links between the king and the saint were proclaimed to them through the architecture, before many went on to Canterbury to visit the cathedral. The forebuildings were thus buildings of 'show'; enormous stage settings reflective of England or perhaps, more specifically, Henry's identity to people entering the country from any direction. Perhaps we may refer to this as 'architectural propaganda'; the details alluding to the saint were symbols of Henry's piety and kingship projected through such substantial buildings seen firstly as structures of

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<sup>40</sup> Dover Castle was essentially a great public relations exercise, to proclaim to the county the privilege of the state over the saint (cf. Gillingham forthcoming). Improving Canterbury Castle was not an option due to the overwhelming power of the saint in the city. Although Henry II was not against the cult of Becket, the developments he made to Dover's keep were a way of retaining some of the king's power in a time of growing support for Becket's cult.

<sup>41</sup> A chapel dedicated to St Thomas was purportedly incorporated into the forebuilding and used to draw attention towards other Becket monuments along the route from the port, e.g. Barfreston (Keefe 2003, 120–1),

military pride, but in a modern new image created by the king: grand *adventus* structures.

The ordered interiors of these keeps denote a repetition of sanctuary within a castle complex serving to emphasise the exclusivity of the encountered spaces (Goulding 2007, 344). Through the access of the spaces, the architectural details mirror the liminal progression encountered by those who could pass through and cross these sacred thresholds in order to reach the very interior, as similarly enforced at Canterbury. Consonantly, the forebuildings at Dover and Newcastle housed many social levels and so could be viewed as ‘harbour[s] from the liminal...zone[s] of variable use, meaning and purpose’ (Goulding 2007, 344), or even as versions of an *ante capella portas*. Movement through the forebuildings, as well as the medieval pilgrimage church, illustrated an active process of control and manipulation to exhibit social and religious status and identity. Thresholds, and the physical entry and movement through them, were key to this hermeneutic corporeal manipulation framework. What is becoming more clear is the sense that the buildings are the material signature of dialogues between actors or, more specifically, the orchestration of visitors.

The layout of the architecture at these sites was additionally used to manipulate the theatrical experience and structure a ‘performance’ for those entering the castles, as it was inside Canterbury Cathedral. An analysis of this concept may answer the question of whether the elite pilgrimage experience was actually created with secular/courtly life in mind? Expectation and anticipation were created by the architecture, particularly the use of many ascents and the transition of light from the forebuildings into the great halls which served to disorientate as well as excite the visitor on their approach to the light-filled main chambers (Graves and Heslop 2013). Taking this further, the entire keep buildings were planned for display; stage settings constitutive of status – they did not just reflect it – which is not surprising as the castles were continually constructed by and used for royalty (Johnson 2002). The term ‘*magna turris*’ may be favoured over ‘keep’ as these buildings were clearly places to illustrate one’s prominence over others through highly symbolic ceremonies (Davis 2009). The ceremonial architecture was designed as a locale in which complex interpersonal social relationships were constructed and structured through architectural and sensory built qualities. Dixon and Marshall (1992) argued similarly for the great hall of Hedingham Castle (non-royal) as its design indicated that it was used to serve grand audiences during ceremonial occasions. A large

ascent was needed to access the fourth floor of residential rooms. This was, essentially, a fictional tool for the purpose of pomp and display as the great hall was used as a ‘throne room’ for the de Vere earls of Oxford with a lower floor waiting room. The ascent therefore created a ceremonial way up to the ‘stage’: the hall. Once more, the importance of the grand entrance was incorporated into the design so that the arrival was paramount.

Canterbury also used similar ‘levels’ of architectural detail to indicate access for varying social statuses. Upon ascension throughout the church (primarily post-Trinity Chapel construction), there was an increasing richness of architectural and decorative detail and only the most important visitors were allowed to freely pass into the most elaborate areas. For example, the crypt is predominantly the least architecturally-decorative space – Binski used the term ‘antiseptic’ (2004, 20) – then the nave, followed by the choir, then the Trinity Chapel, and culminating in the Corona. This highlights a further point regarding the experience gained at both sites: the buildings reveal themselves gradually through their plans and, accordingly, social roles were played out in this ‘ceremonial ranging’ (Johnson 2002, 13). The difference between the almost clinical lines, modest and more practical setting of the now-empty tomb for solemn prayer, confession and reflection, was succeeded by a marbled and jewelled reliquary emulating the ‘theatre of allegory and spiritual enlightenment’ illuminated by bright and precious stones, marbles and glass in imitation of the glitter of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Binski 2004, 20). As such, visitors of varying social status had different experiences as the lower status accessed different areas to the elite. Accordingly, the design of Canterbury Cathedral was closely aligned with the development of processional art and architecture, both of which were associated with ‘pervasive imaging of celestial teleology’ (Tekippe 2005, 694).

### **3.8 DECORATIVE ASPECTS**

#### **3.8.1 ROYAL EMBLEMS**

On a sensory level, the sovereign’s pilgrimage experience would have been aided by their own presence within the fabric of these buildings. Almost wherever they turned, some form of royal insignia or patronage was encountered, pulling them into the history of the building, whilst connecting the cult of the saint with the monarchy. The following 1124 description of William of Malmesbury’s visit to Canterbury Cathedral in the *Gesta Pontificum* reinforced the visual feast that was the interior: ‘nothing like it could be seen

in England, either for the brilliancy of its windows, the beauty of its marble pavement, or the many coloured pictures that led the wandering eye to the very summit of the ceiling' (Hamilton 1870, 138). Although Malmesbury was clearly referring to the choir area pre the 1174 fire, the replacement building was fashioned in a similar, if not more elaborate aesthetic. This visual drama, characteristic of the liturgy of the medieval church, also spilled over into the passion for pageantry which dominated royal pilgrimage and the belief in the power of relics. Spectacle filled every surface as a lavish aesthetic and decoration was thought to enhance the power of relics. As such, the design of the shrine locales became increasingly decorative and sumptuous – they were virtually shining beacons of intercessory power. Monarchs also used decoration as a way of personally instilling their identity, status and reputation into the materiality and fabric of the church. For example, there were many 15<sup>th</sup>-century banners of St Thomas at Canterbury which were used as adjuncts to religious and entertainment ceremonial which no doubt included royal visitation. The royal insignia would also be suspended from the rods which ran from pillar to pillar throughout the interior creating a tapestried route that would frame the procession towards the shrine. Such a display was carried out in York Minster for Richard III's 1483 visit which included banners of Our Lady, SS George, Edward, Cuthbert and the Trinity and, finally, 'oure owne Armes all sarcenet' (Tudor-Craig 1986, 111). Further coverings and cloths were likely hung throughout the church, as was the case during the 14<sup>th</sup>-century coronation procession. Carpets of golden cloth often paved royal routes, marking the steps of the monarch through the materiality (Strong 2005, 85).

Like Henry III and Westminster before him, Richard II saw the construction and reconstruction of a church as a powerful way of honouring a saint. Saul (1997a, 317) argued that this material show of devotion was a part of Richard's fascination with saintly relics which does appear to be the case as his contributions largely went to those churches housing important relics. Saul (1997a, 84) described Richard II's contribution to the fabric fund of York Minster as not unique but unusual. In July 1395 his donation of 100 marks (£66 13s 4d, Issue Roll 12 July 1395 PRO E.403/551, m.14; Harvey 1971, 207) towards the cost of the rebuilding of the choir was commemorated by the carving of the king's badge of a white hart on the capital at the springing of the main arcade,<sup>42</sup> above the entry to the south choir aisle beside the south-east pier of the central crossing (Harvey 1971, 207) (Fig 3.20). It is the only case of the badge being used in an

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<sup>42</sup> He adopted the emblem following a tournament in Smithfield in 1390.

architectural context in a non-royal building, another indication of the significance of Richard's involvement in the church fabric.

Additionally, on the opposite side of the same pier is a carved stone head with a beard, moustache, flowing locks and a tiered triple crown with a sword in the right hand and possibly a sceptre in the left (Harvey 1971, 214). The crown's shape alludes to an emperor (a status Richard had been trying to obtain in the place of his brother-in-law Wenzel around 1397),<sup>43</sup> but together with the large nose and civilian hair styling, it is possible the figure was a representation of Richard himself, although this has been disputed by Saul (1997b) and Norton (1997, 68–9), the latter of whom dates the figure to c.1410 and notes its few similarities to the features of the portraits of the king from the Wilton Diptych. Identification of the image must remain conjecture.

Still, these additions to the fabric aid in dating the construction of the aisle. Perpendicular eastern bays were in the process of construction at this time thus linking the earlier crossing to the Lady Chapel built for Archbishop Thoresby in 1361–73, while Harvey has suggested that on account of the crossing arch's mouldings, it belonged to the same work as the next five bays to the east – that of Hugh de Hedon, chief mason by 1399 until his death in 1408 (Harvey 1971, 208). Norton (1997, 59) confirmed that the erection of the south arcade of the choir could be dated to 1398–1405 on heraldic grounds, narrowing down the construction phase.

The importance of the inclusion of Richard's badge should be examined given that his *arms* do not feature in the Minster fabric. Richard's last visit to York was in Easter 1396 during which time he performed various duties over the festal period. As the construction of the choir was still in progress during Richard's visit to the city, it is likely that the Minster wanted to commemorate his generous donation to the works. Norton (1997, 74–5) proposed that the inclusion of the hart on the capital may have been the easiest way of doing so, especially as its construction was not too disruptive to the main work being undertaken at the awkward junction between the new south choir aisle and the south transept. The hart was therefore the most suitable way of incorporating a heraldic device that acknowledged the royal visit and donation without

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<sup>43</sup> Or the hat may have a papal significance. The crown symbolism took shape in the 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries when the Holy Roman Emperor was thrice crowned as King of Germany, Italy and Roman Emperor. Accordingly, popes decided to stress the equality of their spiritual authority with that of the temporal authority of the Emperor by wearing a three-tiered crown (Twining 1960, 378).

the need for the completion of any significant structural work.<sup>44</sup> The significance of the emblem lies in its location at the official entrance to the south choir aisle, therefore at the start of the processional route through the aisle and into the new vestries and Lady Chapel (French 1992, 131–2; Brown 2003, 176–7). Its location was also easily visible to any visitors in the south transept including the king himself, thus physically immortalising the monarch in the fabric of the cult church.

Suggestions made by Harvey (1971, 211–13) purport that to mark Richard's devotion to the Minster, and again his visit, the chapter house vestibule was painted in reference to him. However, the decorative scheme of the vestibule may have more of an immediate personal meaning for the king. Now virtually lost apart from smaller areas of largely red polychromy, the blind tracery of the south end wall of the vestibule over the exit to the north transept was adorned with the shields of the Three Kings of the Epiphany which alluded to Richard given that he was born on the feast of the Epiphany (6<sup>th</sup> January 1367). Linking also to the narrative of the Holy Innocents in the nativity (relics of which Richard donated to the Minster – see Appendix I), together with his heraldry, this suggests that the work was undertaken as a form of commemoration of the king's support and generosity. Based on examination of the heraldry, Norton (1997, 71) claimed that the paintings could be dated to the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. More evidence lies in that for a brief period in the summer of 1392, Richard ordered the transference of government to York following the confiscation of the liberties of London (Saul 1997a, 79–80; Brown 2003, 176). Although brief, the event was undoubtedly significant to contemporaries and so it would not be outlandish to suggest that the chapter house vestibule decoration associated with Richard was used to remember this episode, given the function of the chapter house itself.<sup>45</sup> While the king's arms were not actually depicted, Edward the Confessor's were included in the bottom row, which again may link the scheme to Richard, as Edward was his patron saint. The English royal arms were depicted in the Minster glass from the time of Edward I as well as in wall paintings and sculpture of the Chapter House, its vestibule and the nave (Norton 1997, 73).

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<sup>44</sup> Richard II's arms do not feature as the heraldry was not completed until after 1399 – after his deposition (Norton 1997, 75).

<sup>45</sup> As York had no guildhall until its completion in 1453, the chapter house was used like that at Westminster: for any great public meeting that could not be held in open air, for parliament or other secular assemblies (Harvey 1971, 211; Brown 2003, 58).

Images or attributes that played key roles in a royal's life became personal representative symbols that could be displayed on patronised art and architecture, stimulating recognition and emphasising the holiness of the space. The images became *aide-mémoire*: mnemonic sign systems that took the place of words in order to contain and convey the metaphorical memory of the royal and their association with the saint (Carruthers 1990, 35–42). Therefore, like the medieval belief that proximity to relics equalled proximity to sacrality thus the rapidity of divine intervention, so the depiction of a royal emblem close to, or associated with a saint or his locale within the church (i.e. the shrine), could also assume the same function (cf. Crook 2011). Whether these emblems were accurately depicted was irrelevant as, for many people of York or, at least, the elite to whom the royal was projecting them, the symbolism would have been obvious. Faithful rendering gave way to sufficiently suggestive elements to act as unmistakable characteristics of a person who could then be flexibly situated within the larger context of the English dynasty and their relationship to the church. Specific renderings were not necessary for the performatory aspect of an image. Rather, the common theme was that the meaning conveyed transcended visual form (Krautheimer 1942, 21, 24). The image was therefore portrayed to all who passed through the transept (and vestibule) as they made their way to and from the shrine, advertising the acts of royal patronage to pilgrims of high and low status.

### 3.8.2 SCREENS AND GATES AS GATEWAYS

Perhaps the greatest display of kingship lies in the impressively sized 15<sup>th</sup>-century pulpitum which provided a grand entrée to York Minster's choir – one of the largest iconographic schemes within the church in the most visually and devotionally important location (Fig 3.21). Now devoid of a large amount of its initial decoration and paint, the asymmetrical construction contains seven niches on the north side and eight on the south, each holding a statue of an English king from William the Conqueror to Henry VI atop a pedestal description. A large proportion of the statues are uncharacteristically recognisable, apart from the final few towards the end of the row, such as Richard II with his short double-goatee beard as depicted on his tomb effigy – this was the only place in the Minster in which Richard was represented as himself.

It is clear from the iconography that the Lancastrian succession is being celebrated in the wider context of the English monarchy from the Conquest and therefore the scheme must not have been conceived before the time of Henry VI's coronation in 1422

(Barnett 1995, 26). Documentary evidence provides a terminus date for its completion: a 1450 entry in the fabric rolls refers to the cleaning of the reredos ‘in the choir’, while a bequest left by William Duffeld of £20 was left to gild the screen in 1452 (Raine 1858, 65–83).<sup>46</sup> Barnett (1995, 29–30) proposed that given the iconography of the screen, the patron was likely connected to the Lancastrian regime, possibly a high-ranking cleric.

A similar royal iconographic message is transmitted in the same format at Canterbury Cathedral where an early 15<sup>th</sup>-century screen with figures of kings has been attributed to the Plantagenet-Lancastrian dynasty (i.e. Richard II and three Henrys) (Barnett 1995, 30) (Fig 3.22). The impact of such powerful regal imagery is profound. Six kings and shield-bearing angels originally flanked sculptures of Christ and the twelve apostles, uniting the holy with the kingly realm. As the screen was so wide and so monumental in height and depth, we may infer that large numbers of people were intended to pass through. However, from the ornamentation of the door itself, as a frame we may infer the importance of the sacred locale to which it gave access. During the royal pilgrimage procession, every doorway was metaphorically transformed into a triumphal arch – backdrops and frameworks for the procession – with these ‘crowds’ of sculpted figures providing an *adventus* audience (Fassler 2007, 20). The sculpted representations of kings, queens, bishops and prophets can be interpreted as proxies who now joined and interacted with the procession and therefore assumed a similar role (and observational backdrop) to their physical counterparts for welcoming the royal into the choir and beyond. The use of effigies as proxies for political bodies was a recurrent practice in medieval artistic media. Their use was inspired by the effigial custom of representing the deceased in royal and heraldic funerals, beginning with Edward II’s in 1327 (Moore 1887, 215). Effigies were regarded by the entire populous as much more than visual depictions of royal leaders but as animate objects; anthropomorphic agents with the ability to interact with the visitor (Kantorowicz 1957, 419–21; Graves 2008, 41).

It is possible to relate Ernst Kantorowicz’s theory (1957) for the double representation of the deceased at funeral ceremonies to these royal depictions serving the gateways of churches. Kantorowicz suggested that they symbolised two distinct aspects of the monarch: the dignities of the royal office held and the mortality of that person (1957,

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<sup>46</sup> The most accurate date proposed is the second quarter of the century, although its patron and designer remain elusive. Brown (2003, 232–3) suggested the eastern face may have been installed in the 1420s, but the western ‘public’ face is later given Henry VI’s depiction as a mature monarch and vested with the accoutrements of his office. In addition to the gilding and cleaning reference, the screen was likely completed by 1450.

435–6). This *memento mori* attribution was used to contrast the worldly position of the figure against the degradation of death, yet proclaiming the eternal memory of virtue (Cohen 1973, 43ff). Their presence added to the symbolic drama of the ceremonial and simultaneously emphasised the royal grandeur and majesty. Like medieval royal funeral processions, the royal screen figures are dressed in their robes,<sup>47</sup> crowned with arms and therefore reflect the eternal connection between the monarch and their territories whom they were guardian and grantor of the rights and integrity of the kingdom. In their effigial state guarding the sacred entrance of the east end as symbols of the *corona invisibilis*, the representations maintain the royal authority and position which never dies (unlike the royal human body). They are symbolic of the lifelong tie between the monarch, the patron of the earthly kingdom and the patron of the spiritual kingdom, which at Canterbury was St Thomas Becket and at York was St William (Borkowska 1985, 528, 534). Accordingly, the screen doorways may be viewed as the gates of paradise into the Heavenly Jerusalem, welcomed by the hosts of Heaven depicted in sculptural form before arrival at the throne of the Almighty (Kipling 1998, 206), and, in the earthly realm, the shrines of the saints.

Furthermore, the enormous proportions as opposed to the width of the doors at the centre of both the York and Canterbury (and the breadth of the stairs at the latter) choir screens, would have limited the access of a large amount of foot traffic able to pass through at one time, particularly during a procession and so order would have to be assumed in relation to social superiority. In a visual sense, access was also obscured until the most senior officials and royal passed through thus ‘communicating its messages of status, [which] was not only through the look of the door’ (Goulding 2007, 193). The glowing light from the eastern end would thus only be allowed to penetrate the small open doorway area, yet the streaming rays would serve to draw the eye to the void, transforming the screen ‘from [an] inviting beacon to dominating barrier, and ultimately manipulating threshold’ (Goulding 2007, 345). At Canterbury, in a corporeal sense, the voluminous breadth of the stairs in relation to human scale also served to indicate status. Access was restricted to a certain few who were allowed to climb or descend the stairs into the immediate choir and so harmony and order were contained through the spatial environment which, once again, may be viewed as a physical microcosm of the wider society.

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<sup>47</sup> The figures are also depicted in medieval dress at both locations.

Not only is the screen at York a suitably imposing structure for any of the western entrances to the choir, but the royal statuary is echoed throughout the imagery of the north choir clerestory glazing (N11, *c.*1405–30) and the legendary and historical kings depicted in the bottom row of the Great East window (1405–08) (E1) (Fig 3.23). N11 is a four-light window, the bottom row of each light being of clear glass; the second containing a shield of arms and a name-plate. In the third and fourth rows the panels depict standing figures of, from the west, a king, a pope, another king and finally an archbishop (French 2001a, 84). In panel 2c are the royal arms of England (three fleur-de-lys as changed by Henry IV) from which French (2001a, 86) proposed that the new heraldry was used to represent Henry IV's visits to York in June 1405 or late summer in 1407 (Fig 3.24). Although the heraldic shields commemorate the contributors to the glazing and not the figures situated above them, the nameplates do identify the figures. This system is used throughout the north and south choir clerestory (N8-11 and S8-11) and all figures belong to the specific period of *c.*600–30 therefore marking the crucial transitional period from paganism to Christianity and thus the foundation of the Minster itself (French 2001a, 90). The historical unity culminates in the royal and ecclesiastical figures represented in the bottom of the Great East window. Twelve kings fill the bottom row of the window, minus Richard II. Still, the inclusion of Edward the Confessor would fit to serve the supporters of Richard (for the patronal reason noted above) as would Edward III (whose arms were also in the stonework adjacent to the window), the last king from whom he and Henry IV traced their descent.

Together the windows, choir screen and architectural emblems form a tight scheme which binds the monarchy with its derivation from divine authority whilst uniting the ties between itself, the Minster and the history of Christianity. This is further substantiated through the connection formed by the three colossal walls of glass of the largest windows of the eastern end. Together, the St Cuthbert window (dated *c.*1440s and given by Thomas Langley, former dean of York and bishop of Durham since 1406) (s7), the St William window (1413/14) (n7), and the Great East window act as a triptych for the east of the Minster, projecting the theme of the Northern Church and its relationship to the universal Church, in addition to promoting the resonance of York's patron saint (William) to the North, further evidenced by the opposite location of the St Cuthbert window (s7, *c.*1440). The latter also contains, at its base, three Lancastrian monarchs as well as John of Gaunt. If we may use the term visual propaganda then, together with the glass of the northern clerestory window (N11) (dated to 1408–14)

which conveys the last pagan northern king, the first Christian king, followed by Henry IV (Henry saw himself as the legitimate successor to St Edwin), we see the promotion of the ‘interrelationship of church and crown’ (Norton 1997, 56). Edward III is actually depicted in figural form in the easternmost clerestory window (Nxic) with a long, flowing beard similar to the other kings represented in the rows and with many characteristics typical of John Thornton’s work in the Great East window. As such, the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, which saw the popularity of these portrait-like images, meant that viewers could now identify the kings by their appearance (Norton 1997, 82).

Christian Frost found at Salisbury Cathedral that participation in procession ‘brought past, present and future together in one experience which linked normal time with the foundation of Salisbury as well as the hope associated with the Second Coming’ (Frost 2009, 282). Distance between the events of the past, whether that be the life of the saint, his death or liturgical stories and the present time, disappeared during the performances as religious events were continually brought to the present through the veneration of the pilgrim or elevation of the Host, etc. During such processions, the royal continually entered and exited through symbolic and physical doors and gateways as if moving in and out of glorious spaces (the Heavenly Jerusalem given that the church symbolised the holy city), and by doing so moved through the boundaries of space and time (Fassler 2007, 21). As the monarch moved through the time/space boundaries that seem fluid in this pilgrimage procession, this then echoed the way in which the Mass itself conflated time and space (cf. Bossy 1983; 1987; Graves 1989). This idea was inherent within royal pilgrimage procession as the accompanying ritualistic sensory aspects such as music and incense offered a reconstruction of dramatic events from the past in the present (Fassler 2007, 14), as will be further illustrated below.

‘One function of great churches’ was, Norton noted, ‘to act as a repository of memory, whereby the past may be reconciled with the present and carried on into the future’ (1997, 85). The presence of the sculpted figures at the door through which the most holy area was entered during the pilgrimage procession, brought the royal’s ancestors into the present ceremony. As they greeted the king/queen, they served as a deliberate commemorative link between the monarch’s familial lineage and their divine one. The ritual undertaken linked the monarch to their fellow participants as well as ancestors, connecting past, present and future, and repealing the disjuncture between history and time (Myerhoff 1984, 152). Through this constructed communal memory, history was

remade and recreated in the present. As Hahn professed, ‘The past and the site may be specific to the saint, but the intention of the rhetoric of sanctity is to join that past with a powerful present, replete with the rewards of faith’ (Hahn 1997, 1105). Establishing a link with the past and the sacred quality of a shrine and cult church still resonates today. The symbolic and metonymic desire to engage or touch a person or world from the past, remote from everyday experience and located within a biblical or hagiographic narrative, is key to the creation of the pilgrimage experience (Coleman and Elsner 2002, 191). Thus, in terms of royal devotion, York Minster was a tangible receptacle and thus living memorial to the devotion of past kings, as Canterbury was to a saint martyred by the crown.

As shown, pilgrimage art and architecture manifested complex underlying relationships and meanings within the hierarchical structures of its layout. The most significant of these structures was embodied in the notion of the penetrable/impenetrable threshold or gateway, both physical and metaphorical (Frost 2009, 150). When St William of York’s relics were translated to the new shrine in 1284 (Brown 2003, 236), visual access to the structure appears to have been obstructed by a tall screen of wood located behind the High Altar of approximately eight-feet high (24.38m). The area was enclosed except for two small doors (Wilson 1977, 20, 27). There is an ongoing debate regarding whether the shrine could be seen through this screen.

When William’s bones were moved to the shrine, the original place of sanctuary (the tomb in the nave) remained revered, and was even elaborated in the mid 14<sup>th</sup>-century (Wilson 1977, 12). The tomb’s location, in the eastern-most bay of the nave, was accessible to any visitor who entered the church. Perhaps then, following the construction of the shrine, the church retained the tomb-site as a ‘taster’ focus of worship for the cult as access to the east end – the sacred area containing Archbishop Richard Scrope’s and St William’s shrine – was controlled to the majority of the population by the following: ‘The choir aisles were accessed through gates from the east side of the main transepts...There were also...screens across the choir aisles on the west side of the eastern transepts, through which gates gave access to the eastern bays of the aisles and the Lady Chapel’ (Norton 2005, 169) (Fig 3.32).<sup>48</sup> The gates and screen structured admittance, segregating areas so that exclusivity was promoted, reminding

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<sup>48</sup> In two early printed plans of the Minster dating to *c.*1726, the screens across the choir aisle on the east side of the eastern transepts are shown. Cf. Brown 2003 plan 2, 271 for plan drawn by E Barker and engraved by Nutting and Hall 1979, 260–1.

social levels of their place. An ambulatory provided some visual access to the shrine so that the masses of pilgrims did not have to enter the sacred choir.

This echoes the contradiction observed by Erasmus at Canterbury between the desire for a site that welcomed pilgrims to worship and offer, yet restricted access to the most sacred cult stations. He repeatedly mentions open ironwork screens and gates located before each successive stop on the route, which permitted view but closed off access to certain spaces to the laity. They were, however, made freely accessible to monarchs. According to Erasmus, gates were placed before the entrance to the Chapel of Our Lady in the Undercroft, in the south choir aisle, and leading up to the Trinity Chapel (Nichols 1849, 46; Geddes 1999; Tatton-Brown 2002, 102). Additional visually restrictive gates included the Great Rood (above the Altar of the Holy Cross), and subsequent rood-loft (Tatton-Brown 2002, 102), at least until *c.*1500 when it was replaced by an open iron screen.<sup>49</sup> In the far distance pilgrims may have been able to glimpse the top of the elevated shrine through the reredos and then through and above the iron screen called ‘le Hake’ situated above the High Altar, which survived until the late 16<sup>th</sup> century (Tatton-Brown 2002, 102). In a 1298 statute, Archbishop Winchelsey called for doors to be put in the choir and rood screens, which could be opened and locked when necessary for senior clergymen and elite visitors. In order to enter the lantern space and stairs down to the crypt, it appears that pilgrims also had to pass through an additional gate on the south side of the crossing (Klukas 1983, 148). The eastern shrines thus created an intimacy between the saint and royal as they were located in an area restricted to the populus and daily liturgical events, while the gates and screens, freely penetrable to the monarch, also restricted any visual access.

### 3.8.3 PAVEMENTS AS PLACES AND PATHWAYS

As illustrated, decoration was used to denote hierarchy in the sacred areas of the medieval church. Mosaic pavements were another medium. They were used to form a boundary between the presbytery and the choir and nave at Canterbury (Hamilton and Spicer 2005, 18). Within the eastern area of the crypt, surrounding where the tomb stood upon a wide platform of marble, was a pavement of small red tiles dating from *c.*1400 (Scott-Robertson 1880, 522). This penchant for distinguishing sacred shrine areas through decorative pavements was continued as the Trinity Chapel was

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<sup>49</sup> Replaced by Prior Henry d’Estria in 1304–05 and then modified with a silver tabula in 1394/5 and reset *c.*1450 when the pulpitum was rebuilt (Hope and Legg 1902, 109–10; Tatton-Brown 1990, 26–9).

constructed to house the new shrine of Becket. Laid at the same time as the podium of Becket's first shrine – immediately after the completion of the Trinity Chapel – Henry III likely donated the segmental pavement known as the *opus Alexandrinum* which framed the space in front of the sacred structure (Collinson *et al.* 1995, 70; Tatton-Brown 1998, 54) (Fig 3.25).<sup>50</sup> Recent research has uncovered that the great marble pavement was actually an early 12<sup>th</sup>-century original that was first placed in front of the High Altar of Archbishop Anselm's 'Glorious Choir' (Norton 2002). This was then re-laid with the erection of the new Trinity Chapel 'as another relic of St Thomas' (Tatton-Brown 2002, 91–3; Dudley 2010, 121ff). According to Tatton-Brown (1998, 53), placement took place *c.*1182–84 and re-laying in *c.*1213–20.

Measuring 4.4m x 0.93m wide and geometrical in design, the pavement, still in existence, is comprised of a row of six stone roundels set in plain stone (Eames 1982, 66). The signs of the zodiac fill the stones while the long furrow in the purple pavement marks the limit to which lower status pilgrims could advance (Stanley 1868, 228) (Fig 3.26). The segments are made of red and green porphyry with small amounts of black and what appears to be white marble – together they produce the overall look of grey and pink with white accents, reflecting the surfaces of the surrounding architecture. Surfaces were made to glitter and portray a 'jewelled inflation' that became crucial to the aesthetics of art and ceremony of Early Christianity right through the medieval period (Pentcheva 2006, 642). There is perhaps little doubt that the choice of colours thus stemmed from the plurality of meanings ascribed to the colours of stone made in reference to the Heavenly Jerusalem and the twelve precious stones that adorned its foundations. However, these were far from exclusive or universal symbols. Red and green were the two colours included in the throne of Heaven in St John's vision (Rev 4:1–6), referred to as jasper and sardonyx. Green was thought to make men glad and bring comfort to the eyes, while red was recognition of Christ's charity and inspired men to martyrdom to shed their blood for his love – appropriate symbolic meanings for such a pavement.<sup>51</sup>

A combination of form and radiance, the sensorial significance of the porphyry lies in the fact that the segments are convex in form and set to look like gems that reflect light

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<sup>50</sup> The outer areas were heavily restored in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century (Tatton-Brown 1998, 55; Dudley 2010, 122).

<sup>51</sup> Wycliffe saw green jasper as God's mercy which comforted man's inner eye, and sardonyx as divine wrath (Woolgar 2006, 170).

from all directions. This elaborate *opus sectile* work is exclusive to Canterbury and Westminster Abbey (Tatton-Brown 1998, 57–8). The main lines of the design are Purbeck stone, thus integrating themselves into the piers of the surrounding Trinity Chapel masonry which is also made of Purbeck. Whether layman or king, the impression made by such a grand pavement on the ascent to the shrine would have been overwhelming, and no doubt produced an emotional response in itself. The polished convex surfaces would have reflected light from the surrounding windows, lamps and candles as well as the jewelled and gilded shrine structure, creating a dazzling visual array which would draw the royal towards the shrine; a somewhat fitting area for a royal pilgrim.

The design reflects the cosmatesque pavements adorning the area around the shrine of St Edward the Confessor and in the sanctuary to the west at Westminster Abbey (laid 1267–69) (Fig 3.27), in addition to the pavement at Old St Peters, Rome. Nikolaus Muffel, a German counsellor who attended the coronation of Emperor Sigismund in 1433 at the latter, added a visual detail relating to the altar of Saint Maurice: placed before it was a design of five marble discs on which the Emperor would genuflect for the unction, presumably part of a cosmatesque pavement (Blaauw 1994, 738; Fletcher 2013, 414). Outside Westminster and Canterbury, such floors were rare in England. Yet, the geometric designs were commonly used during the unction and, in fact, can be found in several north Italian churches (particularly 12<sup>th</sup> century) and often only on tombs of clerics or saints. It is not unlikely that the pavement was also used in this way at Canterbury, given that incoming kings were similarly anointed with the oil of St Thomas during their coronations. This would have established a further bond as the pavement recalled the symbolism of papal approval therefore linking it to Thomas as well as to Christ, in addition to linking the English royal family to all (Binski 1999b, 86–7). As such, this design was carefully constructed. It created an experience that was almost otherworldly or mysterious, referencing the saint's heavenly abode through the jewels of the mosaic, the shrine and surrounding locale.

Although the origins of the notion are disputable, many scholars have argued for the ideological significance of the journey created by the material of the pavements as well as the path taken by the pilgrims who walked over them (Foster 1991). Products of their design, the pavements of medieval cathedral floors have been compared to mazes or labyrinths which served as a 'chemin de Jerusalem' or 'path to Jerusalem'. While the

phrase appears to originate in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries (Wright 2001, 210), it is possible to view such floor mazes as symbolic recreations of the (somewhat torturous) journey of the pilgrim to God, particularly the design of the 1268 cosmati pavement of Westminster Abbey or the 13<sup>th</sup>-century pavement in Chartres Cathedral nave (France), which are far more obvious as mazes or labyrinths. The idea of wandering in search of salvation was a theme of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678); a metaphorical tale of a pilgrim who made his way from the City of Destruction to the Heavenly Jerusalem. In a similar vein, the labyrinth idea of the pavements reflected such a journey as, it would appear from this thesis, did the entirety of the pilgrimage infrastructure of the medieval church. The pavement, therefore, was perhaps the culmination of the journey; the final struggle before the reach for salvation. Once again, physical movement through the spaces up towards the shrine area may be understood as a symbol of the physical and spiritual transcendence of the pilgrim, whether layperson or king, the ultimate goal being the experience of celestial kinship (Coleman and Elsner 1995, 6).

Finally, there is a possible further connection between the pavement and royalty. The change in location signified the point at which the High Altar ceased to be the central focus of the upper church, and the shrine began to be, whilst illustrating a link of time and continuity through the fabric of the building. Similar examples occur at Norwich and Durham where piers were re-used in the later church in order to adopt a sense of continual and communal history (see chapter 4). This movement sought to affirm the sacred link between the origins of the church and that of Becket's cult as the pavement became the material embodiment of the significant areas and events of the history of the church. In turn, its use during the royal visit further established a link between the church and the divinely chosen rulers who were anointed with the chrism of Becket. Aesthetically and symbolically the pavement served to mark off the sanctuary as the preserve of the senior clergy and royalty, i.e. those in charge of spreading God's word and those anointed by God (Hamilton and Spicer 2005, 18).

#### 3.8.4 MASONRY

In addition to the flooring, the aesthetics of the shrine locale were further integrated by the polished coloured surfaces of the Trinity Chapel columns. The double columns of the arcades allowed a maximum visibility of the windows from the shrine structure at the centre, allowing the streaming light from the glass to catch the marble reflecting off

the spectrum of colours emitted by the opulent decoration of the feretory. Outside of the *opus Alexandrinum*, the pavement is blanketed in a rose-pink marble, warming the interior with its tone. This is contrasted with the counter-changing hues of the polished stones, some of which use the same rose marble, while the others are a cream-white pelletal limestone and grey-green Purbeck marble (Binski 2004, 3). At the west the pairs of columns are limestone and Purbeck. Rose-pink marble<sup>52</sup> was used on either side of the shrine together with Purbeck so that the warmth would have hit the bright tones of the shrine surface which, from documentary evidence and surviving fragments reputedly from capitals of the shrine's stone base, was also constructed from rose marble (Binski 2004, 6; Tatton-Brown 1998, 54) (Fig 3.28). This rose-pink hue was scarcely used elsewhere in the church in order to confine it to the shrine locale, i.e. the central area of the Trinity Chapel, and thus demarcating the significance of the sacred area and distinguishing it from the rest of the building. Finally, Purbeck and limestone are repeated and the two easternmost piers are coupled as limestone and rose: white and pink-red (Binski 2004, 3; Fergusson 2011, 57).

This use of colour was by no means unintentional and its symbolic nature must be discussed. If we contrast the muted tones of the Trinity Chapel with the dark Purbeck or Bethersden marble of the choir and presbytery (Fig 3.29), the contrast is great and this particular combination is used in no other Gothic church of the period. As will be further explained below, colour allegory was fast becoming a universal language of the Church, particularly following the Fourth Lateran Council of the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, and one that was understood by the majority of the population. Bede connected purple to blood and therefore typologically to martyrdom and baptism (Binski 2004, 7). Thus, the rose marble can also be understood as a representation of the martyrdom given the area in which it is located.

Also, the use of white coupled with red alludes to the colours of the rose and the lily. It was no surprise that, following the martyrdom, Becket's death was compared with an imitation of Christ – in Becket's bloodshed Christ was crucified again (Binski 2004, 7–8). Five of Becket's biographers first remarked upon the scattering of Becket's brains on the pavement as the blood, one reddening and one whitening the other – the lily and the rose (or virgins, confessors and martyrs) via reference to the image in Canticles (the Song of Songs) (2:1, 5:1) (Binski 2004, 8). This mixing, the suffusion of the brains and

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<sup>52</sup> Originating from the Phillipeville area of modern Southern Belgium (Tatton-Brown 1998, 54).

blood, also exhibits a colour dynamism that was found in the miraculous water of St Thomas which was said to change five times, once into milk and four times into blood, this time associating the colours with the blood and milk of Christ and the Virgin (Binski 2004, 8).<sup>53</sup> Through the coloured stones, the martyrdom became present. The significant representation and understanding behind the spiritual meanings of the coloured stones brought the act into present reality so that ‘Becket [was]...embodied in the Church, and the Church in him’ (Binski 2004, 9).<sup>54</sup> The poetics of architecture produced by the ‘Augustinian marble revolution’, suggests that scale, variety, colour, opulence and improvement were ‘signs of magnificence’ in architectural patronage (Binski 2004, 3) and so the use of a bright polychromy throughout the shrine locale was likely to have been intended from the initial conception of the design which served to surpass fellow cult churches.

Surrounding this area are the twelve windows of the ambulatory and nearby, at its apex, was the light-filled Corona Chapel which featured the head reliquary of Becket (Fig 3.30). Two of the windows in the ambulatory illustrated Becket’s life, whilst ten depicted his posthumous miracles (between 1171 and 1173). The stories depicted in the stained glass were selected from accounts of Becket’s life and miracles recorded by the monks, Benedict of Peterborough (c.1135–93) and William of Canterbury (fl.1162–74; d.c.1190) (Blick 2001, 5). Specifically, healing miracles were chosen to illuminate the Trinity Chapel windows enclosing the shrine area. This choice authenticated the intercessory power of the cult as the glass literally depicted and illuminated through its subject matter, the reason for the rare cream and pink stones of the columns (Wilson 1990, 90). The chapel itself was a metaphor for the martyrdom and a permanent acknowledgment and memorial of its presence. Together these architectural metaphors created an intense, yet unique atmosphere attributed *only* to Canterbury (Hahn 1997, 1090). The shrine surroundings of the Trinity Chapel consequently produced a beautiful ornamented space that reflected a gigantic reliquary in itself.

### 3.8.5 CHAPELS

In the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral stood the image-shrine of Our Lady of the Undercroft (Fig 3.31). The chapel’s reverence initially derived from being the area in

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<sup>53</sup> Becket’s blood was mixed with holy water as, even diluted, the blood was believed to hold miraculous properties.

<sup>54</sup> This subtle symbolic signaling would have been recognised by lay pilgrims rather than exclusively for than the educated elite (cf. Woolgar 2006 for a detailed analysis of medieval issues of colour allegory).

which Becket's body first rested before his burial (Stanley 1868, 101), yet towards the end of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, its own reputation began to grow and its 'image' became a distinct source of devotion (Blick 2007, 190).<sup>55</sup> An elite audience largely supported the cult as the chapel in which the image-shrine stood was tightly controlled by a set of large iron gates, opened only to royalty, nobility or the high-ranking clergy (Nichols 1849, 50, 56–7, 172).<sup>56</sup> For the royal pilgrim, no doubt the devices used to control access, such as the canopies, gates and emphatic framing, would have enhanced the experience of the crypt, and the resulting exclusivity would make a visit especially personal.

The chapel was fashioned from the finest materials and displayed the best workmanship of the period. Hardly any surface was left undecorated, providing the eye with a dance of visual delight. The curved vaulted ceiling decorated with lapis lazuli formed an angelic choir bearing musical instruments and the starry night sky that framed the space was additionally adorned with relief images of golden suns and silver stars (Woodruff 1926, 154; Blick 2007, 191) (Fig 3.32). The focal point of the chapel was the altar upon which stood the sculpture of the Virgin within a screen (similar to that which can be seen today). It is also likely that images of the Trinity and apostles made of silver adorned the chapel (Blick 2007, 191). Royal patronage was frequent and no doubt spurred by the late 14<sup>th</sup>-century painted heraldic shields of kings, nobles, archbishops and saints which decorated the framing space of the statues (Humphrey-Smith 1987). Royal gifts were extremely common: Queen Philippa in 1352 (12d); Edward II (7s) in 1311, 1316 and then in 1320 he gave 7s for a candle to be lit in front of the image; Edward III visited at least once a year giving alms to the undercroft amongst other stations; and he also sent a 5lb candle to the image in 1335. In 1343 Edward III gifted many gold ships to some of the major shrines including the Undercroft Chapel for surviving various sea crossings (Blick 2007).

The greatest benefactor was Edward the Black Prince, whose offerings and gifts directly affected the aestheticism of the chapel. He bequeathed sacred vessels, hangings and vestments, and was the likely benefactor of the reredos and other screens surrounding

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<sup>55</sup> Its popularity was also likely an unofficial outcome of the Black Prince's 1376 will in which he desired to be buried ten feet from the altar (Nichols 1999, 71). His wishes were, however, disregarded and he was interred in the sanctuary, close to Becket's shrine.

<sup>56</sup> As ordinary Canterbury citizens made the majority of endowments in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, following Edward I's royal approval of the image, it perhaps found favour with the aristocracy/monarchy (Marks 2004, 191).

the chapel (Scott-Robertson 1880, 527). The Decorated style of the stone screens suggests they were made c.1365–80 coinciding with the Black Prince's period of power (Fig 3.33), while his coat of arms are painted on the south-eastern pier of the *sacrarium*, against the east wall (Blick 2007, 191). Nine statues of saints stood on the reredos, probably made of silver gilt, with the central largest figure a representation of the Virgin herself. The importance of the screen is clear by its appearance on many 14<sup>th</sup>-century pilgrim badges. They depict what is thought to be a representation of the original image of Our Lady framed by an elaborate Decorated Gothic-style screen resembling that of the stone edifice which displayed the sculptures behind the altar (Blick 2007, 182) (Fig 3.34).

The multitude of gems or statue offerings given by elite visitors could only be witnessed by the masses of lay pilgrims through the double-iron grille. Sound was also a significant aspect of these donations, which consequently affected the sensory atmosphere of the chapel. For example, Edward I presented the image of Our Lady with a gold brooch every year (and another to Becket's shrine) and paid musicians to perform before it. In 1296–7, Henry III donated '4 8s. 4d., by the gift of the king to 14 minstrels, making their minstrelsy before the statue of the Blessed Mary, the Virgin, in the crypt (*vouta*) of Christchurch, Canterbury'. Edward III paid 2s to 'divers minstrels for making their minstrelies before the statue of the Blessed Virgin, in the *volta* in Christchurch, Canterbury' in 1332–3, and in 1337 he again gave 2s for 'divers minstrels who made minstrelsy before the Image of our Lady in the Vault' (MS E101/386/7 f.7r, Exchequer account PRO, Cotton MS Nero C VIII, f.212; Scott Robertson 1880, 527).

The playing of music before holy images was a wide-spread practice and occurs repeatedly throughout the wardrobe books of Edward III, three entries of which specify that minstrelsy occurred during the offering of oblations (Rastall 1970–71, 86–7). The *Te Deum* and *Magnificat* were also sung during offerings made by important persons at the shrine of St Cuthbert at Durham (Fowler 1903, 94). In the undercroft at Canterbury, the regular use of sound in worship was likely a result of the curved nature of the vault which provided excellent acoustic properties. Sound reverberated by bouncing off the curves of the arches. These rituals, although often specifically stipulated with intricate details, such as the singing of psalms whilst kneeling for the peace and tranquillity of the king, together with special prayers which had to be read in a fervent manner imploring the aims of royalty (Blick 2007, 193), could be enjoyed by all onlookers

making the experience of the images and the shrine itself even more evocative to those who *could* enter its sanctified barriers. This sensory environment, all for the devotion of an image-shrine, would remind visitors that the saints of the cathedral supported their sovereign, and imploring that they should do so also.

### 3.9 OFFERINGS

Lay pilgrims largely offered to shrines gifts of wax or silver at most, while sovereigns brought magnificent jewels, gold pieces, crowns and even grants of land, all of which brought much prestige to a cult. Following their public offering, royal gifts were displayed and specifically recorded in the places they were given and governed by particular customs (Swanson 1993, 179–80; Vincent 2002, 30; Blick 2011 43, 46). Such gifts required a place of honour as they marked the presence of royalty, conferring that the churches were their chosen place of pilgrimage and thus bestowing a tangible and visible mark of authenticity and honour.<sup>57</sup> Essentially, saints needed monarchs as much as monarchs needed saints.

Perhaps one of the most lavish set of gifts given by a royal were those of Edward I who, while on pilgrimage to the shrine of Becket on the Feast of the Translation (7<sup>th</sup> July) in 1285, gave four figures and two ships of pure gold with brooches, gold and ornate precious stones (two of the ships are pictured on the shrine of a pilgrim badge flanking a jewelled cross) (CPR 1893, 198).<sup>58</sup> The figures were of St Edward the Confessor and a pilgrim, and St George and his horse (Taylor 1979, 24). From the description given by their maker the king's goldsmith William of Farndon, they were adorned with rubies, emeralds and pearls (PRO E101/372/11, m. 3). The account also implied that a cover was to be placed over the shrine for the images to reside upon suggesting they were to structurally and visually enhance the structure. This is further confirmed by the final cost made of £5 12s. 8d for the 'making [of] divers pinnacles' and for the purchase of pure white silver for framing crosses of crystal. These may possibly be the three

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<sup>57</sup> These donations were scrupulously recorded by the monks as proof of high-level devotion to the saints, but they were even more important to royalty than to the monastery (Blick 2011, 52). Royal visits were often a financial burden as they expected to *receive* a sumptuous gift in return, although contributions were often limited to *c.* 7 shillings so they could be equally dispersed around the altars of the church (Woodruff 1932, 28–9).

<sup>58</sup> Votive ships were considered appropriate gifts. Evidence suggests that many were presented as thanksgivings for safe returns from hazardous journeys or as a fulfilment of a vow for their lives made at sea (Champion 2012). The number of ships given by royalty to Becket's shrine would suggest that the maritime aspect of the saint's altruism was well known. In addition to the ships presented to St William's shrine, at York, the shrine of Richard Scrope was surrounded by a small fleet of votive graffiti ships (Duffy 2005, 198).

floriated finials depicted on the cover of the shrine structure represented in the Cottonian manuscript drawing as they were noted as made in silver gilt. Further crosses were purchased, one of silver and the other jasper which were offered at the shrine (Taylor 1979, 25). As such, Edward's contribution to the embellishment of the sacred structure may account for its change in fashion as seen in the Cottonian drawing. If so, this royal offering was fundamental to the shaping of the experience for subsequent royals (and lay pilgrims), as the shrine not only became much more elaborate, but it also reflected Edward's personal piety and devotion to the cult. The king himself therefore became embodied, together with the saint, in the fabric of the shrine structure.

Edward's commitment to Becket's shrine continued. In 1297 he then offered a silver censer followed, in July 1299, by the offering of the crown of Scotland (and purse) to commemorate its safe return after it was discovered in John Balliol's luggage when he was about to leave England for France under papal supervision (Scott-Robertson 1880, 512; Taylor 1979, 26). This gift also commemorated his marriage to Margaret of France at Canterbury in September of that year, as the nuptial Mass was celebrated at the altar of the shrine of the saint (Stanley 1868, 264–5).

An example of such a votive can be seen in a Canterbury window, where a golden crown hangs above an image of the shrine (nIV) (Fig 3.35). Further examples of the cult's ties to corporeality exist in the stained glass surrounding the shrine locale which depict many scenes, primarily of the tomb (with one image of the shrine although this may be due to the survival rates), of the changing votive donations (including coins, candles, crutches, cloths, etc.). One was a golden head given by Henry V (Dobson 1996, 137). The elaborate votives offered by royalty reaffirmed Becket's power, and as many of these gifts were in the shape of, or associated with bodily parts such as the crown given by Edward I in this panel, a focus on the corporeal elements of his cult and cures was recognised.

In the York St William window (n7) there are large quantities of candlesticks depicted around the tomb/shrine and many pilgrims are presented with the particular attributes associated with their cure needs, i.e. crutches and shackles (Fig 3.36). However, unlike the Canterbury panels where *ex-votos* and ampullae recurrently feature to authenticate the miracle accounts, images of votive offerings in the York window rarely occur and it is rather the contact that pilgrims make with the shrine structure itself that is continually

stressed. This is surprising given the amount of human attributes left around the shrines and reliquaries of St William listed in the surviving 1509–10 inventories. Such items included a golden nose, many pairs of gilded shoes, several hands and even a silver breast (Raine 1858, 224–6; Swanson 1993, 179–80). Although specific names of the donors are not recorded, the high value of the objects listed suggests they were gifted by royal or elite pilgrims.

It is clear that the many practices associated with devotion to both saints were predicated upon the desire to have not only a visual but also a physically corporeal experience in order to establish the memory of the saint (Harris 2005, 272). Further evidence lies in the actions of royals during their visit. Henry V prayed and kissed the relics of St Thomas before making an offering at his shrine following his success at Agincourt (Nilson 1998, 118), while on nearly every occasion, Henry VI visited Canterbury on foot (Connor 2010), as did many other monarchs, perhaps in imitation of Henry II, thus heightening their corporeal experience as their body directly touched the church where the martyr had fallen. The monarch would be in direct proximity to receive sacrality from the saint as the stone-cold floor heightened the other senses, imprinting each element into the memory. Proximity to the object of veneration was paramount and explains why the royal partook in bodily performance during pilgrimage. For example, the details of Henry II's 1174 public penance at St Thomas's tomb are very specific with regards to the corporeal interaction and suffering undertaken.

“taking off his cloak, he thrust his head and shoulders into one of the openings of Saint Thomas's tomb”. Then he was flogged, five lashes from each of the prelates present and three from each of the 80 monks. “When he had been disciplined, he withdrew his head from the tomb and sat down on the dirty ground with no carpet or cushion under him, and he sang psalms and prayers all night, without getting up for any bodily need” (Shirley quoted in Gillingham 2008).

This corporeality emphasised the character of experience continually at play even during a personal act of veneration by one person. The multiplicity of corporeal elements associated with the Becket cult was the focus of much imagery associated with the cult. This can also be seen in the depictions of *ex-voto* offerings made at shrines, where physical offerings were expected to result in physical healing. Badge makers even began to replicate body parts associated with St Thomas. It is possible that the many ‘foot’ badges associated with the Canterbury cult may well be attributed to Henry

II's penitential visit where he walked barefoot through the streets to the shrine. Perhaps this may also account for the numerous graffiti in the shape of hands and feet which adorn the cloister walls and stalls – some are even dated as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Moreover, Canterbury pilgrim tokens are largely found in the shapes of Becket's vestments, gloves and girdles, as well as the sword which killed him (Fig 3.38). It is no coincidence that many of the relics and gifts that became represented in the little lead tokens were in the form of offerings actually gifted to the tomb and shrine by the monarchs of the medieval period. Therefore royal gifts often shaped the image of the cult both metaphorically and literally – through authenticity but they were obviously seen as very important to the church. For example, Edward I's gifts of gold ships to the shrine feature on pilgrim badges from Canterbury, and Henry II is said to have left with an ampulla of the holy water of St Thomas after his visit in 1174 (Stubbs 1965, 249).<sup>59</sup> The ritual expression favoured by the royal pilgrimage found expansion in the gifts given to the fabric and shrine structure, but also in many other sensory stimuli. Such decoration extended outwards, into the main processional space, altering the 'ambience of festivity' (Tekippe 2005, 706). Thus, the fabric was used to cure, promoting the idea once again that the salvific essence of Becket's cult lay in his body.

It may be argued then that the donations made by royalty, whether as votive offerings or as patronage of the fabric, also helped to imbue the monarchs literally within the building, as the martyrdom of Becket was through the colour of marble used in the Trinity Chapel masonry. Votives hung on columns rather than wax images given by laity which, although displayed on a beam above the shrine, were not kept for a long period. When the new shrine was created at Canterbury, the sumptuous gifts given by sovereigns and elite clergy were removed from the tomb and affixed directly on or placed near to the new golden feretory, while others were hung over beams and buttresses or affixed to cloths which hung from these beams (Turner 1976, 19; Nilson 1998, 37; Blick 2011, 55).<sup>60</sup> The now-vanished beam/rail which stood on two wooden columns to the east of the High Altar, called an *artificiosa machine* similar to the beam adopted at St Albans Cathedral, was carved with scenes perhaps from the Life of

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<sup>59</sup> One particular sign depicts a small figure pointing to a jewel in emulation of the prior or attending monk who would identify important donations with a white rod noting not their donor and monetary worth (Nichols 1875, 55–6).

<sup>60</sup> Examples of gifts attached to the shrines in York Minster in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century manuscript YML, M2/2d include: silver, coral, a breast of gilded silver, rings, precious stones, coins, two images of a bull, ten ships of silver, and a staff (Swanson 1993, 179–81).

Becket, together with images of SS Alphege and Dunstan, a majesty and seven chests filled with many relics (Gervase of Cant, chronicle vol 1, 13; Nilson 1998, 85; Blick 2011, 55, 57). There was even a hierarchy paid to where the gifts would be placed. Offerings were therefore much more than mere acts of devotion; their final location was representative of the individual ruler as well as the monarchy as a whole (Blick 2011, 43) and they were tied to the symbolism and corporeality of the pilgrimage which included memory and display (Tekippe 2005, 701). The shrine structure itself was thus monitored as closely as the aspects of the devotional procession.

### **3.10 A SYNAESTHETIC EXPERIENCE**

Royal pilgrimages were marked by a synaesthesia of aesthetic and tangible displays. Images, sounds, smells, lights, movements and music characterised their visits. Interaction with the aesthetic surroundings was a salient aspect in creating a memorable devotional experience. Use of light and glass particularly alludes to the idea that royal devotees required, even demanded, physical and imaginative interaction; art and architecture needed to participate as much with them as they did with it. The monarchical experience at Canterbury is exemplary in illustrating this concept.

Church officials monitored these visual and material qualities as much as the observers or participants. The prior, convent and sometimes even the Archbishop accompanied all royals during their 'processional' pilgrimage. Such events, although ritualistic, assumed the form of a grand procession. The sheer spectacle and drama that such company created aided the royal pilgrimage in its display of majesty, emphasising the distinction between the royal party and everyone else (Smuts 1989, 69, 72). The theatricality of the sensory intense environments culminated in the visit to the shrine itself. Shrine locales were appropriately 'dressed' and ritualistic customaries followed for the devotional visits of royalty. Although the evidence is sparse for the exact practices carried out during these events, the customs undertaken for feast days may also have been observed for high status visitors. The ringing of a bell signalled normal pilgrimage hours and so it may be assumed that this was also the case for the entry of royal visitors to the church on pilgrimage (Turner 1976, 17). Furthermore, if the Archbishop was officiating, then the two clerks of the shrine held torches lighting his way while he censed the High Altar, shrine and 'other customary places'; if only the prior were attending, then the second clerk carried the torch (Turner 1976, 19). Again, we may assume that a similar practice occurred before the official entrance of a monarch into the most holy area.

A synaesthetic experience was clearly a crucial component in the structure of a memorable devotional experience and thus the intention behind the construction of the royal pilgrimage visit, as can be attested by the documentary account of the visit of Henry VI's wife, Margaret of Anjou to the shrine of St Thomas in 1447. Recorded in the Chronicle of William of Glastonbury, as well as the Canterbury monk John Stone, Margaret, who was only sixteen years old at the time, arrived on foot on the eve of the feast of St Michael (28<sup>th</sup> September) and was received by the prior and convent at the entrance to the church (Woodruff 1925, 126–7; Connor 2010, 82). Throughout Stone's chronicle, on the days of the royal visits, the colours of the robes of the prior and convent are recorded. These were most often white or red, occasionally green, but the fact that they are recorded denotes their clear significance in the creation of the drama and memory of the event. Interestingly, the chronicles differ on the colour of the robes of the prior and convent for Margaret's visit: William notes they were green while Stone suggests they were white.

The specification of colours by both authors implies that the garments were important, but detailed analysis of the texts reveals that there is little correspondence between the colours of the robes and the nature of the visits. Predominantly, female royal consorts were received by the priory and convent in white robes, whereas for kings, green was the predominant hue chosen. However, red is also used, and white and green were interchangeable. No doubt the colour given off was ceremonious and marked the beginning of the sensory ritualistic journey about to be taken. At the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215, Pope Innocent III established a framework of four principal colours for liturgical vestments.<sup>61</sup> Drawing on Exodus 28, Canticles 2:1 and Canticles 5:10, Innocent denoted that white, red, black and green should be used for liturgical vestments. Although these differed from the colours of the garments worn by the High Priest outlined in Exodus 27, his choice of a colour-tetrad was justified by the biblical verse (Portmann and Ritsema 1974, 88). White was worn for: Easter, the feasts of Christ, the Virgin, the confessors and virgins, and the invention and exaltation of the cross. Red was worn for: the Holy Spirit, apostles and martyrs (formerly venerated in white), Whitsun, and feasts of the cross associated with suffering. Black was used for days of penitence and abstinences, throughout Lent, during Advent until Christmas Eve, and for Offices of the Dead. Finally, violet was to be used on the fourth Sunday in Lent,

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<sup>61</sup> Hues were not specified and local/occasional vestment variation was possible.

and green for other days due to its hue position in the middle of white, black and red. Innocent also noted that scarlet was sometimes used instead of red, violet in place of black, yellow for green, and, for the feasts of martyrs, rose was often used with yellow for confessors and lily-white for virgins (*De sacro altaris mysterio*. PL, 217, cols 799–802; quoted in Woolgar 2006, 168–9).

Clearly the church recognised that the sensory components of the event could convey social order and meaning as well as creating lasting mnemonic experiences. The distinct colour of the officials' robes distinguished them and the royal from others so the royal could be traced as they processed through the church to the various shrine stations, while the manner of the procession itself served to increase the devotional aspect of the royal visit, elevated the clergy's reputation and brought honour to both the cathedral and the city (Stevenson 2010, 51). These specific material elements of the event – the visuality brought by the colour of the dress, and the movement and spectacle produced by the body of the procession – constituted important sensory cues which aided the quality of the memory of the royal experience and embedded it within the minds of the spectators, as well as the participating royal themselves.

Throughout the documentary and archaeological evidence it is definitively clear that decorum and ritual were vital components in the creation of a devotional visit. The specifics of clothing and behaviour outlined in the records are perhaps an effort to ensure the appropriate sensoriality of the experience. In the medieval period, dress and bodily manner communicated much more than simply visual meaning: they were rhythmic actions that translated through the bodies of onlookers (Stevenson 2010, 53). Many depictions of medieval *adventus* ceremonies or entry processions emphasise the richness of dress to convey an iconic gravity which brings the eye to the royal and transforms them into icons themselves (Muir 2007, 141). With each step and gesture of the procession, the colours animated the fabric, revealing vibrancy and hues whilst shimmering and projecting radiant light (Pentcheva 2006, 643). Material, visual and even physical elements of processions, such as attending bare foot or the slow manner in which the clergy would process the royal, brought hierarchical structure, 'reverence, respectability [and] edification' to an event and so their recognition by the organisers exploited this use in order to convey and control such meaning (Stevenson 2010, 51).

The function of dress was therefore about much more than decoration; sumptuous jewels, gems and gold were believed to emit rays or ripples, termed by Roger Bacon as ‘species’, which reacted on the eye creating sensations (Muir 2007, 138). The ‘species’ that emanated from the dress of royalty were worthy of being cast onto the sacred. This functioned through the process of *mimesis* and *imitatio*. By viewing such actions, viewers were triggered to simulate the behaviour and emotion of another participant’s visit, in this case the monarch’s, with their own bodies. Thus, royal pilgrimage processions established and highlighted the distinctions between social groups through the reciprocity of mutual gazes of ‘interlocking material species’. Moreover, ‘What the [royal...] saw as they processed created the ritual performance just as what was radiated from the procession itself did’ (Muir 2007, 144).

Returning to Margaret of Anjou’s pilgrimage, the sensory experience was then increased as the precentor started the Antiphon *Audi filia* which began to be sung in harmony (possibly with organ accompaniment) as the queen entered the nave. The entire time the queen was on her knees in supplication. Following this, the Antiphon *Rogamus Te* was performed until the choir was reached. When the queen reached the High Altar the Prior said the collect and the queen made her offering. The use of hymns to mark distinct phases of the pilgrimage continued: when the precentor commenced the *Pastor cesus*, the convent preceded her to the shrine where the Prior again said the collect with *per Christum dominum* which, when completed, marked the signal for the queen to make her offering at the altar of Becket’s shrine and then at the Corona. She then left through the cloister to the palace (Woodruff 1925, 127).

Throughout the accounts of visits made by queens and kings at both churches, there is a clear distinction between the actions performed by and for the two genders. As noted above, the preoccupation with Advent imagery was also ascribed to the royal visit. The king was received as if he was Christ entering Jerusalem (particularly during the civic royal entry) and queens also had their own distinctive variation. Although of the same function, queens were more commonly received according to ‘the pattern of the Virgin’s Assumption and Coronation in heaven’ (Kipling 1998, 41). This relates the medieval pageant to the concept in which the city was depicted as the New Jerusalem (the church being its culmination), and therefore the ‘king as a Christ come to his people, and the queen as a Virgin Mary ascending to her heavenly coronation’ – the *imitatio Christi* or *imitatio Mariae* (Kipling 2005, 127).

It is particularly noteworthy that Stone thought it important to record that Queen Margaret actually entered the cloister which was an unusual practice for a female devotee as it was contrary to the rule of St Benedict (Woodruff 1925, 127). At 13<sup>th</sup> century Norwich Cathedral, we see the delineation of sacred versus holy space with the holy consisting of the cloister, cemeteries and precinct, and the sacred referring exclusively to the cathedral church (Gilchrist 2005, 243). Within this concept, the nave was considered more secular and the choir and presbytery were for the monks only which was derived from the concept of sexual purity. Space was used as the medium through which sexuality was constructed and femininity of high-status women was reinforced with an emphasis on chastity and purity (Gilchrist 1994, 57). In castles and monasteries, female private space was often the deepest or most segregated, but in the communal church, many spaces were gender confined and separated so that ‘women’s chastity was protected through enclosure’ (Gilchrist 1994, 57). As queens were revered in relation to the Virgin herself, this may account for the access Margaret gained to the cloister at Canterbury and why she was allowed to enter such a holy space.

The significance of sound resonates throughout the surviving accounts of royal visits. In Stone’s chronicle, he records each response begun on entrance of the monarch, whether male or female: for queens the response *Audi filia* was sung whereas kings were greeted with the *Summe Trinitati*. Roy Strong (2005, 84–5) alluded to the importance of song also during the 14<sup>th</sup>-century coronation procession, noting that the accompanying procession of members of the episcopacy and convent would chant and sing anthems until the royal was stationary – a likely comparison for the audition of the royal pilgrimage spectacle. Anthems, hymns and responses created an atmospheric state that allowed the participant to ‘pray with the voice’. Although the participating royal would not traditionally join in, the effect produced by the surrounding sound would elevate the experience. ‘The melody of responsory was supposed to work to serve the text, so that melody expressed the meaning, feeling and the atmosphere of the text’ (Vuori 2011). This served to help both singers and royal attain the ‘appropriate’ state of mind – harmonious and contemplative – forming the mode of prayer so that they would deeply feel what was being sung and why. It would appear that the responsory and its monotonous sound was used to create an atmospheric state which, with it being so closely related to the Virgin, was used as a sort of holistic purification rite for the female monarch. The additional union of melody and specific text signalled a ritualistic

marking of the female's entry into the sacred space – the space of Mary herself (Coletti 1999, 31).

At Chartres, kings heard the antiphon or response the abbot found appropriate, whereas a queen would always hear 'Cum sederit filius hominis' (Fassler 2007, 15). Nonetheless, the chants were often sung for the protection of a secular ruler by God if they followed the laws established for them. Simultaneously they welcomed and warned the ruler. Moving now to York, on his visit to the Minster in 1483, Richard III led both the clergy and laity in spoken prayer rather than following the traditional custom of being received by a response from the clergy. The importance of this role-reversal would have created a significant sensory experience and strong emotional response for all participants. As various social groups were speaking the prayer together, the experience would be subsumed by a feeling of commonality and community as the recitation would have, if only for the length of the chant, removed social status and put all on an equal level, including the king. Following this event, no doubt the king would have felt humility as deference was offered by the spectators who watched as he travelled through the church and visited St William's relics. His experience would have been shared with the rest of the congregation who, as a result, became 'extras' in the event. This is clear evidence to show that what others did as the royal processed through the churches on their pilgrimages and what the royal saw, created the performance as much as what was radiated from the procession itself. The senses thus channelled the 'intense exchange of visual and affective influences [continually taking place] between the [pilgrimage] procession and its spectators' (Muir 2007, 150).

However, Stone noted that Margaret of Anjou was the only royal to hear Mass in the company of music by the boys of the Canterbury choir. The singing boys are only mentioned for the queen's 1446 visit and perform here when she attends the altar of the Blessed Mary in the crypt (which was not so uncommon in 15<sup>th</sup>-century monastic churches) (Connor 2010, 80). Perhaps, as Stone's chronicle only covers the period between 1417 and 1472, there may be further evidence to suggest that choristers were a common feature of elite female pilgrimages at Canterbury or even the wider context of pilgrimage churches.

Female devotion in late-medieval convents and beguinages was filled with the pursuit of active and contemplative avenues of devotion. Sounds were one of the most notable

outlets for this as harmonious music often symbolised feminine control (Lezotte 2011, 79). Choirboys were often associated with cherubs or angels. The Dionysian theory of hierarchy equated them to bringers of lights, incense, music and other provocations of the senses (Binski 2004, 268). In fact, John Pacham, the Franciscan Archbishop of Canterbury (d.1292), produced a French ‘moralized epitome’ of St Denis’s hierarchy for Queen Eleanor of Castile in which he deployed an analogy between the hierarchy of the celestial and royal court (Binski 2004, 268). Likewise, the high pitches of the young boys’ voices were only possible by males of that age and so were often compared to the voices of angels. Their association with the Virgin – Mary was accompanied by the host of angels in heaven – completed the symbolism as the female monarch was seen to enter the image-shrine of Our Lady at Canterbury accompanied by the angelic voices of the boy choir, together with the angelic choir and their instruments depicted upon the vault of the eastern apse of the chapel. Thus, ‘the angelic was a sublimation of that which could not be said at the mundane level’ (Binski 2004, 280). Sounds therefore developed into the embodiment of sanctity as well as heightened spiritual female power (LeZotte 2011, 80). This may serve to explain the inclusion of the choir for such an important female devotee and the use of certain responses and antiphons for female monarchs.

Furthermore, the sounding of bells pervaded the ascetic day heralding the most important liturgical rituals, festivals and, most importantly, the processions of significant leaders (Bagnall Yardley 2006, 105). Bells, and music in general, were commonly used throughout the medieval and Early Modern period during both civic and religious royal receptions. Bells were also seen to lend solemnity to an event which would sit well with the purity of the female royal. At Chartres Cathedral the sounding of the two largest bells marked the beginning of the *adventus* procession for kings and queens (Fassler 2007, 15–16). Canterbury’s Sacrists’ rolls detail an example entry from 1273 which records extra money paid to bell ringers for the visits of two secular benefactors, including Queen Ediva to which is added ‘Processio Sci (sancti) Augustini’. On the feast days of the Martyrdom of Becket (Dec. 29<sup>th</sup>) and Translation (July 7<sup>th</sup>), further bell ringers were again needed (Woodruff 1939, 77–8). The city of York regularly made use of sounds to great effect for royal receptions, often playing organs upon monarchical entries (Johnston and Rogerson 1979, 145). For example, upon Princess Margaret’s entry through Micklegate Bar in 1503, all the bells in the city rang together in welcome, portraying an image of civic unity and harmony (Murphy 2006, 248). The Princess even remarked on ‘How sweetly the bells of York do ring’.

The chamber in which St William's shrine resided behind York Minster's High Altar, was topped by a gallery. The position of the gallery directly above the shrine would suggest that music or singing was a crucial aspect of the pilgrimage visit, likely for high-status visitors. Simultaneous song and walking during procession has been suggested by Bagnall Yardley (2006, 113–14) to create bodily memory via 'embedding the music very deeply in the body of the participant', largely through the rhythmic movement of the processional pilgrimage around the building. Physical participation through kinaesthetic and emotional means served to absorb the events into the consciousness, establishing the royal's memory and confirming their personal devotion to the saint. The use of sound to announce the arrival of a royal would have been furthered by the actual access they gained to the shrine itself as the large iron gates and screens were unlocked and opened for the royal to pass through, followed by the raising of the canopy of the shrine in order to view the reliquary (see above). Such large edifices would have generated very loud sounds thus denouncing to all that the monarch was able to view the most sacred aspects of the cathedral: the relics.

Before continuing, Stevenson (2010, 51) noted that the use of the white rod as well as the use of candles or torches during processions not only distinguished certain statuses from others, but increased devotion through the proper manner in which the event was played out. Physical accoutrements accompanied royal pilgrimage in even greater numbers than the equipment used for liturgical processions (Tekippe 2005, 701). Throughout the documentary records of Canterbury and York cathedrals, the significance of candle wax is clear and, to wit, it is also recurrent throughout many monarchs' offering accounts. Edward III's will, for example, specified the amount of wax to be provided at his funeral, indicating his strong belief in light as an 'antidote to sin' (Ormrod 1989, 854). Light from the candles was also said to ward off evil spirits when set around the body (Duffy 2005, 361–2). Eleanor of Provence (Henry III's wife) called for the help of Becket when pregnant with her son Edmund and again in 1244. She also gave thanks to the saint by presenting 1,000 half-pound candles to the shrine, and four great candles were to be set permanently around the saint's shrine in exchange for the remittance of taxes due by the cathedral (Duggan 1982, 31). In fact, during his penitential visit to the tomb in 1174, Henry II bestowed an annual gift of 40 marks on the monastery to keep lamps constantly burning before the martyr's tomb (Stanley 1868, 120). It no surprise that Canterbury even contained its very own 'wax- house'

attended by its own keeper (Woodruff 1939, 39). Beyond this, many churches preferred beeswax candles due to the belief that as bees died while producing the fragrant wax, so the candles would recall Christ's sacrifice (Blick 2011, 32). The light given off by the candle was also tied to the notion of Christ as a lamp unto the world and the illumination of God's grace throughout humanity.

The 'creation' of light was a crucial part of cult liturgy. At the beginning of the day, Becket's shrine was 'opened' by the ringing of the bell followed by the commencement of the Mass via the lighting of four candles atop the shrine, as well as another six of the twelve large and painted square candles which stood on a beam nearby (presumably the rail on which offerings were housed) (Turner 1976, 17). Not only were these candles large and heavy (3lbs each), but they were also intricately painted with roses and flowers of gold and other colours on alternate backgrounds of red and green. The customary of the shrine notes that on great feast days all twelve were lit, which we can assume was also the case for a royal visit. On feast days, such as the Passion of St Thomas, seven lights were placed before the relics in the choir.<sup>62</sup> Similar customs were also observed at the tomb which was continually attended by two clerks: torches burned before the altar on the Anniversary of Henry IV and various other remembrance events at which times up to 120 torches would be lit around the church in sacred spots (Scott-Robertson 1880, 515). At vespers there were eight lit on the shrine and four on the altar. Holding torches, two clerks of the shrine joined the Archbishop if he officiated at lauds. The importance of lights and candles is clear by the fact that every fourth year the twelve painted candles of the shrine had to be renewed (Turner 1976, 19).

Light was also key to royal processions, forming stopping points and aids to spectacle en-route. At York, Edward IV's royal reception in 1478 was lit by one hundred torches bought by the corporation for use in fire-pans, which could be wheeled along with the procession (Murphy 2006, 249). It is likely that the royal pilgrimage ceremonies also followed this custom as many documentary accounts from the period detail similar events being led by the clergy with a cross in hand, banner (either displaying a cross or saintly images/emblems) and candles (Tekippe 2005, 702).<sup>63</sup> These sensory elements served to keep the royal visitor in continual illumination similar to the role provided by

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<sup>62</sup> William of Glastynbury notes: '*In die passionis Sci Thome martiri feretrarii invenient vii cereos ante Reliquias in choro*' and '*Isto die (?Nov. 12) Feretrarii ponent vij cereos ant Reliquias in coro [sic] & eciam in die passionis eiusdem*' (Woodruff 1925, 130).

<sup>63</sup> The processions at Durham also followed these customs (Fowler 1903, 95–6).

the officials' coloured gowns when moving along the route towards the most sacred areas of the church, which were also framed by candle light.

When processional lighting was used in such a manner it reinforced the hierarchical order as the most powerful and important figure, i.e. the royal, was continually bathed in the light that emanated throughout the course of the ceremony. Yet it also bathed their fellow civic subjects in the same glow, increasing their status: 'Those on the periphery of the light are further down the order, though they are accorded a place in the ceremony — no matter how briefly — that is denied to others' (Murphy 2006, 248–9). This was, essentially, a sensory demonstration of 'you are the company you keep'. Moreover, such light served as a visual reference outlining the boundaries of the processional route and distinguishing these areas from those the procession did not pass through, whilst simultaneously highlighting the areas connected with the saint – the most holiest of spaces.

Further sensory qualities such as fragrant and beautiful flowers also 'dressed' the shrine locale for a fulfilling pilgrimage experience. The flowers were used as symbols of virtue or miraculous signs of grace (Classen *et al.* 1994, 52), perfuming the area with their 'odour of sanctity' as it was believed that mystical fragrances signalled the divine presence of the saint within the shrine (as derived from the connection between the sweet fragrance of flowers with the garden of paradise), so contrasted against the customary putridity of a rotten corpse and complementing the grace given off by the divinely chosen ruler (Classen *et al.* 1994, 53–4).

Spices, perfume and incense were also a traditional staple of imperial, liturgical and devotional ceremony. The leaders of the procession would carry censers to cleanse and purify the route for the following royal. Accompanying a chant or prayer, the smell and smoke provided a visual and olfactory bridge between the human and divine spheres (Harvey 2006). The royal pilgrimage experience constructed by these sensory aspects was participatory on the approach to the saint's shrine. Through a sensory transition, the invisibility of smell was turned into presence via the burning of incense and the smoke it produced. As the incense emitted a further sensory quality than its initial or primary one, similar to the warmth or smell given off by a candle, it became grounded in the devotee's presence. As a result, through the smell, the intangible presence of the saint was palpably experienced (Pentcheva 2006, 650). Together, these stimuli combined to

form a synaesthetic engagement for the royal pilgrim, the officials and the onlookers, which served to construct and establish the memory they helped to create; they ‘effectively reach[ed] out to the viewer’s body and [drew them]... into a mnemonic experience’ (Stevenson 2010, 50).

### **3.11 THE SENSORIUM: RECONSTRUCTING THE MEDIEVAL PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE**

The journey taken by the royal during their pilgrimage through the medieval church will now be attempted via a reconstruction of the experience in narrative form. It is largely a reconstruction of a male royal pilgrimage as there is greater evidence for such visits. The period represented is approximately 15<sup>th</sup> century, thus after the construction of the significant glass, shrine structures and additional integrative decorative elements.

*The anticipation for the monarch’s imminent arrival was palpable. The atmosphere in the cathedral was tense but exploding with excitement. Large crowds began to gather around the church in desperation to get a glimpse of the monarch as he entered in culmination of his peregrination.*

*As he entered through the elaborate south-western transept and underneath the sculpted image of the tragic event which had befallen the building, the king paused, silently praying to the detailed reliefs of St Thomas Becket and his martyrdom, before passing underneath and slipping through into the body of the church.*

*Upon his entrance, the contrast between the stark sunlight of the exterior and the jewel-like ambience of the church struck the monarch’s eyes. As his eyes adjusted, he was met by the prior and convent whose robes were adorned with green vestments, and the precentor began the Summe Trinitati. A procession was held which advanced the king towards the east end. As he journeyed up through the nave, the space was filled with sound as the organ began and the precentor was joined by many other voices that sung in harmonious verses.*

*Looking left and right as he journeyed, the numerous colours of the nave struck the king’s eyes. All around were dripping colourful banners suspended from hooks and appearing as if floating from the clerestory level, proclaiming the church’s allegiance to their sovereign. At times, the sun would shine through the glass and cast rainbows over the colourful banners. The space became somewhat of a kaleidoscope to the eye, creating a dazzling array for the procession of this most important visitor.*

*At the end of the nave, the response ended and the king made his way left through the great rood, towards the north transept – the most sacred area. As he climbed the steps toward the martyrdom site, he fell to his knees, and journeyed the rest of the way in the same manner. Once he had reached the site where the most dreadful act had occurred, he remained there, praying and giving offerings. During this time, he looked up and saw the great window which shone down on him, bathing him in a warm light and depicting his lineage, proclaiming his own link to the church and to the saint.*

*Once he had made his devotions, the king descended into the darkness of the crypt. Once again, his eyes readjusted from the light, as did his mood, which was now cast with solemnity given the ambience created by the dark, holy place. He then entered the east chapel and prayed at the now-empty site of Becket's tomb. Here he placed monetary and material offerings, adding to the embellishment of the structure, and placed his hands within the apertures whilst praying. Following this he moved west into the crypt's centre which became filled with the sound of the numerous gates opening so he could pay his respects at the altar of Our Lady of the Undercroft, again making a monetary donation.*

*Exiting the crypt, his eyes were again filled with the colours of the transept. He then processed through the choir screen. As he did so, he was again reminded of his descent. The sculpted figures of his royal predecessors framed his entrance, almost confirming his visit. He was then processed up the numerous series of steps to the High Altar where the Prior said the collect and, once again, he made an offering. The Antiphon then commenced and in procession the king journeyed towards the culmination point of his visit: the shrine.*

*Ascending the huge marble steps towards the Trinity Chapel, he then walked across the beautiful pavement adorned with symbols of the zodiac. Reflecting against the light from the blue and red tones of the Trinity Chapel glass and admiring its tiny depictions of the life and miracles of the saint, the king was overwhelmed by the transformation which occurred on the pavement. As he walked, the stones reflected the light creating, essentially, a carpet of honour paving his way towards the shrine. He felt as if he was walking across a pond of gems. Surrounding his way, the rose and creams of the marble contrasted against the deep Purbeck, framing the sacred shrine area and marking out his sacred route. As the king walked, the space was again filled with a harmony and solemnity produced by the collect performed by the prior. Once finished, the king advanced towards the shrine. The huge iron gates surrounding the site were already opened awaiting the royal visitor. He then offered at the altar of the shine.*

*Around him, the Prior burned incense, cleansing the area so that it was pure for the king. As the king made his devotions, his nose was filled with the smell, retaining the moment in his memory. During this time, the Prior winched the large wheel that moved the wooden cover of the shrine up so that the king could view and touch the sacred relics of the saint. As he did so, the cover caught the light and its dazzling jewels and gems reflected off the marble hues, casting out tones into the entirety of the eastern end. The king was recounted with the history and patronage of the offerings and gems adorning the shrine, revelling in its history and precedence; using a white rod the Prior commented on the lineage of each and every stone.*

*The cover was then winched down; the king gave his blessing, received amen and then journeyed east towards the Corona. Here he, once again, marvelled at the jewel-encrusted reliquary and the ambience created by the virtual walls of glass surrounding it. The reliquary was almost bathed in golden sun or even radiated itself as the jewels reflected the light from every angle. Here the king made his final offering before turning back down through the choir in order to exit the south-western porch through which he came. As he journeyed down the many descends towards the exit, his nose was filled with the smell of the shrine – the incense – as his clothes wafted in the air as he walked, thus forever retaining the sacred pilgrimage in his memory.*

### **3.12 CONCLUSION**

The pilgrimage infrastructures of York and Canterbury were very clearly created with the intended purpose of evocation; the sheer spectacle and drama of the interiors impacted the viewer immediately on entry. I hope to have shown that the medieval pilgrimage church became an increasing ‘theatre of devotion’, in which the art and architecture functioned as much more than ‘devotional furniture’, but rather as royal staging devices promoting interaction. Royal visitors were conditioned into reading a *habitus* created through improvised behaviour to a general framework of rituals that led to the demarcation/hierarchy of spatial significance created by the fabric and decoration. Over time and through the additions and transformations in the building, the maintenance of these practices led to the establishment of an increasingly complex series of architectural and symbolic spaces and boundaries that served to control bodily positioning, movement and scale, in addition to guiding religious experience and understanding (Skeates 2010, 243). The continual use of staged and performative *adventus*-like entrances along the route served to establish the royal as they were formally introduced and processed, and thus physically ‘framed’ by the accompanying

ritualistic action. This performative framing highlighted the exclusivity of the royal experience, not only in the minds of the secular visitors in attendance, but the royal was also made aware of the impact his/her visit had upon the event.

Equally, the ceremonial procession reinforced place within the community and social structure (Gilchrist 2005, 245). Pilgrimage infrastructures became ‘representations’ of social discourse that were specifically exploited through the patronage of the reigning monarch, and the various subsequent entrances that such commissions afforded. This created a different experience for the royal even more so as theirs was compared to the onlookers who would never experience such a ritualised or ordered visit filled with such an ostentatious display of sensory stimuli. What can be concluded is that the monarch’s role, even during a visit of worship, was passive and their movement around the church echoed a pawn in a chess set as they were paraded around the sacred areas, in full view of varying social groups. In turn, royal life itself may be proposed as a recurrent metaphorical series of *adventus* ceremonies.

Moreover, the customs followed for the visit and encountered by the royal provided, in some respect, a very different experience to that of an ordinary lay pilgrim. Although there are clear similarities between the two – both followed a determined route in the presence of the others’ and journeyed around the church worshipping and offering at specific stations – the sensory rituals favoured for the royal had a far greater experiential impact. A crucial aspect of the pilgrimage experience was the creation of the spectacle as constructed by the cathedral officials. This, it appears, was undertaken through harnessing the power offered by the inherent sensoriality of devotional materiality in such designed ritualistic events. The number and intensity of the exterior sensory elements, i.e. the chants, responses, music, incense, banners, flowers etc., illustrated that they were just as important to the ‘display’ of the visit than the direct sensory aspects, such as the interaction with the shrine structure or colour/form of the masonry. For a royal, these were further heightened by the almost requirement for physical interaction with the fabric. Essentially, they served to imbue memory more successfully as the synaesthetic acts of display functioned to heighten the initial atmosphere of the locales and thus enable the monarch to retain the experience.

Although it could be argued that a stress was put on the *visual* nature of the royal pilgrimage event, it is difficult to prioritise them or to argue that the experience was

formed out of ocular elements *individually*. Rather, they were more often found in combination with a further sensory medium, or were an initial stimulant for accompanying sensory rituals. For example, the colours of the officials' robes were used in conjunction with the movement of the wearers in order to stimulate the reflected rays of the fabric.

As such, the ritualistic form of royal pilgrimage perhaps created a closer convergence with the sacred than any other experience by any other social class (Vincent 2002, 43). Not only did the monarchs visit shrines as pilgrims, but also they were anointed with chrism, they ruled by the grace of God and supported their devotion by endowing relics and offerings. Accordingly, they were perhaps better equipped than anyone to gain a full sacral and intercessory experience, gaining more than 'a merely vicarious brush with sanctity', but they became part of the entire pilgrimage visit and one with the church (Vincent 2002, 45). This was especially the case when royal patronage had been afforded to the building and there was a tangible demonstration of the links between the saint and the monarch which served to strengthen the authenticity of their visit and their devotion. While there will be examples of similar integration of identities with the pilgrimage fabric of the church by the other social classes considered in this thesis, no others literally became imbued within the fabric like that of the royal, and thus their ultimate pilgrimage experience stands alone when analysing its very specific foundational elements.

# 4

## A GREAT SHRINE THROUGH THE EYES OF THE LAY PILGRIM

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In his ‘reverse archaeological’ study of the reasons for the construction of Durham Cathedral-Priory, Arnold Klukas stated that ‘within the Gothic era, Durham went through two major transformations, the first structural and the second aesthetic’ (Klukas 1995, 77). More recent scholarship, however, appears to have overlooked the significance of Klukas’ assertion. From an analysis of the development of the Cathedral it would appear that Klukas is indeed correct: the stages of progression in the building and decorative campaigns certainly constitute two distinct phases of construction and elaboration. Despite Klukas’ insightful assertion, he fails to identify pilgrimage as a real source for any of this programmatic work; a large oversight given the notorious rivalry between cults throughout the Middle Ages.

The unified appearance given to the interior of the church, as created by the second phase of construction, certainly presupposes an intention of consistency in the design. Nonetheless, this chapter will prove that it was rather a matter of providing a more elaborate setting for the display of the cathedral’s most valuable commodity: the shrine of St Cuthbert, and thus for the experience of its visitors. Through an examination of the archaeological remains and documentary accounts, I will illustrate just how important the wider perception of Cuthbert’s cult was to the monastic community at Durham as, following Thomas Becket’s death at Canterbury in 1170, Cuthbert gradually had to renounce his title as the most popular saint in England and, as such, Durham could no longer remain complacent in the setting of the relics they possessed.

### 4.2 CONTEXT

The wealth of past studies on the origins of the cathedral means that there is little to contribute to understanding the construction phase of the building work, but what these works fail to understand still is the influence of the development of the art and architecture on the visitors to the church or how they experienced it in accordance.

Thus, in order for this study to be complete, it must also critically review the major stages in construction, whilst furthering this past literature by examining the sensory aspects of the building. What needs to be perpetuated, and what is more productive, is to consider the human use and experience of the constructed sensory environment in relation to its variability over spaces and over time, rather than producing a further historical description or chronological investigation of construction. Although the latter type of analyses are certainly important for our understanding of medieval architecture, we need to go further with data in order to comprehend how it was actually used, perceived and, above all, experienced.

### **4.3 METHODOLOGY/SOURCES**

Although there has been a great deal written on various stages in the development of the architectural setting, the progression of the art and architecture dedicated to Cuthbertine veneration at Durham Cathedral-Priory during the medieval period has remained devoid of scholarly attention. This chapter will fill this lacuna by examining the influence of the saint's cult on its physical setting at significant stages in the cult's history. This will then show how the church was altered and added to as a result of the popularity of its most famous resident. Most importantly, a reconstruction of the general appearance of the original shrine (including after the addition of the new base in the 14<sup>th</sup> century) will be undertaken. This analysis will go beyond previous scholarship in order to prove that the argument for pilgrims being mere passive spectators is limited by illustrating how such visitors actually influenced the church's devotional environment and controlled how the spaces engaged them.

A full record of the development of the building is not within the realms of archaeology or history. Yet, from the available evidence we can retrace the history of the designs and forms of the structural and decorative elements over the medieval period as much as is possible from descriptions of their initial creation and the surviving archaeological evidence. Discretion will be used to create the descriptions of the later compositions in the event of any significant evidential gaps. In reference to the shrine structure, italics are used to illustrate where these are made. Through an analysis of how each of the five senses were stimulated at the most significant pilgrimage locations within the church, an attempt will be made to reconstruct the sensory experience of the medieval pilgrim, a narrative of which culminates the chapter.

#### 4.4 EAST END

It cannot be doubted that the origin of Durham Cathedral derives, in part, from the need to provide a grand and sheer monumental setting appropriate for St Cuthbert's shrine that rivalled some of the greatest cathedrals of the Anglo-Norman and Romanesque period. The design and plan of the original east-end reflected this purpose, focussing the space around the symbol of the monastic community's identity and the desire to house Cuthbert's first shrine. Begun in 1093 by Bishop William St Calais (*fl.*1090–6), it consisted of an eastern central apse flanked by two smaller square apses at the end of each aisle (Fig 4.1). Originally, evidence indicated that the central apse contained an ambulatory; however, heating work of 1896 discovered the apse of the south aisle therefore confirming that an ambulatory did not exist (Crook 2000, 195). Work was completed and Cuthbert's relics were translated to the new site in 1104 (*De miraculis*, ch. 18, I, 247–61; *Libellus* ch. 40–3, 84–90; translations relating to the 1104 inspection given in Battiscombe 1956, 99–112; Crumplin 2004). Subsequently, although it did not follow many of the other major English cathedrals, as no crypt was included for additional altars or an ambulatory — unlike Worcester, Canterbury and Winchester, for example — access to the shrine was considered and included in the design in various other ways.

Today, we can still get a sense of the extremities of the space as the termination line of the original apse is designated within the masonry of the present feretory pavement (Fig 4.2). The flagstone flooring also displays signs of wear attesting to the feet of pilgrims at the shrine over generations (Crook 2000, 203). Although these markings are more likely to be attributed to the feet of visitors to the second shrine base, they can provide crucial information regarding the use of this small, enclosed area (Fig 4.3). The close proximity between the markings gives evidence of little room for pilgrims. It seems unusual to have a very small container of space for the shrine of such a large cult. However, this restriction is mentioned in the miracle stories recorded by Reginald of Durham which suggests that pilgrims had difficulty reaching the shrine (Raine 1828, 171; Tudor 1989, 460). In fact, pilgrims were not particularly permitted to enter the feretory through the gates into the transept and choir apart from on his feast days (Klukas 1995, 73).<sup>64</sup> The control of access to Cuthbert's original burial location at Lindisfarne Priory alluded to by the saint in his final rites also appears to have been

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<sup>64</sup> At least four times a year.

invoked at Durham as the secluded and restricted nature of the shrine certainly gave it the character of inner sanctum:

If you wish to set aside my plans and take my body back there, it seems best that you entomb it in the interior of your church, so that while you yourselves can visit my sepulchre when you wish, it may be in your power to decide whether any of those who come thither should approach it (Bede, *Vita S. Cuthberti*, ch. 37, Colgrave 1940, 278–81).

As these original boundaries show, the small space would most certainly have hindered the circulation of pilgrims, as they would have needed to pass through the presbytery in order to reach the apse. While this may have given the shrine locale a ‘holier’ feel, as it was only accessible by passing the High Altar, it was not practical (Stopford 1999, 103). No English tri-apsidal plan survived the later Middle Ages suggesting they were unsatisfactory in the long term. Rather, the ambulatory and eastern chapels were raised, while aisles were turned into right angles behind the High Altar so that they created a rectangular version of an ambulatory, known as a retrochoir (Hearn 1971; Nilson 1998, 77). In fact, the Rev. Precentor Edmund Venables even suggested that ‘In one great church after another we find the same process of eastern extension undertaken...with the same object, viz., to obtain greater shrine room’ (Venables 1887, 195). While the design provided space and honour for shrines, they also accommodated a greater number of pilgrims. Therefore, it is clear that the sole consideration in the choice of a retrochoir was always for a shrine (Nilson 1998, 78). At Durham, there is certainly evidence that this was the case (Draper 1981 is also in agreement).

The evolution of the eastern space was no more extensive than during Prior Melsonby’s (fl.1229–44) term of office when it was transformed into a structural entity providing more than simple architectural function. Known as the Chapel of Nine Altars, it is perhaps the most obvious instance of planning with respect to grandeur, appropriation and emulation (Fig 4.4). In 1235 an indulgence was granted by Hugh Northwold, Bishop of Ely (fl. 1229–54) commencing plans to extend the east end of the church. It is said that Richard Poore, Bishop of Durham (fl.1228–37) designed the space in order to give Cuthbert’s body a more fitting and safe place to reside and although contemporary building work at Canterbury was an appropriate model to emulate (an ambulatory form), it was unsuitable for the terra firma at Durham (Draper 1980, 74). The space measured 160 feet in length and the floor was made four-feet lower than the Norman level in order to give it a greater height and dominant feeling whilst keeping the same ceiling level as the Norman vaults above the choir bays (Klukas 1995, 75). The

resulting space provided more room for the shrine and interestingly for pilgrims too, in addition to ridding the old enclosed apse which featured several structural problems (Tatton-Brown 2002, 98). This suggests that the church wished to open up the area for pilgrims of *all* social statuses to view as the indulgence stated that remission of thirty days would be granted to those contributing to the fabric fund (Tatton-Brown 2002, 74).

I wish to illustrate the primary function of this space by reference to the contemporary structures it emulated. The nearest relative to Durham is the also named ‘Nine Altars’ retrochoir of the Cistercian Fountains Abbey in North Yorkshire. Here the extension was provided to accommodate the increased number of monks whereas, at Durham, it seems certain that the purpose of the construction was to provide a more fashionable and appropriate setting for St Cuthbert. It is too coincidental that the indulgence granted to assist the new work was given by the Bishop of Ely, who had recently commenced the elaborate new presbytery (Draper 1980, 74). Additionally, the trend for enterprises to provide splendid provisions for cults was increasing, e.g. the reconstruction of Canterbury Cathedral after the fire in 1174 and the popularity of eastern transepts aligned with High Altars, such as those at York, Worcester and Beverley (Draper 1980, 77). As such, the creation of such an extensive amount of space was intended more to provide a sense of grandeur in a large enough area for people to congregate near the shrine, than simply to provide extra chapels (Draper 1980, 77).

Accordingly, we may be able to further understand the nature of the development and extension of this east end by assessing its sensory components. The degree of importance placed on the decorative and, more notably, visual aestheticism of this space was substantial, permeating almost every surface. Beginning with the roof, the central square bay above the enclosing space known as the feretory in which St Cuthbert’s shrine resides, is emphasised by the cross-ribs of the vault which are divided into a star pattern and frame the sacred space of the saint, yet allow it to be read as an extension of the choir vault, uniting the old space with the new (Draper 1980, 81) (Fig 4.5).

The monumental nature of the Nine Altar’s interior would no doubt be impressive and dwarfed its visitors. Not only did the design create a structurally sound frame, but also the interior decoration was just as grand, displaying elegant early Gothic rendering of ‘marble, deep undercutting, and high textures’ (Klukas 1995, 76) (Fig 4.6). Originally, the space was highly decorated with dark polished Frosterly marble set against

applications of white and red paint upon all of the stone surfaces of the wall arcading (Draper 1980, 82; Klukas 1995, 76; Graves 2007, 525). Although dating from c.1417, a reconstruction of a similar design to that which is believed to have decorated the blind arcading adorns the original Neville chantry chapel site in the nave (Fig 4.7). Further extant painting, dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, can still be seen in the south aisle of the cathedral and the arcading of the eastern side of the south transept. In addition painting post-dating the 12<sup>th</sup> century also remains in the north transept (Park 1990, 29).

We must be cautious not to oversubscribe the impression produced by the Purbeck columns in the church which today is almost entirely stripped of its polychromy. Thus, attention must be paid to how the illusionist construction of the interior spatial colours would have affected the architecture. Deriving from the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the common provision was for a surface to be decoratively painted. Colour went hand-in-hand with light according to Aristotle, providing it with its determination as ‘light was the *hupostasis* of colour’ (Recht 2008, 177). In the Gothic church, the visual effect produced was key to the pilgrim’s experience: ‘It served to strengthen the visual impression produced by certain elements, and to accentuate one form over another within a profile’ (Recht 2008, 183).

From the surviving evidence, the painting scheme comprised of patterns, and in conjunction with the brightness of the glass and consistency of colours used, uniformity was produced in the eastern end. This decorative sense of order may be linked to the notion of beauty as *claritas* (Klukas 1995, 77). One complemented and aided the other.

The emphasis on the sensory aspects of this location is overwhelming and much more consciously sensorially integrated than one may first assume. To begin, the acoustics of the apse space would have been of resounding quality as the curved nature of the apse itself, together with the cylindrical and spherical surface of the vaults, provided perfect harmonics for serving praise of the Divine World (Reznikoff 2006, 82). Thus, the architecture of such a space was likely conceived to enhance the singing voice and chant. The proposition that the medieval cathedral was an instrument of music can be applied here (Hale and Campbell 2007, 184). The masonry literally echoed even the slightest of sounds turning them into chants and so the vast proportions of the spaces were ‘tuned’ to drown out the emptiness.

The sound in Norman and Gothic churches, surrounding the audience, strengthens the link between the individual and the community. The loss of high frequencies and the resulting impossibility of localising the sound makes the believer part of a world of sound. He does not face the sound in “enjoyment” – he is wrapped up by it (Blaukopf 1960, 180).

Although listening to sound was a physical experience, it directed pilgrims away from the material earthly realm towards a contemplation of the heavens. Sound filled the body, but one can consciously understand that it is merging from a space far removed; yet, still, ‘the music’s manual production does not invade its reception’ (Stevenson 2010, 76). The acoustic intentionality of the design may be understood by Reznikoff’s belief that through sounds we may become conscious of space; a space that was constructed to hear ourselves and the Divine, and establish a relationship between the two (Hale and Campbell 2007, xiv). The church was both literally and figuratively modelled in and symbolically representative of the Heavenly Jerusalem (a material manifestation of the divine specifications described in Revelation 21:13 (von Simson 1956, 8–10; Stookey 1969; Bandmann 2005, 70)),<sup>65</sup> which the enormous vaults and piers of the somewhat skeleton-like, almost hollow frame of the Gothic style allowed for (Recht 2008, 12). The church building was therefore not just a model but also a reality of the Heavenly Jerusalem because the sacraments and relics were made manifest within (Bandmann 2005, 63). In an attempt to reach the heavens beyond, the soaring structures suited the manageability of these sounds which were so vital to the building’s function. For example,

instrumental music was symbolic of divine order and hence of God's Kingdom itself. The Church could subscribe whole-heartedly to a vision of the Kingdom in which angels eternally play musical instruments around the throne of God... – a mortal man's glimpse of Paradise (Rastall 1970–1, 84).

It is difficult to agree with the proposition that such acoustic properties were unintentional consequences of the medieval architect’s quest for style (cf. Blesser and Salter 2007, 93). Acousticians have proven that historical music sounds best in the space for which it was originally intended and that Gregorian chant was formulated much later than the architectural criteria for ecclesiastical space (Masinton 2007, 154). As Pol Abraham stated, the Gothic building was composed of two interlinked structures: one functional, the other rendering a solely aesthetic purpose (Recht 2008, 17).

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<sup>65</sup> As von Simson claimed, ‘The church is mystically and liturgically, an image of heaven....The authoritative language of the dedication ritual of a church explicitly relates the vision of the Celestial City, as described in the Book of Revelation, to the building that is to be erected’ (von Simson 1956, 8).

This was important for a number of reasons. Architecture and sound created a drama enforcing a particular experience on the liturgy. This was due to the ‘auditory and visual harmonies [which] are actually imitations of the ultimate harmony which the blessed will enjoy in the world to come’ (von Simson quoted in Blesser and Salter 2007, 91). The harmonies of music were also thought to closely correspond to the harmonies of the body and so through one, the other may be experienced (Willis 2010a, 1). As Graves rightly illuminated, ‘The manipulation of sounds was part and parcel of the way in which the encounter with the numinous was proposed to contemporary communities, part of the historical construction of Christian subjects’ (Graves 2007, 525). The devotional experience of the medieval church was largely dependent on sound and so both the services and architectural plan of the building were focussed around creating the most suitable audible impact on the worshipper.

The visual aspect of the church was also an outside-in process, drawing the observer to the actions taking place within, through the ‘focusing effects’ or the surrounding locales (Masinton 2007, 142). Architectural elements such as stained glass, painting, ornaments and, above all, candle flames, were funnelling elements used to draw attention towards the central foci. Yet, the auditory experience was the reverse: an inside-out process. Music and singing would emanate outwards from the participating choir or clerics to fill the rest of the building. The larger the expanse of ‘outside’ space the church possessed, the more auditory and therefore numinous experience could be managed. The expansive heights of the Romanesque church enabled high reverberation, but this also meant that only slow, simple singing could be managed to avoid long reverberation which would lead to a mish-mash of noise and an inability to follow what was being sung. As such, the Gregorian chant of monastic choirs worked well in such spaces, and the repetitive low tones of the voices gave a resonating quality to the sound, creating an eerie or otherworldly quality, but a very specific devotional experience. A divine atmosphere would be conjured through the creation of such specific orality, almost physically penetrating the space of the church and creating a sacred aura around the pilgrims and situating them within.

Whatever events were taking place, whether the Mass or a feast service, they could be heard by all even if they were not visually accessible. This meant that pilgrims of the lowest status could participate in the services, adding to their pilgrimage even though they could not physically see or partake in them. In this way I disagree with Masinton’s

(2007, 155) suggestion that the way the laity encountered the services at the High Altar was primarily visual as many did not speak Latin and so the language was indistinct. While it is clear that the surrounding architectural and decorative elements served to focus the eye on the most important aspects of the liturgy and cults, the importance of sound was crucial in the creation of the overall numinous experience. Not only did it act as a cue along with the visual for key elements in the services, but it also heightened the sacrality and solemnity of the shrines and altar locales. Sound would become attributed to attendance at that particular church and form another memory device for a resonating experience. In this respect, sound could be proposed as even more important than sight during the pilgrimage.

An intimate and, more importantly, sensory engagement was established through the devotional infrastructure of the cathedral, but one of the most emphatic threads in the stimulating tapestry of decorative elements which ran through the entire building was wall painting. An echo of the original scheme may be better understood by an analysis of the depictions as well as patterns and iconographic scenes that adorned the walls of the most elusive functional part of the cathedral: the Galilee Chapel.

#### **4.5 GALILEE CHAPEL**

Although the original functions of the chapel occupying the most western annexe of the cathedral are crucial to any analysis of the experience of the space, an in-depth examination is not required, and has been undertaken elsewhere (Halsey 1980; Park 1990; Harrison 1994; Klukas 1995; Pocock 1996).<sup>66</sup> However, evidence for the purposes served within will be alluded to during an analysis of how the architectural and decorative elements mirrored the pilgrimage experience of the larger building.

After a failed attempt at extending the eastern end of the cathedral in the early 1170s,<sup>67</sup> Bishop Hugh de la Puiset (*fl.* 1153–95) instigated the construction of the Galilee at the west (Halsey 1990, 60; Marner 2000, 26). As a result, the chapel's construction was taking place at a time when a large proportion of Durham's architecture was being remodelled and may be attributed to the need to revitalise the building as an appropriate

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<sup>66</sup> Many functions have been proposed including the Bishop's consistory court meeting place from at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century and, in the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, the chantry of Bishop Langley. These are discussed below.

<sup>67</sup> Although the general consensus has been structural failure, early accounts suggest this was more due to Cuthbert's displeasure with the construction.

setting for the Cuthbertine cult. Was the chapel another addition to the fabric to entice pilgrims to the cult church and thus away from competing sites?

What is most significant about the chapel's design is the layout: its eastern wall appears to be a reflection of the actual east end of the cathedral executed in architecture and paint. From examining the placement and design of the layout of the main building, it is difficult to imagine that visual access to the shrine or High Altar would be obtainable from the Galilee given the several screens, gates and accompanying altars located in front of its eastern wall. Across this area, the recesses and altars iconographically depicted the story of St Cuthbert. The north recess contained an altar of Our Lady of Pity (Fig 4.8). At either side, 12<sup>th</sup>-century images of SS Cuthbert and Oswald were depicted on the jambs and flanked the main image of the Virgin.<sup>68</sup> Above was an image of the coronation of the Virgin set in circular form and dated to c.1300 (and which also suggests that the original ceiling was of a timber barrelled form) (Harrison 1994, 223) (Fig 4.9). The Holy Cross altar stood on the corresponding south recess (Park 1990, 21–2). This is a direct reflection of the three sculpted figures that adorned the centre of the Neville Screen: SS Cuthbert and Oswald either side of a standing Virgin (Wilson 1980, 90). Surviving painted masonry patterns above the arcades (Fig 4.10), chevrons on the roll moulding and arches, as well as colouring of the abaci of capitals, are evidence of the former widespread architectural polychromy of the entire building (Pocock 1996, 382) (Fig 4.11).

David Park's examination of the wall paintings concluded that the most likely function of the chapel relates to the attributed misogyny of St Cuthbert and, in fact, Geoffrey of Coldingham (writing in c.1214) stated that 'Bishop Hugh made the chapel, so that women have some consolation at Durham' (Raine 1839, 11; Nilson 1998, 95). Colgrave (1947, 15) suggested that the misogyny belonged to the Norman period when women were seen as impure or inferior and so this was bestowed onto the saint given the fashion for such prejudice. As accounted by Symeon of Durham (Op. I, 168), many stories may be attributed to the origin of Cuthbert's dislike of women. These included a legend in which the king accused the saint of impregnating his daughter and the story of Judith, the wife of Earl Tostig who was paralysed as she tried to enter the north door (Davis 1672, 60–3; Sumption 1975, 262). Tudor (1984, 158–64) attributed the belief to the Benedictine monks as a way to show their hostility towards married clerks; however, Meryl Foster (1994, 60) denies this was the case as the accounts regarding the women punished for trespassing into the sacred area of the church were not wives of members of the *Congregatio*.

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<sup>68</sup> Followed later by an image of the Pietá.

Regardless, the blue line of marble located at the western end of the nave floor was presumably used to forbid further access by females (Fig 4.12). This may uphold the argument for the chapel being dedicated to the Virgin given the link between women, chastity and purity which was most often achieved through heightened segregation, and often located in the western space of the building (Gilchrist 1994). Galilee was also associated with the Greek term for vestibule and so in Eastern and Early Christian churches it became known as an atrium for women and catechumens to enter and hear the services. In late 12<sup>th</sup>-century Canterbury, a female visitor was directed to the cathedral's porch by a monk who stated 'behold goeth before you into Galilee' (Halsey 1980, 62). Women were often treated in opposing manners to men via spatial segregation and/or room allocation in order to reflect the medieval social order whilst reinforcing the hierarchies and relationships between the two genders, such as the protective boundary formed by the chapel. This perception was also likened and categorised with the fear felt towards leprosy and disease (Gilchrist 1994, 59; Richardson 2003).

However, evidence to the contrary for Durham falters this somewhat. The Feretrars' rolls of 1397 and 1401 record gifts given to the shrine by women (eleven in total); some are even described as pilgrims (DDCA Feretrars' Rolls 1397; 1401). This may imply that women did manage to gain access to the shrine although they were likely of elite status. In 1538, a French lady named Madame de Montreuil (an attendant of Mary of Guise) visited Canterbury and was taken to view and kneel at the shrine (Stanley 1868, 251). Her status meant that she was allowed as full proximity to the relics as any male. A similar practice may also have occurred for certain female visitors at Durham. In the Cistercian house at Pontigny (France) in which St Edmund's bones were kept, women were not allowed to enter the church but, over time, English female pilgrims could enter to gain indulgences, and money from both sexes was welcomed (Finucane 1995, 87). We cannot rule out the possibility that although women gave gifts to the shrine of St Cuthbert, they did not enter the sacred feretory to offer them, and were instead given on their 'behalf'.

Whether the chapel was dedicated to Our Lady as has been frequently suggested is still not certain as it appears this association derives from the later medieval period when Bishop Thomas Langley (1406–37) erected an altar to Our Lady in front of the west door and, as a result, the Galilee became 'dedicated to the Virgin Mary (and was called

the Galilee or our Lady's Chapell [sic], but now is simply called the Consistory)' (Fowler 1903, 73). However, it is significant that during this time competition was being fiercely posed by the cults of Becket and nearby Godric of Finchale. The majority of visitors cured at Godric's shrine were women, while Canterbury may have had no restrictions for women to visit Becket's relics which may account for Bishop Hugh's decision to build Durham's Lady Chapel to give female visitors a place to worship and thus offer at (Tudor 1984, 162). The Galilee provided this function and further altars, as well as one of the most significant shrines in the cathedral: the Venerable Bede's tomb (Fig 4.13). Durham would most certainly have been vying for attention during this period given the immediacy of Becket's death, and therefore revitalising Cuthbert's cult was key to attracting pilgrims to the church. As Puiset's initial plan was to accommodate pilgrims at the eastern end, he instead provided a chapel for these visitors to wait, pray in or even the infirm to be cared for. These could then be treated or held there by the monastic community, preventing them from entering the communal space of the nave or feretory. Perhaps then, the change in location attributed a change in use. I would like to conclude this argument with a quotation from Gilchrist in relation to her work on gender and space which may propose why there has been so much disagreement over the chapel's use: 'Like any other form of material culture the architecture of segregation had many meanings, and these were subject to change' (Gilchrist 1994, 57).

The chapel was likely designed as the female counterpart to the feretory; a miniature imitation. Cuthbert's shrine served men, while the altar dedicated to the Virgin was suited to female devotion. A charter dated to 1180 in which a husband and wife offered gifts to the saints may provide proof for this speculation: '*super altare Beati Cuthberti in ecclesia sua, [and] super altare Beate Mariae in occidentali parte ejusdem ecclesie que Galilea vocatur*' (Park 1996, 23). As a result, females could achieve some sort of experience, although not the visual and most sacred/intimate one afforded to men. The exclusion of women would have heightened the control aspect of the primary shrine, making it more elusive to those who could enter given that 'the control of space [meant]...control of knowledge and power. In the case of the Sancta Sanctorum, men are allowed more indulgences than women by virtue of their sex' (Morrison 2000, 91). Clearly, the pilgrimage experience of men was more advantageous than women at Durham and directly reflected in the design of the building.

Further evidence for this miniature ‘mirroring’ or ‘ordering’ effect lies in the architectural style of the chapel. The original entrance was located on the northern side and still exists. Immediately, the elaborate bold chevron moulding of the arcades are apparent, and spring from slender clusters of columns consisting of paired stone shafts added to the Purbeck piers of the chapel (Fig 4.14). Stylistically, the details of the chapel are particularly regional. Harrison (1994, 219) noted the similarities between the architectural motifs of the chapel and others of the Durham and northern region. For example, the extensive use of chevron moulding is also used in the doorway of the North Hall of Durham Castle,<sup>70</sup> as well as the doorway along the south side of the cathedral nave. Moreover, the waterleaf motifs used on the capitals (see Fig 4.8 – i.e. north recess) can be found in the Castle as well as at Furness and Holm Cultram Abbey, Chester Cathedral, York Minster, St Mary’s Abbey at York and St Michael, Spurriergate (York). Finally, the influence of North Yorkshire Cistercian architecture can be seen by the use of barrel ceilings and transverse gables and so the chapel structure may be compared with the transepts of Fountains Abbey and nave aisles at Reivaux Abbey (Harrison 1994, 232).<sup>71</sup> The effect is rich and, though distinctive, mirrors the architecture of the rest of the cathedral. Decorative masonry designs are used throughout Durham to signify a change in the use of space, to highlight a distinction in the significance of the space or to emphasise particular features and boundaries including altars, shrines, doorways and screens, which are also carried through here. The decoration thus visually frames the interior, drawing attention to the three aisles and their respective separate functions as the piers of the choir and presbytery do for the most sacred area in the east.

The effect was a range of multi-sensory surfaces, decoration and events that appealed to all the senses. Not only was the chapel rather small compared to the size of the rest of the building<sup>72</sup> – the five-aisled building is low, yet wide due to its awkward positioning on the steep cliff – with its monumental and impressive interior which dwarfed spectators, but the Galilee was much more enclosing and confined. The effect is almost labyrinth-like, providing a more personal and close devotional interaction between the altars and the other participants. In fact, as entry to the chapel was through the eastern

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<sup>70</sup> Now an entranceway archway along the Tunstall Gallery.

<sup>71</sup> It is difficult to confirm whether the Cistercian examples provided the model or *vice versa* as the Galilee’s use of barrel ceilings together with transverse gables is the earliest in date (Harrison 1994, 232).

<sup>72</sup> Although higher than the present building.

door (and then north and south doors located in the east wall),<sup>73</sup> and away from the heart of the devotional action or ‘stage’, upon entrance, visual orientation can only have been achieved via turning the body around or looking back over the shoulder which meant an initial move away from the foci in the chapel before a turn back to acknowledge them (Pocock 1996, 381).

Perhaps the female experience was therefore as confined as the male one in the feretory. The atmospheric experience may also have been similar to the main shrine. Incense would have filled the chapel as it was used to cleanse the altars, while the sun would have streamed through the western and southern windows filled with associative iconography. Twelve windows are located here, but sadly only four are described in the *Rites*. Although there is still some discrepancy over whether the west front originally had three rose windows, the evidence for them is non-existent in terms of the glass descriptions and, as such, an analysis of the glass can only begin at Langley’s renovation (between 1429 and 1435) (Haselock and O’Connor 1980, 115). An image of Langley featured in the central light of the west window between St Chad and St Wilfred, beneath the Virgin and Child who were flanked by St Oswald and King Henry VI (Fowler 1903, 49). The illumination produced by the glass combined with flickering candle flames of the candelabras located on the altars etc., no doubt created an assortment of shadows on the various masonry designs. The combination of the purbeck marble with the painted imagery and patterns of the walls, in addition to the finely decorated surfaces and forms of the interior, created rich visual and tactile stimuli (Skeates 2010, 287). The deep colour of the purbeck would also have contrasted against the lighter colours of the paint and glass.

The particular functions and placement of the Galilee meant that movement through the space occurred at times when procession took place. Previous to the construction of Langley’s chantry chapel, the great central doorway provided the main processional entrance into the church, and so during this time the central aisle of the chapel must have been kept clear for access (Harrison 1994, 215). The Galilee therefore provided the termination space for the liturgical, ceremonial events. ‘Galilee’ was given to the west end of churches where the Sunday procession culminated and the religious reassembled for entry back into the church for the Mass or Last Supper re-enactment (Halsey 1980,

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<sup>73</sup> The central doorway is now blocked by Bishop Langley’s tomb chantry which is built into the stairs. Langley also added new doorways to the north and south aisles from the nave (Harrison 1994, 215).

61).<sup>74</sup> Moreover, as the pilgrims moved or processed through the areas and boundaries, and were stopped from going passed others, their ritual, social and, more importantly, gendered status would have become extremely apparent, transforming their experience. Moving through the Galilee may therefore have acted as a marker of a rite of passage.

Archaeoacoustically the barrel vault ceilings would have provided a resounding quality to sound. Given the presence of the Lady altar, two chantry priests were required to sing a Mass in honour of the Virgin each day (Klukas 1983, 165), heightening the spirituality of the space while pilgrims congregated within. Due to the small spatial area of the chapel and its low roof, the acoustic response of the Mass chant would have been one of reverberation across the ceiling, filling the small space with an intense and loud chant. The aspect of outside-in attributed to the acoustics of the medieval church would have been prevalent here. The apsidal form of the roof focussed sound back towards the altar from which it came, amplifying the priest's voice in order for his performance to be greater focussed on his immediate audience and providing them with the most resonant audible experience.

As it is likely this space formed a congregational as well as devotional nucleus to the cathedral, we must also consider the more domestic sounds that might have occurred within, as well as those filtering from and between the nave area immediately to the east. Thus, one must ask 'what constituted reverence and what constituted a disturbance' (Craig 2005, 122)? Not only were cathedrals numinous spaces, but they also held many secular uses, especially within the common space of the nave. For example, Canterbury Cathedral allowed the smoking of pipes, walking and talking in its nave, which served as much as a social congregational as a religious building (Craig 2005, 122, n. 81). In addition to the instrumental music of the organs, psalmody, polyphony and chants of the litany, many other recurrent sounds filled the building, such as feet shuffling, snoring, gossiping, doors banging, bartering, and even arguing and drinking. In fact, during the feast of St Cuthbert at Durham, records imply that 'disguising, piping and dancing' were prevalent and most likely this occurred right into the cathedral building itself (Milsom 1989, 150). There is even evidence to suggest that dogs were allowed in churches, with 'dogwhippers' employed throughout the country to make sure the noise was kept to a minimum (cf. Craig 2005). Essentially, the experience of worship was noisier and far more corporeally interactive than one may first assume.

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<sup>74</sup> As an imitation of Christ journeying from Galilee to Jerusalem.

Yet these types of audible phenomena would also contribute to the surrounding atmosphere and the memory of a pilgrimage.

#### 4.6 STAINED GLASS (AND OTHER VISUAL ELEMENTS)

Perhaps, then, an examination of the windows that graced the large walls of this cathedral can also aid understanding of just what type of experience was generated in the space as in considerations of stained glass, the combinatory use of polychromy is often overlooked – a significant oversight given its essential role in the nature of the aesthetic relationship.

The construction of the Nine Altars included new fenestration to light each of the subsequent chapels. Although none of this glass survives, detailed accounts of each window are given in the *Rites*; however, this glass dates from the 14<sup>th</sup> century and so is still not referential to the original scheme. Fortunately, a few small fragments remain of the mid 13<sup>th</sup>-century ‘stiff-leaf’ grisaille which Haselock and O’Connor (1980, 109) have identified as from the first original glazing scheme (Fig 4.15). Furthermore, it is perhaps no coincidence grisaille was used being a style extensively favoured by the Cistercians whose simple monochrome designs are also emulated throughout the architecture. The interplay of light and dark throughout this most sacred space was highly intentional.

Compositions of architectural as well as iconographic significance included the large decorated-style windows of the eastern transept termination. The windows on the south side of the Nine Altars contained the life of St Cuthbert, with the north side depicting the life of Joseph (Fowler 1903, 3) (Fig 4.16). In the choir, Cuthbert featured in four windows and St Oswald in three (Haselock and O’Connor 1980, 113) further promoting the connection between Durham and its Northern saints. Further evidence for the focus on the saintly aspect of the glazing scheme could be found in the eastern side of the central transepts which were all linked to the dedications of the altars that stood beneath them (Haselock and O’Connor 1980, 113). The south transept culminated in the great window called the *Te Deum*, located over the clock. Dated to 1416–46, it contained every verse of the song with the Nine Orders of Angels adoring the image of Christ crucified, together with the blessed Virgin with Christ in her arms (Fowler 1903, 32). A window at York depicts the same iconography. The corresponding window of the north

transept at Durham, which was reglazed around 1494 and 1519 with the iconography we know from the *Rites*, was known as the Four Doctors (Fowler 1903, 31). These figures stood in the upper section, flanking the Virgin, Child and Cuthbert. The lower section contained all the instruments of Christ's death set in round glass (Fowler 1903, 31). Finally, the great seven-light window in the west end of the nave dated 1341–74 was a Jesse window. Few fragments of this window remain in a confused state in the Galilee Chapel which, from their style, actually suggest a date of *c.*1370 (Haselock and O'Connor 1980, 115) (Fig 4.17). The central light featured a Virgin and Child situated at the top of the tree.

The colours and light produced by the glass would have had a decisive effect on the architectural polychromy of the surrounding walls, and *vice versa*. Essentially, one affected the perception and experience of the other. Important to note in relation to the experience are the substantial contrasting shades that would have featured throughout the aesthetic scheme of the east end. Grisaille consisted of colourless glass with floral patterns and symbolised the light and whiteness of Christ, and viewed as a metaphysical aesthetic or analogue of the Divine Presence (Gage 1982, 38; Graves 2007, 520). From this one gets the sense of an eastern arm bathed in light, whereas in reality a large proportion of the glass was densely patterned and had little capacity to transmit light at all (Gage 1982, 41), yet this served to emphasise the narrative which was filled with luminous and vibrant colours. During the latter part of the day, when the sun began to fade, contrasts faded and colours lost their luminosity resulting in a visual juxtaposition. As such, 'It seems that the ideal conditions for seeing a stained-glass window [was]... when the light [was]... not at its brightest' (Recht 2008, 188).

The ambience created by the Durham east end may be better understood by looking at the contemporary glass of the Five Sisters window at York Minster (*c.*1250) which, although located in a darker northern transept, to this day (although supremely leached due to successive conservation campaigns), transmits little light through its heavy grisaille even on a bright, sunny day (Fig 4.18). Although it may seem unusual for such an important space at Durham to be lit by dark glass, the combined visual effects of the architecture, together with this patterned glazing design, would have transformed the interior painted mouldings of the masonry as shades were cast over some areas which, in turn, illuminated the white painting against the deep colour of the marble. Being the framing space of the shrine, it is perhaps no coincidence that this interplay of colour

was invoked throughout the east end if we believe the iconographic explanation of the 13<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Roger Bacon ‘who likened the reception of light as knowledge to the reception of grace: Saints receive light directly, good but imperfect persons received refracted light, and sinners repel or reflect light’ (Hahn 2000, 175).

It would appear then that this monochromatic visual effect was particularly appealing at Durham as grisaille also likely featured in the iconographic arrangement of the replacement 15<sup>th</sup>-century glass. This later scheme depicted standing figural panels under canopies above narrative panels containing scenes from the various saints’ lives whose altars resided beneath (Haselock and O’Connor 1980, 109–10). Giles (2007) analysed the visual effects of light and shade on the wall paintings of parish churches at Pickering (North Yorkshire) and Stratford-upon-Avon (Warwickshire). She found that with the changing forms and patterns of light came a radical transformation in the experience of the figural painted images as some were illuminated and some cast into shadow as a result of the undulating surfaces and pigmentations; a similar effect to that most likely produced at Durham (Giles 2007, 115) (see also chapter 5). Spatial depth was not a consequence of this design, yet the two-dimensionality of the ‘contained’ figural scenes made them easier to read and enlivened the optical surface of the picture plane. An ‘animation’ of the saints and angels in the paintings was created affecting the medieval viewer immensely due to their beliefs in the power of images (Giles 2007, 115). This dazzling array of devotional tools would have been furthered by the surrounding cloths of linen, silks and woven or embroidered textiles illustrating narrative or decorative motifs that we know filled the interior walls of the medieval church (and Cuthbert’s shrine).

The architectural space of the cathedral interior was thus a theatre of memory proclaiming its devotional message through mnemonic techniques. Sensorial stimuli aided and influenced the memory through an interrelationship of holy objects, architecture and rituals as part of the wider experience of the sacred site and promoting a desire for repeated visits (Tekippe 2005, 697, n.15). In *Ad Herennium*, Aquinas suggested that these spaces should not be ‘too brightly nor too dimly lit, [so that] we see taking shape before our eyes an ensemble of images across a space in a coherent order and exposed to enough light to facilitate reading them’ (Recht 2008, 230). Niches, such as those which enclosed the figural glass panels, were particularly stimulating to the imagination as the figures stood against dark backgrounds (or in this case monochrome-

coloured glass) and were surrounded by the colours of the interior wall paintings, both of which emphasised them greatly. A similar visual technique is used in the east window of Gloucester Cathedral (1350s) where tiers of monochrome figures sit underneath painted towering canopied niches on alternating red and blue backgrounds. Colours were essential to the medieval understanding and memory. Different colours were thought to give remembrance to different things and so diverse colours were used in art to give them remembrance. In the case of the cathedral, the interior and exterior polychromy, sculpture, the shrine, its textiles and the glass, thus constituted important tools of artificial memory (Recht 2008, 232).

Light was produced and enriched by shadows at Durham. Predominantly, this was achieved by the newly coloured figural glass panels which let in a greater quantity of light than would have penetrated the sole grisaille of the Romanesque church. The design gave rise to an emphatic contrast between light and shaded surfaces – its austere nature therefore likely affected the audience in different ways (Graves 2007, 525). The new larger lights, particularly the eastern end glass which framed the feretory, provided shimmering light to draw the pilgrim forwards into a place of immediate experience (Harris 2004, 269). The evidence contained in the *Rites of Durham* provides us with detailed descriptions of the most significant of these later medieval window compositions. It begins in the east end with the Nine Altars, as shall I. As explained, the glass was replaced in the 15<sup>th</sup> century with figural panels, the central window being that of the great rose window dated to c.1409–13. The *Rites* describe it as the St Katherine window, which featured twenty-four lights with an image of St Katherine set upon the wheel depicted in the right-hand lancet below (Fowler 1903, 2–3). This suggests the presence of a lower level window illustrating the Life of St Katherine above the altar of St Thomas and St Katherine, but is not the rose window which was most likely named due to its wheel-like form (Haselock and O'Connor 1980, 110).<sup>75</sup>

The most prominent window was the eastern which depicted a large image of Cuthbert holding the crowned head of another revered local saint, the Northumbrian Christian king, St Oswald. A similar image can still be seen in panel 4c of the St Cuthbert window of York Minster (Norton 2005, 172) and highlights the first of many correlations between the two northern churches (cf. Wells 2010) (Fig 4.19). Stylistic similarities between them suggest that they were created within a decade or two of each

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<sup>75</sup> An illustration attesting to the *Rites*' description is featured in Smith's *Bede* frontispiece.

other (c.1430–40 for the York window, and the Durham cycle c.1420), perhaps by artists who had worked at both locations. Two windows on the south side of the Chapel of the Nine Altars also comprised, like that at York, ‘all the whole storye life and miracles of that holy man St Cuthbert’ (Fowler 1903, 3). Cuthbert clearly dominated the iconographic scheme with over eighteen windows containing single figures and scenes from his life which, in turn, indicates the participation of the monastic community in facilitating the primary purpose of the pilgrimage to Durham in the medieval period: arousing the hope of a miraculous cure by St Cuthbert.

Numerous historical and personal links with St Cuthbert can account for the choice of his life to adorn windows in prominent locations of the choirs at Durham and York and, as a result, project the theme of the Northern Church and its relationship to the universal Church, in addition to promoting the resonance of Durham’s patron saint to the North.

Many of the panels featured in both the Durham and York windows can be related to the late 12<sup>th</sup>-century manuscript produced in Durham: MS Yates Thompson 26 (previously, MS. Add 39943), which contained fifty-five full-page miniatures of Bede’s prose *Life of St Cuthbert*. Bertram Colgrave (1939, 673–7) suggested that the manuscript was the principal design source for the St Cuthbert window at York (e.g. f.24r and panel 13d, sVII St Cuthbert window, York) (Figs 4.20 and 4.21).<sup>76</sup> He also demonstrated that it was used to inform the design of a similar window in the north aisle of the choir at Durham, probably made in the 1420s, and a cycle of eighteen panel paintings on the reverse side of the choir stalls at Carlisle Cathedral (Cumbria), dated 1484–1507 (Colgrave 1938, 17; 1944–5, 12) (Fig 4.22).<sup>77</sup> The manuscript was made in the Durham scriptorium so would have been accessible to the designers of the Durham window.

The patronage links between the 15<sup>th</sup>-century glass at Durham and York must account for the similarities between the windows. The donor of the York window, Bishop Langley, had served as Dean of York from 1401–05, and is depicted in a central position at the base of the window (Brown 2003, 232). In 1405, while Langley was

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<sup>76</sup> The similarities stem from the dualistic compositional technique used to include two scenes from the manuscript. See Wells 2010 for a detailed discussion.

<sup>77</sup> Although the compositional similarity points to the Durham manuscript as a source, many architectural and landscape details have been added to the painted scenes (Baker 1978, 24). Park and Cather (2004) suggested that the panel paintings were based on a book of sketches derived from the Durham manuscript.

Dean of York, Walter Skirlaw, Bishop of Durham from 1388 until 1406, commissioned the Great East window of York Minster. During his own episcopate, Langley appears to have commissioned a number of windows for the cathedral at Durham, in conjunction with the refurbishment of the Chapel of the Nine Altars and the rebuilding of the cloisters. Described in the *Rites*, these included the cloister glazing, with images from the life and miracles of St Cuthbert, and the east window which included the large image of the saint (Fowler 1903, 76, 254). The latter imagery, as explained, was also paralleled in the St Cuthbert window at York, in which Langley was commemorated alongside his predecessor Walter Skirlaw.

Evidence for the relationship between Durham and the window at York could lie in an inscription written beside the Yates manuscript's entry in a catalogue of 1416. It read, '*Ricardus Archiepiscopus Eboracensis*' or Richard, Archbishop of York. It is highly probable that Scrope borrowed the Durham manuscript before his death in 1405 on behalf of Bishop Langley to provide the artist of the York St Cuthbert window with designs for the panels; perhaps it was considered at this stage as a source for the York window (Colgrave 1944–5, 12). Another possibility is that the York glaziers based their design directly on the Durham window, or that the same glazing workshop was responsible for executing both. John Knowles suggested that the description of various panels in the *Rites* was so similar to existing panels in the York glass that in addition to being executed by one artist, it is likely they also derived from the same cartoon (Haselock and O'Connor 1980, 111–12). Certainly, there is some evidence that the Dean and Chapter of Durham obtained stained glass windows from York glass painters during the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Haselock and O'Connor 1980, 111).

The cult of St Cuthbert enjoyed resurgence in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, particularly in the north of England. Many narrative cycles of his life were created at this time, including wall paintings, manuscript illuminations and stained glass windows (Baker 1978, 42–4). This historiography of Northern Cuthbertine iconography offers a fascinating insight into the way in which patronage links encouraged the circulation of design models for iconographic schemes. These models, which we may go as far to label as pastiche, allowed glass painters to transform detailed narrative accounts into legible compositions that could easily be interpreted by audiences of such large-scale windows at the same time as honouring the original manuscript, perhaps as a nostalgic gesture (Caviness 1973, 205). At York and Durham, the windows assumed the function of a giant

advertisement for the local saint, reminding pilgrims and celebrants of the saint's spiritual importance. Cuthbert's cult was therefore strengthened and reaffirmed by the numerous connections illustrated in the decorative schemes of the two most important cathedrals in the region.

Furthermore, if the links between the Durham compositions and the York Minster Cuthbert windows are correct, it is expected that the miracle windows at Durham followed similar designs to those at York thus containing depictions of Cuthbert's last steps and where his body was consecrated, with scenes featuring images of the cathedral and of the tomb/shrine. As we know from the *Rites* and the account rolls, there were many stations along the pilgrim path throughout the cathedral attributed to Cuthbert and therefore the pilgrims could have experienced these places physically by walking through the enormous building, passing by its devotional stations, images and areas, as well as seeing them visually in the stained glass windows that also punctuated the route around the church. As such, the infrastructure utilised the visual in order to control the pilgrims' response and enabling them to experience 'an emotional, yet primarily metaphorical, renewal through the joining of "story, ritual, and place"' (Hahn 1997, 1085). This connection between the two mediums, I believe, was certainly undertaken throughout the medieval period and created an engagement with some of the 'intimacies and immediacies with the saint' (Caviness 1973, 280). Subsequently, these representations would have provided proof of Cuthbert's miracles perpetuating his power beyond the liturgical boundaries of the cathedral and ensuring the longevity of his cult in visual form (Caviness 1973, 280).

St Cuthbert would have resided in his new elaborate setting behind the High Altar by 1258, but the view of the shrine was obstructed by a tall screen of wood (Klukas 1983, 173–5; Fernie 1993, 150–1; Thurlby 1997, 859),<sup>78</sup> and then in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by a stone screen (this will be further examined below) located between the High Altar and shrine. Such a restricted approach was very unusual for English churches with residing shrines (although a similar arrangement obstructed the view towards St William of York's shrine in the Minster) (Wilson 1977, 20), yet it certainly appears to have been a tool for controlling the flow of pilgrims. Although it seems strange that a relic as important to Durham as St Cuthbert's shrine was obstructed to a large portion of the

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<sup>78</sup> Two carved panels, thought to derive from the 12<sup>th</sup> century screen, are now held in the cathedral treasury.

population, the presence of such significant glass in this area may explain this oddity. The huge walls of surrounding glass may have functioned as signifiers for the holy space; the Great Rose window and subsequent lancets indicating the central eastern altar, the High Altar and the magnificent shrine. At the same time, the specific nature of the windows' locations, height and grandeur suggest that they also acted as visual sacred relics for the devotional areas unable to be freely entered by the majority of the medieval population.

A more literal example of this can be seen at Chartres Cathedral where a 12<sup>th</sup>-century panel was reframed in the manner of a sacred relic in the 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Belle Verrière* window, revealing the crucial role that stained glass played in mediating the relationship between the human and divine (Marks 2000, 69). As such, painted glass images became substitutes for the saintly visions that could no longer be experienced in the sacred areas, and so simply by looking on these ocular intercessory narratives: 'The vision [produced by the image] filled that gap that existed in the imagination of the common beholder and gave a sense of nearness [to the saint]' (Belting 1996, 412). In this way, like the evidence for the windows of the Nine Altars at Durham, these figural windows not only demarcated the dedication of each altar below, but they entertained the groups of pilgrims waiting to visit the shrine in the east end. Harris (2004) examined the pilgrim experience of window schemes featuring those of cult saints. By reference to Canterbury, she attested that the windows depicting Becket's life and miracles were so numerous to make them memorable 'by having pilgrims experience Becket's *own* history in *its own* space' (Harris 2004, 267). The result of this conception was that the space of the cathedral became a 'theatre' of re-enactment and memory of the saint's life by the representations which mapped the saint's martyrdom and miracles onto the pilgrim's own experiences. Durham also displayed similar roles in its stained glass scheme. The repeated iconographies featuring St Cuthbert instilled a physical memory on the viewer as the figure of Cuthbert, depicted similarly, became recognisable. They brought to life an origin or a founding event, and so for the believer they made the present, the full, holy effect of the past.

From the later 13<sup>th</sup> century, changes in the architectural structure of the pilgrimage setting at Durham made the saint less physically accessible to the laity. In response, it appears that an increasing emphasis was placed on the visually aesthetic elements of the pilgrimage scheme primarily surrounding the shrine as a means of enabling pilgrims to

participate in the divine power of the saints. This was facilitated through a range of strategies including the highly decorative figural stained glass, the decorative schemes of the wall painting, the permeable walls of the feretory to provide the laity with views of the shrine, the subsidiary chapels of the Nine Altars and, finally, the enormous light emitting paschal candlestick thought to be one of the rarest monuments in England (Geddes 1980, 141). Commissioned by Bishop Puiset, the candlestick was positioned on one of the steps to the High Altar. The most impressive feature was its scale. Described by the author of the *Rites* as almost as wide as the choir, its height was also inline with that of the triforium: 11.6m (38ft) from the ground (Fowler 1903, 10–11, 201–3; Geddes 1980, 141) (Fig 4.32). Inserted into the central holder was a wooden judas candlestick which was lit through a hole in the vault. The total height was about 23m (75ft). Its design consisted of a flying dragon at each bottom corner, with four evangelists above (Geddes 1980, 141–2). Canterbury Cathedral also possessed a similar gigantic edifice. On occasion its paschal candle contained as much as 800 pounds of wax (Woodruff 1926, 162).

The sensory impact of such an enormous structure is perhaps difficult to grasp for a modern observer, but for the medieval pilgrim, the light could have been seen from any area of the church and would have symbolised much more than a candle. At Durham, not only did it light the most sacred areas: the High Altar, choir and feretory, but it represented the divine illumination of God. As this could have been viewed above the large choir and rood screens, it also established and maintained a connection with the laity who were often visually unable to partake in the Mass. As established in the writings of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, ‘the primary light (*lux*) was distinguished from the light of heavenly bodies (*luminaria*)’ and ‘*Lux* is substance itself and Lumen flows from *Lux*, that is the whiteness of *Lux*’ (Gage 1982, 38). Thus, the identification of *lux* with the Divinity is clearly exemplified, which explains why the phrase ‘*Ego sum lux mundi*’ was used on many famous candlesticks, such as the Gloucester Candlestick (1104x1113) now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, as they were thought of as analogues of the Divine presence, as the now lost paschal example at Durham would have. At Canterbury, the lighting of the paschal was accompanied by a solemn procession which included the signing of psalms and hymns and the burning of incense. These sensory elements would have created an extremely numinous and ceremonial event for any onlookers, while the heat from the candle and smell of the incense would have been a sensory experience that retained in the memory (Withers 1921, 58).

#### 4.7 SHRINE

St Cuthbert's first shrine began life as rather architecturally un-ambitious for the display of such an important set of relics. It consisted of a reliquary-coffin supported by a raised slab in which pilgrims could crawl underneath (Reginald, *Libellus*, cap. 42; Raine 1828, 87–9; Crook 1994, 24; 2011, 151). This information is derived from several miracle stories and an early illustration which details the arrangement of both the base and reliquary coffin. For the translation ceremony in 1104, the documentary account describes the raising of the reliquary coffin to a stone behind the altar sustained by nine columns raised high above the ground (*de Miraculis*, 359–60).<sup>79</sup> The structure was a common form of an early shrine base, with a table-like support on which the reliquary resided.

From analysing this early data, the evidence we do have for its complete design is contradictory. Several illustrations of this structure survive with varying designs that do not entirely match the description of the shrine in the miracle accounts. All derive from the same illuminated manuscript of Bede's *Life of St Cuthbert*, known as Oxford, Bodleian Library, University College, MS 165 (Fig 4.23), dated to around the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps preceding the translation in 1104 as it does not feature any of the additional miracles added after the event (Baker 1978, 19–21).

The illustration shows the structure as a common form of an early shrine base, with a table-like support on which the reliquary resided with a space of approximately three feet underneath the stone enabling pilgrims to crawl under and touch the holy reliquary (Crook 2000, 269; 2011, 152–3) (f.163). Although the columns are missing, the image shows the casket covered by pieces of silk and linen cloth which envelope the wooden coffin (Reginald *Libellus* cap. 66, 134). These are certainly depicted in the illustration of the Norman thief from the manuscript. The reliquary coffin is also pictured, as well as the slab, as it could be argued that the depiction shows a slightly larger stone supporting the coffin on top. Although, it cannot be doubted that the nine columns appear in any way, the draperies perhaps cover these and so we are left looking at the steps surrounding the base. Or, perhaps the dual foci arrangement of St Thomas' cult at Canterbury, St William at York and St Kentigern at Glasgow was also entertained at

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<sup>79</sup> *Peracta...solemni processione, locus incorrupti corporis sublimius post altare eleuandus fuerat super lapidem, quem gratia tanti oneris sustentendi, diligenter manu artificum praeparatum, nouem pro sui magnitudine altius a terra sustentant columnae.*

Durham, and the contradictory shrine designs are actually two different structures entirely. However, the image may also simply depict the very first arrangement of the shrine which the coffin was put upon whilst the cathedral was being constructed, as the second illustration shows the reliquary coffin surmounting the floor which we know was how the shrine was constructed during this time. The author of the *Rites of Durham* as well as Reginald of Durham, identified that a chapel was constructed in the cloister to house Cuthbert's first tomb in the pre-Conquest church during the construction of the new cathedral 'till a faire shrine might bee made in his new church wherin hee might be inclosed [sic]' (Fowler 1903, 77; *Libellus* cap 48, 98–101). The fact that the author of the *Rites* even refers to this in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century may infer that the original site remained one of veneration after the construction of the shrine in the new church, or was simply regarded as another, more accessible focal point for worship.

This is extremely important to the concept of sensory perception and interaction as the numerous types of saintly engagement provided by various attractions heightened the overall experience of the cult, giving greater prestige to the church and subsequently enticing more pilgrims to visit. The competition between saintly sites is certainly apparent during this period and, as a result, churches had to stimulate an appetite for contact with the holy, for new trends in piety and also for various shrines to visit. Multiple cult stations therefore provided an overall pilgrimage 'attraction' heightened by the visual decorative schemes of the glass and wall paintings which also functioned as official sanctions of Cuthbert's intercessory power and provided visitors with amusement whilst waiting to visit the shrine. These numerous sacred areas meant that different emotions were provided by different parts of the fabric. Expectation was created on immediate entry to the church by the shrine vistas; anticipation was stimulated on the journey route to the main shrine, visits to the lesser-known sites and also during the wait to enter the feretory. This then culminated in excitement as the various Cuthbertine relics and shrines were viewed.

Shrines dating from the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, as seen in early images of Becket's shrine in various windows in the Trinity Chapel at Canterbury Cathedral (see Fig 3.3), depict similar compositions of a raised coffin on columnar supports, and in suggested reconstructions of St Æthelthryth's shrine at Ely, a thin stone slab is shown supporting a pointed gabled coffin atop a row of columns (Fig 4.24). These structures are of a comparable design to the early images and descriptions of Cuthbert's first shrine and

imply that physical contact with the sacred was an important aspect of their construction.

The emphasis of these shrine designs is on the head and hands for saintly veneration. As Graves (2008, 41) argued, the head and the hands were thought to embody more of the symbolic life force than any other parts, and many early Christians desired to visit Jerusalem in order to ‘see and touch the places where Christ was physically present’ (Frank 2000a, 104; Frank 2000b, 104–05; Wells 2011, 123). In early medieval art, the head and hands were continually emphasised over other body parts, as they are the most expressive as Christ was seen as the ‘head’ of the mystical body, and inside this head, all of the senses were to be found, while the saints only possessed the sense of touch (Rahner 1979; Graves 2008, 41). As many scholars of medieval vision have shown, ‘seeing something was in effect touching it’ (Graves 2008, 42), but it is my contention that pilgrims wished to receive the intercessory power of the saints as intimately and as quickly as possible hence the need for a close encounter with the relics – essentially they required much more intimacy than the mere sight of the shrine. The evidence for pilgrims touching and even sleeping underneath shrine structures suggests that direct physical engagement with the holy was extremely important. It is therefore not surprising that focus was often put on these two attributes for saintly veneration, and for any type of devotional activity for that matter. Subsequently, in order to understand why pilgrims gave such emphasis to what they touched, it is worth examining the changing development in the design of St Cuthbert’s shrine.

Not only his first shrine, but also St Cuthbert’s second, more elaborate shrine-structure featured recessed openings cut into the marble base for the use of pilgrims. In 1372 John Neville of Raby paid upwards of £200 for a new shrine base (Coldstream 1976, 25). Clear descriptions regarding the design of this second base feature in the *Rites* and James Raine’s account of 1828. They describe the structure as thirty-seven feet long by twenty-three feet wide, made of green marble, painted and gilded with four niches or seats carved into the base for pilgrims to lean and rest on ‘in the time of their devout offerings and fervent payers to God’ (Raine 1828, 111). The cover of the shrine was wainscoted and painted on the east end was Christ on a rainbow in judgment. At the east end of the top, iron candlesticks gave light to the Nine Altars and surrounding feretory area. On the west end was the Virgin with Christ on her knee while the top of the cover was carved with various dragons and beasts (Fowler 1903, 4–5). At the west was also a

small altar, while nearby (north and south), following the arrangement of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century tomb, stood several finely painted and gilded small aumbries and irons for the gifts, offerings and relic collection of St Cuthbert (Fowler 1903, 5, 94, 96; Nilson 1998, 52, 115). These were opened for pilgrims to see when the shrine cover was drawn up,<sup>80</sup> as were the iron railings surrounding the raised feretory platform (Fowler 1903, 198), similar to Canterbury. Two official monks were in charge of the shrine: the *feretrarius* (who also accounted for the offerings) and his subordinate, the *consocius* (Nilson 1998, 13, 161) who had the task of keeping the shrine in order and maintaining the account rolls (Nilson 1998, 130). The *consocius* also watched visitors to the shrine from a chamber above the north door of the Neville Screen (Fowler 1903, 17, 208–09; Wilson 1980, 95), presumably similar to the watching chambers at St Albans and Canterbury. At Durham, evidence suggests that the shrine-keeper had the task of unlocking and lifting the canopy for pilgrims to view (Nilson 1998, 133), immediately for elite visitors. The cover was also to be drawn during matins, whenever the *Te Deum* was sung, or at evensong when the *Magnificat* was sung (Fowler 1903, 94). This practice of marshalling the pilgrims would have been to retain security as well as sanctity, as visitors were entering, in essence, ‘the clergy’s domain’. These guardians could also manage the expectations of the pilgrims. Not only may they have ‘modeled bodily decorum’ (Hahn 1997, 1087), but there is evidence (especially at Canterbury) that many monks functioned as ‘tour guides’ whose task it was to explain the images and inscriptions of the windows, and provide verbal descriptions of the space to the masses of pilgrims (Jordan 2009, 563).

The shrine would also have been covered and surrounded in exceptional offerings ranging from images to jewels, the most valuable and precious of which, in a similar practice to Canterbury, the feretrar was entrusted to hang directly on to the shrine. Anything else was to be hung within the feretory, at the end of the shrine (Fowler 1903, 94, 275–6). The most notable gifts included the golden image of the Virgin displaying the arms of the ‘Lord of Durham’; the ‘goodly and sumptuous five-yard banner of St Cuthbert with pipes of silver’ from *c.*late 12<sup>th</sup> century which was carried in royal battle and came to hold a position of honour in the Durham feretory following its appearance at the field of Flodden; the gold cross given by Newcastle merchant Robert Rodes in 1446 for the east gable of the shrine; and the central stone known as the ‘Emerald’, valued (with five rings and five chains) in 1401 at £3,336 13s. 4d. (Fowler 1898, 440,

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<sup>80</sup> Six silver bells were hung from the rope.

451, 454; Fowler 1903, 25–7, 95; Nilson 1998, 188–9; Dobson 2003, 39).<sup>81</sup> Another possible relic, which may have been retained in order to provide an embellished pavement for the feretory, but which never got realised, was a piece of marble destined for the saint (Crook 2011, 154). Reginald tells of Prior Roger's (*fl.*1138–40) ask for anyone travelling abroad to bring back pieces of marble for creating a pavement 'on account of the honour of St Cuthbert', therefore likely for the shrine area (*Libellus* cap 75, Raine 1835, 154–7). Although there is no archaeological evidence to suggest this plan came to fruition, similar pavements at Westminster Abbey and the cosmatesque pavement at Canterbury, which was moved from the area in front of the High Altar to adorn Becket's shrine locale (see chapter 3), indicate that these decorative floorings were a common feature of shrine churches (Norton 2002), adding to and creating the sensory overload of the sacred surroundings.

The description in the *Rites* is the most detailed that survives for the exact design of the shrine; the rest is conjectural but can be determined from similar contemporary examples. More specifically, the designs of the area surrounding the shrine: the Neville Screen and choir, are surviving examples which illustrate that the replication of styles within a church onto various structures was common, creating a unified design specific to that location.

The tombs of Bishop Hatfield (late 14<sup>th</sup> century) and Lightfoot (late 19<sup>th</sup> century) (Fig 4.25) replicate various elements of the Neville Screen and choir stalls thus illustrating this recurrent common occurrence (Fig 4.26). The larger three niches of the western facing side of the Neville Screen mirror, almost exactly, those of the choir stalls, as if a specifically microarchitectural source was chosen for the small-scale detail on each. All three are surmounted by or incorporate three-sided canopied niches faced with richly crocketed ogee arches and a small cross-quarter filling the arch head. Slender vertical shafts terminated by crockets lie between each niche. The cross-quarter is also used on the eastern facing side of the Neville Screen. Regular quatrefoils even grace the blind arcading of the Nine Altars. The replication of such features was often transferred to tomb-chests and shrines throughout the period. For example, the east wall of Henry VII's chapel at Westminster Abbey has been suggested as the inspiration for various tomb-chests, notably Sir Henry Vernon's at Tong, Shropshire (Gilderdale-Scott 2005,

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<sup>81</sup> The statue of the Virgin appears to have been a transaction rather than oblation, but this is disputed (Nilson 1998, 188).

67). Direct transference of shrine motifs to larger choir furnishings and constructional devices – particularly the quatrefoil as seen in Wells Cathedral choir – was abundant throughout great shrine churches as artisans, architects and even influential patrons often worked in several media, while they served to create a unified decorative space to house a shrine incorporating visual elements that were readily understood and easily recognisable (Malone 2004, 104–06). No doubt, Bishop Richard Poore’s term at Salisbury (1217–28) impacted on the spread of similar designs when he moved to up to Durham in 1228. Similarly we see reliquary caskets and shrine designs with an architectonic emphasis that resemble church architecture most specifically – predominantly the Gothic architectural form – so that both the casket and surrounding building are seen as emulations and implications of the Heavenly Jerusalem (Tekippe 2005, 702). This resulted from the belief that the casket and its accompanying visual accoutrements signified the other, holy realm and the abode of the divine whilst they also resided in the realm of the faithful on earth, thus explicating ‘the eschatological potential of earthly life’ (Tekippe 2005, 750).

As these stylistic features/themes are so recurrent in the east end, adorning many of the high-status monuments, they were no doubt incorporated into the design scheme of the later shrine base. The descriptions we do have suggest it was an intricate and fashionable arrangement. Thus, using these contemporary features as a reference, my reconstruction of St Cuthbert’s second, 14<sup>th</sup>-century shrine is as follows:

*The arrangement of the base comprised two stages: the lower featured four elliptical arched recessed openings cut into the marble of the base which stood on five steps; the upper stone slab was pierced by a row of depressed cross-quarters and triangular inserts. The reliquary coffin cover was wainscoted with a gilded diaper pattern. Included in the centre of each was a framed jewel. The top was surmounted by a row of stiff-leafed pinnacles which framed a cover of carved wooden beasts. Each corner was supported by a shaft terminating in crocketed pinnacles which flanked an elaborate ogee arch on the eastern and western end of the reliquary-coffin. A pulley system was attached to the cover by iron loops at each corner, which was then attached to an elevated canopy suspended by ropes fixed to the shafts framing the feretory walls. Finally, six silver bells hung off these ropes (Plate 1).*

The sensory importance of the four niches of the base invite consideration. It has been suggested that the resonances and amplification of the recesses created an intimate encounter with the saint, whilst the visual isolation contributed to the feeling of private worship, making Cuthbert's spirit a visual and aural accessible experience (Blessner and Salter 2007, 88). As many shrines were of this rather open *foramina*-design or contained niches or apertures designed for pilgrims to interact with the sarcophagus, the functions were numerous. Most notably, apertures created a harmonious and sensory integration with their architectural surroundings. Not only did these niches provide acoustical properties appropriated for experience as the echoes of pilgrims' prayers reverberated around the enclosed space creating an intimate encounter with the saint, but the visual isolation further contributed to the feeling of private worship. Church architects were always aware of aural issues in conceiving the design of religious interiors. For example, the Shrine of St Werburgh at Chester Cathedral (Fig 4.27) contained six recesses where kneeling pilgrims inserted their heads whilst pleading their petition:

The cavity serves both as amplifier and filter, thus giving the petitioner's voice dramatic and emotional emphasis: only modest vocal effort is required to produce a strong voice. The shrine's cavity becomes a unique private arena that also excludes external sounds—privacy without walls (Blessner and Slater 2007, 88).

Not only did they provide acoustical properties appropriated for experience, but the power of touch combined with vision also appears to have been a significant quality. Accordingly, the popularity of these shrine bases and the development of Cuthbert's shrine base to a more ordered and conceived design, clearly illustrates that the sensory accessibility of the relics was becoming increasingly desirable for the fulfilment of the devotional experience and thus the need for more contact with the saint (Morris and Roberts 2002, 5). Many accounts describe pilgrims touching the niches with their foreheads and eyes, and then kissing them (Frank 2000a, 105), with similar actions depicted in the stained glass of the period. At York Minster particularly, throughout various scenes of the St William and St Cuthbert windows, pilgrims are portrayed partaking in the physical elements of the shrine constructions. This demonstrates that the tangibility and tactility of the sacred was becoming a predominant factor in the designs of shrines as the closer pilgrims were to the relics, the more genuine and more immediate access was offered to sanctity (Frank 2000a, 106). One specific cause was due to the increasing amount of miracle stories which often emphasised the physical actions by which the saints healed.

Still, we cannot rule out the importance of vision within these experiences. The combination of sight and touch is resonant within tactile worship, but this concentration on immediacy with contact explains why these two senses were prioritised. Furthermore, the ultimate importance of the medieval experience was the everlasting memory it appropriated in the mind of the pilgrim. The process by which this devotion was undertaken was extremely important as ‘memory consisted of a tidy assemblage of sense perceptions’ (Frank 2000a, 107). Frank explains that perceptions entered the mind in visual form and therefore smells, sounds and tastes were all translated into a mental picture and stored away. Whichever sense had the most substance therefore imprinted the experience in the mind and so further explains why a stimulation of each individual sense was created by the church to create such a magnificent memory as such resonances aided the feeling of being in another world or realm; amplification contributed to intimacy; and visual isolation to privacy (cf. Blesser and Salter 2007).

Cuthbert’s shrine also featured other sensory stimulants in its later development highlighting the increase in this type of experience. Similar to a practice performed at Becket’s shrine at Canterbury Cathedral, on Cuthbert’s feast day the carved and painted wooden canopy above the shrine would be raised by a pulley system and the six silver bells attached to it would ring out permeating the considerable barriers of the choir and subsequent Neville, choir and rood screens into the body of the church so that anyone not in the immediate vicinity would be stirred by the sounds (Raine 1828, 111; Fowler 1903, 4; Graves 2007, 525). In light of my earlier argument regarding the corporeality of such shrine designs, together the visual stimuli of the sounds, relief decorated masonry, smell of the incense and feel of the shrine recesses, would have made a lasting impression on the imagination, enforcing a symbolic experience like never before which singularly, neither sensory tool could have achieved. Although Blesser and Salter’s work proposed that the ‘earconic’ aspects of the niche embellishment were incidental (2007, 88), this analysis surely proves that definite planning was undertaken with respect to enhancing the sensory environment of pilgrim devotion.

The construction of the Nine Altars, the new shrine base and the movement of Bede’s tomb from the apse to the Galilee chapel in 1370 (Fowler 1903, 45), suggests a conscious reorganisation of the east end towards a new concentration on the feretory site marking it as a separate and most holy place. From this rearrangement of the most valuable and sacred architectural aspects of the cult, Durham felt the need to boost

popularity of their saint by making his surroundings worthy of prestige if they wanted his cult to be credibly viewed as one of the most famous in England. After the substantial alterations and additions to Canterbury Cathedral following Becket's martyrdom, Durham perhaps felt pressure to promote Cuthbert in the most productive way possible.

A small amount of documentary evidence could be used to uphold this and which suggests a parallel between the cult's popularity and the development of the ecclesiastical architecture of Durham. The feretrar's rolls indicate that the late 14<sup>th</sup> century was a very popular period for the shrine. During this time, offerings were in the region of £38 in 1378/9 increasing to £63 in 1385/6. These years were interspersed with figures averaging £30. It therefore seems probable that in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century greater prominence was given to the shrine when a taller base was constructed to provide a spectacle rivalling Canterbury when Cuthbert's popularity was weakening (Crook 1994, 248).

More noteworthy, perhaps, was the slow decline in offerings after the 1380s. Brown & Hopkins and D L Farmer's work on the average wages of this period would suggest that the decrease was the result of smaller disposable incomes created by the decline in inflation (Nilson 1998, 173). However, Nilson makes what I think is a very interesting and noteworthy point. The offerings given by pilgrims were not principally related to income as 'theoretically [there was] no limit to the supply of divine favour' (Nilson 1998, 174); essentially, people would spend as much money as possible if it meant their time in purgatory was to be shortened, or bypassed completely. It seems, though, that the needs of the pilgrim were no longer important. There is still some discrepancy over the importance of the visibility of the shrine before the 14<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>82</sup> although it does appear to become more controlled at this time and it is thus not outlandish to suggest that the decrease in pilgrim offering numbers was a result of this attempt to control access to St Cuthbert's shrine. This control may have also been due to the regular large flow of visitors which interrupted Mass and other services in the east end, or it may have been just an attempt to go back to the 'old days' when the clergy had the job of deciding who got to see Cuthbert and who did not (Rollason 1989, 42). As noted earlier,

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<sup>82</sup> The obstructions blocking view of the High Altar are regularly disputed (cf. Nilson 1994, 85, 90), although rood screens at Ely and Sarum suggest this was common.

Reginald of Durham actually recorded in two of his miracle stories the difficulty faced by pilgrims in acceding to the shrine suggesting this problem may have been ongoing.

In addition, the re-siting of Bede's tomb suggests that multiple foci for the 'cults of Durham' were used as a way of generating visitors, as does Symeon of Durham's suggestion (*Libellus de Exordio*, 322) that (at least when he was writing at the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century) Bede's shrine also enclosed many other saintly relics. The success of Canterbury's numerous cult sites illustrated that this certainly worked, exemplifying to the monastic community at Durham how they could add to the income from offerings by providing numerous collection stations at these cult stops. Perhaps Durham also had previous experience of using this method as Cuthbert's original tomb site allegedly acted as another focal point. I believe this also highlights that Durham wanted to increase the prestige of Bede by giving him his own 'feretory-esque' setting. A separation of the two saints meant that they were both individually important, promoting the fact that Durham had two enormously important cult saints attributed to the foundation and origin of the church.

#### **4.8 MASONRY**

Malcolm Thurlby's (1994) analysis of the relationship between the patron and master mason of Durham has brought to light some fascinating discoveries regarding the overall design conception of the interior and exterior decoration. Comparisons between the first cathedral and the shrine of Old St Peter's, Rome certainly seem apparent, yet what is most notable for this study, is just how this elaboration and articulation of space created the sensory experience. Some of the most significant elements of Durham's masonry are the spiral piers in the presbytery and transept arcades (Fig 4.28), and the rib vaulting which Thurlby (1994, 163) suggests relates convincingly to the spiral columns of Old St Peter's shrine (Fig 4.29), now reused in the present building.

The popularity of such vaulting ribs throughout the medieval period has been attributed to their presence in the canopy of St Peter's original shrine which, as a result, meant that these structural elements became signifiers for a sacred locale within a Romanesque church (Thurlby 1994, 165). Yet it must be noted that they were also used in many great cult churches in order to direct the gaze upon entry so that a 'rhythmic progression' carried the stream of pilgrims towards the choir in which they adorned and fused together with the supporting walls and roof in a 'homogenous whole' (Recht 2008,

121). At Durham, this was further achieved upon immediate entry, preparing the eye and drawing it to the choir by varying the design of the nave columns which are comprised of alternate cylindrical and composite piers. The cylindrical piers are decorated with spiral patterns, chevrons (zig-zags), lozenges and flutes (Fig 4.30). A similar plan, and deriving from around the same period, can be found in the nave of the 12<sup>th</sup>-century Holy Cross and St Lawrence church of Waltham Abbey (Essex) (Bettley and Pevsner 2007, 808). Here, again the arcade supports alternate between composite piers and subordinate round ones with similar incised chevron and fluting patterns (Fig 4.31).

The integration of these architectural forms created, in essence, a great shrine for Cuthbert comprising the entire building. In a building measuring 117.83m internally, it is no surprise that the scale of elaboration fitted the scale of the structure itself (Thurlby 1994, 163). This deliberate seeking of visual effects, taking into account the viewer's position, is what Recht (2008, 125–9) called a 'kinetic conception of space' wherein the choir is given a privileged position yet, although several scales of parts of the building are apparent, they are harmonised by subtle transitions. The spectacle created through these small changes in styles – different yet unified – turned the building into a *mise-en-scène* to engage visitors with the architecture. The latter was thus 'not conceived solely for an attentive viewer but also for a body in motion' (Recht 2008, 134).

Eric Fernie (1980) has analysed the symbolic nature of spiral columns. Although it cannot be doubted that they functioned as part of the decorated schemes related to altars or demarcated a change in spatial function, they also flanked the monuments of important figures, as seen at Durham. Although plain shafts also acted as signifiers of sacred space, up to the early 12<sup>th</sup> century '*almost all* spiral columns mark[ed] important places' (Fernie 1980, 56, own emphasis) and, as such, I disagree with Fernie's suggestion that the spiral shafts in the eastern end of the choir at Durham were purely decorative as, together with the decorative rib vaulting, their adjacency to both the altar and the shrine certainly suggests otherwise, as it would also have done in the earlier building. It is clear that this was a conscious aesthetic practice by these masters whose principles rested on the idea that 'arcade design took precedence or equal status with vault design' (Hoey 1986, 61).

There is also a possible memory aspect attributed to the use of spiral columns at Durham. The use of architectural imagery was often visualised with reference to particular buildings to stimulate memory and composition (Carruthers 2000, 16). Abbot Suger moved the twelve pillars representative of the Apostles against the enclosing wall of the crypt at St Denis so that their original function was lost, yet they remained as ‘architectural relics’ of the crypt built under the previous Abbot Fulrad. His difficulty in obtaining marble Carolingian columns to continue the ‘concordance and harmony’ (*de convenientia et cohaerentia*) of his 8<sup>th</sup>-century nave which needed to be extended westwards by four bays, was achieved via the use of imitations; pastiches that displayed a ‘conscious archaism’ (Caviness 1973, 217). A similar practice occurred in Magdeburg Cathedral, Germany (begun 1209) where pillars from the Ottonian building were preserved and set on Gothic piers exhibiting their antique status to all (Recht 2008, 113).

Columns were therefore often treated as ‘relics’ in themselves. Through such synaesthetic metaphor, the horizon of knowledge was expanded and so what was before was made actual. This recalls the concept of mimesis as the power of replication allows the representation to share in or take on power from the represented (Feld and Basso 1996, 93). The concept also follows the medieval tradition for meditation which drew upon visual memorable images that may be recollected. The medieval memory followed the Roman tradition of rhetoric and can therefore be understood as ‘locational’ in that it was prompted by specific architectural places and markers which served to provoke recollection and cognitive meanings (Gilchrist 2005, 254). A synaesthetic experience cannot be present without the data of our senses and of our past experience. Imitation of Roman tradition was thus important to the Romanesque designer so, to the observer, the architecture would serve a mnemonic function, animating recollection of the sacred places and people of the past, and evoking their meanings in the present through the decorative and architectural designs used in the current edifice they were standing in.

Furthermore, the visual display of the elaborate vaulting surpasses any of its contemporaries. Unlike St Albans, the high stone vaults at Durham were not confined to the eastern arm:

Unmoulded arches and groin-vaults...become respectively moulded and ribbed...The alternating pier system at Winchester has plain minor columnar piers while at Durham they have incised spirals in the presbytery and transepts, not purely for decoration, but to create a more visually explicit link with Old St Peter’s (Thurlby 1994, 168).

This aesthetic richness had a greater purpose than to simply surpass contemporaries. The importance of Cuthbert's cult during this period was like that of Becket's in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century: it rivalled all others, enticing pilgrims from all over the country. Accordingly, the cult needed a setting fitting for this type of prestige and therefore the entire church became the shrine setting; every area of its interior aesthetically designed to create a unified appearance that extended both east and west, north and south.

This type of elaborate and embellished scheme would have been a sensorial feast for the body. A humble pilgrim visiting the church for the first time would have been in awe of the richness of the mouldings, the gilding, the piers, and the glass. It would have most likely overwhelmed the senses as every surface would have been imbued with designs that ran the entirety of the building, ordering the interior 'with a wide, but locally variable, range of durable multi-sensory surfaces, decoration, and fittings, extending from their walls to their floors' (Skeates 2010, 291). The prominence of the deep cut mouldings and the enormous spiral wound shafts of the piers demanded sight followed by touch. Their ingenuity cannot be overlooked, and the originality of the design even to this day forces one to feel the deep cuts of the unique masonry designs.

I would like to take a moment to analyse Thurlby's (1994, 165, 184) suggestion that the spiral columns and rib vaulting created an architectural canopy over the shrine of St Cuthbert. Although, as noted, the functional parallel to Old St Peter's is certainly significant, what is more notable for this study is the conception of the design as a canopy in itself, and how this created and added to the experience of the pilgrim. The intentions behind contrasts in pier forms have been under dispute, as explained by Lawrence Hoey:

Neither archaeological arguments involving separate campaigns or changes in master, nor arguments related to liturgical divisions or shrine placement can explain this surprising freedom. These arcades are clearly the result of an extraordinary creativity in pier design and a desire to display this virtuosity as effectively as possible (Hoey 1986, 45).

Hoey's argument, however, rests on the principle that few of these churches illustrate a conscious relationship between the pier alternation and a system of vaults and vault shafts, but this is not the case at Durham, as illustrated above. As the spirals were confined to the presbytery and transepts, this demarcated the function of the areas as sacred, holy spaces. Visually they created a separation from the areas of the church the

mass population had regular access to, whilst generating an excitement and anticipation as pilgrims could recognise the pier elaboration as visually signifying the choir space, thus identifying that they were moving progressively closer to the eastern location of the shrine. Spiral piers are also used in this way at Norwich Cathedral (begun 1096) where four mark the nave sanctuary (Ferne 1980, 49), and in Lincoln Cathedral's great west transept (*c.*1215), where the piers of the north and south transept arms are arranged symmetrically around the east crossing piers to form a general pattern centred on the crossing and the entrance to the liturgical choir (Hoey 1986, 52). Subsequently, 'it would appear that the architects sought visually to distinguish the limits of the choir through a modification in the interior design of the architecture' (Russo 1998, 262).

The shrine and church at Durham were both a physical extension of Cuthbert's cult and, as a result, the Anglo-Saxon/Norman 'motifs' recurrent throughout the building reflect the desire of patron and mason to create an extension of the saint's life and relationship to the period and to the North. An example of this exists in the choir area, as the paired aperture windows beneath enclosing arches of the presbytery-gallery and transept-gallery windows are comparable with the belfry openings of local churches including Bywell St Andrew, Ovingham (Northumberland) and Monkwearmouth (Co. Durham) (Thurlby 1994, 177). Additionally, the consistent use of cushion and scalloped capitals in the presbytery aisle dado arcades only occur in a similar multiplication at York Minster, as do the roll mouldings used primarily throughout the presbytery (Thurlby 1994, 181). The use of this design would have added to the indigenous, yet revolutionary decoration and articulation of the masonry. As the master mason was allegedly recruited from the North, it does not seem improbable to suggest that he tried to keep as much of the design in-keeping with regional styles, but using them in a new and original way, creating an overall linear pattern for the structure.

None of these architectural relationships can have been unconscious as they most certainly provided a multi-sensory aspect to the building on a more complex and grand scale than had ever been achieved in an Anglo-Norman cathedral. The result of this unified conception for the interior masonry was an overall visual coherence to the building, suggesting elaboration and splendour, suitable to the cult of such a famous saint, yet equally providing signification and a hierarchical separation of the sacred spaces within. This would have bombarded the senses of the pilgrim as they marvelled at the richness and prestige of the architectural schemes whilst visually identifying

where the sites relating to the cult were and, furthermore, interpreting these signifiers at the same time as experiencing the sounds, smells and feel of the space.

#### 4.9 SCREENS

The liturgical spatial division resulting from the various screens that punctuated as well as divided the eastern limit from the nave also caused similar anticipation to that produced by the interior decorative and architectural schemes. Only one belonged to the Romanesque era: the stone rood screen dating from between 1155 and 1160; the only screen decorated with Christological imagery of any 12<sup>th</sup>-century cathedral (Russo 1998, 251, 267). Whilst the screen no longer exists, fortunately the *Rites of Durham* describe the interior arrangement of this ecclesiastical furniture in detail, although it was most likely removed from the cathedral by the time the *Rites* were written in 1593.

Although there has been some discrepancy over the original location of the rood screen, the overwhelming conclusion is that it stood at the western side of the crossing in front of the thirteen-feet tall choir screen (built 1153–95 and rebuilt by Prior Wessington, *fl.*1416–46) (Fowler 1903, 32–4; Nilson 1998, 88). Constructed of two tiers, one displayed a row of regional bishops; the other, the kingly benefactors of the cathedral (Malone 2004, 64). Together with the north and south porches flanking the pulpitum (a chapel stood above the north), this arrangement separated the nave from the eastern end of the church (Fowler 1903, 33–4; Klukas 1983, 73; Russo 1998). Two smaller screens also sealed off entry from the south nave aisle but included a gate in the north aisle for entry into the crossing, and two small doors punctuated the larger central screen permitting restricted access to the eastern end beyond (Fowler 1903, 198; Russo 1998, 257).

Further evidence for the rood screen's location can be gathered from the signs of damage left in the church fabric at various intervals in the piers. Grooves and rectangular holes can be seen in the north face of the crossing pier and the south face of the aisle wall in the north aisle confirming the location of the secondary minor aisle screen (Russo 1998, 260) (Fig 4.32). Furthermore, the central screen position rests on a set of holes in the south face of the north-western crossing as well as a deep groove and shaved-off moulding which can be seen on the west face of the plinth of the south-western crossing pier. Also, a moulding partially shaved off the plinth on the first circular nave pier to the west and on the corresponding half-column respond against the

south wall, suggests the site of the south aisle screen (Fig 4.33). This is furthered by evidence of the right-angle arrangement of the south aisle screen which would have been altered for the insertion of the new cloister door in the south aisle from its original location in the western end of the south transept (Russo 1998, 260–1). This large amount of archaeological evidence confirms that the author of the *Rites* was correct in his analysis of the rood screen location: ‘in the body of y<sup>e</sup> church betwixt two of y<sup>e</sup> heist pillors supporting & holding vp y<sup>e</sup> west side of y<sup>e</sup> Lantern...’ (Fowler 1903, 32).

All that remains of this fascinating piece of liturgical furniture are two panels depicting *Noli Me Tangere* and the Transfiguration (Russo 1998, 253) from the original composition of ‘y<sup>e</sup> whole storie & passion[n] of o<sup>r</sup> Lord wrowghte in stone most curiously & most finely gilt’ above which stood the rood ‘w<sup>th</sup> y<sup>e</sup> picture of Marie on thone side, & y<sup>e</sup> picture of John on thither, w<sup>th</sup> two splendent & glistering archaengel[s] [sic]’ (Fowler 1903, 33–4). Despite their fragmentary state, an idea of the content and original composition of the reliefs can be gained thanks to Samuel Grimm’s 18<sup>th</sup>-century collection of drawings (Russo 1998, 255) (Fig 4.34). It is no coincidence that the narrative illustrates the Easter story, since lay people did not usually attend Mass in the cathedral aside from on major feast days. The focus of sculptural programmes of medieval church screens was often created to make the experience of the laity more ‘instructive and memorable’ (Jung 2000, 634). The screen’s original splendour and impact can thus be gleaned from examining the detailed stonework of the figures.

The synaesthetic control established and the sensorial functions produced by the iconography were numerous. Not only did the reliefs possess a distinctive visual vocabulary aimed at the socially different class within the nave thus functioning as bibles for the poor in a similar vein to stained glass, but it could also be argued that they united the viewers through this imagery, whom at first glance the stone structure appears to be excluding (Jung 2000, 624). The senses were firstly bombarded by the biblical exegesis which visually enabled empathy and identification with the extraordinary naturalistic representation of the figures, then by the tactility and visuality due to the deeply cut reliefs, and finally by the sounds of the services and congregation in worship (a Jesus altar was located in front of the screen – see below). The aesthetic properties of the screen made it pleasing to the eye and the hand, enhancing the intensity of the experience (Skeates 2010, 280). The numerous candles flickering in front of the screen, and on the altar, would cast shadow on some of the reliefs, forcing others into

the light. As such, they denied the tangibility and even visibility of all the sacred images depicted, while appealing to the sense of touch through the textured surface of the masonry (Pentcheva 2006, 631). No doubt the spectators of the screens turned into participants as the intricacy of the Life of Christ tempted them to receive its effects in closer quarters. Their legibility was a rather new concept and one that derived from the sense of form revealed in each figure. The bodies perform specific actions which the garments move together with, similar to the 13<sup>th</sup>-century friezes of the screens at Bourges Cathedral, Sainte-Chapelle and St Denis (Recht 2008, 233). The scenes took on the role, like glass, of ‘*non solum ad edificacionem sed ad recreationem*’ (not only for the edification but also for the entertainment) (Jung 2000, 636), through ‘visualizing all the energies activated in a stone structure’ (Recht 2008, 234).

As a large proportion of the masses of lay pilgrims were not necessarily able to follow the Latin services, such intricate biblical exegesis, as displayed on the Durham rood, could rather be interpreted by them and thus their devotional experience heightened by the mnemonic visual narrative provided by the figural panels. Jacques de Vitry explained how medieval lay audiences required teachings that showed ‘everything clearly, as if it were directly before the eyes and perceptible with their senses [*quasi ad oculum et sensibiliter*], so that the preacher’s words might be as completely open and lucid as that precious stone’ (Jung 2000, 646). This agrees with the idea of the reliefs as nonverbal stimulants presenting to the senses tangible stories that appear corporeal and palpable, similar to what the audience was familiar with experiencing. As Graves’ analysis of the body in late-medieval England suggests, ‘there was something special about the direct gaze of statues: they looked not above their worshippers but at them, as if to engage them in direct interpersonal communication through the meeting of the eyes’ (Graves 2008, 42). Many scholars have argued that statuary makes a greater impression on the senses than mere words through their ability to impact on the emotions and give a more lasting impression in the memory for their recital over generations to come (Jung 2000, 647). Corporeal images, as a result, became ‘legitimate accessories for devotion’ (Ringbom 1969, 164) and so the visual relationships of images allowed for ‘bodily participation in the divine’ (Biernoff 2002, 134).

An understanding of the physical dominance of such a screen to a simple layman standing in the centre of the nave can be gained from the words used in the *Rites*’ description. The use of ‘heist pillors [sic]’ suggests a grand, impressive height, as does

the author's later comment on the extent of the width: 'fro[m] pillar to pillar [sic]' (Fowler 1903, 33), a phrase which he repeats when describing the detailed work atop the rood. Russo calculated the actual height of the screen to be approximately 4.18m. This figure came from emphasis placed in the documentation on the length of the decorative elements, the height of similar rood doors at Ely Cathedral and Crowland Abbey, and the height of the existing relief panels multiplied by the number we know existed, plus the series of twelve apostles that extended across the screen wall above the Life of Christ panels, but below the great rood (Russo 1998 266; Fowler 1903, 32–4). In this case, although the screen did not block the entire height of the nave, it must have risen to at least quarter of the way between the pillars, ensuring that the message of the redemptive theme of the Mass displayed by the imposing iconic rood at the top would have been proclaimed to all who entered the church (Russo 1998, 268).

Architecturally the rood screen contained the laity and equally structured the central public space, providing a liturgical focal point for interpretation and devotion. These restrictions, what I will call 'control systems', had various purposes. As well as elaboration, access and security were important considerations for screens. The apertures of the constructions, whilst restricting admission and acting as spatial dividers, also created a seamless and harmonious integration with the architectural surroundings offered by the decorative unity of the structures which complemented the decorative schemes around them. Jung (2000, 264) also suggested that these screens had an incorporative function, uniting the space of the choir and nave using a distinctive visual vocabulary aimed at the socially differentiated viewers who inhabited the respective spaces. Various scholars have concluded that the boundaries created by such screens were used to structure rites of passage (Van Gennep 1960; Turner 1969; Jung 2000, 630–3). In a reverse psychological way the screens worked not to block movement, but to signify something that was to be passed through as a new territory lay beyond and where a new special status would be assumed by individuals who entered. This is due to the fact that the doors were always visible as they were located either towards the west or on the nave side therefore continually enticing the men and even women (although they were prohibited to enter), with the potential of passing through them (Jung 2000, 631). No doubt the design accentuated the *sanctum sanctorum* aspect and the process of entry (through one door and leaving via another) added a degree of solemnity (Stopford 1999, 103).

In the year 1380, the Neville Screen was likely completed, given that the church was consecrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> November of that year. The structure consisted of a canopy-type reredos located between the High Altar and shrine (Wilson 1980, 91) (Fig 4.35). Petrographic examination found that the screen was made of Caen stone and displayed a continuous series of tall freestanding canopies or tabernacles intended to house statuary, similar to the canopy design of the Exeter Cathedral altar screen begun in 1315 (Wilson 1980, 81). From the *Rites* we know that the richly painted and gilded central statues portrayed the Virgin flanked by St Cuthbert and St Oswald (Fowler 1903, 7, 198; Wilson 1980, 90). Although the screen contained two doors either side of the altar, providing access to the shrine similar to the arrangements at Westminster, Winchester and St Albans (and the rood screen in the nave at Durham), its view was blocked from the area of the presbytery and choir (Wilson 1980, 95). As Wilson noted, ‘the Neville Screen has to be seen as a remarkable triumph of architectural fashion over religious tradition’ (Wilson 1980, 95) as not only does it appear that the doors provided the only means of access to the shrine, but the shrine was practically invisible from the presbytery and choir.

Was the screen therefore intended to control access and sight of the area behind the High Altar, or was it produced to compete with the elaborate settings appearing at various cult sites across the country? If we turn to the accounts of offerings made at the shrine, the income from 1380 (when the screen was completed) had actually risen to £44 from £32 the year before (Nilson 1998, 226). This could be attributed to the interest generated by such an elaborate design or could simply prove that interest in Cuthbert’s cult was slowly rising during this period, which led the church to regenerate the area around their most prosperous possession. I believe it is no coincidence that the construction of a new shrine base and the Neville Screen followed the high-income period of offerings of the late 1370s.

Visibility and visuality of cathedral shrines from outside the feretory can tell us a great deal about both the theological and practical aspects of sanctity, as well as the architectural and social history of the church itself. The general consensus was that shrines needed to be visible from afar (Nilson 1998, 81); however, as discussed, the interior of Durham appears to have given the opposite impression, with the vista from the nave being largely that of screens with a small view of the Neville Screen and paschal candle. The arrangement of severing the visual association of shrine and altar at

Durham was original, as hitherto this relationship had been established and maintained in English churches possessing a major relic (Wilson 1980, 95); however, it did come to influence later developments. Nilson (1998, 81) argued that the vista was in fact exceptionally significant in the planning of the great church with the necessity of a 'long-range view of the feretrum' being at the top of the agenda, providing a visually impressive sacred sight culminating in a small preview of the magnificent shrine spectacle to come. Tatton-Brown (2002, 102) also agreed by suggesting that the screens were essentially used to *heighten* the pilgrim's experience by providing a 'glimpse' of the greatly elevated shrine throughout their journey. Subsequently, focus on the vista appears central to the entire purpose of the barrier arrangement.

From the nave, the shrine would have been invisible; yet, to provide a sacred sight to the laity, the church may have consciously constructed the view that was available. Looking from the central aspect of the nave towards the High Altar, the top of the Neville Screen penetrates the middle of the canopy above the shrine which are both then framed by the rose window (Fig 4.36). This, in turn, creates an almost Trinity-esque composition, perhaps reflecting the Holy Trinity itself, but also the three most sacred areas of the cathedral: the High Altar, the shrine and the east end. The fact that screens could be looked over and beyond 'reinforced their roles as reminders of the zone that [lay]...behind' (Jung 2000, 631).

Before continuing I must draw attention to how the feretory was entered. As explained, the doors within the Neville Screen allegedly provided the only access to the shrine as the present doors and the lateral walls of the feretory very likely *postdate* the screen, thus it is not clear when the main approach was moved to the north and south of the feretory platform (Wilson 1980, 95) (Fig 4.37). Fernie (2000, 134) argued that with the 13<sup>th</sup>-century extension, came steps to access the feretory platform in the manner it is accessed today. Previous to this, he suggested an ambulatory made of wooden screens fitted into the fourth bay (presumably the edifice previous to the Neville Screen) provided entry.<sup>83</sup> However, even in the plan executed by Willis in 1728, no steps are shown to ascend to the feretory (Nilson 1998, 99), which suggests Fernie's hypothesis may not be correct. Instead, it is more likely that a rather common route was provided for pilgrim access; yet one that seems unusually restrictive for the movement of such a large amount of visitors (thousands) to such a popular shrine (Fig 4.38). If pilgrims

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<sup>83</sup> While the points of his argument are valid, the supporting evidence is limited.

were waiting in the east end space of the Nine Altars then, to visit the shrine, they were forced to return westwards, entering the presbytery area and behind the High Altar eastwards towards the doors in the Neville Screen. It would seem more functional to have built steps when the eastern arrangement was in construction, providing direct access from the Nine Altars into the feretory area, but this does not seem to have been the case due to the fact that neither the steps nor the flanking walls were extant during the medieval period.

In accordance, the medieval arrangement, as described in the documentary evidence, featured the Nine Altars as a holding area for the pilgrims, which were marshalled in groups back towards the presbytery, passing by the High Altar and into the feretory through the north door of the Neville Screen, then exiting via the south door, turning left down the south aisle and back towards the nave. Still, there is a possibility that a gate may have screened off entrance to the Nine Altars from the south side, therefore projecting the flow of pilgrims down the aisle (Fig 4.39). A similar route was taken at Norwich Cathedral: pilgrims had to bypass the High Altar and bishop's throne in order to view the church's many relics situated behind them, including those of St William which resided in a tomb in one of the ambulatory chapels (Gilchrist 2005, 246).

Moreover, returning to Durham, the 14<sup>th</sup>-century image-shrine of Our Lady of Bolton (a *Vièrge ouvrante*, comprising an enthroned image of the Virgin opening to reveal possibly the Trinity with painted interior wings) resided in a south transept chapel, further supporting my theory for the pilgrim route. Not only was the image a supplementary object of devotion to Cuthbert's shrine, but it was revered in its own right – no doubt a product of its important role in the Easter ritual wherein the crucifix situated inside Christ's image within his mother's wings, was taken down in symbolism from her womb (Fowler 1903, 30; Marks 2004, 198–9). Thus, it was a popular image of devotion in the later medieval period and no doubt a final station on the exit route from St Cuthbert's shrine, especially given its southern location.

#### **4.10 ALTARS**

The experience of the rood did not end with the sensory display of the screen, as a Jesus altar located between the two doors at the western side of the screen provided a devotional focus for the use of laymen (Klukas 1995, 73) and, no doubt, many pilgrims attended such services during their visit to the church. Services were held for the

congregation including a sung Mass and vesper antiphon every Friday, accompanied by organs and singers residing in the arcade galleries (Fowler 1903, 33; Klukas 1995, 73). The song was accompanied by the tolling of the Galilee bells (Fowler 1903, 34). As recent work on archaeoacoustics has discovered, Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals were ‘undoubtedly envisaged...as acoustic instruments, using their enhanced ambience of sound to emphasize the drama of the sheer volume of space they enclosed’ (Lawson *et al.* 1998, 128). The sensory combination of these services created an intense atmosphere, which would almost certainly have heightened the connection to the Host as the music bound the body and soul, and provided a harmony within the listeners (Woolgar 2006, 64).

Once again, creating the feeling of a solemn mood appears crucial in attaining a full religious experience. Smells of incense, the sounds of singers, the flickers of candles, and the visual displays of the Mass, together with the words of the priest and the domestic sounds of the congregating pilgrims, would have created a dramatic environment for worship. Similarly to the emotive experience given by the figural representations of the relief panels, the sounds of the Mass engaged the participant in these ritualistic performances, demanding their attention and then being augmented by other dramatic sounds that resonated throughout the building. Through listening to sounds combined with other sensory stimulants, hearing helped to understand the situation more fully:

Hearing, together with its active complement, listening, is a means by which we sense the events of life, aurally visualize spatial geometry, propagate cultural symbols, stimulate emotions, communicate aural information, experience the movement of time, building social relationships, and retain a memory of experiences (Blessner and Salter 2007, 4).

The latter point is what I wish to draw attention to in relation to the architecture of the nave. The application of polyphony to church music increased in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, especially for the ordinary Mass (Green 2001, 148). Thus, the music of the church played more than the role of entertainment; it acted as an additional aspect in promoting the consecration of the Host through a further sense that resulted in emotion, feeling and hopefully understanding. The latter may not have been in the literal sense, however. Like the majority of the Mass service, the sung parts of the traditional roman rite were performed in Latin and so the laity did not technically participate. Still, the harmony created by the music and attributed to its conduction aided the communication of the Divine to humanity. ‘In the same way that objects communicated intromissively with

the eyes' proclaimed Willis, 'elaborate sounds reached out to the ears. But sound did not need a direct line of sight to be efficacious, nor did pictures have the same range of active affective properties as music' (Willis 2010a, 53). It was the experience created rather than the words sung that mattered. As previously noted by de Vitry, the illiterate required perceptible didactic elements in order to fully appreciate events such as the Mass or other services preached to them.

In conjunction with sound, smell was another of the integral ways in which the church created this sensory environment. Sense of smell provided the pilgrim with a special and psychological impact; a key part of the multi-sensory experience even if it was not in the foreground of perception (Woolgar 2006, 117). As explained, 'Smell is powerful. Odours affect us on a physical, psychological and social level' (Classen *et al.* 1994, 1).

By the 12<sup>th</sup> century, in England incense was part of a devotional or sacrificial act as it was used to cense the celebrants at Mass themselves, for example in the Sarum Rite, where it demonstrated the distinction of the clergy as celebrant (Graves 2009). Also, such an intimate and small spatial area, such as the feretory at Durham, for a large body of people would have enhanced *any* type of smell (whether human or religious), heightening the experience and creating a more intimate encounter between the pilgrim and the saint. Similarly to Canterbury Cathedral (see chapter 3), it is no doubt certain that the feretrar censed the Host, chalice, altar and around the whole shrine area, to perfume and cleanse the locale immediately before letting pilgrims in to visit. As such, the small groups of pilgrims entering the shrine area would all breathe in the same odours, including those emanating from themselves and those around them, as they were led through the doors and into the feretory. Being such a small space, the intense smell of the incense would likely have hit the noses of the pilgrims due to its pungency and inability to really escape into the main depths of the church and so they would physically 'taste' the air of the saint's locale. In this way, the smell also possessed an integrative power, enveloping and uniting all participants who breathed in the smell so that they became socially and olfactorially one. Smells (and the additionally sensory elements such as sound) can therefore be described as 'cues in social bonding' (Classen 1993, 1, 123). Those waiting in the surrounding Nine Altars may also have been fragrantly 'teased' if the pungent incense managed to escape through the permeable walls, creating a sensorial anticipation for what was to come, whilst reminding them of the boundary still between them and the shrine.

Olfactory experience was a further means of heightening solemnity which, like the hermeneutic properties of sound, was used to aid or prompt the senses in grasping the greatness of an event, understanding it and therefore memorising it. Other senses were used in conjunction with sound as cues for emotional responses to different parts of the services or events which singularly neither sensory tool could have achieved. Once registered, the stimuli became associated with the location of original experience which, when relived, could bring the individual's memory to the place they were when the sensation was first experienced, forever remembering their pilgrimage. What is important therefore is not only the sensory experience of the initial smell itself, but also the experiences and emotions that became associated with it (Classen 1993, 1).

#### **4.11 THE SENSORIUM: RECONSTRUCTING THE MEDIEVAL PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE**

The evidence for the progression in the decorative and architectural elements argued above provides a general overall impression of the medieval pilgrim's ritual and sensory experience of Durham Cathedral-Priory. However, what is still missing is just how the sensory experience of the lay pilgrim was generated in the later medieval period. I will therefore attempt to reconstruct this in narrative form during the period of the second shrine base when the Nine Altars was completed, and the Neville Screen constructed.

*The excitement grew in the usual hustle and bustle of the space that was the nave as the mass of pilgrims waited to progress to the final part of their sacred journey. As they stood waiting, they admired the richly decorated blind arcading with its contrasting light and dark marble, brightly accented by the deep reds of the floral patterns. There were, however, no women to be seen as a blue line of marble with a cross at its centre marked the boundary for women entering any further into the church at the west end of the nave. As a result, they were confined to the Galilee Chapel.*

*There was still no indication of when or how the pilgrims' presence would be acknowledged by the clergy who resided at the other side of the large stone screen that bore down upon them. Whilst they waited, a service was given at the Jesus altar placed centrally between the two doors of the screen which today celebrated the Feast of St Cuthbert. Incense was used during the service which permeated slowly throughout the nave, hitting the pilgrims' noses and drawing their attention to the east. The pungency of the smell meant that their experience would be forever embedded in their memory.*

*Few men could understand the Latin prose, but it helped to maintain some sense of order as the priest progressed with his sermon followed by singing which sounded out from above them. This did little but to muffle the incessant talking of the pilgrims, most of whom spoke in a northern dialect, elucidating the significance of Cuthbert to his regional people.*

*Apart from the rood screen stood in front of them, there was little to be viewed of the eastern end. As a result, and due to the fact the services could not be understood, many of the pilgrims' eyes were focussed on the detailed reliefs of the Life of Christ panels which adorned the screen along with the great rood sculptures that visually dominated over them. Few were on their own as groups formed either by social class, association or familial ties as they discussed intently their own interpretations of the images or prayed to the large rood sculpture.*

*Many pilgrims were becoming agitated. This was further increased as a small group was rushed straight through the nave and screens by an unfamiliar cleric. It was clear that these people were of notable rank and thus allowed to see the shrine whenever they so wished and so were being brought straight to the feretory.*

*Suddenly a peal of bells rang out throughout the cathedral permeating all other sounds. The north door that stood to their left was opened by one of the clergy who introduced himself as the conscious or custodian of the shrine. The long black cowl of his robe, however, immediately proclaimed his status to all. He explained to those in the nave that they should form an orderly queue and would then be taken to visit the sacred shrine of their holy St Cuthbert. The chaos that had engulfed the space was diminished into a sense of order as the pilgrims noted the importance of cordial behaviour for the culmination of their visit. They were then led by the custodian through the gate in the north aisle of the nave, who swung a censer from left to right producing a spicy, pungent smell as they journeyed out of the nave through the crossing, passing underneath the north porch and its chapel above and along the north aisle of the choir.*

*The pilgrims followed the holy man's footing, being careful to remain in an orderly fashion as they passed the most magnificent decoration of the screens and the enormous colourful windows which bathed the huge space of the transepts in jewel-like tones. Many pilgrims paused as they passed the entrance to the presbytery taking care to look at its marvels as inconspicuously as possible so as not to disturb the monks within. Some, however, were less obvious, even stepping up the stairs to manage a greater look at the detailed carved misericords, Bishop Hatfield's tomb, the Bishop's throne, and the gilded and painted statuary of the Virgin, St Cuthbert and St Oswald on*

*the large reredos behind the High Altar. The custodian, who noticed even the smallest inconveniences to his route, quickly removed their presence.*

*The consocius then made the entire group pause as he opened the gates of the porch to the Nine Altars. Once all were inside he explained in detail the dedications of each altar and spent time presenting a dissertation on the window iconographies, particularly noting those of the life and miracles of St Cuthbert which advertised the healings performed by the saint and noting the large amount of offerings that had been given in return. They listened in the large, yet highly contrasted surface of light and darkness given off by the enormous marble shafts and starkly painted decoration of the arcading which mirrored that in the nave. He then pointed westwards to a heavily detailed semi-circular structure explaining that it was the feretory itself. The anticipation was palpable with the pilgrims' voices becoming louder and faster as their hearts beat with excitement. The feretory was bathed in a magnificent light from a candle which appeared to touch the roof of the presbytery from where they stood. It seemed like the largest candle in the world.*

*Eventually another man, also wearing black, entered the ambulatory declaring himself as the feretrarius of the shrine who explained that he would be heading the charged procession back out of the Nine Altars and into the illuminated sanctum of St Cuthbert in small groups. Accordingly, the pilgrims hurried towards his direction, arms outstretched, declaring themselves as the first allowed into the feretory.*

*The feretrarius marshalled the first few handfuls of pilgrims back through the north porch and into the presbytery where they were presented with two small doors giving access to the shrine. He signalled for them to go through the left door in single file. Following close behind, he closed the door after they had all entered.*

*The shrine was magnificent. The reliquary coffin stood on a marble stone-base, three-feet high. The striking green colour and gilding was overwhelming. It demanded touch and, as such, the pilgrims flocked to use the four-niched recesses that permeated the marble. Kneeling on the stone with their foreheads touching the back of the niche, kissing could be heard along with chanting, mumblings and desperate prayers. It did not matter that there were only four recesses as the other pilgrims touched the marble surrounding it or the floor. Some stood in awe of the magnificent jewel-encrusted coffin. The central emerald was like nothing they had ever seen, its size was enormous and created its own shaft of magnificent green light that reflected off the carved surfaces surrounding the structure. The smell also added to the numinous experience. Incense*

*burned from censers hanging from various ledges around the shrine heightening the feeling of the holy connection to the saint.*

*Having completed their salvific experience, the pilgrims ended their prayers deciding that they had made enough contact with the divine to receive their cures and were then directed towards the aumbry to make monetary offerings in thanks to Cuthbert for the intercessory power that they were to receive. Those that could not afford to leave coins left textiles, candles or even miniature images formed from wax of limbs or versions of themselves in order to be cured.*

*They were then led out via the south door of the screen back into the presbytery, being directed left into the south aisle and back westwards towards the crossing. They then re-entered the nave through the gate in which they had exited towards their divine experience. As they walked back through the large space of the nave towards the west door, looking around at the mass of pilgrims awaiting their turn, the smell of the incense once again hitting their noses, they hoped that Cuthbert had been listening after all.*

#### **4.12 CONCLUSION**

It is hoped that this chapter has proven the view that ‘hardly a move was made in ...the construction of... [the] cathedral church...without the role and impact of [the]...patronal saint having been carefully considered’ (Davies 2011, 115). While the pilgrimage infrastructure was a little haphazard in terms of a linear chronology in direct relation to the height and decline in the cult popularity, the way its character was assumed through an increasing variety of sensory processes was often directly related to and dependent upon the construction of the pilgrim experience. The development in areas of the building associated with the cult can practically always be traced to the need to embellish or construct a larger or more fitting locale, and the resulting unified scheme was down to careful planning in association. As such, the ecclesiastical authorities justified the elaboration of the church interior throughout the medieval period in order to continue competing with rival cult sites and consequently maintain a steady pilgrim population. In their bid to do so, it would appear that various social and gender discourses were exploited. While it seems women and men were kept separate, I would argue that steps were taken to ensure that each gender received an intense type of experience as created through the art and architectural schemes, although the female space was obviously much more confined, and limited in terms of a physical journey taken through the building.

Still, the pilgrimage infrastructure at Durham exemplifies the substantial amount of bodily participation that encompassed almost every aspect of the devotional visit and was considered key in order to fully interact with the divine, with physical involvement being at the heart of any pilgrimage. The increasing sensory aspects of the shrine structure design, for example, with its larger apertures, bell-clad canopy, framing decorative piers and even painted holding area for waiting pilgrims, were a response to a growing requirement by, and designed to appeal to, the increasingly large numbers of pilgrims, many of whom travelled long distances desperate to seek salvation or cures and who therefore needed, as much as they *required*, corporeal involvement in their cult experience. This shows that the senses needed to be heightened or interplayed for the content to be fully understood and memorable. Through their combination, pilgrims interacted with ‘interiors’ rather than simply ‘surfaces’ which only possessed visual qualities (Classen 1993, 4). Therefore, effective production of a retainable memory that one could recollect and promote was an important aspect of medieval cult churches, particularly Durham who had to continually compete with other notable cults.

Finally, nearly all areas of the cathedral have shown that, for example, seeing and reading, in conjunction with touching and hearing as a unified form of sensory practice, was certainly designed to elucidate meaning and understanding of devotional images or structures. However, it suggests that although there was certainly a linear progression in the amount of sensory engagement required by the pilgrim from the art and architectural frameworks, throughout the period there existed complex and conflicting ways of seeing and understanding of these devotional schemes and their associated locales. The next chapter will seek to examine another such aspect: the presence of absence.

# 5

## ‘DEVOTION BY DESIGN’: A LOCAL SHRINE THROUGH THE EYES OF A PARISH COMMUNITY

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

‘As always archaeologists are dealing with the props of the play rather than the play itself. More difficult still, some of the props are missing’ (Stopford 1994, 69).

One of the greatest problems for reconstructing the medieval church, as defined in the above quotation, is the scant amount of evidence left with which to formulate solid conclusions. Every archaeologist is limited by evidence and it is their job to uncover the original function and experience of the past. But what if, through our exploration of the experience, meanings and understandings of this previous world, we uncover that they were also missing pieces of the puzzle? What if the church building left to us was created as an entire scheme erected upon little tangible surviving evidence left by a previous generation? What if a medieval cult church had essentially formed something out of nothing?

In consequence we arrive here at the culmination of this research journey. Up to now, the churches considered in this thesis designed pilgrimage infrastructures in order to suitably house the relics of their saint. At St Neot, however, this was not the case. It is debatable whether the Cornish church actually retained the relics of their patron after they were allegedly stolen in the 10<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>84</sup> Is there thus an entirely constructed pilgrimage route within the church incorporating almost all of the decorative elements leading to a shrine in the north wall of the chancel which houses little more than space?

This chapter aims to uncover the sensory convergence and interpenetration made physical in the medieval church building, the experience of which was then subsumed and fulfilled by the pilgrim. St Neot may hold the key to understanding how this synaesthetic toolbox was created through the visual and tangible infrastructure and

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<sup>84</sup> Some accounts say that they possessed no relics following this; others proposed that they still held the saint’s arm bone (see Appendix I).

therefore how it was used and experienced by the late-medieval pilgrim who was faced with a possibly ‘empty’ shrine. Emphasis is placed on illustrating that regardless of whether the parish believed the reliquary was empty or not, the management of the sensory experience and creation of a spiritual atmosphere was paramount to the development of the church building.

## 5.2 CONTEXT

The church’s hagiographical tradition is attributed to the 9<sup>th</sup>-century cult of St Neot (d. c.871–8) (Orme 1992, 100–01). Thus far, its fabric has remained virtually entirely devoid of scholarly attention. The niche in the north wall of the chancel – thought to be the original tomb-shrine of St Neot – has also escaped any detailed historical or archaeological research (Fig 5.1), while the subject of the wall painting occupying the back of the niche recess has garnered only fleeting scholarly references with no attempt to provide it with a subject.<sup>85</sup> The following examination is therefore the *first* in-depth investigation of the church of St Neot. It is of great archaeological value, not only as a significant analysis of the building’s fabric, but also for its exploration of the sensory aspects of the shrine’s devotional setting.

The alleged 14<sup>th</sup>-century ‘shrine’ of St Neot is located on the north side of the chancel and supposedly housed the saint’s relics until at least the late 18<sup>th</sup> century (Doble 1929, 26). In 1795, the shrine was described ‘as a small recess from which projected one end of a stone casket ... found to be a shallow cenotaph; behind it was a stone, closing the mouth of an aperture rudely formed in the solid wall’ (Whitaker 1809, 203–11). However, a compilation of English saints and their burial sites dated to 1020 notes that the body of the saint actually resided at St Neots, Huntingdonshire (Cambridgeshire). It is alleged that the Cambridgeshire priory stole the relics from Cornwall in c.974 to enrich their new foundation (leading to the place-name), leaving behind only an arm bone of the saint in the Cornish parish, presumably in the existing ‘shrine’ (Doble 1929, 26–7).<sup>86</sup> Although details of the story are conjectural, the account recurs throughout the hagiography. Regardless of the documentary accounts, it is believed St Neot’s body once lay in a tomb in the chancel of the Cornish church which was presumably replaced in the later medieval period, whether the relics were left there in their entirety or not.

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<sup>85</sup> Apparent whitewashing/defacement/erosion have destroyed much of the original detail and pigment. This may have occurred during the 16<sup>th</sup>-century iconoclastic reforms.

<sup>86</sup> A similar theft (of St Petroc’s relics) occurred at Bodmin Priory in 1177 suggesting that this story may be a legend particular to Cornwall.

### 5.3 METHODOLOGY/SOURCES

In chapter 2 I summarised the various categories of pilgrimage in the Middle Ages. Yet, these do not include the very unusual type that we encounter at St Neot. The experience delivered here is a combination of Gelfand's performative and imaginative pilgrimage, which collectively may be better termed 'constructed pilgrimage'. This category refers to a rather distinct concept of pilgrimage but which is more commonplace than one would assume.

'Constructed pilgrimage' may involve physical travel between various stations or sites, but largely it refers to the experience of locations which were once a primary site of pilgrimage yet no longer possess relics in their entirety – i.e. they initially housed the body of the saint. Accordingly, the retention of sanctity within the locations in which the bodies had lain is promoted and entire pilgrimage schemes constructed in association in order to continue generating the sacred atmosphere of a possible empty site. This management of the absence of spiritual 'presence' also occurred between the worshipper and their devotion to the sacraments, impacting on the aesthetic development of the devotional furniture of the church. As such, the nature of worship and the relationship between the sacred and the devotee underwent a huge transformation between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century.

The church of St Neot displays the qualitative features of this devotional revolution and is a prime example of how the medieval church developed the sensory elements of the building in order to maintain a belief in the intercessory relationship of an intangible presence. Although it is still debatable whether the shrine structure of St Neot contained any relics, the absence/presence argument still stands. The unsubstantiated belief in the relics supported a need and desire to create an even more substantial pilgrimage site to make up for this issue.

Accordingly, the cult of St Neot will be shown as an example of the medieval penchant (common in Cornwall) for drawing on historical antecedent to consolidate a sense of authority for the identity of the institutional development of a parochial community (cf. Harvey 2000). This was undertaken in order to create a sense of *wir-gefühl* or 'who we are'. In this way, St Neot's identity reflected the needs and concerns of the later-medieval present – producing a sense of tradition attributed to the relics of the saint –

rather than the factual history of its past. Although the story of the Neot relics and their possible continued existence within the shrine of St Neot throughout the medieval period may have been untrue, or at least partly untrue, people did believe in the story and so it held power in the present. Charles Insley termed this ‘collective remembrance’ (2011, 55), while Amy Remensnyder referred to the practice as ‘imaginative memory’ (1996, 2). Both terms represent the synthetic and artificial *historia* created for the church which had little to do with ‘individual human remembrance than with the common cultural pool of information “which informed a vision of the collective past”’ (Hen and Innes quoted in Insley 2011, 55). As such, ‘the past [became]...legitimizing, glorifying – even sanctifying – for the present’ (Remensnyder 1996, 3). This chapter will illustrate just how this ‘fashioning’ of a pilgrimage site around an unconfirmed existence of relics created new traditions and claims to the rights of the church.<sup>87</sup>

The treatment of this chapter requires a slight deviation from the previous model as it includes a detailed archaeological survey/analysis of the building as well as the subsequent sensory experience generated. The focus is split to accommodate this situation, and organised as follows: firstly, a chronological development of the construction of St Neot church to give a sense of the broad history of both parish and pilgrimage before and during the 16<sup>th</sup>-century reformations. This section is a succinct digest, giving the reader a thorough, yet paced exposition of the site’s stages of construction and how they were developed relative to the creation of the sensory pilgrimage experience. The second section of the chapter explores the changing nature of late-medieval piety. St Neot is presented as a perfect example of this change as it illustrates the increasing need to ‘construct’ a cult due to a lack of physical saintly remains. The arrangement of space and material decoration as the *habitus* of social groups and genders are revealed as an expression of wider structural relations and identities. A narrative account of the reconstructed sensory experience of the pilgrimage route through the church will then form the final section of the chapter.

## **5.4 EAST END**

### **5.4.1 ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY**

The church has been altered several times since references in the early hagiography. Dating to the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the earliest *Life of St Neot* claims the saint was buried in

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<sup>87</sup> The term ‘absence’ will be used in reference to the condition of the shrine structure as it is/was likely an empty casket (even if it only contained a small bone).

Cornwall then translated to the north side of the altar seven years later. Presumably the relics were interred into a church remodelled at this time (Orme 1992, 100), perhaps especially to receive the bones of the saint. The earliest standing work in the current church belongs to the western tower dateable to c.14<sup>th</sup> century, which features thick diagonal buttresses, windows of the Decorated style and four-centred arches (Fig 5.2). Thus far, the chancel has escaped detail analysis, but it would appear to date from a similar period to the tower, for reasons discussed below. The current Perpendicular nave (including the north and south arcades), south aisle and porch of St Neot were built of granite ashlar between 1425 and 1480 (Fig 5.3). The dating of the nave and south aisle derives from an inscription reading ‘*Anno. dn. mcccclxxx. hsec. dom. edificata*’ which was carved into the roof bosses at the west end of the current nave (and existed until at least the early 20<sup>th</sup> century), thus dating the completion of the building scheme to 1480.

The nave and chancel are structurally undivided and aisled along the full length on both sides. The south arcade is seven bays long, while the north has only six and a half bays because the arcade at the eastern end has a narrow four-centred arched doorway leading into the north chapel. The lack of symmetry in the arcades appears to derive from the need to accommodate the existing shrine structure (and the northern wall of the chancel in which it is set), resulting in the truncation of the northern arcade bays, and the insertion of the smaller north chapel doorway (Fig 5.4). This arrangement suggests that the chancel dates to the 14<sup>th</sup> century (similar to the tower), and was originally attached to an earlier nave, remodelled in the later 15<sup>th</sup> century.

Between the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 16<sup>th</sup> century, it appears the church was a constant building site. Following the tower, the nave and chancel were remodelled, after which a large parish family completed the work by a sizeable investment which helped to rebuild the north aisle and chapel in the first half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Fig 5.5). This assumption derives from the fact that the north chapel was built for the marriage between John Tubb and Joan Callaway which, at the very latest, took place in the 1510s or 1520s (CRO: P167/5/1, mems 35v–7). Joanna Mattingly (2000, 12) suggested that the windows in the chapel date to 1524–5. It can be assumed that the erection of the aisle followed this, taking place up until the time that the last window was installed – presumably the west window, dated by Mattingly to c.1530/1.<sup>88</sup> This dating concurs

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<sup>88</sup> She also notes that as Robert Tubb, the vicar between 1508 and 1544, was included as a donor in the glass of the north chapel, this may suggest the chapel was completed between 1538 and 1549 (Mattingly, pers. comm.).

with Pevsner's suggestion that the north aisle can be dated on stylistic grounds to c.1520 (Pevsner and Radcliffe 1970, 197). In a late 19<sup>th</sup> century antiquarian account, there is mention of a date of 1593 which allegedly adorned part of the roof indicating its completion or restoration at this time (Loftus Brock 1877, 443). This, however, is the only mention of this date. Unfortunately there is also no evidence of heraldry adorning the exterior of the north aisle, and the shields held by the angel bosses of the roof are now defaced, both of which could have indicated that the families helped pay for it as part of a larger unified construction scheme paving the route to the shrine. This appears to have been the case at St Cuby, Duloe (Cornwall) where the construction of the Colshull chantry chapel at the east end of north aisle in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century was followed by the erection of the north aisle in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, no doubt under the direction of the patrons, the Colshull family of Tremadart Manor (Pevsner and Radcliffe 1970, 63).

The circumstantial evidence for the chronology of other elements of the building's construction upholds the hypothesis that the shrine was already *in situ*. In the early 16<sup>th</sup> century the north aisle was rebuilt or widened, during which time the area north of the shrine, once thought to serve Neot's relics, was transformed into a chantry chapel serving the Callaway and Tubb families (Rushforth 1927, 151). Although there is no documentary evidence for pilgrimage to the church in the later medieval period, the early hagiography of St Neot describes a thriving pilgrimage population to his shrine, even resulting in an enlargement of the church (Doble 1929, 18, 24).<sup>89</sup> Still, there existed a chapel of St Neot, licensed in 1380 by Bishop Thomas de Brantyngham of Exeter (d.1394) (*Reg. Brantyngham*, 14<sup>th</sup> Oct 1380; Hingeston-Randolph 1901, 434),<sup>90</sup> and likely located near the western edge of the parish, together with the nearby well some 300 yards from the church, also associated with Neot's cult (Dr. Padel, pers. comm.).<sup>91</sup> It may be that this chapel occupied the needs of the majority of the passing pilgrim traffic until the late 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation in Cornwall (Whiting 1989, and see below for further discussion), keeping the church relatively clear for the devotion of the local congregation and devout pilgrim visitors. If so, the chapel may have served a

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<sup>89</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup>-century *Bec Life* (BM Cottonian MS. Claudius A.V) makes reference to pilgrims thronging to the shrine which was tended by its own custodian – the church even had to be enlarged to compensate (Doble 1929, 18, 24).

<sup>90</sup> *Item, ibidem, xiiij<sup>o</sup> die mensis Octobris predicti, Dominus Johannes [Trengeoff], Perpetuus Vicarius Ecclesie Parochialis Sancti Neoti, in Cornubia, habuit Licenciam celebrandi Divina, et faciendi celebrari, in Capella Sancti Neoti predicti, absque prejudicio alieno; quamdiu Domino placuerit duraturam.*

<sup>91</sup> The Grylls family rebuilt the present well house in 1852.

similar function to that of the 15<sup>th</sup>-century Red Mount and 14<sup>th</sup>-century Slipper Chapel for the shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham (Norfolk) (see below for further discussion). As the chapel was dedicated to St Neot, this may further indicate that the cult was firmly established in the parish and still growing in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century.

## 5.5 SHRINE

### 5.5.1 ARCHITECTURAL HISTORY

Using this evidence we may be able to piece together a summary of the life and function of the 'shrine'. As noted, in the north wall of the chancel there is a four-centred archway adjacent to an ogee-headed recess: the alleged shrine. Pevsner (Pevsner and Radcliffe 1970, 197) proposed that the six and a half bays of the north aisle are all of a Perpendicular date except for the 'ogee-headed recess, perhaps an Easter Sepulchre?', i.e. the shrine, yet does not provide any further detail to firmly date it. Measuring 3.75m (147.6in) high x 1.66m (65.4in) wide x 52cm (20.5in) in depth, the shrine structure is comprised of a surrounding frame, ogee arch, stone casket, recess with wall painting, a wooden aumbry in the centre of the niche, and a squint which pierces the left-hand bottom corner into the north chapel (Fig 5.6). The adjacent four-centred granite archway is adorned with capitals decorated with carved geometric abaci (Fig 5.7). The style of the archway (similar in style to the arcade), and its integral place in a building scheme of *c.*1480, suggests that it too has a 15<sup>th</sup>-century date, while the shrine's ogee-arch decoration of cinquefoil-cusps terminating in a finial alludes to the 14<sup>th</sup>-century (Fig 5.8). A similar ogee with lion head stops and an inner cusped trefoil headed arch, dating to *c.*1350–80, can be found on the doorway of St Margaret's church, Cley (Norfolk) (Matthew Champion pers. comm). John Allan's research also supports the 14<sup>th</sup>-century dating of the shrine as he argued for the frequent use of Beer stone (a white limestone) during a well-documented period between the 1320s and 1340s. Among his examples of Beer stone use in Cornwall was the St Neot tomb, possibly indicating the work of craftsmen from Exeter Cathedral. He also noted that the decorative device of a shield hanging over a branch, as found on the Neot ogee carving, also features on the tomb canopies of both Otto (d.1358) and Beatrice Grandisson (d.1374) at Ottery St Mary, Devon (Allan pers. comm.) (Fig 5.9).

The stone tomb-casket forming the base of the structure is difficult to date, as it has no identifiable features; yet, it was not uncommon to have a plain tomb chest by the early 15<sup>th</sup> century (Graves 2000, 75). However, Gorham (1820, 232) suggested that the entire

structure was ‘probably cut out of a Saxon arch, having belonged to a more antient [sic] structure’, and formed the entrance to the original chapel of the early-medieval church where Neot’s remains were preserved. He is therefore proposing that the present large recess, with its ogee arch, was cut out of a ‘Saxon’ arch which formed the doorway into a chapel in which Neot’s remains were located (occupying the area where the vestry and organ now are and the Tubb/Callaway chantry resided). It is not clear why Gorham believes that it was cut out of an older ‘Saxon’ arch, but that ‘On the N. side of this wall [separating the chancel from the present vestry] (where was doubtless the Saxon Chapel) is a small recess, from which projected one end of a stone casket 18 inches by 14. Here were deposited the remains of Neot...’ (Gorham 1820, 245). Gorham’s ‘Saxon’ suggestion can be attributed to his antiquarian speculation that the present vestry is the site of the former Saxon tomb-chapel, evidence for which was based solely upon his theory of what buildings and their uses preceded the present structures, and perhaps also the few references in the *vitae* to the original function of the area. He also assumed that the present arch of the shrine was the former doorway into that chapel, and therefore the arch was a recut ‘Saxon’ one. Gorham does not actually cite any architectural reference to support his assumption and so his hypothesis seems unreliable as there is no evidence or any physical features to firmly identify the casket’s date (or the presence of the supposed ‘Saxon’ chapel), although it is possible that the casket is older than the ogee and frame. If so, it is likely that the casket was moved in the 14<sup>th</sup> century as part of the shrine/chancel building programme.

Surviving paint traces are also apparent on the jambs of the frame yet not on the ogee, suggesting that the ogee arch has been restored. In view of the two different geologies of the stonework, it is likely that such work occurred at least twice (see Fig 5.8). Documentary evidence also alludes to this: Henderson notes in Doble, ‘The canopy of the recess must once have been elaborately carved, but it has been pitiably defaced and ruined’ (Doble 1929, 45). If by ‘canopy’ Henderson is referring to the ogee then perhaps the restoration is rather recent (i.e. 20<sup>th</sup> century, sometime after Henderson’s reference, at least of the lighter stone which appears less sharp), but executed in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century style. The frame was therefore most likely carved during a similar period to the erection of the western tower (14<sup>th</sup> century), as was the original ogee carving. To finish the arrangement, the nave arcade bays (and southern aisle) were then added in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, leaving the most eastern bay truncated so as not to encroach on the

already existing wall and recess, indicating that the 15<sup>th</sup>-century builders likely viewed the recess as a shrine, and wanted to preserve the sacred monument.

### 5.5.2 WALL PAINTING

The wall painting may also serve as evidence to explain why the shrine may have been remodelled in the late medieval period. A large proportion of the painting has been lost, but by varying the RGB balance of the photographs taken in normal daylight, enough paint has survived to suggest an image of Christ in Majesty or the Crucifixion (Fig 5.10). This can be surmised from remnants of the following: a central flesh-coloured figure with ‘arms’ either crossed, with hands raised in prayer, or perhaps extended outwards as in a crucifixion, but with the end of each now lost. As there is no indication that either hand is raised – as the pigment runs primarily horizontal suggesting outstretched arms bending slightly downwards and as no further pigment appears to survive either side of ‘Christ’s’ head which it would if a hand was depicted upright – the crucifixion proposition may be made with more certainty. ‘Christ’ is flanked by two other figures surmounted by haloes in 15<sup>th</sup>-century pleated gowns, who kneel either side of the central ‘Christ’ figure that descends downwards (between the two figures) to a ‘v’ terminus.<sup>92</sup> The shape in the lower middle is very clearly a deliberate circle and appears to be split into three parts – note the black pigment around the left side. The upper part of ‘Christ’ also displays traces of a deep red pigment above the head of the left-hand figure which would tie in with the wound in his right side (Fig 5.11).

The painting would appear to be stylistically similar in composition to that depicted in the vision of the Last Judgement of the Holy Thorn Reliquary (Fig 5.12), now located in the British Museum (1390–7). Made for Jean, duke of Berry (1340–1416), the brother of Charles V of France, it contains an alleged relic from the Crown of Thorns (Bagnoli *et al.* 2011, 94–5). The reliquary depicts a central image of Christ in Majesty with, at its base, a globe flanked by two figures. The sphere, split into three, represents the world, and the ‘T’ construction frequently appears on medieval *mappa mundi*. However, if the central image of the St Neot painting follows the reliquary subject of a Christ in Majesty or Crucifixion, then this may cast doubt over the two flanking figures being donor images. This is due to the fact that St John the Baptist and the Virgin Mary are usually

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<sup>92</sup> It was common for donors to be pictured in a kneeling pose, particularly those deceased. Examples can be found in masonry as well as glass, such as the figure of Edward Despenser (d.1375) who kneels atop his monument towards the High Altar at Tewkesbury Abbey (Martindale 1992, 169–70). The donors of St Neot’s glass are also depicted in this pose throughout the lower lights of the windows (see below).

found beside an image of Christ, rather than donor portraits. This may be further supported by the clearly visible haloes above the heads of the figures which would be expected above depictions of the Virgin and St John, yet not for secular donors. That said, the consistent use of the red pigment for both figures – also stylistically similar to the style of donors’ costume in the stained glass – may well support the donor image idea.

With regards to the text of the scrolls framing the central image, Matthew Champion found that the scroll residing in the central area to the left of the main image may begin ‘E t e r ? a ?’ (Fig 5.13) (Champion, pers. comm.). The letters show characteristics of 15<sup>th</sup>-century red Lombardic capitals with blackletter text, interspersed with red crosses used as punctuation (Bischoff 2006, 136–45). Similar script styles upholding this date are found in the *Book of Romances* (BL Royal 15 E. vi, particularly ff. 2v–3) (Fig 5.14) presented to Margaret of Anjou, wife of King Henry VI, by the Earl of Shrewsbury (known as the Shrewsbury Book, c.1444–5), which displays full Lombardic capitals coloured, red at the beginning of each scroll. A similar textual style can also be seen in the Vienna Codex 2537, f. 118 (c.1410).

The general layout and construction of the St Neot scrollwork would suggest a mirrored symmetry, so that the text on the left-hand side of the image corresponded to something similar on the right, but with the scroll starting in the row above on the left, matched by the scroll ending below on the right side. Evidence for this lies in the inscribed lines of the scrolls, still visible on the left-hand side (Fig 5.15). As a line of text runs all the way along the bottom, with two lines of text still visible on the left (one above the other), the same arrangement should also occur on the right. What can be gleaned on the right side is in agreement with my proposition: the scrollwork appears to flow down and wrap underneath the main line of text (again one above the other).

Moreover, above the right-hand side of the scroll various twisted ropes are apparent – possibly the extensions of censers – but the paint is too eroded to make any more than this approximate suggestion (Fig 5.16). At first sight the presence of numerous shapes surrounding a Christ-like figure indicates a possible representation of the Sunday Christ: the crucified Christ, usually shown as the Man of Sorrows displaying the stigmata and other wounds, surrounded by tools representing local parishioners’ occupations and leisure activities which are transformed into elements embodying the memory of his

sacrifice (Reiss 2000, 1). The image was used to warn off the use of such objects on Sundays or other holy days. A version of this image – known as the Warning to Sabbath Breakers – was depicted in a lost glass panel originally belonging to St Neot (Fig 5.17). Found only in 1999 in the nearby vicarage, before this time only a *c.*1824 drawing of the panel by the Exeter-based architect John Pike Hedgeland (1792–1873)<sup>93</sup> had been in existence (Mattingly 2010). Largely painted on white glass with yellow stain, the panel is perhaps the only surviving representation of the subject in its medium and shows Christ standing in a loin cloth surrounded by the usual assortment of trade tools and other implements. Dated to *c.*1510, it was originally located in the most westerly window of the south aisle (window 8), closest to the south door, ensuring that all those leaving the church would see the image.

The St Neot wall painting does reflect elements of the standard features of the Sunday Christ composition, particularly that of St Mary's church, West Chiltington (Sussex) which shows a 14<sup>th</sup>-century depiction of Christ stood on top of a wheel (Reiss 2000, 108–9, 119) (Fig 5.18). Over the side-altar where weekday Masses were celebrated at Morebath (Devon), was an image of the 'Salvator Mundi': Christ, likely standing and holding a globe (Duffy 2003, 72). This was one of the commonest early Tudor representations of Jesus and attributed to the growing emphasis on the tenderness and accessibility of the human Christ in early 16<sup>th</sup>-century lay piety (Duffy 2003, 72). The similarities of these two compositions to the Neot image are clear and it would certainly have reflected a desire to integrate the Passion and Resurrection stories of Christ with the intercessory power of St Neot who embodied the parish's regional pride and sense of identity. Still, the inclusion of a circular shape is perhaps the only real similarity to the Neot image, as here it does not appear in Christ's hands nor shows the spokes of a wheel. The pose and gesture of the Sunday Christ figure is generally artistically stable: a single standing figure with one arm raised in blessing, one holding his right side/wound, or both below his sides surrounded largely by tools, not figures; very rarely does he appear crucified (Reiss 2000, 15, 63–134).<sup>94</sup> It is therefore difficult to propose that the St Neot wall painting is of this subject rather than the Crucifixion, as the evidence for the latter is simply far greater. Moreover, Duffy (2003, 76) also refers to a further figure at Morebath of the Sunday Christ pierced by the implements, which was housed in a

<sup>93</sup> He restored the St Neot windows between 1824 and 1829.

<sup>94</sup> There are a few examples of the Sunday Christ featuring Christ crucified. These feature more specifically in images of the related theme of Christ with the Instruments of the Passion, such as in the coloured woodcut in BL MS Egerton 1821 and in the manuscript illumination in BL Add MS 37049 (Reiss 2000, 188–9). Still, there is no circular shape or other figures within these compositions.

niched tabernacle against a wall or pillar, and so he clearly did not believe the image holding the globe was of the same subject matter.

Still, the St Neot wall painting can be estimated to date to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, based on the Lombardic capitals of the text and the drapery style of the two figures. The latter rests on appropriate comparisons of draperies of a similar period, such as in the ‘Warning to blasphemers’ painting at St Lawrence, Broughton (Buckinghamshire) (late 14<sup>th</sup>/early 15<sup>th</sup> century), throughout the Passion cycle at St Peter Ad Vincula, South Newington (Oxfordshire) (second half of 15<sup>th</sup> century) and, finally, adorning the image of the donor at St Agnes, Cawston (Norfolk) (mid 15<sup>th</sup> century) (Rosewell 2008) (Fig 5.19).

### 5.5.3 EASTER SEPULCHRE?

From the above analysis, it may be inferred that the shrine did serve to hold St Neot’s remaining relic(s); however, there is also reason to suggest that it was transformed into an Easter Sepulchre in the 15<sup>th</sup> century (or perhaps even earlier), when the wall painting was executed for this secondary purpose. An analysis of the evidence for this double function must therefore be undertaken.

Although Easter Sepulchres still deserve further scholarly examination as their forms are numerous and exact functions rather ambiguous, there is a large amount of evidence to suggest that the permanent examples of these structures, which stood primarily in north chancel walls or chapels, held two purposes (Roffey 2007, 62). In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Alfred Heales commented:

The fashion for erecting...structures to answer at once both Easter sepulchre and monument, set in towards the end of the fifteenth century and continued until the middle of the sixteenth century. It necessitated the horizontal surface of the tomb being flat...all being generally covered by a stone canopy. Whenever we find a monument of this form and period in this situation, namely against the north wall of the chancel...we may, in the absence of possible evidence to the contrary, have little doubt that it was built to answer the double purpose of a monument and an Easter sepulchre (Heales 1880, 37).

Although examples survive from much earlier than the 15<sup>th</sup> century, these singular structures, often known as Founders’ tombs, provided both a permanent Easter Sepulchre for the church and prominent place for burial of a donor (Sheingorn 1987, 38). At Irnham in Lincolnshire such an arrangement (formerly in a bay of the arcade dividing the north aisle from the chancel) comprising a canopy of three bays with nodding ogee arches, occupied the tomb of Sir Geoffrey Luttrell (d.1345) and allegedly

doubled up as an Easter Sepulchre (Woolley 1924; Sheingorn 1987, 207), as did John Clopton's tomb at Holy Trinity, Long Melford (Suffolk) (Roffey 2007, 62) (Fig 5.20). It has been argued that this combination was partially motivated by the introduction of the Decorated style in the later 13<sup>th</sup> century and the subsequent changes in liturgical practice which gave rise to complex sanctuary furnishings (Sekules 1986, 123; Sheingorn 1987, 38). This facilitated a tendency to unify isolated units in the chancel, particularly Easter Sepulchres, doorways, sedilia, piscinae and tombs, and provided an 'unparalleled opportunity for a donor to memorialize himself through his building campaign ... [and] allowed some of the "spiritual power" of this place of resurrection to pass to the donor' (Sheingorn 1987, 38).

Although the relics within the monument at St Neot were (originally) from a saintly rather than secular founder, the structure does possess many of the characteristics representative of these types of 'dual' arrangements. For example, a common trait of Easter Sepulchres was their adornment with images of the Passion or Resurrection of Christ; occasionally the central image was even accompanied by secular donors, such as the late 15<sup>th</sup>-century painting adorning the John Clopton tomb/Easter Sepulchre structure at Long Melford (Rosewell 2008, 174), a similar depiction to the wall painting at St Neot (cf. Woolley 1924; Rosewell 2008, 172–6). Moreover, the recess in the St Neot shrine (see Fig 5.6) that lies a third of the way up the niche above the stone slab, perhaps served to hold the removable wooden table top (in the fashion of a tabernacle) (Sekules 1986; Kroesen 2000, 79–80; Herbert 2007), while the Host and/or cross were kept in the wooden aumbry built into the wall below (carved with a cross likely indicating its function). The aumbry here is clearly a later addition to the structure, as it would appear was the tabernacle indenture above it, given the crude work and the asymmetry of the jamb ornamentation below (Fig 5.21).

With the 16<sup>th</sup>-century remodelling of the north-eastern space of the church and subsequent establishment of the Tubb/Callaway chantry chapel, what appears to be a surviving squint (at the bottom left of the main recess) was then pierced into the back of the shrine recess in order for the family to view the Host from their chapel in the north aisle, directly behind the shrine – a common practice of converted 'sacrament shrines'. Squints were a common late 14<sup>th</sup>- to early 16<sup>th</sup>-century phenomenon of southern and western English churches, upholding the dating evidence of the St Neot shrine structure, while proposing that they were a regular feature of the geographic area (Roffey 2007,

57).<sup>95</sup> Used to facilitate clear lines of vision to the High Altar during Easter or festival rituals (Roffey 2007, 114), squints were also installed in ‘private’ chapels for the exclusive sensory function of visual communication of a small group, as at St Neot (Roffey 2007, 59).

The whole arrangement is thus very similar to that found at East Harling (Norfolk): a chapel on the north side of the chancel with an altar tomb (associated with the Chamberlain family) with pierced squint and an entrance from an adjacent door for the patrons and priest (Fig 5.22). Lady Anne Herling founded the chapel in dedication to the Virgin Mary in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century; a similar date to that proposed for the construction of the north area at St Neot. As is the case with the St Neot shrine, the Chamberlain tomb is positioned towards the High Altar on the north of the chancel, has little depth to the canopy recess, little relief decoration (although more than St Neot), a flat surface upon which the memorial brasses are mounted, and squints in the angles of the tomb. This large amount of evidence provides little doubt, argued Graves (2000, 76) that it was intended to act as an Easter Sepulchre and, more specifically, a permanent sacrament house. A further similar arrangement can be found at St Helen’s, Bishopsgate (London), where the early 16<sup>th</sup>-century sepulchre is doubled as a nuns’ squint for sick or occupied nuns who could not attend the actual service to view the elevation (Myers 2013, 194).

Further discussion of the reciprocal relationship of ‘private’ chantry chapels will be given later, but it is noteworthy that while these features allowed the altar to be made visible, the chapels themselves were highly visible to the public areas of the church so theoretically a sense of *communitas* was enacted as all worshipped together in the nave area. The most eastern area of the south aisle of St Neot formed the Burlas (Borlase) family chapel (and possibly the Lady Chapel) – the westernmost window of the area (window 4) dating to 1500–15 in which the family appears (Mattingly 2000, 12) – and was only likely enclosed by wooden parclose screens to the north and west, similar to the modern-day arrangement as there is no evidence for any structural partitions (Fig 5.24). This suggests, as noted by Roffey, that ‘intercessory rituals enacted in such chapels were tied into the general “network” of rituals within the parish church itself, such as those celebrated within other chapels and especially at the High Altar’ (Roffey

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<sup>95</sup> In the south and west of England, aumbry and squint combinations are rare. Survivals include the north chapel at Aldbourne and the south chapel at Lacock (Roffey 2007, 68).

2006, 25). The suggestion that squints were not used frequently and served as passive visual tools may be inferred by their lack of elaboration compared to the heavily carved masonry of sedilia or piscinae, for example (Roffey 2006, 114). Furthermore, the squint at St Neot is not perfectly rectangular – the tooling is also irregular and it is not decorated in any way; the inside of the hole is angular towards the east, suggesting that it was used for sight of the High Altar. The sight line through this hole testifies to this. The small size of the hole, however, would make it difficult for the view of more than one or two people, perhaps the resident incumbent of the chantry, likely that of vicar Robert Tubb (*fl.* 1508–44), assisted by the additional priest, John Bennett who we know held this position in 1537–8 (RIC, Henderson MS x, 360). It seems likely, given his connection to the family of the chapel, that Tubb managed the chapel and he was even depicted as an additional donor in its east window.<sup>96</sup>

A further piece of evidence which upholds the later Easter Sepulchre function of the structure are the remains of two iron hooks at the very top of the surrounding frame (Fig 5.23). An integral custom related to the Easter Sepulchre was that either during Easter week, or perhaps the entire duration of Quadragesima, as was the case in many parish churches,<sup>97</sup> the structure was to be covered by a wall hanging or ‘veil’ along with all other crosses, images, reliquaries and ornaments (*Sarum Use*, I, 138–9; Duffy 2005, 111; Roffey 2007, 62–3).<sup>98</sup> Similar examples exist at Stoke Charity (Hampshire) where a large iron hook has been associated with the Waller canopied altar tomb which also served as an Easter Sepulchre (Roffey 2007, 62–3). Also, brackets and attachments for the Lenten veil are still visible at Horsham St Faith, Haddiscoe (Norfolk), Monk’s Soham, Troston, and Norton (all Suffolk) (Duffy 2005, 111). These hooks may also have been used for hangings on anniversaries, feast days or just simply for decorative effect. At St Neot, however, the form of the hooks very clearly suggests they are to hold a rod for a hanging to cover the front of the structure and located at the very top of the frame. Also, at the top of the adjacent wall are a further two hooks (Fig 5.24). These are spaced less far apart and look more likely to have held a wall hanging.

If the structure was covered at certain times then this suggests that after the shrine was made to serve its dual function, it ceased use as a site of mass pilgrimage. For liturgical

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<sup>96</sup> Mattingly (*pers. comm.*; Snell 1955, 2) suggests that the existence of three chalices in the church in 1549 denotes the number of serving clergy had increased to three, including vicar Robert Bennett.

<sup>97</sup> Between the first Sunday of Lent and Easter morning.

<sup>98</sup> It seems that permanent structures were covered during Lent, while the tombs that doubled as Easter Sepulchres were only covered during Holy Week.

and sacred reasons the structure was covered during Easter week and therefore concealed from all and so it would be implausible to allow pilgrims to be able to visit the shrine at this time. It is more likely that at this holy time lay parishioners would be kept behind the rood screen and, as such, together with the veil or hanging, the two barriers marked the boundaries between the ‘people’s part of the church and the holy of holies’ (Duffy 2005, 111). Now, the two elements of the interior fabric, so visually decorative, inviting and appealing, deprived the sight of the devotee of elements usually accessible. Still, for those returning to Mass during the Easter week (or when the shrine was ‘open’), the concealment of the sacring/shrine meant that when the spectacle did take place, its experiential value was much increased.

Yet, the dimensions of the Neot structure are much larger (particularly in height) than the ‘typical’ Sepulchre-type examined by recent research (Sekules 1986; Herbert 2007), and the depth of the casket would suggest it was used for more than a house for the Host/cross. As noted above, many scholars have argued that Easter Sepulchres were part of the major shift in theological understanding and liturgical practice that centred on the doctrine of transubstantiation, promulgated by the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, wherein the tomb from which Christ arose came to be represented by an aumbry rather than an entire structure (Sekules 1986, 123; Herbert 2007, 10). Emphasis was placed as much on the image of the resurrected Christ as on the instruments of his passion and thus the Lateran Council required parishes to provide lockable receptacles for the housing of the sacrament. Consequently, the consecrated sacrament was put on display, even when there was no service being held which led to these ‘sepulchres’ being seen as ‘monumental aumbries for the reservation of the sacrament...[for] the entire year’ (Sekules 1986, 123; Graves 2000, 79). Thus, what constituted an Easter Sepulchre became the vessel in which the Host/cross could be situated, rather than the monument surrounding it. This may account for the numerous variations in these structures. This also upholds the argument for the structure at St Neot having a dual function as a tomb and sacrament shrine. The arrangement seems to have been rather unusual, but perhaps its rare survival also makes it appear even more exceptional than it actually was.

Moreover, the possibility that the squint may in fact be a hole that served to house the reliquary casket must be explored. In October 1795, workmen broke open the ‘little Cemetery’ – the north chapel – and allegedly uncovered the shrine which Gorham described as

“a small recess from which projected one end of a stone casket” (18x14 inches). The casket was found to be a shallow cenotaph containing an inner recess within which was discovered “about a quart of a mould-earth, very fine in itself, yet adhering in clots, and dark in colour” (quoted in Doble 1929, 27).

Overlooking the ambiguity of the description, what appears to be described is one of the sub-recesses, either the aumbry or squint. Possibly this held either some form of relic, perhaps the arm bone of Neot left after the robbery of the majority of the remains in *c.*974. Indeed the working of the stone around the squint is rather crude from the south side (see Fig 5.21). Perhaps it was used for this purpose initially until the need for the squint. Gorham (1820, 245) explained that the part of the wall where the relics had been deposited had never been moved during the rebuilding of the church and that it now formed the north side of the chancel. From the front (the south side), the hole looks simply like a squint, angled so that a sight line would directly capture the High Altar, although one can see cut marks suggesting something may have been located within.

If we assume that Gorham was speaking from a first-hand account, then the space provided by the squint may well have been the area in which the casket was located. If not, then perhaps the details have become misinterpreted and what is being referred to is rather an explanation for a medieval squint inserted into the original shrine for the Tubb/Callaway family to view the High Altar during Mass. Also, as evidence suggests the ogee was restored in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps one should then ponder whether the whole structure has been extensively remodelled since 1795 (or since Gorham’s publication in 1820) and that his detailed description cannot now be followed. Besides the ogee there is no evidence to uphold this, yet the idea must be retained as, writing in 1877, E.P. Loftus Brock referred to the niche that was broken into as ‘a piscina on the south side of the site of an altar, and therefore could never have been a receptacle for a relic’ (Loftus Brock 1877, 442).<sup>99</sup> Once again, Loftus Brock provides no further evidence for his speculation that the niche is either a piscina or located on the south side of an altar. If this were the case, then this would assume that the altar, which stood in the Tubb/Callaway chapel, faced south towards the High Altar, rather than east. Either way this analysis is based on conjecture and this small reference to the discovery in 1795. Unfortunately little weight can be given to any conclusion.

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<sup>99</sup> However he later refers to the recess again as an Easter Sepulchre (Loftus Brock 1877, 445).

As the above analysis has illustrated, a fashion emerged, particularly in later medieval lay piety, for the combination of devotion to the Eucharistic celebration and the life and resurrection of Christ with the cult of saints – the intercessors between humans and God (Ford 1992, 227–8; Swanson 1995, 137). Christological schemes were prevalent in England’s parish churches appearing throughout variant imagery in a number of different iconographic campaigns dependent on the tendencies of the parish, and often together with the schemes of the cults of saints. Churches integrated this various imagery into the significant elements of the interior fabric, such as rood screens, niched figures, altars and wall paintings. This can be attributed to the increasing theological sophistication of the parishioners and clergy which emphasised Christ’s very human sacrifice upon the cross – the truly human embodiment – and therefore the transformation of the Eucharistic elements into his body and blood (Raw 2009, 50–1; Duffy 2005, 91; Davidson Cragoe 2005, 36). This belief arose from legendary tales with an inherently sensory element: in the Mass of St Gregory a doubting viewer is convinced of the Real Presence when a Host that Pope Gregory I had consecrated, visibly changed in front of him (Swanson 1995, 137). The growing interest in the presence of the Host developed into a belief in its status as a relic in itself, venerated in a similar sensory manner to any saintly cult (Swanson 1995, 141). In turn, a stress on the intangible aspects led to a demand for an emotional and spiritual response: ‘They mark[ed] a new type of devotion, moving from the physical nature of the Passion towards a more mental, perhaps truly spiritual, appreciation of Christ’ (Swanson 1995, 143). The unity which the Mass symbolised – the undeniable focal point of Catholic devotion – (and that any soul could be saved by Christ’s sacrifice) was then cast out into the fabric of the church and made physical through the iconographic structure of its furnishings thus exploiting the ‘magical’ nature of divine power (Swanson 1995, 137).

The Easter Sepulchre was essentially an ‘empty’ vessel that became tangible through representation in physical material objects. Similarly, the cult of St Neot was manifested in the shrine in the same way that the Real Presence was thought to emanate from the sepulchre structure and so be revered. After all, the Easter Sepulchre and indeed the Holy Sepulchre were venerated precisely because they became empty, as was St Neot’s shrine as it is still unclear whether any relics resided in the church. In the face of its physical absence, what pilgrims were required to believe of the St Neot shrine, parishioners were also required to believe in the Real Presence. The images – adorning the Neot shrine and the concept of the sepulchre with the aumbry displaying the

presence of the sacrament – consequently served as reminders or memorials which the believer needed to register so as not to forget the cults that were represented. Suso's (1952, 64) idea of the *imitatio* may be used to further develop this idea. His notion of the term stands as an instance of temporal and spiritual identification whereby memory is secondary to a mystical experience which places the subject in a perpetual present. The ultimate experience and connection produced by veneration can only be reached by following a prescribed course via the layout of the religious buildings. In this way the 'images' (connected with the Presence/relics) serve their mnemonic function of memorisation or imitation of the hagiography together with moments in the Passion (Recht 2008, 231). As will be illustrated, when combined with various other sensory stimuli the experience of St Neot as well as the Passion was invoked.

Subsequently, there is a distinct significance in that the shrine of St Neot was located *ad locus sanctus*, i.e. in the direct presence of the High Altar (see Fig 5.5). Situating the shrine – which also later came to be such an important requirement in the Easter rite – in the direct presence of the most sacred piece of liturgical furniture unified the power felt to emanate from each, a power which could not be seen. As such, placing the Host within the northern tomb would physically and spiritually alter the hierarchical ordering of the church space. Sacredness was considered contagious to the medieval mind – it consecrated the immediate environment – and so it followed that the sacred charge of a place could be transferred to an object, structure or even person (Melczer 1993, 2; Hayes 2003, 5).<sup>100</sup> It is possible that the intercessory power that brought pilgrims to the shrine was felt to be even greater due to its proximity to the altar.<sup>101</sup> And, no doubt, when serving its dual purpose as an Easter Sepulchre, the culmination of power was at its greatest, combining the thaumaturgical aid of the saint with the sacramental help endowed through the miracle of transubstantiation – the dialogue offered by God was passed to the pilgrim through the saint.

After detailed analysis there is reason to suggest that the structure is in fact a later development of the original shrine of St Neot, which was converted into an Easter Sepulchre in the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century (or perhaps earlier) during which time it served this dual purpose for the devotion of the Tubb and Callaway families, as will be explained

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<sup>100</sup> This 'making' of a 'sacred place' was one of the criticisms of the Lollards who despised the 'idolatrous attachment to place' (Beckwith 1993, 24).

<sup>101</sup> It was not a requirement that a corpse be present in the context of intercession (Roffey 2007, 60).

more fully below (Plate 2). Using this evidence it is now possible to analyse the synaesthetic experience of the medieval pilgrim when visiting the church.

#### 5.5.4 SENSORY ASPECTS

The move away from a need for the physicality or materiality of a cult to a more 'symbolic' or spiritual presence in its place is becoming progressively clear. One of the effects was that an awareness of the 'constructed nature' of the pilgrimage art or architecture was projected at the same time that the fabric of the event – the presence of the media in play – was made noticeable. In relation to the shrine at St Neot, this explains how the structure was constructed in order to project the power of Neot's cult through various sensory stimuli, all of which were used to create an experience because the relics may no longer have resided in the structure. The sensory aspects were the 'means to an *invisibilia*' (McMurray Gibson 1989, 14); they established a sense of contact with the saint to affect the pilgrim. The shrine therefore was both the 'host and augmentation' – a 'passive and active' agent (Lavender 2006, 56). The immediacy of the structure, i.e. its visual impact, embraced the spectator, absorbing their engagement. The sensorium created in this way produced an atmospheric *mise en scène*, the effects of which were less to do with the 'direct production of meaning' and more with the 'production of a (meaningful) texture to the event' (Lavender 2006, 63).

Originally, the shrine would have been an impressive sight, not only in respect of its thaumaturgical significance, but it would also have been aesthetically pleasing. Polychromy still survives on the frame of the shrine, giving us an idea – although limited – of its original colourful appearance (Fig 5.25). Moreover, in its original splendour, the wall painting would have been both an intricate visual display and a religious device, confirming the sacral nature of the structure as well as projecting its message of the miracle of transubstantiation. The sacrality of the structure would have been further increased by its location as, in order to visit it, the laity was allowed to pass beyond the rood screen and into the most holy area of the chancel, usually reserved for the clergy and the elite.<sup>102</sup>

In its original splendour the wall painting would also have portrayed vibrant colours and perhaps gilding. Combined with its location on the flat surface of the wall, the radiance

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<sup>102</sup> Choir or rood screens in parish churches also marked out areas of responsibility. The clergy were responsible for the upkeep of the space beyond the screen (the choir), and the laity had the responsibility of maintaining the space in front of the screen (the nave) (Wells 2011, 140).

and shimmer of the hues would flood the eye. Further illumination would occur by the trembling flicker of candles and oil lamps which the area around the shrine was no doubt teeming with. Due to the ogee arch, and as the painting is situated inside a recess, the light produced would make aspects of the painting sink and disappear into the shadows, whilst other areas would shine forth (Pentcheva 2006, 631).

Yet visual and tactile access was not the only way in which the church created a sensory environment for the cult. Although there is no evidence for how the shrine functioned for pilgrims, there is a surviving 13<sup>th</sup>-century deed from the cartulary of the Sacristan of St Neot's tomb at the Huntingdonshire priory which notes the numerous gifts of wax-lights to be kept continually burning before the *feretrum* (Doble 1929, 35). Such votives or *ex-votos* were a ubiquitous part of medieval devotion and were purchased or brought to the shrines by pilgrims (Blick 2011, 21). We can reasonably assume that the Cornish saint's shrine was also adorned with a multitude of these objects. The visual display and constant repetitive symbolic objects of cures inspired faith and hope in the pilgrims waiting to visit the shrines for their own needs, and thus through identification with the divine prototypes, they valued the power of these images to stimulate their perception of and experience towards them. Interestingly, the cults did not just promise that the pilgrims might be healed through contemplation of images and stories, they made available to pilgrims the physical agents (the repetitive images of the *ex-votos*) through which this healing was made manifest in visual form; 'they were the physical embodiment of devotional promises' (Blick 2011, 21).

No doubt also the locale of the shrine would have been heavily perfumed with the smells exuding from censers which could spread through the entire space to trigger emotional and physical effects. Incense was symbolic of prayer which produced a divine odour derived from Heaven and counteracted any offensive smells (Woolgar 2006, 119). Odours were therefore equated with their beauty, particularly divine beauty, which was thought to please and attract those at whom it was aimed. Smelling was understood as a form of internal 'tasting' as it acted as a metaphor for the sweet delights of the sacred and holy, and the foul smells of Hell. A widespread belief, deriving from Psalm 33: 9 – 'Taste and see that the Lord is sweet' – was that taste was made manifest spiritually, and holiness could therefore be experienced physically, the supernatural benefits of which could be directly attained by the participant (Woolgar 2006, 114, 127). The inclusions of smell within a sacred environment provided a crucial dimension

to an already extensive multi-sensory experience. Through its power to produce an emotional or psychological impact, smell made a perfunctory lasting impression that could be recollected via an understanding devoid of words (Woolgar 2006, 116). As the pilgrims entered the church, at first the incense would fill the nose as well as the mouth, shaking the senses, almost overloading them. They would physically swallow the pungent sensation. In this way, the particles of the smell would actually *enter* the body. As such, we may equate smell with sight as the sense was thought to physically effect, or more appropriately, touch the receiver. However, once a pilgrim had been within the building for a short length of time the smell would carry on the body so that it, both inside and out, would become one with the sacred odour. In this way, the pilgrim became one with the devotional olfactory environment that surrounded them and, in accordance, the odour also became part of the pilgrim. Through the intrinsic connection believed to exist between olfaction and transition, the ‘smelling’ of the divine odour was an accompanying symbolic rite for the pilgrims ‘transitioning’ through the church as they visited the shrine and received the intercessory power of the saint. It is clear that ‘carrying’ the pungent smell on the body would be a lasting effect that would stay with the pilgrim once they had left the church, announcing their newly transitioned ‘sacred’ state, thus establishing the memory of the experience on their travel home, and aiding its recollection whenever incense was sensed in the future.

Even today the area in front of the altar, and therefore the shrine, is hung with such elaborate censuring vessels and, as noted, the wall painting adorning the recess possibly also depicted images of censers. These were part of a larger scheme associating St Neot’s cult with the olfactory. Images of ‘censation’ were ubiquitous in medieval church art as through them the scent of heaven could enter the earthly realm. Through the images, the sweet-smelling aroma from above could merge with the physical and holy: as pilgrims smelled the scent of incense within the church and viewed the imagery of censers and angels censuring, as depicted on the wall painting of the shrine, they could identify with what they were projecting as time and space were seen to collapse in this sensory drama.

Further reason for the emphasis on the olfactory within St Neot can be attributed to the burial of Neot’s body when the church was filled with a fragrant odour of sweet spices with apparent miraculous qualities. A similar event also occurred during Neot’s translation when, once again, the church filled with an odour of flowers of Paradise by

which many were cured (Doble 1929, 17, quoting the *Bec Life*). The ‘odour of sanctity’ or sweet smell (*suavissimus*) was often associated with the body of a saint (Woolgar 2006, 119). Those who breathed in the saint’s odour were said to restore to health. At York, a sweet-smelling oil exuded from St William’s tomb from 1223 onwards and was sealed in ampullae and sold to pilgrims as thaumaturgical souvenirs (Spencer 2004; Boertjes 2007, 48–63). Perhaps pilgrim souvenirs were sold or acquired at St Neot as the *Bec Life* also notes that dust was ‘frequently taken from his tomb, and, when swallowed, heals the diseases of animals as well as of men’ (Doble 1929, 17). This practice occurred following St Cuthbert’s burial at Lindisfarne as the original sepulchre, water trench, and site where his body was prepared for burial, were revered in the early medieval period, while miracles were accomplished by a drink infused with dust gathered from such sites (Wells 2013, 216).<sup>103</sup>

Subsequently, the unified scheme of the building helped form the pilgrim’s experience of their visit and the objects taken away as souvenirs enabled them to partake in and remember the experience. Devotees placed both of these types of objects (ampullae or badges) near the shrine, physically absorbing and proclaiming the saint’s powers and, as such, they were thought to cure illness, ensure salvation, and repel evil, as the miraculous legends and stories surrounding the cult transformed these mere mementoes into relics. This process was the means by which the votives offered at devotional locations or the souvenirs that many pilgrims left with were instilled with the sanctity of the saint. Blick (2001; 2011, 21–22), perhaps unsurprisingly, discovered that these ‘corporeal souvenirs’ were most certainly objects of memory, not only instilling in the pilgrims the memory of a rite of passage or of the heightened experience to the shrine, but also that they possessed a container filled with a miraculous relic of the sacred saint.

Accordingly there is a repetitive theme of contact in order for a cure to be achieved and it is clear that interaction with relics was a vital component in fulfilling the cure. It would appear that ‘physical proximity to the tomb became physical proximity to the saint, thus the rapidity and power of the cures’ (Harris 2004, 273), illustrating the requirement for a sense of closeness to the saint. Evoking the authenticity of the cult and his miraculous power required an action related to the body to be performed

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<sup>103</sup> The numerous wells dedicated to St Cuthbert also suggest that holy water was used to promote the cult (O’Sullivan and Young 1995, 108–09).

through use of at least one sense. For the pilgrims visiting the shrine, they were reassured of Neot's power by observing its effects on the body via the senses.

The concept of mimesis may be used here, in so far as a representative of absence through presence (Maran 2003, 195). The absence of a full set of relics, or possibly any relics at all, is counteracted by the presence of the shrine structure which gives substance/materiality to the intangible or absent presence. The tension between this absence and presence is formed in the shrine, yet resolved through its sensory performance; its 'mimesis' or sensory play with the devotee (Pentcheva 2006, 632). The use of sensory and material media enacts the saintly presence in its absence simply through their presence and ability to create interactions with the faithful. For example, the presence of so many people in such a small area would create disruption to the candlelight, as passing wind was created simply by movement or breath. Oscillation of the surfaces would occur, forecasting a glimmer of reflected rays back out onto the visiting pilgrims gathered around the shrine and giving effect to a sense that the painting was animated. Moreover, the rising incense in the air would aid the visibility of both the incense itself as well as the rays of candlelight reflected on the surfaces. Combined with the sense of touch and taste that such sensory qualities conveyed, and the sounds of music, prayer and chant, they all served to animate the structure. Drawing attention to the absence, it was made tangible, apprehensible through the senses. Devotional edifices, such as shrines, are thus never stable structures, but transitory in their nature as they 'imitate or mimic' and consequently go through processes of 'becoming, changing and performing before the faithful' (Pentcheva 2006, 631). Through the expected nature of medieval veneration – kissing, touching and lighting candles – the worshipper was fully engaged in the spectacle of the shrine's performance/*mimesis* (Pentcheva 2006, 640). As much as the pilgrims, the structure may therefore be viewed as a performing agent which materialised the absent saintly and/or sacred figure.

## **5.6 DECORATIVE ASPECTS**

### **5.6.1 ROOF BOSSES**

On entry from the south doorway, the visual aspect of the colourful stained glass would be mesmerizing. Immediately, the Life of St Neot window (Fig 5.26) (dated 1530), located in the westernmost light of the north aisle directly opposite the south door, would be apparent, acting somewhat as a signpost or 'presencing' for the location of the pilgrimage route within the church (window 15 on Fig 5.5). It was common in Cornwall

for high-impact images (most often murals) to be found on the north wall. After seeing Neot's life narrated in the glass panels, pilgrims would then be directed to the location of the shrine via the (*in situ*) wooden roof bosses above them.

A common feature of cult churches as seen throughout this thesis, architecture is also used as a guiding technique in this way at Holy Cross church at Whitchurch Canonorum (Fig 5.27). It is assumed that the original location of St Wite's *c.*1220 shrine is indicated by the differentiation in pier designs of the north arcade (Coldstream 1976, 16). The capital of the third pier (grouped in four respond shafts depicting transept-scallops with conventional and more naturalistic foliage) is much richer in design than the rest in order to illustrate upon entrance from the south that the shrine was housed beneath it (Prideaux 1907, 133; Pevsner and Newman 1972, 458–60). In addition, the pointed arch which the capital supports, is carved with a freestanding double-chevron design and again immediately highlights the sacred area to pilgrims as they entered the church. This was most common in parish churches, where a single arcade was distinguished from all others in the building by using complex or multiple pier forms (Hoey 1986, 52, 55).

St Neot uses a similar type of 'cognitive map' to denote the threshold or placement of the sacred areas of the church through as many decorative visual devices as possible, thus using a tangible sensory element to inform the pilgrim of an upcoming spiritual, intangible presence. 'Stories' bosses are used in the same manner at Norwich Cathedral where they are 'located to connect narrative sequences [of the life and death of Christ, the death, assumption and Coronation of the Virgin and the lives of favoured saints] with physical movement through the cloister' (Gilchrist 2005, 254).

Originally the bosses at St Neot would have been elaborately painted and visually striking to the eye, making the procession from the window to the shrine much more obvious while allowing the pilgrim to commit the route to memory. Four bosses associated with the fish (although five make the sequence) are sited along a pair of principal rafters of the north aisle wagon roof and depict shorthand versions of a key aspect of the saint's hagiography (Fig 5.28). St Neot found three fish in a nearby well but was charged by an angel to take only one fish a day, and if he did so he would ensure a never-ending food supply. When he fell sick, his servant Barius took two fish to tempt Neot to eat: one was served on a dish while the other was left on a gridiron to

continue cooking. Fortunately the saint realised what had happened in time, and the cooked fish were returned to the well where they came back to life (Doble 1929, 22). The first two bosses show the three fish heads in swirling water (Fig 5.29) followed by one single fish. The central boss, although damaged, is of a floral design – possibly a rose, but it is unclear how it relates to the Neot story. Finally, the fish on the gridiron, and the two fish served up on a bed of leaves complete the sequence (Fig 5.30).

The symbolism of the gridiron is similarly reflected in the geometry of the wagon roof of moulded ribs and shield-bearing angel bosses along the wall plate (Fig 5.31). Although the painted chancel roof is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century reconstruction, it demonstrates how striking the colours of the original bosses would have been and also how fitting the iconographic corollary of the use of angels holding now empty shields<sup>104</sup> to line the route to the shrine was, given their role in the hierarchy of intercession for salvation as protectors or guardians who ‘present our prayers to God ... [and] bear our souls to Heaven’ (Ryan and Ripperger 1991, 585–6) (Fig 5.32). The windows therefore guide the viewer’s attention up towards the roof where the combination of the fish bosses and angels along the wall invite a ‘physical movement...which suggests a more direct discourse or relationship between the individual and their God [or saint] than that which the Church represented or encouraged’ (Graves 2000, 161). Perhaps there is also a sacramental connotation to the fish. In St Augustine’s *Commentary* on John XXI, 13, he identified the roast fish with the martyred body of Christ and so, typologically, aspects of St Neot’s life are perhaps turned here into a Christian sacrament (Bourke 1986, 68). Thus, this combination promotes an intercession which did not require a member of the clergy. However, by directing the way pilgrims looked upon the bosses and towards the shrine, the church was attempting to control the pilgrims’ gaze and therefore the individual’s devotional experience of the St Neot shrine infrastructure. The images on the bosses dictated what and how they were seen, i.e. which parts of the narrative were key to the story as visually witnessed through the bosses by the pilgrim, but in a very specific way (Fig 5.33).

Placement and iconography were thus crucial to the desired sensory and physical devotional reaction (Stevenson 2010, 69). Key to the hagiography of Neot, the fish symbolism even flows through to the central panel of the St Neot window (Fig 5.34), as

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<sup>104</sup> It is possible the Tubb/Callaway families’ arms were incorporated into this scheme also to illustrate their endowment of the chantry and possibly the entire northern aisle too.

well as the easternmost window of the north aisle, wherein the arms of the Tubb family display ‘3 Gournets hauriant Gules’ or three tubbe fish (for Tubb) (Gorham 1820, 237) (Fig 5.35), linking in the nearby holy well in which the alleged three fish attributed to the narrative were thought to reside. As the form of the bosses are so legible, and colour originally so striking, the devotee was situated as a participant within the hagiographic event, deepening the visual experience as they aided the pilgrim’s understanding of the story and the link between the hagiography in the window and its placement on the roof. Susan Andrew (2011, iii) found in her examination of Devon roof bosses (very similar in form and iconography to Cornwall) that many actually served as ‘mnemonic devices and aids to prayer in a penitential process which sought to cure the soul of sin’. This is clearly seen in the piscine hagiographical devices and which, we will see, were twinned with various other two and three-dimensional devices to encourage the fulfilment of the deeper meaning and the preservation of the memory. A full appreciation of the sensory devotional experience being created for the pilgrim could then be received.

#### 5.6.2 STAINED GLASS

Mattingly’s examination of the windows found that the positions of the bosses were deliberately chosen for maximum effect, as they were located directly above the ‘Sisters’ (‘Young Women’) window donated by the young women of the parish to the east (window 14, dated 1529), and right of the St Neot window (Fig 5.36). The miracle of the fishes story is told in panel four of Neot’s window, and then retold in a shorthand version on the bosses nearby. As such, the bosses would have attracted the attention of those who had just viewed the same story in the glass. Yet had the roof bosses been placed directly over the St Neot window, they could have been missed (Mattingly pers. comm.)<sup>105</sup> and, therefore, would not have served the same function: marking out the route to the shrine. Following these visual ‘signposts’, pilgrims would process along the north aisle into the easternmost space – the area, which the early medieval hagiography states, was reserved for pilgrims visiting the shrine (cf. Doble 1929). Possibly, like many shrines of the period, this served as a ‘holding area’ where pilgrims awaited their visit; a similar function to that of the Nine Altars at Durham Cathedral.

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<sup>105</sup> Mattingly (pers. comm.) also found a similar fish theme in St Neots, Huntingdonshire. Featuring in the south aisle roof, the fish and sea creatures were viewed upon entry from the original south doorway. The gaze was then drawn across the church to the north aisle where an elaborate statue niche still remains and up the north aisle to the Jesus chapel where the saint’s resting place was located.

Adding to the sensory environment, the placement of the windows and bosses served to produce a visual effect. The light being cast by the painted glass onto the bosses would (although not particularly strong due to the northern location) stream through the windows illuminating the figures while casting the recesses into shadow, transforming the seemingly two-dimensional images into the three-dimensional stories they were created for (Camille 1996, 5; Hahn 2000; Giles 2007, 115). Not only did the imagery enforce a reverential atmosphere, but it also refined the senses of the pilgrim so that they were more easily able to engage their emotions in the intercessory event (Roffey 2007, 88).

Both bodily and visual interaction with images became increasingly important to the late-medieval devotional experience. This is also reflected in the choice of representations used in the glass scenes. Key events depicted in the Life of St Neot window (1528) were located either in the parish itself, or specific locations were clearly referenced in the texts – such as Rome or Glastonbury Abbey – yet the architecture represented in the glass is not identifiable. Rather, a repeated architectural template is used to set each scene so that this transportable topography could be presented as an archetypal, ideological conception of what the places looked like over their true reality. Consequently, the hagiographical stories could be envisaged within a real setting, allowing viewers to imagine their own devotional and wider urban surroundings as those of the locations depicted in the glass, thus transporting them so that they could picture themselves as part of the narrative events being told in visual form. The viewer essentially became a ‘mediator of [their own] experience’ (Gelfand 2007, 16) as the hagiographic iconography was thrust into the viewer’s plane. Cities and towns often had standard appearances, including numerous churches, defence mechanisms/law enforcement (castles, walls, bridges, gateways, keeps and towers) and places of entertainment. These are similarly depicted throughout the glass images to convey the ‘medieval feel’ of the depiction and thus its recognition as such – the constant iconography could be used to inspire particular recollections (Woolgar 2006, 187; Lilley 2009).

This concept derives from Aquinas’s notion of memory preservation which suggested that memories would latch more firmly through constant repetition of what had been memorised (Recht 2008, 228), and just like the scenes in the glass, the *loci* for these *imagines* should be real places in real buildings, i.e. churches (Yates 1966; Recht 2008,

229). During the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, symbolic significance was the central occupation of sacred architecture (Stokey 1969, 35); however, following the developments in rendering and narrative execution in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, these meanings clearly became conflated, as can be seen at St Neot.

However, the medieval beholder did not require every single element in copies of forms of buildings or cities to be present, only various parts of the prototype (Krautheimer 1942, 13). In turn, these architectural attributes had particular meanings which, when added to a scene, aided its understanding. As Swanson noted, ‘The static quality of the depictions suggests...They were not meant to be realistic representations; they functioned primarily as aids to memory, mnemonics, and in a chronological sense reproductions of the whole story encapsulated in the depiction’ (Swanson 1995, 162). As they were visually depicted in the glass on the pilgrimage course to the shrine in the church, the authenticity of the miracle cures was cemented. This was an important tool used by medieval artists as by depicting real events, places, and objects as visual mnemonics, the observer could understand and experience these images through recognition and remembrance.

Even more sensorially integrating was the inclusion of figures of the laity within the ‘spiritual congregation’ of the windows. Donors, including the groups of sisters, wives and young men of the parish, are depicted as exhortations to pray for their souls directly underneath invocations of saints, Christ and the Virgin. The ‘Wives’ window (number 13) (Fig 5.37) is consumed by an image of the Pietá, no doubt an eschatological message given that Cornish records are littered with the burials of infants under the age of five (Bourke 1986, 64; Whiting 1989). Active participation by female parochial groups was a common Cornish practice and suggests that women played a significant part in the creation of the art of the church (French 2008; Orme 2007, 106; Hill 2010). Female contributions were often recorded but not formally rewarded by tangible or visual displays in the medieval parish church; only royal bequests would be cemented with a depiction and often still only in the larger churches and cathedrals. For example, a group of ‘Wives’ of St Mary’s church, Sandwich (Kent) donated the largest payment of eighty shillings to the rood-loft gilding in 1509–10, yet their gift only appears as an entry in the account book (Ford 1992, 233). As the female groups were so highly rewarded at St Neot, no doubt the inclusion of their donor figures in the sacred iconographies of the window compositions helped to establish their personal identities

within the parish community and, more importantly, their pious associations to their patron saint.

As the 'Wives' window is located on the path to the shrine and next to the St Neot window, the combination of the Pietá image with the hagiography of Neot would no doubt strengthen the belief in these intercessory images. As a result, pilgrims were able to physically and mentally immerse themselves as participants in the saint's life and with the sanctity of the holy family (Gelfand 2011, 115). Including hagiography with the most sacred figures, together with such a late use of Latin inscriptions, the windows would have been viewed as 'properly' dignified and orthodox, fitting for such an area in the church (Orme 2010, 88). This pilgrim experience was further validated by the presence of the donors in the windows which helped promote the belief that a pilgrimage to the church was a worthy substitute for any other, or to St Neots, Huntingdonshire where the full set of relics allegedly lay. The increase in desire for a unified coherent scheme therefore led to emotionally engaging environments and experiences.

This is further reflected in the placement of the gendered donor portraits in the glass. Firstly, the female groups of the parish are depicted in the north aisle and therefore the left of the 'venerated' (in this case the High Altar and the shrine of St Neot), corresponding to the convention of medieval Christian religious imagery (and in built space of later medieval society (Gilchrist 1994; Woshinsky 2011)) and the Virgin's placement in iconography on the north side of Christ. Thus, the placement of the female groups in the glass on the north side reproduced this cultural category of gender distinction. Moreover, the donor figures throughout the St Neot glass are located in separate panels at the bottom of the windows. They are therefore located outside of the main imagery, on the threshold of the marginal and liminal space/time of salvation history and of fellow worshippers (Schleif 2005, 210). The windows then do not portray scenes in the heavens, beyond the reach of the laity. Rather, the donors aid the connection between the religious figures in the glass with the physical nave and the earthly people within it at the same time as securing the donor families' presence in the Neot parish community – both a visual and beyond a visual mode of representation (Stevenson 2010, 75). The glass thus transformed the worldly surface in which the glass was located and viewers stood, actually bringing paradise to earth and 'eliminating any further reason to yearn for the celestial paradise' (Recht 2008, 19). Devotees could thus

relate to the figures in the glass as they are pictured as earthly bodies, yet were aware that they were physically and metaphorically above the viewer's body. 'These images assert their "presentness" before viewers and, through material rhythms,' notes Stevenson, 'offer spectators a being-in-the-world of the donor that inscribes a synesthetic memory of the deceased into the embodied schemata of those who look upon the window' (Stevenson 2010, 76).

The increased secular involvement in the affairs of the parish and, particularly the parish itself, is clear. As the laity was responsible for the maintenance of the church west of the chancel, an increase in the personalisation of the art and architecture of the area is apparent. Laypeople were able to assert their identity in the parish church as well as publicly announcing their priorities by orienting communal visual piety through material and aesthetic means (Stevenson 2010, 69). As David Morgan asserted, 'as a collective or social act of memory, the image connects the devout viewer to fellow believers, that is, to those who see it in the same likeness. Visual piety, therefore, exerts a strong communal influence' (Morgan 1998, 48).

As noted earlier, there was an increase in active participation in communal worship rather than a privatisation, as the glass at St Neot illustrates. The donor portraits of couples or individuals in the south aisle glass are depicted kneeling facing west (Fig 5.38). A common trait of medieval imagery was to use the positioning of donor portraits to direct spectators' attention to sacred areas of monuments within the church, but this was most often towards the east. Although there is no evidence for any significant monuments in the western area of the church, the inclusion of a very important glass panel in the westernmost window of the south aisle (window 8) may aid an understanding of the donor portraits' positioning. Originally, the main lights depicted St Mary Salome, the Virgin Mary and St Mary Cleophas, as well as the panel known as the 'Warning to Sabbath Breakers', mentioned earlier (Mattingly 2000, 40). As it was depicted nearest the door, those leaving would certainly see it but it may have served a further function. All of the donor portraits – yeomen and gentry of the parish – are shown looking towards the image of Christ displayed with seven items related to the tin and mining industry of the surrounding area; an image literally representing the daily reminder of how to live morally in medieval society.

Such records of pious generosity were made explicitly associative with local resonance and with the establishment and development of the area, while reminding worshippers of their spiritual duties and moral obligations towards such beneficent donors. A few of the female donors are also depicted with rosary beads which David Griffith (2005, 222) has argued were signals of shared social and devotional identity, once again reaffirming this idea of communal parochial devotion. This suggests that they wanted to be depicted in more personal reflection and indicative of their own bequests; yet the larger, communal patronage was portrayed in remembrance of wider devotion to Christ and Neot.

### 5.6.3 NORTH CHAPEL

Amalgamating the secular with the saintly was an important tool used in promoting intercession. The use of intercessory images in the glass at St Neot, as well as the actual site of the shrine, promulgated an association with the chapel's founders: the Tubb and Callaway families. When put with the symbolism of the familial devices, these acted as a 'catalyst for intercession' as they established a link between the perpetual rituals performed by the cult of the saint with that of the families' souls (Roffey 2007, 87). One served to remind the other, binding worshippers to them in a 'perennial state of debt...repaid through continuous commemoration and intercession' (Rubin 1991, 138). Graves (2000, 143) referred to this method as tricking or stealing prayers from people, yet this was perhaps prompted more by the inclusion of the wall painting and sepulchre function with that of the shrine. Whether it was merely the family who were allowed to worship at the shrine once it had been converted or a wider network of visitors, the Christological subject of the painting and sepulchre function of the structure, would have acted as an *aide-mémoire* indirectly or subconsciously for individuals to pray for the intercessory power of the saint (Martindale 1992, 168; Roffey 2007, 87). Simultaneously, the shrine's association with the family would also further serve as a petition for prayer from those simply visiting the shrine. Aquinas even praised the beautifying of a church including the building of monuments as they encouraged prayer for the departed souls (*Summa Theologiae* 2626–7). This would be spurred on by the sensory aspects such as colour, light, display, sounds, iconography and symbolism of the sacred structure and its locale, which produced 'a metaphysical setting for the rituals of intercession, and a colourful and emotive context for lay piety' (Roffey 2007, 88).

Further evidence for this lies in the physical location of the northern chapel. Although the location of the chantry was clearly chosen to highlight the status of the Tubb and Callaway families, it was also the most spiritually efficacious space. There are several eschatological reasons behind locating chantry chapels on the north side. Primarily the area reflects an importance ascribed to death, memorial or tradition in lay activity as the church building itself was viewed as a symbol for the body of Christ crucified (Gilchrist 1994, 140; Roffey 2007, 100). The wound in his right side – which we should remember is depicted in the wall painting, a structure associated with Neot's death and the miracle of transubstantiation – therefore corresponds to the north side of the building, the area said to issue the blood and water, and so it came to represent the Eucharist (Roffey 2007, 101). Therefore the north side is a perfectly fitting placement for a shrine, Easter Sepulchre and chantry chapel, and would promote the significant connection between intercession and burial practice (Roffey 2007, 102). Insertion of a squint, which linked all three areas together, finished the arrangement, connecting the chapel physically and visually with the rest of the church.

Moreover, if the documentary accounts are to be believed, then the area also previously housed the relics of St Neot. As we have and will see further, a continuance of sacrality was believed to reside anywhere relics had rested. Therefore, the medieval church would have believed that this power was retained in the fabric of the north side and continued to be so in its new role as a chantry. Either way, this was assured as the chapel acquired virtue simply by being nearby to the saint and/or his relics (Woolgar 2006, 41). The transformation of the shrine into the Easter Sepulchre may then be viewed as a continuation of mortuary; a new life in death. The active role and presence of the saint continued post-mortem, ensuring his existence in the symbolism, memorials and materiality, and then through the ritual of the Eucharist taking place upon his shrine (Roffey 2007, 110). As such, the cult was not just recollected by pilgrims but made present through the sensory rituals of the Mass. This gave the shrine a new life and, with that, a further belief in absence: as pilgrims believed in Neot even though his relics may not have resided in his shrine, so did the congregation believe in the True Presence. Both cults were therefore symbolised by materiality but venerated through a belief in an absence or association, and through touch and proximity the virtues were conveyed. As Aquinas noted in his 13<sup>th</sup>-century commentary on Peter Lombard's *Sentences*,

[the] reason[s] for the institution of images...[are] in order that the mystery of the incarnation and the examples of the saints may be more firmly in our memory when they are daily present to the

sight [and]...to excite the feeling of devotion, which is more effectively excited by what it sees than by what it hears (quoted in Hagen 1990, 103).

Devotion to a saint and a belief in the transubstantial miracle were associated with the late-medieval concern with pardon from Purgatory and a desire for salvation, a desire fulfilled through an emotional response (Duffy 2005, 194). Again, these acts, so integral to late-medieval piety, promoted a belief in a presence from little or no tangibility, as did the veneration of St Neot's cult, but devotional memories were fulfilled by the 'creation' of sensory infrastructures. St Neot's shrine is therefore a physical example of the promotion of an assurance; a belief in hope through didactic aesthetic tools. This upholds Fentress and Wickham's theory that 'the social meaning of memory, like its internal structure and mode of transmission, is little affected by its truth; all that matters is that it be *believed*, at least at some level' (Fentress and Wickham 1992, xi, own emphasis).

In consequence, it can be presumed that the shrine was attracting a steady stream of visitors as the rebuilding of the north aisle and construction of the 'visual pilgrimage route' was enacted immediately before the Reformation period in Cornwall of the later 16<sup>th</sup> century. If not, why would the focus on the north aisle and its connecting aesthetic scheme have been constructed?

#### 5.6.4 HISTORY OF THE SHRINE'S USE

There were various stages in the biography of the shrine. The structure appears to have been in place from at least the 14<sup>th</sup> century, suggesting that earlier versions of the north aisle may well have facilitated pilgrimage to it, although unfortunately we have no idea of the visual/aesthetic characteristics of these previous aisles. The northern arcade is, however, 15<sup>th</sup> century, including the archway from the north chapel adjacent to the shrine, suggesting that prior to the 16<sup>th</sup>-century remodelling of the northern chapel and subsequent aisle widening, the north aisle could also have been used for pilgrimage purposes.

The presence of the archway adjacent to the shrine suggests that pilgrims entered underneath it at the south face of the shrine, after which they would exit either down the central aisle or back through the archway. Unfortunately, no contemporary offering

accounts survive, and therefore it is difficult to identify how popular the shrine was.<sup>106</sup> Still, it is possible that pilgrims went back through the same arch they entered, down the north aisle and out the south door (or perhaps even the westernmost door of the north aisle). As there was no seating in the medieval aisles at St Neot, this left the space open for such processional movement. This arrangement would keep the aisle and western area of the church reserved for the circulation of visitors, retaining the sanctity for those worshipping in the nave and chancel. Also, there is a rather substantial amount of space in front of the shrine that would allow for at least a handful of visiting pilgrims to reside in without blocking the sacred area of the High Altar. This suggests that entering through the archway and out would have been fairly easy to circumnavigate.

From the development phase of the north aisle and the consequential surmised route taken by visitors, a proposition must be put forth: perhaps, from the 15<sup>th</sup> century (when the painting was added) until the construction of the Tubb/Callaway chantry chapel, the shrine served its dual purpose as a site of veneration and an Easter Sepulchre structure. However, following the construction of the chantry chapel in the early 16<sup>th</sup> century, the associated pilgrimage scheme of the north aisle was created for the private veneration of St Neot and his shrine by the Tubb/Callaway families and their guests. This would mean that the north aisle, stained glass, roof boss and squint were primarily constructed for the families' devotional experience, rather than for visiting pilgrims who, it could be argued, would now largely be travelling to the nearby chapel for this purpose. Unfortunately, this also suggests that the private Neot scheme had a limited life span. Although Cornwall was more reluctant to adhere to the Reformation changes, the region had succumbed by the late 16<sup>th</sup> century and again in the mid 17<sup>th</sup> century (cf. Whiting 1989), and so the elaborate cult scheme would therefore no longer be needed, either for veneration of St Neot or for use as an Easter Sepulchre.<sup>107</sup> An investigation to unravel this proposition will follow.

Recent evidence is against the view that there was a gradual increase in the privatisation of religion in the parish church of the later Middle Ages or that this resulted, as noted by Dom Gregory Dix, in 'individualistic forms of devotion' that were 'unparticipatory' leading to the laity having somewhat of a 'passive supporting role' in the cult of saints,

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<sup>106</sup> Except the early reference mentioned above regarding the enlargement of the church to cope with the volume of visitors (n.6).

<sup>107</sup> It is likely the north chapel also ceased function as a chapel even earlier – the Chantry Act of 1547 dissolved their use and abolished prayers for the dead (Roffey 2007, 126).

relics and Mass (Cross 1976; McMurray Gibson 1989, 6; Bossy 1991, 137; Graves 1989; Roffey 2006, 25). Duffy (2005, 121) argued that the increase in personal methods of devotion during the later Middle Ages, such as primers or similar texts, pews and chantry chapels enclosed by screens, did not segregate the literate and gentry into private worship, or end public participation (Roffey 2007, 96). Lay people also had access to these kinds of *topoi* and were already bombarded by the religious repertoire of paintings, screens and windows which, as we have seen, certainly did not cause all to retreat to solitude worship. Rather, what was most important, as stressed in *The Lay Folks Mass Book*, were the requirements at Mass ‘to kneel quietly without idle chatter, saying Paters and Aves, to respond to key gestures or phrases by changing postures and above all at the sacring to kneel with both hands raised in adoration’ (Duffy 2005, 117) – the worshipper therefore joined in the praise and thanksgiving.

The emphasis on pilgrimage, however, was not so focused on literate versus illiterate understanding or participation although, at St Neot, evidence suggests the laity were ‘devout, well-to-do and [therefore] literate [who consumed]...private prayer books’ (Bourke 1986, 64). Pilgrimage experience was determined more by the reputation of a saint and the sensory stimuli at the shrine site. Understanding was promulgated through meditation and the atmospheric mystic and spirituality of the cult (cf. *The Book of Margery Kempe*).

Seeing others worshipping was a corporeal event, and not only cemented devotees’ experience, but also devotees became assimilated with the others in a universally efficacious act through this visual interaction (Biernoff 2002, 136). Space was used to link the worshipper with the pious pilgrims and parishioners in this time of salvation which led the worship to become a public act. A sense of *communitas* was certainly established as all witnessed in the elevation or visited a shrine together, although the dialogue between the individual’s soul and Saviour was inherently interior (Bossy 1991, 146). The outer walls of the chantries did separate and confine the elite worship taking place inside from other worshippers, but the participants were also centralised by focussing the devotees’ attention on them. Although the north chapel at St Neot was ‘topographically disconnected’ from the wider communal areas, it was still both visually and physically accessible (Roffey 2007, 97) as these barriers were much more ‘flexible’ than might be first assumed. Opening up the south side (and largely the western side) of the chantry area through the use of the open screenwork of parclose

screens, forced the space the elite devotees were occupying into that of the public domain of the church. Furthermore, the presence of secular emblems within the story of the saint in the decorative aspects of the cult infrastructure served to identify the family with the construction of the pilgrimage scheme which meant that they were continually visually present within the minds of the pilgrims as well as the daily congregation. A similar uniting of the sacred and secular may be seen around the Colshull chantry at St Cuby (Cornwall), where the reset late 15<sup>th</sup>-century carved parclose screen incorporates symbols of saints with the Colshull family arms (Fig 5.39).

Finally, the northern chapel of St Neot is rather large in size. Although it was built to accommodate members of two families, Roffey's (2007, 83) examination of Devon parish churches found that many chantries were accessible to the lay population. In some churches he even found archaeological evidence of seating arrangements, many of which were rather sizeable constructions, purporting that 'outside' visitors were rather frequent. Perhaps this is further evidence that the chantry at St Neot equally functioned for the devotion of the elite and lay.

As illustrated, it was a common medieval practice to have the individual devotional tastes of a patron recognised through the inclusion of works of art in the fabric of the church. Not only did they amplify the donor's social status, but they also offered a 'lasting identification' of the pious act (Ford 1992, 234). As the scheme was so complex here and centred around the hagiography of St Neot, no doubt the families wanted to visually associate themselves with their benefactions as well as highlighting to the local congregation and visitors that they had created the sacred space for them. The belief that these patronal acts would also shorten time in purgatory also likely contributed to the intentions behind the scheme (cf. Andrew 2011).

Elite contributions often dominated the repertoire of the devotional materiality of the church interior. Bequests of paintings, screens, glass etc., as seen at St Neot, served to create the communal experience, not internalise it: 'groups...adopt[ed] religious symbols to deal with their own problems through...difference and individual variation' (Geertz quoted in Rubin 1991, 135). Although the fabric of the church constructed what looked at face-value to be more private interiors, the participation and particularly sensory experience of its 'complex network of interactions and visual relationships' actually

countered this and instead welcomed public piety, ‘bonding the community in its religious practices’ (Roffey 2006, 25).

As a result, difference was dissolved into a unity ‘through the ritual adhesion to a supernatural symbol’, i.e. the Host or, in this case, St Neot’s shrine (Rubin 1991, 135). Thus, the shared experience determined a feeling of *communitas* that did not remove social status but reinforced, negotiated and manipulated identity in the wider sense allowing for ‘coexisting levels of integration’ (Rubin 1991, 147). After an examination of the evidence, it is my contention that the pilgrimage scheme was created by the two families at St Neot, but was not reserved for their exclusive access. What will be examined below is just how such sensory elaborations provided a ‘metaphysical setting ...and a colourful and emotive context’ (Roffey 2006, 26) ‘for individual piety in the *communal* context’ (Roffey 2007, 16, own emphasis), i.e. how pilgrims participated in their cult devotion of the saint and the sacrament via the personal scheme created by the Tubb/Callaway family.

## 5.7 SCREENS

Following the visual decorative ‘signposts’ noted earlier, pilgrims would process along the north aisle and through the rood screen. Although the current edifice is a 19<sup>th</sup>-century reconstruction, it can be inferred from the surviving lower and upper doors of the rood stair and tower (Fig 5.40) that the original structure must have served as a rood-loft or pulpitum, similar to the surviving 15<sup>th</sup>-century rood screen of St Mellanus, Mullion (Cornwall) (Fig 5.41)<sup>108</sup> and was therefore a sensorially dominating structure, relegating the pilgrims to the role of spectators.<sup>109</sup> Since its job was to divide the chancel from the nave area, the screen at St Neot must have been erected after the construction of the north aisle for the stair and turret to be included in the north wall, thus dating it to the early 16<sup>th</sup> century when it was an integral part of the projected rebuilding campaign.<sup>110</sup>

The vibrancy of the rood screen would also have been extremely prominent, contrasting against the three darkened tunnels bearing down upon it created by the wagon roofs of

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<sup>108</sup> The screen was restored with rood figures and loft by F.C. Eden in 1925.

<sup>109</sup> It is not clear when rood screens became common in Cornwall, but likely c.14<sup>th</sup> century as they are not referred to in Bishop Quinil’s statutes of 1287 or the visitations of Cornish churches of Exeter Cathedral from 1330 (Orme 2007, 98).

<sup>110</sup> Endowments of rood screens did continue into the Henrician Reformation; examples from the West Country include narrative scenes of events of pagan Sybils to match the Apostles of Prophets representative of the ‘New Symbolism’ (Duffy 1997, 158).

the aisles and nave/chancel.<sup>111</sup> The base of the *c.*15<sup>th</sup>-century screen, although restored and regilded, still remains *in situ* at the church of St Enodoc, St Minver (Cornwall) (Fig 5.42) and may be analysed in comparison. The uprights are moulded and carved with a floral trail and the restored dado panels are painted in vibrant hues of green and red which contrast against the glittering gilding work of the microarchitectural decoration of the blind tracery (Pevsner and Radcliffe 1970, 196). The dados or lower sections of many screens were often painted with one or two rows of saints which meant that those kneeling behind had their view of the Elevation of the Host blocked. Screens adorned with geometrical or floral designs, or simply with names of donors, were often punctuated with ‘elevation squints’ allowing parishioners to view the event from the lower eye-level (Duffy 2005, 97).<sup>112</sup>

Regional variation determined the design of screens in medieval churches, but by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the overwhelming majority were embellished with sequences of carved or painted saints (Duffy 2005, 157; Orme 2007, 98). From comparisons with the few surviving medieval reconstructions, and the presence of the stair door which still remains high in the north wall of St Neot’s church, the screen was likely a rather open rood-loft stretching across the nave and aisles (a common local arrangement) with a painted dado and door(s) in the centre (Loftus Brock 1877, 444; Orme 2007, 98).

Visually both the rood figure itself and the architectural intricacies of the wooden screen would have dominated the eastern vista of the church masking their object of veneration, whilst acting as a frame providing slight glimpses of the shrine on entrance through the southern porch, creating anticipation for the pilgrim. Graves (2000, 157) suggested roods acted as ‘veils’ through which the most sacred area could be ‘tantalizingly viewed’. A sense of exclusion, in the hierarchical rather than prohibiting sense, may have been felt upon sight of the screen, reminding pilgrims of the separation and hierarchy between east and west.

However, as found in chapter 4, the more likely feeling promoted was of unification. Not only did the open and light nature of the framework designs (tracery and mullions) act as a set of windows, framing the liturgical drama rather than acting as a door (Duffy 2005, 112), but also as the dado was likely painted with a hagiographical display fitting

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<sup>111</sup> Also seen in many Devon parish churches (cf. Graves 2000, 157).

<sup>112</sup> Occasionally squints were pierced into the screens above the heads of saints as at Roxton in Bedfordshire, but this was much less common (Duffy 2005, 97).

for such a prominent cult church, the didactic messages, together with those of the glass and wall paintings, would have created a collective experience for pilgrims as they perceived and interpreted their meaning (Jung 2000, 624). Passing through the screen, a visit to the shrine would have engaged the viewer both physically and emotionally as, not only were they about to approach the shrine, but they were also physically passing through a tangible barrier into the most sacred areas of the church (the mystery of the Mass could therefore also move out to meet them) (Duffy 2005, 112), an area in which the laity would not regularly enter, except during specific liturgical rituals or perhaps to pray in chantries on behalf of the dead.

In this way the physical form of the screen broke down the sensory barrier to the shrine, sacrament and the distinction between the clergy and laity; no doubt an outcome of the need for regular worship and access, both visual and physical, to the eastern part of the church for all statuses (Graves 2000, 154). As such, the rood screen may have even ‘served to heighten the...moment sensually by giving it material texture’ (Stevenson 2010, 72). From the evidence of Norfolk, Devon and a small amount from Cornwall, the increasing contributions from lay patronage made it possible for the churches to cater to lay demands and their devotional needs, such as access to the Elevation of the Host. This therefore included the most significant architectural elements (Graves 2000; Orme 2007 102–03; Roffey 2007).

Although we still await a full understanding of the role of rood screens (descriptions of their functional rites are largely absent in the liturgical record), many served to provide further sensory aspects which could significantly create and alter the atmosphere. Bequests to maintain lights (in addition to garlands of flowers) before rood screens are abundant in medieval documents and so it is clear that candles and tapers were continually present thus illuminating the intangible barrier between the sacred and profane. Also the screen became a ‘nodal point of spiritual power’ emphasising the light framing the holy space which confined the shrine and High Altar (Graves 2000, 160; Duffy 2005, 146–7).

Moreover, scholars have suggested that acoustic properties were more a coincidental by-product of medieval church design, rather than intentional, yet ‘...aural and visual symbolism became tightly linked’ for those in daily attendance (Blessner and Salter 2007, 93). The emphasis on the sensory aspects at St Neot was clearly intentionally

planned to produce an integrative experience. Even from the little surviving evidence of St Neot's fixtures and fittings, this is difficult to agree with. From the substantial nature of the rood-loft (as noted by the survival of the stair), it would appear that there was possibly a gallery or walkway below or attached to the figures of the rood (Christ, the Virgin and St John the Baptist). Such spaces were used for the placement of organs or became choir lofts for additional singers to accompany the liturgy which no doubt functioned during processions and, particularly for this study, the saint's feast day (31<sup>st</sup> July), assimilating the pilgrims into the space and providing the appropriately holy ambience for their experience (Duffy 2005, 137). Such an arrangement may have followed that found at St Ives or similar to the early 16<sup>th</sup>-century loft extant at St Materiana, Tintagel (Cornwall).<sup>113</sup>

Furthermore, the elaborate carving of the masonry would also have attracted the touch and even perhaps kiss of the pilgrim. Tactility was imperative to the attainment of sanctity – the closer the proximity to the saint, the quicker the intercession was fulfilled. Sound was often seen as a material substance, and may have even been perceived as a form of touch. In combination with touch, sound created a harmony for worship, while music was also thought to have a curative function (Woolgar 2006, 64).

The cavernous design of the wagon roof would also have created an immense auditory experience providing great amplification and reverberation due to the open-planned nature of the interior (Scarre and Lawson 2006). Architecture and sound created a drama enforcing a particular experience on the parishioner or pilgrim. As Graves suggested, 'The manipulation of sounds was part and parcel of the way in which the encounter with the numinous was proposed to contemporary communities, part of the historical construction of Christian subjects' (2007, 525). While there was no specific sound ritual to accompany pilgrim visits, as noted, they were interspersed with chantry altar Masses,<sup>114</sup> Masses at the High Altar and the ringing of bells. It is likely that the Mass was sung (in Latin) rather than recited (Orme 2007, 100–01; Roffey 2007, 88). In fact, it is claimed that 'unadorned plainsong formed the backbone to the liturgy and was customary in all parish churches' (Kumin 2001, 70).<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Organs and polyphony were universal aspects of the liturgical round in parish churches, although much less modest than larger churches, minsters and cathedrals (Willis 2010a, 84).

<sup>114</sup> It is possible that a secondary organ stood in the chantry chapels, accompanied by the singing of the resident priest (Temperley 1983, 7–8).

<sup>115</sup> Music largely continued in parish churches until Henry VIII's death in 1547 (Kumin 2001, 78).

Further aural stimulants would accompany events, such as the sounding of the church bells or polyphony at critical moments as the most important liturgical rituals, religious festivals and even the occurrence of miracles were audibly marked by their appearance and created a 'positive environment' or 'aura of sound' (Woolgar 2006, 71–2; Bagnall Yardley 2006; LeZotte 2011, 79). Although documentary evidence for the musical landscape of St Neot does not exist and, even so, the role and structure of music in worship was shaped more passively than with rigid formulation, in regards to pilgrimage, the audible sensory environment consisted more of bells and sounds at significant points in the experience rather than services and their accompanying material and sensory paraphernalia. The placement of the bells in the western tower meant that they would be the first sound heard upon entry to the church and were perhaps timed in accordance with the allowance of access to the shrine, as was the case at Canterbury and Durham when the reliquary casket was revealed.

Medieval belief in music arose from the idea that 'if music had the power to speak directly to the human soul, then differing musical stimuli would elicit correspondingly different emotional responses' (Willis 2010a, 1). The generation of various sounds and music at St Neot would thus compliment the devotional experience produced by the various sensory stimuli by literally hailing the sanctity and creating an appropriate solemn atmosphere for devotion – often harmony as tangible proof of the divine – while surrounding and enveloping the pilgrims, penetrating their bodies (Frischer-Lichte 2008, 119; Willis 2010b, 187). Music was believed to have an affective power and so when used during a pilgrimage, the participants' joy could be amplified and sadness banished so their mind was focused on piety and had the ability to become ecstatic so they may be healed or the soul beautified (Willis 2010a, 16). In turn, these sounds or music would lend a distinction to the visit, and create much more of an impact as a cohesive compositional theme heightening the emotional response and prompting a mnemonic effect through compounding with the architecture of the shrine, wider interior fabric, symbols, images and liturgical furnishings (Roffey 2007, 89). Pilgrims would thus be overwhelmed by their senses and could therefore retain a memory of their experience much more easily.

## **5.8 INTEGRATIVE INTERIOR SPACE**

During the late Middle Ages, it is clear that the aim of the interior of the church building was about far more than worship; it was intended to impress via the stimulation

of many or all of the senses. The architecture of the space and the roughness of the grey granite of the piers and arches contrasted with the vibrant hues of the red, blue and gold of the painted roof which, together with its striking geometric form, created an interplay of texture and colour. This was then further complemented and emphasised by the vibrant jewel-like tones of the glass (Fig 5.43). Moreover, the light streaming through the south aisle, into the body of the church, highlighted the gilding of the bosses, whilst creating a dramatic chiaroscuro-effect on the glass in the darker north aisle, where the life of the saint was located.

The integrated relationship between the shrine painting, glass and the surrounding art/architectural framework, suggests that they were part of a wider coherent scheme which united the decorative elements to direct the pilgrim experience. From her analysis of St Christopher wall paintings, Eleanor Pridgeon also found the complementation of two and three-dimensional imagery with various other media to be a common staple of the medieval parish church interior: ‘It is clear that church imagery worked together, creating a complex iconographic whole in which different media might create a comprehensive “scheme”’ (Pridgeon 2008, 2). Although there are no indications of paint on the walls of the church interior, it would be extremely unusual for a medieval church to leave them undecorated (Orme 2007, 99). When exactly the plaster was removed is unknown, but the numerous late 17<sup>th</sup>- to 19<sup>th</sup>-century monuments and tablets adorning the walls (which appear *in situ*) (Fig 5.44) suggest it was most likely during the 1650–1 third Puritan iconoclastic campaign, when the churchwardens of St Neot paid for the glass to be whitewashed, to hide and thus save the ‘offensive’ images (Mattingly 2000, 9–10). This anti-Catholic operation spread throughout the county with all types of imagery being demolished. Perhaps then, although the glass was saved, the wall paintings were not as fortunate.

Although the loss of many of the medieval fixtures, fittings and paintings makes it a little more difficult to reconstruct the devotional practices that served to link the areas of the church together, if the interior of the church was painted in some form, the scheme could well have been the unifying element that brought all three decorative aspects together to function as a whole. In this way, it is likely that the interior painting was patronised in much the same way as the stained glass: the product of a range of individuals and social groups, such as the parish gentry or a guild of the prevalent Cornish tin miners (cf. Mattingly *et al.* 2001). This would be similar to the piecemeal

commission, yet unified iconographic 15<sup>th</sup>-century scheme found by Giles (2007, 116) in the church of SS Peter and Paul, Pickering (North Yorkshire). The north wall functions as a series of *via exempla*, and on the south wall, a series of didactic scenes symbolically link to one another and the different parts of the church (Fig 5.45). The mural scheme illustrates a move towards combining depictions of patrons' favourite saints with 'short-hand moral schema' and images of the Passion of Christ (Giles 2000b, 3). This practice can perhaps serve as comparanda for the original St Neot scheme if we accept that the two families commissioned it. Reynolds' work (2007) also found that specific colour selection was apparent in parish mural schemes. However, both his and Roger Rosewell's research (2008) have found identifying obvious paint schemes that directly relate to, and interact with, glass schemes difficult, although this is perhaps because there are so few good examples of each left surviving today.

One final piece of evidence must be brought into the argument. There are no surviving graffiti on any of the main walls of the church.<sup>116</sup> The most suitable explanation is that the walls are made of granite, an extremely dense stone which is difficult to inscribe. Although it is not surprising that no graffiti survive due to the hard nature of the stone's geology, it would be significant for there to have been none attempted. Recent research has uncovered that it was very common for churches of once pilgrimage status to be filled with images throughout the church building interior, particularly close to shrines (Rebecca Williams, pers. comm.). For example, at Holy Cross church at Whitchurch Canonorum (Dorset), a number of incised votive crosses can be found on the east jamb of the south door connecting the site with pilgrimage to St Wite's (also known as Candida/Wita) foramina tomb (Syer 1991, 16).

## 5.9 A 'CONSTRUCTED' PILGRIMAGE

In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Erasmus commented on the prominent widespread disdain for the relic culture of the later medieval period. Although Erasmus is perhaps not the ideal example of a common medieval pilgrim, many laymen still shared in his disappointment. Besides the crudeness and authenticity of relics, in reference to his visit to Our Lady of Walsingham, Erasmus disregarded the image-shrine as 'a small image...unimpressive in size, material, and workmanship' (Nichols 1875, 639). What then, if not the culminatory foci, attracted the throngs of pilgrims to journey to churches across Europe?

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<sup>116</sup> Only a few inscribed dates on the wooden door to the second floor of the porch.

It is unclear what the church of St Neot held of the remains of the saint following the 10<sup>th</sup>-century robbery account. Still, we are presented with a very plausible shrine which was preserved and elaborated throughout the medieval period. An explanation is therefore required for the possibility that the Cornish parish did not possess any saintly relics, or retained only an arm bone. If so, why is an entirely constructed infrastructure associated with the saint incorporated into the church fabric? Perhaps, through an examination of the underlying intentions of the elaborate pilgrimage scheme, it may be argued that, as the church building was so engaging of its participants, they journeyed simply to experience the surroundings and access its spiritual power.

As noted earlier, the ‘magical/mystical’ aspect of late-medieval devotion derived from an appreciation of the ‘corporeal humanity of an incarnate God’ (Swanson 1995, 137; Marshall 2003; Walsham 2008, 510). Yet this idea was not exclusive to Christocentric veneration. The management of faith towards belief in a presence in the face of physical absence became increasingly central to the wider nature of late-medieval religion for *all* types of cults, particularly in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

This belief was the perfect precedent for mausoleum as opposed to relic shrines which functioned in a similar manner to the sepulchre structure. Such shrines ‘trapped’ the power of a saint following a containment of relics or corporeal remains of the body – belief in their efficacy remained, even after the relics were removed. Saints were seen as ‘no less visible and tangible in death than they had been in life’ (Sumption 1975, 48). Physicality became irrelevant as the structures directed and channelled devotion rather than specifically acting as *objects* of devotion (Swanson 1995, 160). Instead they gave access to it as a devotionally stimulating device; a reminder of the saint that possessed a magical force.

The key to understanding this type of ‘constructed’ devotion lies in the increasing amount of tension during the later medieval period over the creation of a belief or an experience in cults that were not tangibly evident or could not be venerated through concrete or empirical means. As McMurray Gibson noted, the transformation of the ‘abstract and theological to the personal and concrete was not only the general characteristic of mind in the late Middle Ages, it was the center of raging controversy’ (McMurray Gibson 1989, 7). This will be shown as the underlying principle of the

entire scheme of St Neot and the church's significance to the wider nature of the development in late-medieval piety. What will follow, therefore, is an analysis of how a pilgrimage visit to this 'theatre of devotion' was created, and how the aids to worship were managed through continual sensory practices.

The general consensus was that a cult should possess relics in order to be appropriately authentic. But what if a cult no longer possessed any, such as might have been the case at St Neot? The priority had to be the creation of a 'fitting' architectural environment for the cult in order to encourage the physical experience of the pilgrim in establishing the memory of the saint (Harris 2004, 272).

It is instructive to compare the creation of St Neot's cult with that of other English saints, whose absence enforced the maintenance of sanctity at the place wherein the relics first resided. One of the most notable such cults, perhaps the only one of its type to have survived the Reformation as a recusant place of public pilgrimage, was the Chapel of St Winifride (d. c.660) whose 'construction' was managed by Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII (Lowry 1983, 116) (Fig 5.46).<sup>117</sup> The construction of the chapel at Holywell (North Wales) was paid for by Margaret in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century over the saint's original burial site, supposedly out of gratitude for victory at the battle of Bosworth (Seguin 2003, 2). It encloses three sides of a well; however, the saint's relics had been translated to Shrewsbury in 1138, many years before the chapel was erected. Similarly to St Neot, the cult which formed around the saint, and the chapel constructed in honour, was predicated on the survival of a single fragment of bone, thought to be St Winifride's finger, which was preserved at the well site. Substantial offerings (10 pounds per year) were given at the site which made it 'one of the most lucrative foci of Catholic worshippers anywhere in North Wales' (Scully 2006, 212; Seguin 2003, 2).

Returning to St Neot, the physical and sensory impact of the experience meant that the church could function as a memory device through recollection of the first visiting pilgrims to the shrine when Neot lay entombed there, while simultaneously producing new memories with affective qualities of an actual experiential visit. Medieval memory was felt to be, in degree, a physiological, bodily phenomenon (Carruthers 2008, 8). Perhaps then, the scheme could have enticed those pilgrims who had visited Neot's

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<sup>117</sup> It has been disputed whether Margaret was the driving force behind the cult (Jones and Underwood 1992, 150). Lowry (1983), however, disputed this.

shrine in Huntingdonshire to re-enact or mimic their pilgrimage back in the Cornish church via physical and imaginary means, creating the feeling or impression of an actual pilgrimage to Neot's shrine again.

This *intentio*, or emotional resonance or colouring, as produced by the likeness of the shrine (*simulacrum*), hooked particular memories into an existing network of experience for the pilgrim, i.e. their visits to other sites which, in turn, worked to stimulate the memory by association (Carruthers 2008, 8). As a result, 'One becomes part of what one contemplates, so that to see is virtually the same as "being there" whether "there" is an actual location or spiritual state' (Renard 2001, 414). Pilgrims therefore carried a visual and somatic memory of what resided in the shrine through its physical appearance. Aquinas recommended 'thinking of...images to stand for whatever it is we want to memorize' (Recht 2008, 228), while Frances Yates (1996) argued that this meant 'real' places and, above all, churches. St Neot, simply by being the original burial site and location in which his miracles transpired, re-evoked the past within the present. A fertile imagination allowed the pilgrim to conjure up and create the reality of a past event and a 'way of seeing' it re-imagined (Woolgar 2006, 187). Participation in the events of the church was therefore about much more than re-enactment, but the creation of an original event, physically and symbolically (Woolgar 2006, 180). Imagination was obviously dependent on the memorable experience produced and personal to the individual (Carruthers 2008, 8–11), but it can be argued as the 'fundamental truth [and shaping aesthetic] behind late medieval lay spirituality' (McMurray Gibson 1989, 10).

Physically moving through the topography of the Cornish church would, in essence, imitate that of the Cambridgeshire pilgrimage experience. Active mimicry was also used in the creation of Red Mount Chapel, Norfolk (built 1483–5). Also referred to as Our Lady of the Mount, the octagonal structure encases a cruciform stone chapel, ingeniously planned for a one-way stream of pilgrim traffic (Marks 2004, 203, Pitcher 2008, 17–27). Although often regarded as an en-route wayside chapel for Walsingham, the structure was actually a pilgrimage destination in its own right, housing a bejewelled image-shrine which sat beside a golden altar in the upper chapel.

Similar to the Adornes' family Jerusalemkerk in Bruges (started 1420s), Red Mount's appeal stemmed from its replication of the Holy Sepulchre – the possibility of an active

participatory devotional experience was the primary draw. The designs of such buildings meant there was a specific pilgrimage route, providing glimpses through apertures of the most sacred objects housed in the top ambulatory, creating anticipation and excitement by the architectural elements. Upon reaching the glory of Red Mount's upper chapel (completed 1506), the visitor entered the room which was crowned with an elaborate fan-vault and panelled tunnel-vaults over the cruciform arms (Fig 5.47). Unusually, the masonry provides nearly all of the sensory stimulation as the chapel is lit by four small quatrefoil oculi only (Marks 2004, 203; Pitcher 2008, 22). A large recess in the lower chapel mirrors the form of St Neot's shrine – another reference to the Holy Sepulchre structure (Pitcher 2008, 22).

There was a greater sensory focus through which these 'mystery cults' were venerated – spiritual devotion was manifested by physical experience. In order to create this experience, the surroundings had to be suitably constructed for a particular atmosphere to evocate belief. The central concern was therefore not to understand but to experience the event. A 'theatre of devotion' was needed in order to create an 'aura' that promulgated a belief in an absence (or likely absence) which was achieved via sensory stimulation. The more the senses were impacted, the more constructed the pilgrimage scheme was, while the more associated it was with the cult of the saint, the more likely pilgrims were to believe in its efficacy. This presence was created from absence by a specific atmosphere which, in turn, generated the corporeality of the experience. Through their bodies, spectators could then sense the energy of the allusive 'presence'. As such, the sensory environment or 'atmosphere' will be shown to be crucial in the attainment of belief through presence. This is much more than a visual or aural perception, but it is a physical experience which is poured into the space of the church and can be sensed through the aesthetic qualities of the space.

The medieval belief that original burial sites were still revered after relics had been removed illustrates that, after canonisation, anywhere a saint's body had laid or touched was thought to be sacred. The evidence for continued pilgrimage to Lindisfarne and the Farne Islands hundreds of years after St Cuthbert's death and the translation of his body to Durham in 996 is also comparable. Pilgrims continued to be drawn north to seek passage to St Cuthbert's original tomb-site and accompaniment of associated structures at Lindisfarne and Inner Farne throughout the late-medieval period even though Lindisfarne and Farne did not possess any primary tangible, corporeal relics, only the

original resting place of the saint within the priory-church.<sup>118</sup> As such, the cult centred around the tomb itself and its complement of dependent sacred sites embodied in the various retreats once used by the saint (Cambridge 1989, 371). For the cult of St Cuthbert, these appear to be more concrete with architectural associations serving in place of mobile objects. Rather than bones, hair, or other bodily parts, places were marshalled as witnesses to Cuthbert's sanctity. For example, the timber church at Lindisfarne where Cuthbert was buried in 687, dismantled and re-erected at Norham and used by the Cuthbertine community under Bishop Ecgred (830–45), was regarded as a sacred relic in itself (Cambridge 1989, 371). At Chester-le-Street, during the period between 883 and 995, the original timber church was replicated in stone by Æthelric of Durham, providing the temporary resting place of Cuthbert's body with a more permanent setting. As at St Neot, Cuthbert's bones rested at these sites, but did not remain there, yet the association and presence of the saint endured. On the islands, however, such associated places were numerous and included the hermitages in which Cuthbert both lived and was discovered dead on 20<sup>th</sup> March 687 (Fig 5.48), Prior Castell's Tower, the chapel of St Cuthbert on Farne (both thought to be built over Cuthbert's original cell), the hospitium – the original guesthouse built by Cuthbert himself for visiting monks – and finally, Lindisfarne Priory where Cuthbert was buried and enshrined before being removed and eventually housed in Durham Cathedral. Many of these buildings, particularly the original hermitage cells, were successively rebuilt throughout the medieval period. Though they had no real functional use (although the odd hermit occupied the cells at various times), evidence suggests that they were conserved/restored in order to serve as pilgrimage sites, creating, in essence, one large pilgrimage circuit akin to the modern-day tourist attraction.

What is notable is that the majority of the sites were associated with Cuthbert's life and so it may be concluded that a belief was substantiated in his sanctity remaining imbued within the fabric of the buildings (Wells 2013, 228). Crook (2011, 18) used the term 'comfort objects' to describe contact relics, which sits well with my hypothesis that shrines and associated locations were promoted as cult attractions as they retained the presence of their original owner. Anything that a saint had touched, in life or in death, pilgrims could draw solace from through touch or proximity. They were continually

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<sup>118</sup> Once the relics were removed, a cenotaph was erected in commemoration in the nave of the priory-church.

sacred and their intangible and moral qualities could be passed to and from objects and people (Woolgar 2006, 29).

This may be explained by the notion of a ‘sense of place’ whereby locations become imbued with history through a prolific creativity of making something of things that have happened (This is also a resonant aspect in the creation of sacred landscapes, cf. papers in Jones and Semple 2012). Just like a route, so a shrine may acquire the meaning and stability, characteristic of the traits of a place, through habitual use or visitation (Tuan 1977, 182). Thus, a sense of place grows and presents itself as a ‘social imaginary’ develops through take, actions and signs that are ‘scanned’ or collected like dense layers that demarcate a *place*. What we are therefore attempting to uncover or track is the ‘force of cultural practices subject to social use’ (Stewart 1996, 137–9; Garner 2011). It is reasonable to refer here to the concept of ‘reading’ the past like text. Signs and their working are understood through excesses of reading meanings only found in uncovering the social and historical usage of the place or *habitus*; through the process of remembering, retelling and imagining (Stewart 1996, 140). The examples above have illustrated that use and belief in their affectivity as places was determined more by accounts of impact, signs and traces, than of facts and physical evidence – once again, there was a belief in an absence.

Moreover, Lindisfarne is very similar to St Neot being another unusual case of a burial site located a considerable distance from the translation-site.<sup>119</sup> Thus, what occurred at Lindisfarne and Farne is a great exemplar for why St Neot church created an interior entirely structured around the association with its patron saint and which culminated in a largely empty shrine structure. In the late 18<sup>th</sup> century the Revd. John Whitaker found a local tradition of St Neot not recorded in any of the written Lives. The narrative appears to have been entirely constructed from parish word of mouth and, when discovered, was still ‘as fresh in the memory, and as lively upon the tongues of the

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<sup>119</sup> Most burial sites are located close to the translation site (i.e. within the same building): see for example Beverley (St John), Canterbury (Becket), Kentigern (Glasgow), Swithun (Winchester), and William (York). The distance between St Neot’s original burial site in Cornwall and the place where his stolen relics were removed to in Huntingdonshire is approximately 274 miles by road and 220 miles as the crow flies ([http://www.postcode.org.uk/country/uk/\\_postcodedistancecalculator.asp?SPC=PL14+6NG&FPC=PE19+2BU&Submit=Calculate+Distance](http://www.postcode.org.uk/country/uk/_postcodedistancecalculator.asp?SPC=PL14+6NG&FPC=PE19+2BU&Submit=Calculate+Distance), accessed 12<sup>th</sup> February 2012). Cuthbert’s burial site at Lindisfarne and his reliquary-shrine at Durham is approximately 86 miles by road and 69 miles as the crow flies (see [http://www.postcode.org.uk/country/uk/\\_postcode-distancecalculator.asp?SPC=DH1&FPC=TD15&Submit=Calculate+Distance](http://www.postcode.org.uk/country/uk/_postcode-distancecalculator.asp?SPC=DH1&FPC=TD15&Submit=Calculate+Distance), accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2010).

parishioners, as any of his written miracles. It even appears to carry a higher confidence of truth than any other, by appealing to a visible monument in proof of its own veracity' (Whitaker 1809, 17). As Harvey explained,

Lowenthal (1985, pp. 213–4) quotes from Pocock (1962) when he notes that "... collective statements about the past help to conserve existing arrangements, and the diffusion of all manner of history, whether fact or fable, fosters the feeling of belonging to coherent, stable and durable institutions". This provides a context in which to understand the hagiographic legends and stories in west Cornwall as emblems of emerging parochial communities within a symbolic landscape. The promotion of saintly myths and legends went hand in hand with the processes of uniform territorial definition associated with parochialisation (Harvey 2000, 216).

St Neot is therefore a tangible example of this practice. The shrine, still standing in the church, although likely devoid of relics, is still to this day a visible reminder of the cult proving that history and social commendation hold more prestige than any official *vita* of a saint.

The tradition also makes reference to many sites of the surrounding countryside which together, similar to Lindisfarne and Farne, create a complement of associated cult locations and wider constructed pilgrimage 'theme park'. These include the chapel of St Neot licensed in 1380, the chapels of St Neot and St Ann licensed in 1425 (*Reg. Lacy*, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1425; Dunstan 1963, 118),<sup>120</sup> the holy well situated a short distance from the village (supposedly this was the original pool in which Neot meditated) (Fig 5.49) and, finally, Crow Pound, an enclosure linked to a miracle from the hagiography (Doble 1929, 45–6). In order to further authenticate and establish the links with the saint, these locations appear to have been promoted (perhaps even exploited) in order to verify the parochial association with the cult. David Harvey also observed this as a common trait in the hagiography of west Cornwall: 'Particular versions of history and tradition seek to legitimise institutional development, and the subjective recognition of a particular landscape requires a legitimate relation to social identity and memory' (Harvey 2000, 215).

From the 14<sup>th</sup> century onwards, a common practice of the Church was the increasingly substantial time and energy invested in managing absence, and the theatricality framing those absences, rather than in hagiography. This was particularly the case for image-shrines, largely those of the Virgin Mary, for which similar constructions were created due to the absence of relics (Champion forthcoming). Examples include Our Lady of

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<sup>120</sup> As *capell* is used in the original MS, it is unclear whether this was two separate or one joint chapel.

Long Melford as noted earlier, which possessed only a miraculous image but inspired an entire rebuild of the church's Lady Chapel (Marks 2004, 199), and the obscure 14<sup>th</sup>-century shrine-chapel and holy well built for Our Ladye of the Park at Liskeard (Cornwall) (Santoro 2011, 36; Orme 2000, 179; Riche 2002). At Morebath in Devon, the 16<sup>th</sup>-century vicar, Sir Christopher Trychay, also constructed an entire cult around an image-shrine of St Sidwell whose relics lay in a nearby Exeter church (Duffy 2003, 73–4). Sir Christopher had the saint's statue placed strategically alongside the figure of Jesus over the altar where daily and requiem Masses were said (Duffy 2003, 74). The image-shrine encouraged handsome bequests of a monetary and material nature which appropriately 'dressed' the saint. As a result, the steady growth (largely economic) of the cult led to a renovation of the church's interior in the 1530s, including its imagery and furnishings, followed by the transformation of large portions of the fabric, including a new screen, a reordering of the chancel area, new choir stalls, a re-pewing of the church and a renewal of the timberwork around the font and High Altar (Duffy 2003, 76–7).

Also, in the priory church of Bradwell Abbey (Buckinghamshire), the Chapel of Our Lady of Bradwell housed a similar image-shrine to Long Melford. Here, however, there is a distinct correlation to the arrangement at St Neot. The image resided in a purpose-built 14<sup>th</sup>-century chapel, although located at the west end of the church. The route to be followed by pilgrims was marked out by the stamped tiles of the floor which acted as a 'carpet of honour' for the image (Marks 2004, 198). The walls also tied into the pilgrimage scheme by depicting the letter 'M' as well as throughout scenes of the Virgin's early life which adorned the north wall (Fig 5.50). Perhaps St Neot also followed this convention, tying in roof bosses to the glass, walls and then to the floor. Similar to St Neot, the laity was also key to the Melford cult and some were even depicted holding *ex-votos* on the south wall painting, thus consecutively announcing the authenticity and efficacy of the image. Furthermore, the location of the image, in a stone canopied niche at the north end of the east wall, echoes that of St Neot; this position was the place of honour for patronal saints. Finally, Marks (2004, 198) also suggested that the use of the stone frame meant that the image was exposed and therefore permanently accessible to a predominantly local clientele. This perhaps gives us some idea of the status of pilgrims visiting St Neot's shrine given that it was also accessible and it too was framed by a canopied niche.

What becomes apparent is a recurrent practice of ‘constructing’ a site of pilgrimage through an association with a cult regardless of whether relics were extant. The Chartreuse de Champmol near Dijon (France) is one of the grandest examples of this practice and can help to understand the intentions behind the church of St Neot. From its very inception (dedicated in 1388), the Carthusian monastery provided space for visitors and pilgrims within the fabric of the complex. Like the Cornish church and the two Virgin cult sites, the Chartreuse de Champmol housed no relics. However, Gelfand’s (2011, 90) analysis of the art and architecture of the monastery has found that it was a place of imaginative pilgrimage. The awe-inspiring wonders of Claus Sluter’s sculptures adorning the Well of Moses are remnants of the Great Cross which stood in the cloister of the monastery. They portray the prophets, Mary Magdalene, the Virgin, John the Baptist, the Crucifixion, and weeping angels (Fig 5.51). The verisimilitude of the sculpted figures was so engaging that they were perceived as an efficacious aid for devotion.

In turn, the sculptures themselves became objects of veneration. In fact, a papal bull which granted indulgences to the site refers to the Christ figure as an ‘effigiem’. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century this term was used to describe ‘sculpture that connotes the actual presence or essence of a being’ (Lindquist quoted in Gelfand 2011, 93). They were real, responsive figures, essentially archetypes that ‘consciously or unconsciously involved the viewer in intercessory rituals or prayers’ (Roffey 2006, 27–8). Veneration of these image-shrines occurred simply because, as Philip Nichols noted in 1549, ‘they would have a god that they might sensibly see with their bodily and carnal eyes’ (quoted in Whiting 1982, 39). An affective power was thought to emanate from them and corporeally touch the viewer. Sadler explained this through Ronald Barthes’s modern principle of ‘punctum’: ‘the part of a photograph that elicited an ineffable response from the viewer, [the detail which pricks our memory] “something that astonishes...with an astonishment which endures and renews itself, inexhaustibly”’ (Barthes 2011, 385, 407).

As Stevenson found in her analysis of medieval devotional piety,

The visual models and theories circulating during the later Middle Ages conceptualised art objects and images as “active” entities, and thus recognized the viewer’s body and the object of perception as physically interacting with one another; seeing was understood as to be kinaesthetic’ (Stevenson 2010, 45–6).

Stevenson (2010, 46) attributed this to 'infiction': a conventional assumption of medieval visual theory and devotion, which led pilgrims to ascribe a 'liveness' to static objects through seeing images and objects as conveying rhythmic energies. Performative piety allowed the image to reach the devotee through their own perception and experience; a process of medieval image culture in which devotional experience was dictated by visual spectacle. Direct contact was effectively established between the seen and seer; sight was perception by the soul which allowed vision within the mind to perceive divine truths – the eye of faith was beyond the corporeal (Woolgar 2006, 148).

This derives, in essence, from Augustine's concept of signs and visual analogies serving in place of abstract concepts so that difficult ideas may be easier to comprehend (Olson 2007, 18). Almost every decorative and architectural element of the surroundings of these 'shrines' held an underlying meaning, symbolism or didactic message to promote an experience and memory of a visit. The colour of sculpture, painting, or decoration, as well as form, constituted a tool for artificial memory due to the fact that the more legible images or sculptures were, the easier they were to interpret and memorise. They caused the pilgrim, as Augustine noted, 'to think of something beyond the impression the thing itself makes upon the senses' (Hagen 1990, 103). Seeing such things allowed one to see beyond their earthly properties to the eternal realities of their hagiography, which then became physically present (Woolgar 2006, 148). Although sparked by sight, these places were known and thus experienced so that the place was 'sensed' through a complex interplay of intersensory perceptual processes including one's embodied experience and memories (Feld 1996, 97–8).

I propose that this occurred through much more than simply an animation or naturalism of a sculpture as Gelfand and Sadler suggest, but that the retention of sanctity imbued within an object of veneration could also cause the same reaction. Like the Chartreuse de Champmol, the ability of such cult sites to attract pilgrims rested on reputation. At the Carthusian monastery, this came from word of mouth of the efficacy of the Well sculptures. St Neot did not need this affirmation. The hagiography was clear: the saint had performed many miraculous actions. His thaumaturgic power and intercessory abilities were well established. His shrine was already sanctified from the moment his relics touched the casket and this power was felt to remain imbued within its entire locale.

Perhaps the most literal example of ‘constructed’ pilgrimage comes from a site very near, and connected to St Neot. While most pilgrimage churches created exceptional architectural settings for saints, this was not the only type of cult the medieval church thought acceptable. Exeter Cathedral is revolutionary in that its architectural arrangement is unparalleled in England (Brooks 1990, 33; Graves 2000, 25) with its foci centering on Episcopal continuity rather than that of a cult saint.

The reason for the aesthetic coherence, symmetry, homogeneity, and simple elaboration of the architecture of the Exeter tombs was due to the cathedral’s lack of major relics. The church needed to attract visitors and money to their building and, by promoting the episcopacy itself, what they came up with was, Brooks proposed, ‘a prodigal display of wealth, literal and metaphorical, a manifestation of that temporal power that was the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace’ (Brooks 1990, 33).

The symmetrical arrangement of Exeter is striking. There are nine chapels which link off from the retrochoir, the largest of which contains the Lady Chapel. The tombs of Bishop Branscombe (d.1280) and Bishop Stafford (d.1419) are situated underneath the arches between the Lady Chapel and its flanking chapels (Fig 5.52). Although both Bishops were buried in plain tombs shortly after their deaths, the elaborate creations for the tomb chests and canopies actually date to *c.*1442 when they were designed as a pair (Graves 2000, 54). The presbytery also featured this coherent plan as Bishop Berkeley’s tomb (d.1327) was located on the south and was paired with Bishop Lacy’s tomb on the north when he died in *c.*1453/1455 (Brooks 1990, 32; Graves 2000, 54).

Additionally, tombs for Bishop Icanus (d.1184), Bishop Simon of Apulia (d.1223), and Bishop Quinil (d.1291) also lie in this area. Bishop Oldham (d.1517) was buried in a chantry built at the end of the south choir aisle which paired with a chantry on the north side built for Sir John Spoke (d.1518). The designs of these tombs also echo those of Branscombe and Stafford. Finally, Bishop Stapledon was buried nearest to the High Altar after his death in 1326 (Graves 2000, 54).

The importance of the architectural arrangement was crucial to the pilgrim experience at Exeter. The pattern of circulation was entirely constructed and linked to the ‘self-conscious exhibition of Episcopal continuity’ (Brooks 1990, 33). Indeed, it seems Brooks was correct when he implied that the bishops’ tombs were arranged for public

display. Additionally, the architecture was all of the same Decorated style, which meant that from the moment the visitor entered, there was a sense of homogeneity, creating the sensation that the fabric and layout had been designed for their pleasure and religious experience.

The choir was also hidden by a screen which created a sense of anticipation for what was to come and what could be seen behind it (Orme 1986, 24). It is not clear whether lay pilgrims could enter through the door in the choir screen; nevertheless they most certainly could enter the eastern end via the choir aisles. Lay people were still barred from the choir by locked gates at the choir entrances when Mass and other services were commencing (Orme 1986, 28). This restricted the view of the choir at certain times, reminding the pilgrims of their lower status, while enticing them with minor previews of the architectural elaboration, and the innate sanctity. Additionally, there were various screens and gates that enclosed and surrounded some of the lesser altars and various tombs were railed off to protect them from rambunctious pilgrims (Orme 1986, 30).

It is clear that the planned nature of Exeter Cathedral was integrally bound to the creation of a cult of their own and, accordingly, the cathedral was constructed to provide the ultimate vista of, what Brooks (1990, 33) termed, an architectural 'ideology of episcopacy'. Once again, we see a church attempting to create a new identity for the institution, or rather establishing a new one through a relationship between past and present: 'at Exeter it was the imperatives of the present that were guiding the reshaping, reconstruction, or indeed, the construction of the past' (Insley 2011, 56).

Finally, by examining the offering accounts, Orme (1986, 27–8) traced the veneration patterns to the change in the route taken by pilgrims at Exeter. After the cult of Berkely waned in the 1330s and 40s, so did the gradual decline of the chantry chapel on the same side of the choir as his tomb. Subsequently, Bishop Lacy then died and as his cult grew, so did the visitors to his tomb which resided on the *other* side of the choir. Perhaps this may be a model for the situation at St Neot as it is possible that the decline in the use of the shrine for pilgrimage purposes coincided with its transformation into an Easter Sepulchre and therefore the access/route to the structure may have changed with the families' use of the chantry chapel.

Orme's suggestion is perhaps correct: until 1200/1300 it was 'essential for churches to possess such relics, because most people found it easier to relate to Christianity through tangible objects than in purely abstract terms' (Orme 1986, 82). Following this period, the architectural *setting* and its projected atmosphere and experience were the draw for pilgrims; such schemes were artificial assistances in creating memories. This marked a shift in directing attention away from meaning to physical experience, although it must be noted that meaning was not excluded as its essence contributed to the power of the sacred, sensory atmosphere.

Not only a factor of cult sites, however, this was a turning point in managing absence in the wider context of the medieval church. While this was a national practice, evidence suggests that Cornwall was seen by outsiders not to put value on bodily relics. The removal of St Neot's body to Huntingdonshire was joined by the relics of St Winifred which were moved from Holywell (Flintshire) to Shrewsbury, and by St Rumon's to Tavistock (Devon), both in the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Orme 2010, 115). Furthermore, the chief sites of pilgrimage in Cornwall were St Michael's Mount and St Day. Neither possessed corporeal remains of a saint, yet on the eve of the Reformation, pilgrimage numbers were thriving. Significance was afforded to the locale wherein the body had rested which was considered a sanctified site, giving it historical authority. The fact that locations in which relics had resided were referred to simply as 'the place' (*loca sanctorum*) upholds this theory that sanctity remained, and therefore they continued to be visited whether relics still resided within/at them or not.

Brown (1981, 38) characterised the churchmen who initiated this aspect of saints' cults as 'impresarios' as he felt they 'rewired' or engineered their promotion. He also noted the move from miracles as private contemplations to public events advertised to the outside world and even recorded in files. Yet, as Crook (2011, 18) claims, no cult could be successful if it did not appeal to the heart of pilgrimage: a sense of contact with a saint. Through the pilgrim's senses, they were able to experience those of the saint, as evidenced by Gregory of Nyssa's comment:

Those who behold them embrace, as it were, the living body in full flower: they bring eye, mouth, ear, all the senses into play, and then, shedding tears of reverence and passion, they address to the martyr their prayers of intercession as though he were present (quoted in Brown 1981, 11).

As the church of St Neot testifies, experience was achieved through a broad sensory engagement, but this did not have to be fulfilled through the ‘agency of presence’. Late-medieval devotion is thus characteristic of the argument against the presumption that ‘When we appreciate the presence of a thing, we appreciate it precisely as not absent’ (Solowski 2000, 7). Rather, as this ‘constructed’ type of pilgrimage has shown, performance can evoke presence through a variety of sensory strategies without the appearance of a concrete or tangible ‘thing’ to venerate. Something that may be virtual, such as the belief in an absent presence (that may not be visual, i.e. the Host or saint’s relics), can subsequently be understood as present, and through the attainment of materiality and its imposition on the body, the actual and virtual are simultaneously in play in the liminal zone between the two: a religious experience. How this belief was managed illustrates that an interrelation of sensory media emphasises presence and enhances the experience of it existing in the present. Theatricality, Lavender (2006, 65) noted, ‘trade[s] in a currency of the present and immediate’, and, in accordance, ‘artefact becomes presentation’.

A common theme is evident at all of these pilgrimage sites: the construction and use of display in order to produce a distinct ‘theatricality’ of the architectural and decorative setting was crucial to enhancing and somewhat producing the devotional experience, regardless of the prestige of a set of relics. It appears that ‘Aesthetic sensibilities [were]...aroused as much by the setting and surrounds and the garnishing of the image as by the image itself’ (Marks 2004, 218). This is perfectly summed up by the following quotation by David Freedberg:

Each picture and statue is enshrined, set against a more or less gaudy backdrop, bedecked or wrapped in garments that are studded with gems, crowned, and generally bejewelled. This, it would seem, is what makes these pictures and statues effective, and what attracts the crowds. Their age and type seem almost irrelevant (Freedberg 1989, 118).

#### **5.10 THE SENSORIUM: RECONSTRUCTING THE MEDIEVAL PILGRIMAGE EXPERIENCE**

From the above analysis it is now possible to re-trace the steps of the medieval pilgrim on their sensory journey through the church to the shrine. The following narrative will provide this reconstruction which is set after the erection of the north aisle and chapel. I will also allude to the dual function of the shrine as an Easter Sepulchre.

*Upon entry through the small wooden door of the south entrance, the sparkling lustre of the radiant colourful glass hit the walls of the church, emphasising the vibrant primary colours of the painted walls in contrast to the deep richness of the floor tiles. The three elliptical shaped roofs bore down like tunnels of woven nets above the head, framing the three areas of the building, and ‘catching’ the pilgrims beneath. Walking forwards, the intricate scenes of the St Neot window hit the eye and drew pilgrims toward the north aisle.*

*As they stood in front of the four-lighted window, the narrative came alive to the eye. Those who could not read the Latin inscriptions could still navigate the scenes of the legendary hagiography of their local saint – his blue robes and halo made Neot instantly recognisable – and, if not, there were always literate clergy on hand to unravel the sacred messages.*

*The jewel tones of the glass were reflected onto the surrounding masonry, forcing the eye to roam the walls and ceiling and, accordingly, the intricately carved roof bosses displaying the crucial fish elements of the hagiography met their eyes. Any local parishioner knew the story and so the connection with the life of St Neot was immediately apparent by the bosses which were interpreted as signposts, illustrating to pilgrims that they were in the vicinity leading to the shrine. As the bosses framed the centre of the north roof, they forced the eye straight to the east and, therefore, the chantry chapel of the local elite Tubb and Callaway families.*

*Although the various wooden screens framed the space in front of them, including a very large screen which dominated the view towards the High Altar, they also created pockets or windows which provided glimpses of the back of the shrine, stood slightly to the south. However, the offered view of the shrine was only a very small glimpse. Only a square hole was visible, nothing of any elaboration or delicate decoration. It was hoped that the front of the shrine was much more decorative than its rear.*

*The elaborately painted and carved screens were visually striking – the intricate work was so splendid that it demanded a lengthy gaze to decipher the symbolic and iconographic messages of its subject. Many of the saints pictured in the windows were also represented on the rood screen, together with the holy family and prophets, who acted as guardians of the space beyond. Moreover, they cast shadows onto the entire masonry as they were bathed by the lights nestled between garlands of flowers amongst the screen framework, creating an almost tangible boundary of the holiest area – a sort of fence of illumination.*

*Doors in the western screen provided access to the chapel, and through them the pilgrims continued on towards the eastern altar which stood for the Masses and prayers of the elite families. En-route, pilgrims looked to their left, interpreting the combination of saints, biblical and donor figures that punctuated the light-filled windows. To their left and right, the route was graced by the presence of angels situated along the roof line – the pilgrims walked down the aisle as if on their way to heaven, in the presence of the angelic; they were therefore protected and their prayers heard as they walked.*

*The aisle was small and although the church was extremely busy, the route provided a clear stream of visitors, keeping hustle and bustle to a minimum. As they furthered towards the east, this arrangement became more complex. The small screens meant that only a few pilgrims could enter the shrine area at one time and a social hierarchy of visiting pilgrims was enforced. With that, the sound of an invisible organ was played out into the church, creating a harmonious atmosphere and heightening the excitement and sacrality of the visit. On further inspection, the organ sounds came from above, although its presence was obscured by the great and dominating figures of the Crucifix flanked by the Virgin and Baptist, which added to the feeling of salvation and protection. It was clear the pilgrims were getting closer to the sacred shrine locale.*

*Once they had passed through the screens, the smell of incense was thrust upon the nose, then forcing its way into the mouth as a result of the pungency, entering their bodies and clinging to their clothes. Spice and sweetness filled the area, casting out any evil spirits and perfuming with the sacred. Breathing in the deep smell enhanced the atmosphere – the colours became more vibrant, the sounds louder. Upon entry, it was clear that the chantry chapel was more than a simple walkway. To visit the shrine, prayers had to be said for the families before the altar. As they were seated on the cold stone seats of the chapel, a service was given by the resident incumbent in which pilgrims were prompted to participate.*

*The Latin Mass fought against the chattering sounds of the nearby waiting pilgrims as they became agitated in anticipation or pain to finally reach their destination, so close to them. Then the sound of the western bells startled the pilgrims and they were forced to look back over their shoulder at the tower in which the large sound-makers resided. The sound cast a veil of harmony out over the church, compelling the pilgrims' minds back to piety. Through the dainty, yet intricate wooden decoration of the screens surrounding them, the throngs of waiting pilgrims were made apparent. With that, a few pilgrims were seen to pass by the southern screen – they had just exited the sacred area and, thus, the bells were clearly the mark of a miracle. The*

*anticipation of the pilgrims in the chantry was seen to increase. They began to shuffle and mumble and so the clergyman brought the service to an end.*

*He then announced that they were to form a single line and wait for their turn to enter through the archway to their left in order to visit the holy St Neot. Within the chapel, a silence blanketed the queue as quickly as the bells heard earlier had punctuated the building with sound. As they stood waiting their turn, they faced the hole that had stared back at them earlier and could see through it to the pilgrims in front, who now attended the shrine for their own needs and desires.*

*The warden of the shrine appeared again, the same man who had performed the altar Mass, holding by his side a large vessel – a censer filled with the aroma that had filled their noses earlier. With it swinging around him he asked the pilgrims to follow him through the archway in an orderly fashion and as they passed underneath the arch into the sacred chancel, to their left was an ornate niche: the shrine. Immediately it became apparent that the hole they had seen earlier was actually punched from the chantry chapel straight into the back of the shrine.*

*Before partaking in their own individual devotional acts, they stood before the shrine at the detailed painting that adorned the back wall of the niche. The crucifixion emanated back, surrounded by the same sort of vessels the clergyman had swung to create the sweet-smelling aroma. An inscription clearly identified the painting in more detail, yet many pilgrims could not interpret its Latin. The painting clearly signified that the shrine had more than one function. The entire structure was, however, bathed in colour as the large east window above the most holy High Altar to their right illuminated the space, glorifying the area and warming the pilgrims through the streaming sunlight. Its colours juxtaposed those of the shrine itself, which was adorned with the brightest of reds, blues and gilding, and was further emphasised by the intricate colourful work of the tapestry depicting the church's patron which hung on the wall to the east.*

*The shrine structure itself was smaller than imagined although it stood almost four metres high. From the roof, an enormous colourful censer was hung in front of the shrine. Above were two hooks upon which a veil was suspended, clearly for use during the Easter celebrations, but it was currently tied up so that the shrine could be accessible to fulfil its primary function. Although there were no lower niched recesses for the pilgrims to touch or enter into (only sculpted decoration), many forced their way into the niche recess, getting as close as they could to the masonry in order to absorb its sacred qualities. Others simply touched the masonry, or kissed the cold stonework or*

*rubbed their hands over its delicate carvings, reciting prayers or wishes. Many mumbled inside the cavernous recess which then echoed out into the chancel and down the tunnel vaulted ceiling. Candles were left lit all around the shrine, and when the prayers of the pilgrims were over, they too added to the illumination that shone out into the chancel.*

*Once the pilgrims looked set to end their visit, they were directed to give thanks for the miraculous power of St Neot. To the right was a small box in which they were to offer monetary contributions, if possible. Those who could not afford such luxuries left other material gifts, adding to the accumulation of material objects that now littered the shrine area.*

*They were then led down the central aisle towards the western end of the church, the light beaming from the southern windows illuminating the pilgrims that had just visited the shrine, making them feel as if they were being bathed in sanctity from the saint and that their visit had been a subsequent success. They were kept out of the way of the masses of pilgrims still awaiting their turn who stood deciphering the various iconographic and hagiographic symbolisms adorning the north aisle.*

*They then exited the south door that they had entered through in order to begin their devotional experience. Walking back through the porch and meeting the oncoming visiting pilgrims face on, they smiled in the hope that they would receive the same magnificent experience as they just had.*

## **5.11 CONCLUSION**

This chapter, the first detailed archaeological examination of the parish church of St Neot, has illustrated the tapestry of intentions behind the establishment and creation of the pilgrimage framework. In the first instance, the church authorities certainly had an interest in shaping or, in fact, constructing the pilgrimage encounter and perception of the church and its associated saint. This grew out of the instability in the accreditation of the cult and the church's claims to the relics which may, or may not, have resided in the chancel. A larger amount of effort was therefore needed to structure the cult in an appropriate manner which was largely achieved through the pilgrimage infrastructure of the church, thus setting the scene for experience.

Continual elaborations and additions to the fabric and shrine structure maintained this, resulting in the 'creation' of a theatrical pilgrimage environment, primarily to preserve the memory of the site within the mind of the pilgrim. Secondly, familial influence was

decidedly instrumental in the creation of the accompanying pilgrimage route due to the patronage of the chantry and adjoining north aisle in which the shrine was located. The Tubbs/Callaways saw this as an opportunity to link their name with the hagiography of St Neot and firmly establish the cult with the church given the insecurity the relic theft left its reputation. How far they were involved in the scheme is difficult to surmise; yet the use of the Tubb fish in the original glass and the continued fish theme in the roof bosses, as well as the location of the St Neot window, suggests they may have played a decisive role in the iconographic plan. These underlying strategic discourses were also joined by a third: the surrounding parochial community. As such, it could be argued that, similar to Durham, St Neot was also heavily influenced by its pilgrimage population, although technically various groups within the parish, as many would not have travelled particularly far and may well have been associated with one of the groups.

The church may subsequently have used an aspect of false advertising. By constructing an appropriate and elaborate shrine structure, this would serve to generate belief in the presence of the relics even though the church itself may have known that they either were not there or few existed. This was then furthered by the rest of the interior space and route which were also specifically planned to impact on the pilgrims' thoughts as they entered, manipulating their minds into feeling like they were in a place of long-standing reverence with an underscoring miraculous ability. The church was 'putting on a front' through the showmanship of the elaborate decoration and architecture which, as it conformed to one unified pilgrimage scheme, appeared more authentic; pilgrims were more likely to believe in the true nature of the cult (regardless of the existence of relics) if the building portrayed such an identity. Then, through an institution of performance, drama and theatrical spectacle were essentially used to 'stage' the shrine's setting. Through a synaesthesia of images, smells, lights, sounds, and opportunities for touch, pilgrims could connect with the sacred shrine and surrounding architectural locale (Blick and Gelfand 2011, xli), almost fooling the pilgrim into thinking the saint was more revered than he actually was. Yet the 'truth' was a secondary consideration, not the main function of the pilgrimage scheme; rather, the church reconstructed its past through the anomalies in the history in order to legitimise its place as a cult site in the medieval present. We may go as far to say that the shrine structure was elaborated in the 14<sup>th</sup> century with the ogee and the painting in the 15<sup>th</sup> century simply to lay claim to and promote the cult. Consequently, the church of St Neot and its associated cult, is an

exemplary of Frey's concept of the creation of a sacred space: '...it is not merely discovered, or founded, or constructed, it is claimed, owned and operated by people advancing specific interests' (1998, 67).

Social responses to the pilgrimage church are therefore an extremely valid aspect of study, and one which will be considered further in the following, final chapter. Although a polarity has become apparent between the sensory experiences encountered by different social levels, this is likely a product of the complex underlying dynamics and intentions at work. The analysis of all four churches has indicated various possibilities and encounters for all types of pilgrim. Yet, how far respite from, or a severance of ties binding each pilgrim to their social status, was achieved may be better understood by a wider comparative analysis of the art, architecture and materiality of all four churches and the experiences generated by them.

# 6

## CONCLUSION

### ‘KINGS, COMMONERS AND COMMUNITIES’: AN EXPERIENTIAL EXAMINATION

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis has examined the pilgrimage infrastructure of the medieval church from three social perspectives during the period between *c.*1170 and *c.*1550. The records left by these cult churches have proven to be an invaluable source of evidence for understanding how the sensory experience of the pilgrim developed and changed throughout the course of the medieval period, and why. The methodological approach adopted centred on the use of an archaeology of the senses to better understand the impact and influence of pilgrims on the architectural and decorative cult infrastructures. This is the first, integrated, archaeological and sensory investigation of the medieval pilgrim experience in this country.

In emulation of the pilgrims discussed in this thesis, I also arrive here at the culmination of my peregrination, in reality and metaphorically. The final stage of this research journey requires a retracing of the entirety of my steps in order to consider what they have discovered. This chapter will subsequently evaluate what has come before in order to uncover what must come next.

The impetus behind the thesis was the belief in a degree of variability in how medieval pilgrimage churches were experienced at different social levels, and that the visiting pilgrim population somehow influenced the construction of the buildings. The dual aim was therefore to discover the experiential effect on various social groups and the aesthetic and material impact of their presence at the sites.

Through narratives of the pilgrimage experience of four major cult sites across different geographical and historical contexts, it has proven the assumption that all people

encountered pilgrimage churches and experienced them in the same way must be disregarded. Fundamentally, the dominant force in shaping the pilgrimage experience of the laity or royalty was as much each other as the Church. It has further concluded that the methods, manners, rituals and customs found at one site may be entirely different to another and were dependent on the social or religious needs and intentions of an individual church. No two pilgrimage sites created experience in the same way. The Church did not act as a universal institution administering cult practices and constructing the associated domain using a conflation of customs, sources or models, as one may first suggest. While there may be similarities in the priorities of sites, what these were and why they featured at more than one church requires investigation and explanation.

The chapter is organised into three sections. A culmination of the examinations of the contextual evidence will be undertaken, cutting across the conclusions found in the previous chapters in order to reconsider the objectives discussed at the beginning of this thesis. This section will act as the main termination of the thesis, bringing together the arguments already formed and developing on them to uncover the impact of the church building on the medieval pilgrim, and *vice versa*. Primary consideration will be given to the following objective as outlined in the introduction to this thesis: a comparative investigation into the sensory experience of the three social groups. I will also analyse the most prominent themes that have emerged, relative to the wider issue of medieval sensory pilgrimage experience. The remaining part of the chapter will explore the historical implications of my conclusions whilst situating my findings in the wider field of the archaeology of pilgrimage and ecclesiastical studies. I end by outlining further avenues for research and by summarising the advantages of using an archaeology of sensory experience as a new approach to the medieval pilgrimage church – thus, what the research has achieved in a broader context.

## **6.2 PILGRIMAGE ART AND ARCHITECTURE AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH**

The range of evidence consulted has made it possible to compare the pilgrim experiences of the three social groups considered in this thesis to uncover how they influenced and were influenced by the associative infrastructure of the churches. The significance of this examination lies in uncovering whether there was a greater need for a sensory interaction with the art and architecture of the building for a more fulfilling

experience, or whether the developments in the models and styles used unintentionally produced a greater sensory experience. Thus, this will explain whether pilgrims had any direct influence on the cult infrastructure of the medieval church.

Several predominant themes have come to light as integral contributions to the construction of the varying sensory experiences. These will be discussed throughout the examination below. They include:

- ♦ Ritual and procession
- ♦ Constructed pilgrimage
- ♦ National versus regional stylistic models
- ♦ Cult rivalry
- ♦ Physical, imaginative and performative interaction
- ♦ Interrelationship between medieval piety and gender
- ♦ Memory

It is now possible to answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this thesis. To reiterate, these were: Were experiences created to suit different social groups and, if so, how did they impact on the archaeological record of the church building? Did the common layman have some influence on how cult churches were built and embellished? What imprint did these transient and ephemeral visitors leave? And, most importantly, how did pilgrims experience the cult churches and associated infrastructures differently? A separate section (the next in this chapter) will form an answer to the latter, most significant objective.

There was a clear increase in the spatial areas of eastern ends, most likely to accommodate visitors to the shrines. A pattern is therefore apparent between the creation of elaborate shrine vistas and the attempt to maintain a steady stream of pilgrims. As today, it would seem that initial excitement wore thin and people were constantly searching for their 'new fix'. This required looking for the next promotion of a new cult saint who promised miracles and cures that had never been previously achieved.

Many cult churches undertook such promotional work for their saints including, the elaborations of the shrines of SS Paulinus and Ithamar at Rochester Cathedral; St

Alban's shrine; St Erkenwald in Old St Paul's; and St Edburg of Bicester (Crook 2006, 125). At the great cult churches, St Cuthbert's shrine at Durham was given a taller base in order to provide a spectacle rivalling Canterbury when its popularity was weakening following the extravagant 1220 translation of Becket's relics to his newly constructed shrine in the Trinity Chapel. Moreover, at Durham, space to accommodate visitors was provided by the Nine Altars and similarly, at Canterbury, perhaps one could argue that the entire eastern construction was created for this reason. St Neot church created a larger spatial area for the setting of the shrine and to hold more space for visiting pilgrims. This allowed for a subsequent pilgrimage route to be incorporated into the church fabric. Again, at Durham, Canterbury and York the formulation of the eastern ends created a determined route for pilgrims to follow.

As the art and architecture developed, the peregrinations made by the laity towards the shrine were aided as the infrastructures functioned as signposting devices as well as increasing the sensory interaction of the journey to the final integrative scheme surrounding the shrine structure itself: the reliquary, pavements, ceilings, pillars and surrounding glass. At all three cathedrals this is very clearly seen, whereas in the parish church of St Neot, screens were used in place of pillars, and painting and roof bosses in place of masonry and vaulting.

At both York and Durham, screens provided access through two small doors to the shrines situated behind the High Altars. Brown (2003, 209) suggests that York's screen was largely a tool for further elaboration of the reformed choir, and I believe this was similarly the case at Durham. When visitor numbers dropped, architectural constructions of grandeur and appealing visuality were created in order to entice visitors away from the most popular sites (i.e. Canterbury). By the 15<sup>th</sup> century, however, it is likely that, particularly at Durham and Canterbury, it would have been considered 'sacrilegious' to make further modifications to the firmly established (and therefore associative) design of the feretras or shrine bases (Dobson 2001, 27).

Physical barriers were crucial to the processional functions of Canterbury Cathedral. Although under normal circumstances the laity was able to enter through them at specific times, as we know from the miracle collections and contemporary accounts, access to the shrine was carefully controlled and, during royal visits, no doubt it ceased completely. The gates and screens thus resulted in the eastern end being a highly

symbolic threshold that only the most elite visitors could penetrate and symbolically activate (Frost 2009, 150). The symbolic thresholds were easily perceived by everyone, but their restrictive nature thwarted the laity with their meditative possibilities for the elite, similar to Richard II's emblem over the threshold of the south transept at York, for example. There existed fewer physical barriers at St Neot compared to Durham and York. But, in regards to the royal experience, barriers were largely irrelevant as they were virtually all freely penetrable to them. Yet the shrines at all four churches were never fully enclosed and situated so that they were still at least slightly visually accessible to the public in one way or another – the structures were often the culminating vista and so integrated into the design of the eastern ends.

The traditional cruciform arrangement of the churches was regularly disrupted as a result of the subsequent pilgrimage schemes. The addition of screens and gates masked the visual cues through which the simple cruciform arrangement had been articulated and created an emphasis on areas of the building associated with the cults. This clearly illustrates the fundamental influence of pilgrimage on the medieval church and its determination of the layout of the buildings, and *vice versa*. The various decorative aspects, such as the banners, roof bosses, wall paintings and even glass, then further enhanced this shift in design.

The importance of these visual and structural changes needs to be examined more fully. In many respects, they led to a 'regionalisation' of the internal space of the churches (Giddens 1985; Giles 2000a, 86). Through this, areas became associated with the cult which, when followed along the specific pilgrimage routes, created the wider scheme, yet during normal services they formed separate regions or areas within the church. For example, the shrine of St Neot/Easter Sepulchre was veiled away during Easter week/Quadragesima and visually out of view. Only the stained glass windows remained displaying the legend of St Neot along with the roof bosses, but these could again be visually disregarded if visiting the church for daily congregational needs. These areas could also be used to regulate status by means of who had visual and/or physical access to them, such as the exclusive route through the great choir screens at Canterbury and York which were reserved for royalty.

The restricting nature of the Canterbury and York choir screens was enacted through the dominating and imposing designs (centered on royal lineage); however, at Durham, the sculpted reliefs of the rood screen aided the feeling of integration by allowing pilgrims an involvement in the biblical exegesis it displayed. Within the parish church, the experience produced by the screens was more about the separation of spaces, but these were still penetrable due to the use of open screenwork which, in effect, acted more like windows or visual framers to the sacred areas than dominating restrictive barriers. An aspect of this was also found at Durham, York and Canterbury as the small doors in the choir (and rood) screens promoted access, although controlled.

The creation of new types of space for the purposes of pilgrimage also contributed to this type of experience. The addition of the Galilee Chapel at Durham, which gave direct visual access to the main body of the church (and possibly the very top of the shrine; at least the starred vault above), provided predominantly female visitors with an unattached sensory experience; an indirect connection to the saint, while at the same time this was a very controlled physical and sensory experience. The arrangement of the space in Durham Cathedral kept particular aspects of the pilgrimage experience private for men through the addition of subsequent gates and screens which controlled access to the feretory. Additionally, the Galilee transformed how people actually entered the church as the chapel created, in effect, a lobby whereby visual and physical control could again be exercised over those (primarily females) who could not exit out into the nave and beyond. At York, Canterbury and even St Neot, similar mechanisms were adopted through which the elite or royalty could distance themselves physically and spiritually from the laity.

For royalty, the pilgrimage experience was much more about commemoration and integration between themselves and the saint/church. Depictions of royal lineage determined that they were physically part of the church or became so through artistic means. But it could be argued that this was also the case for the laity as their donations led to the embellishment of the shrine locales. There was a proven relationship between an increase in offering accounts and developments in the fabric and so, in this indirect manner, lay pilgrims had an impact on the building and their subsequent experience.

Pilgrimage infrastructures also included the shrine structures themselves. In chapter 5 an examination of the development of St Neot's shrine highlighted the direct relationship between the cult's construction and the maintenance of its popularity. Yet St Neot was not unusual in its desire to remodel its shrine in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Although Durham and York obviously found it hard to compete with Canterbury, York appears to have been influenced by the success of having two venerable sites. Like Becket's original burial site, the tomb of St William remained a site for worship even after his relics were moved to the choir in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. We can see from Canterbury's account rolls that both the shrine and tomb brought offerings and, at York, St William's shrine was also likely funded by money generated by the popularity of his tomb in the nave. Its popularity even continued after the reconsecration. This was also the case at Durham. Furthermore, the second and elaborated shrine of Cuthbert, Becket and William of York were all of very similar designs: a stone slab containing several niches or bays with a reliquary-coffin placed above, underneath a decorative cover. Interestingly, as Becket's shrine was of an earlier date to Cuthbert's second, more architecturally-advanced shrine, it would appear that Durham followed Canterbury's influence here. It may, however, be a stretch to say that the shrines followed an architectural pattern as they were constructed in the popular style, yet, no doubt, there was an air of rivalry played out between them. Additionally, the subsequent work to develop and elaborate the shrines at all sites suggests the original designs were inadequate – aesthetically, structurally or functionally.

All four case sites have provided evidence for the use of prototypes by medieval artists for the designs of many stained glass windows. Often these mimicked and imitated popular scenes from mediums other than their own. In fact, models were frequently used in all forms of religious iconic painting as stereotypes or topical conventions of style could be applied to subject matters, regardless of the overall intended meaning. The reason for the use of archetypes and models for glass designs rested in part on the ease of transforming detailed hagiographical narrative accounts into brief, repetitive compositions that could be easily interpreted and, more importantly, recognised by audiences of such large-scale windows. Therefore the ocular display and constant repetitive depictions of such venerable scenes inspired faith and hope in the pilgrims waiting to visit the shrines and altars for their own needs. Perhaps this may also be a reason for the similarities in the shrine structures themselves, and the patterns or models seen throughout the entirety of the pilgrimage infrastructures at all sites. There were

definitely ‘models’ used for particular areas, i.e. the use of distinct patterns on the pillars surrounding the sacred area, or the use of decorative features to pave the route to the shrine. The structural developments and additions attributed to the pilgrimage schemes transformed the visual cues that articulated the internal spatial arrangement of the churches. For example, the star pattern made from the cross-ribs of the vault above the shrine of St Cuthbert, frame the sacred locale of the saint and emphasise the hierarchical nature of the eastern space. In turn, it may be argued that these art and architectural devices were influenced by the patrons themselves (both royalty and lay pilgrims) due to a demand for more integrative experiences. Thus, one class influenced the other.

Access to the shrine areas was one of the largest differences found in terms of sensory experience. For the laity, the use of sensory stimuli was a little less and so the memory impressed upon pilgrims may not have been as retainable, whereas the use of lights, music, flowers and smells, etc. were *specifically* tailored for royalty. However, access generated by integrative sensory means was just as crucial to the lay experience. This practice is best illustrated through the developments in the depictions of the shrines in the glass at York and Canterbury. In these miracle scenes it is the *physicality* of the attributes that is being stressed as integral to fulfilling the cure at the shrines regardless of social status. In the cure of Mad Henry of Fordwich (n IV) in the Trinity Chapel at Canterbury, the later scenes portray Henry in a more dignified manner with sticks and rope presented as *ex-votos* as they are placed around the shrine alongside the many offerings that adorned the structure in the previous panel (Michael and Strobl 2004, 73). Throughout the glass, pilgrims are also seen kneeling within the shrine niches, touching and kissing the reliquary caskets, and even licking the shrine.

Accordingly, at both locations there is a repetitive theme of contact in order for a cure to be achieved. For example, in chapter 3, the proximity allowed by monarchs to the actual relics was remarkable – they could even kiss them. In the 13<sup>th</sup>-century narrative *Vie de Saint Jehan Paulus*, Brigitte Cazelles noted that ‘the fact that the spectacular is no longer a matter of *looking* at the saint’s body, but of *touching* it, suggest[s] a treatment of the sacred focusing on the protagonist’s corporeal rather than spiritual identity’ (Cazelles 1994, 62). This use of touch was an increasingly resonant aspect of medieval devotion and increased the higher one’s social standing. This is proven by the fact that elite visitors at Canterbury, York and Durham were given the most locational access

and were allowed full access to the bones, therefore proximity was a crucial element in the intercessory sacred experience or lay pilgrims would have been allowed similar access.

As illustrated, the development in the cult infrastructures of the churches was largely determined by the greater need and demand of the pilgrim for more corporeal interaction with the surroundings. This verifies my original hypothesis (explained on p.2) that an increase in the sensory aspects of the cult art and architecture was a direct result of the demand by pilgrims for more devotional interaction. Essentially, pilgrims increasingly required an imaginative and performative aspect to their visit in order to have a fulfilled devotional experience. In some ways this theme relates to constructed pilgrimage in that we are seeing the creation of sensory elements produced via the art and architecture to structure a particular experience.

But why then were these sacred spaces filled to the brim with ostentatious displays of materiality, many of which were of a secular as much as sacred nature, thus drawing attention to a family or founder in an ecclesiastical setting? The answer to this lies in the types of display projected via these works of art and architecture: they were inherently sensory. This ‘communal pride’ was showcased through the use of ‘architecture, light and space to provide a fitting aesthetic context’ (Roffey 2006, 24). Displays of liturgical vestments, books and vessels were combined and placed next to paintings, glass and shrines attributed to the patron saint of the church which, from the evidence consulted, reached a peak around the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century (Martindale 1992, 143 is also in agreement). In association were aural, visual, tactile, olfactory and even gustatory resources, e.g. instrumental music and elaborate singing accompanied saints’ feast days; Masses held at their altars and the Mass itself; flickers of candles; fragrance of incense; and the reflection of light off undulating surfaces. Each of these elements triggered emotional connotations. The final approach to the shrine, and the commencement of prayer, alit the five senses and thus the perception of the sacred presence (Pentcheva 2006, 651). Devotion was essentially perfected through these means so that the dialogue between mankind and saint could be more easily achieved in order to draw grace from the latter, and therefore absence from presence (Burgess 2011, 108). Together the ‘interplay of elements’ formed a ‘production’ of atmosphere; an ‘aesthetic discourse’ which held the ‘spheres of presence of something else – their reality in space’ (Boehme quoted in Frischer-Lichte 2008, 115). When coupled with hagiographic images, these visual and

architectural stimuli prompted pious devotion and good works (Roffey 2007, 82). Thus, it could be argued, that sensory materiality was as equally important as the verbal in the commemoration of the cult of saints and of secular contributors to the church – its ‘presence’ was paramount to creating a fulfilling devotional experience.

In essence, the materiality of churches ‘defined and communicated the identity of a saint to the faithful’, (Gameson 2002, 46), immortalising the saint’s majesty, numinism, and power, whilst authenticating and projecting the sanctity of their relics. As such, the encasement of the shrine; that is the form and decoration of the reliquary and the imagery of the windows, walls and ceilings surrounding it, created and determined the experience of pilgrims. Through the saturation of the material and sensory, the experience created transcended the material/physical aspects of the buildings and provided access to the intangible, invisible and therefore spiritual plane (Pentcheva 2006, 631). This discourse encouraged people of all classes to approach devotion and, as such, pilgrimage, as an embodied, live encounter through a diverse range of media. Through pilgrimage practices – predominantly the performance/*mimesis* of the shrine structure – the medieval population made sense of (and ‘sensed’) the architectural and decorative schemes of churches which then facilitated a divine encounter with the saintly relics housed within. Yet, as this thesis hopes to have illustrated, not all senses were required to produce such a sensorially rich or synaesthetic experience.

The sites therefore conditioned these experiences – the cults were individual and localised and by that I mean they had their own intentions and issues to promote. Although a general increase in sensory interaction can be traced throughout medieval pilgrimages churches, the individual elements were confined to each church and appropriated in separate ways to serve local needs. For example, Durham needed to continue to bolster Cuthbert’s popularity following Becket’s death. Canterbury too needed to maintain the popularity of their resident saint. York was a little different in that William was predominantly a local saint, but again the Minster needed to maintain royal visits and so there was a definite development in the architecture surrounding his cult, i.e. the elaboration of the shrine structure, the construction of the St William window and the visual triptych created with the great east and Cuthbert windows. Also, the establishment of the shrines and maintenance of the original tomb sites meant that there were several stations to pay devotion to for incoming monarchs or lay pilgrims.

St Neot appears to be the anomaly in that it had to maintain (or perhaps, establish) a reputation for the cult over centuries and then construct an appropriately fitting setting. However, once again, acts of elaboration were stepped up during the later medieval period when pilgrimage was rife. As my examination has proven, the construction of the present church was significantly focussed around an actual pilgrimage scheme tied to St Neot, and so the reputation of the saint within the area cannot be overlooked. Perhaps, though, this was another attempt to garner support for the cult after the construction of St Neots in Huntingdonshire, and the growing popularity of surrounding Cornish sites, such as St Michael on the Mount, and others.

In turn, it may be argued that the lay pilgrimage experience was shaped predominantly by the physical art and architecture, whereas royalty were largely influenced by the spectacle and performance enacted for, or associated with the visit/event and, as a result, took the opportunity to develop this stagecraft for their own needs (through commissions etc) and tailoring their own experience. Although sensory aspects determined all three participants' experience, ultimately the differences lie in the contrast between the tangible and the intangible characteristics of the visit. The royal experiences were ostentatiously constructed displays, filled with sensory stimuli, such as music, procession, candlelight, banners etc., in order to create appropriate atmospheres and personal events. Although lay pilgrims also encountered sensory additions on their visits, these were not as heightened or intense as they were for royal visitors, and so the physical art and architecture served a greater purpose in structuring the experience. For royal pilgrims visiting Canterbury and York, the experience was primarily generated through spectacle. Many monarchs realised this and personally used it to their advantage in order to situate their own reputation firmly next to that of their pious propensities by commissioning works in the cult churches and thus helping to aid the authenticity of the in-house saints. The senses then became the medium through which interaction with the saints occurred.

### **6.3 THE CULT OF SAINTS AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SENSORY EXPERIENCE**

It is now possible to examine and compare the sensory pilgrimage experience of the three social groups featured in this thesis and how their experiences developed and related to one another. The following analysis will thus serve to answer the overarching objective of this thesis: the sensory experience of several different participants.

This thesis has ultimately uncovered that a manipulation and development of architectural and decorative space was integral to the creation of the pilgrimage experience of the medieval church for varying protagonists. The evidence consulted has suggested that there was a sophisticated understanding of the ways in which the physical, aesthetic and spatial organisation and form of the medieval church could be used in order to structure experiences for particular levels of society, identities and even genders. In turn, these could be exploited for their sensory potential in order to inflict a tailored experience to suit each separate participatory group.

As Stephen Gudeman noted, ‘saints are boundary figures, partaking of the spiritual and the divine and because they occupy this dual position, saints are called upon to act as mediators’ (quoted in Morris 2002, 145). As a result, the stage of intercession by the saint – the time in which the salvific effect is received – would be felt to eclipse the reality of that specific point in the pilgrim’s life. Devotees were, in effect, lost to their experience through this bodily participation and the present reaction that such images provided. The experience of these sites provided temporary relief from mundane existence and everyday ritual forms, but did not remove social status or identity as through the development of pilgrimage art and architecture, identity and social status was certainly displayed, projected and understood by the medieval person.

Accordingly, there was nothing egalitarian or unmediated between the royal displays of pilgrimage on the on-looking lay spectators; the superiority of the monarch was continuously upheld (Smuts 1989, 77). In this way, the royal visit mirrored Bell’s definition of ritualisation: ‘a way of acting that is designed and orchestrated to distinguish and privilege what is being done in comparison to other, usually more quotidian, activities’ (quoted in Coleman and Elsner 1998, 48). Pilgrimage visits made by monarchs were often governed by tradition and custom rather than the creation of an intensely personal/private experience. As Nilson stated,

The substance of these beliefs did not change with social status, only the scale and style with which they were acted out. Thus the actions of a king...were directed with the same hopes and expectations as the average supplicant (Nilson 1998, 121).

Some analyses of modern pilgrimage have identified that when *communitas* is strong, pilgrims often disregard their social status for the duration of the peregrination.

However, for medieval pilgrims, this was not the case. Social status remained; visits to saints' tombs by important members of society were an asset to the church as they projected further authentication for a saint's power and sanctity. Social identification and constrictio was even maintained by the simple administrative practices of the clergy who kept records of visitors to the shrines, thus preserving social structure in the history of the site (Theilmann 1984, 264–5).

Although the experience of the majority of lay pilgrims certainly conforms to the idea of *communitas*, watching the royal visit would also confirm this state. As the church space acted as the institution of performance, this helped connect visitors with the sacred drama, yet reinforced the hierarchical structure of the royal procession at the same time as emphasising the distinction between the elite and the masses visiting the church (Smuts 1989, 72). The ritualistic customs of the royal entries and ceremonies were literal expressions of rank and power and thus directly projected a realisation of status onto the laity (Smuts 1989, 74). The experience of pilgrimage felt by the monarchy was very much a separate phenomenon, which cannot be compared with that of lower class pilgrims. In imitation of the great royal progresses, these devotional processions worked on the assumption that the size and quality of the royal entourage directly reflected status and, with that, honour, whilst demonstrating authority over others (Smuts 1989, 70). The sheer display of power projected by the conventions of the medieval royal ritual was so taken for granted that the rest of society saw it as natural and it therefore authenticated and authorised the royal virtually unconsciously (Flanigan 2001, 147).

Smuts argued that the deliberate promotion of humility by a monarch on pilgrimage emphasised their accessibility, 'counterbalancing the formidable display of authority and status which the royal procession embodied. Power was given a friendly face, so that even the humble could vicariously share in its splendour' (Smuts 1989, 77). I do not, however, believe this to be so. Very rarely did the separate experience of each social class combine or emulate one another to create a sense of oneness between the two. Royalty certainly bestowed alms on the poor; some accounts even describe the washing of feet, yet it is my opinion that this would serve to strengthen the distinctions between the social ranks, rather than unite them.

The examination presented in this thesis has made clear that the experience of the monarch can by no means be equated with that of the layman. It may have transpired that a royal visit to a church occurred on the same day as thousands of other visitors, but the rest of the pilgrims did not mirror the access and impenetrable devotion of the monarch. To support this thesis are referenced traditions that depicted the church as a ‘microcosm of the universe’ by seeing the interior space as hierarchically representative: earth, the area of the nave, and heaven, the area of sanctuary. The lay pilgrim entered the church and waited with the mass of others to be guided to the specific sacred areas and at certain times. The sovereign was processed, gaining access virtually whenever and wherever he/she so wished. The movement of the pilgrims, of each status, and their interaction with the surrounding space of the church, is telling when considered in this context. As Vincent suggested in reference to royal pilgrimage, but which may also be applied to most aspects of medieval society, ‘...degree and status were preserved, even in the act of pilgrimage’ (Vincent 2002, 16). As demonstrated, even the art and architectural campaigns of the church interior demarcated status and even gender, and accordingly access. ‘The [royal devotional] procession thereby articulated the hierarchical structure of the community’s elite, while at the same time emphasizing the broad distinction between that elite and everyone else’ (Smuts 1989, 72).

My contention is that the experience of pilgrimage was very distinct and explicated in accordance with social status in terms of physical access, time spent with the relics, routes taken and offerings given; however, the devotional *intentions* behind such peregrinations and, thus, behind the requirements of each group, were comparable. *Habitus* was impressed upon the laity as they watched the royal enter the church following the traditions of kingship and ritualistic practices of devotion, and made reference to their own place and role in relation to the wider social environment of the church. The event presented a ‘dualistic image of kingship, by emphasizing both the majesty that separated the monarch from ordinary subjects and the emotional bonds that united them’ (Smuts 1989, 76). During this ritual, the ruler occupied a position at the apex of the hierarchies of society (the laity and elite as the clergy form another distinct social group in themselves), not only mediating between them, but also acting as the ultimate source of unity and authority (Smuts 1989, 73–4).

#### **6.4 EPILOGUE. PILGRIMAGE AND SENSORY EXPERIENCE:**

## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study has demonstrated that the development of the art and architecture of cult churches was relative to the creation of the medieval pilgrimage experience. It sought to establish a narrative of the sensory experience of pilgrims in specific devotional contexts as an innovative approach to medieval pilgrimage in opposition to more generalised historical or archaeological studies favoured in the past. It has demonstrated that the manipulation of the medieval church, although nothing new, may have been influenced as much by its secular visitors as by itself as an ecclesiastical institution. Archaeological, material and documentary evidence have suggested that the physical, aesthetic and spatial organisation of the church could be manipulated to form particular levels of experience, which, in turn, were tailored for particular social audiences.

This hermeneutic approach has produced narrative analyses and descriptions of the ways in which different social agents encountered pilgrimage sites in the later Middle Ages within specific aesthetic and material conditions. A vital observation has been that although each level of society was controlled inside the cult church in respect of access etc., by no means did this automatically suggest that each responded to, interpreted, perceived and ultimately experienced the site in the same way. The examination has favoured the conclusion that different groups within a society may perceive the same conditions or events in very different ways. This sits in line with the work of post-processual archaeology in that there are many different viewpoints and that the 'reading' of the past can be highly subjective.

One major aim of this research was to provide various avenues of exploration through engagement with a variety of sources in a hermeneutic manner. There is thus no one objective narrative but many subjective interpretative approaches to the past. I too followed Graves' (2000, 168) precedent in that I did not give the doctrinal, liturgical or vernacular literature, or even claims of the medieval Church, precedence over the perspective of the common layman. This approach provided the ability to understand how experiences were created for the medieval pilgrim via the art and architecture and sensory elements of the cult church, and how these were subsequently manipulated and developed to cater for particular local priorities or for certain intentions. How such contributions reflected dynamics of social power and gendered identities were also highlighted to illustrate how the medieval church can be read as a locus for the inscription of cultural norms, wherein social groups and even different genders

influenced or were involved in various ways that not only codified identity, but were projected in their diverse experiences. Accordingly, an important contribution of this thesis is its redress of the often-neglected attention paid to the uses of religious space in the material, cultural and experiential discourse of the lives of medieval men and women.

A further aim was to archaeologically examine the relationship between patterns of pilgrimage architecture and visitation numbers. There has been a substantial amount of discussion centred around the development of 'pilgrimage architecture'. Indeed, both sides of this ever-turning coin of debate have been represented in various site-specific studies and yet, to date, there still lacks a comprehensive evaluation of the architectural patterns (if indeed these so exist) of English devotional sites. Although data has been used to identify historical patterns of visitation in relation to the changing aspects of the medieval architecture of shrines and their immediate locales, what lacked was a full analysis of how the troughs and peaks in popularity (and thus offerings) directly related to the changing development and consequent use/access of the architectural pilgrimage schemes of medieval churches. Although statistical comparisons are not regarded as a particular priority of this thesis, an observation of the differences in the numbers of pilgrimage offerings and the development of the sites in terms of their cult art and architecture has been made where possible, as a measure of the influence and success or failure of the modification of the church interior on the influx of visitors.

Most of the evidence for access to shrines is based on the little account of offerings made at these sites or by the existence of gates or screens, suggesting that during this period the laity were certainly controlled when it came to entering the most sacred domains. I do believe that there was certainly a pattern between the creation of elaborate shrine vistas (as the evidence seems to show that these structures got frequently taller and increasingly decorative) and the attempt to maintain a steady stream of pilgrims. The maintenance of the popularity of cathedrals' patron saints in the later Middle Ages is best described as 'decline management'.

In consequence, it could be argued that the shrine/pilgrim dichotomy is one of the chicken and the egg: a shrine required a particular visuality and sensoriality as well as a reputable sanctity attractive to pilgrims in order to entice them to visit and offer at the site, yet sites needed pilgrims' offerings to afford a better and more elaborate shrine-

structure and surrounding. Still, it cannot be doubted that shrine offerings can tell us a great deal more about the number of pilgrims visiting churches. The importance of unifying pilgrim numbers with their behaviour has arisen from the lack of evidence concentrating on how the architecture of devotional sites was accessed. This has led to even less information on how/if this architecture was used to create a certain type of experience for visitors. More work is truly needed to obtain a greater view of the exact correlating patterns between the development of the various designs in shrine architecture/settings and the influx of visitors.

Nonetheless, the wealth of evidence has revealed that the act of pilgrimage significantly impacted upon the landscape of the cult church including several fundamental changes made to the buildings throughout the medieval period. However, although there were certainly reactions between Durham and Canterbury as measures to compete, York and St Neot are greater examples of decorative and architectural schemes that were individually tailored in consequence of the needs and intentions of each institution. This was also seen at Durham and Canterbury, which proves my initial hypothesis that although there were certainly trends in artistic styles and the expansion and construction of spatial areas, the fundamental developments of the pilgrimage infrastructures at these churches were a direct reaction to the specific needs of each institution, in order to tailor the building for their particular cult and audience.

Since all four case sites have shown that as the centuries advanced, the developments in the pilgrimage schemes led to a slow increase in the amount of sensory participation in the experience of all social groups, perhaps this should be understood as evidence of a wider and more fundamental shift in the religious experience of the medieval church. The changes made to the buildings throughout the medieval period can be understood to have reflected and structured a parallel shift in the *habitus* of the sensory pilgrimage experience. The changes were also a mechanism through which control could be enforced and identity structured, particularly for women and the laity. It could be argued that the successive alterations and additions made to the pilgrimage infrastructures sometimes reduced the ability to ‘read’ the buildings by some of the lower class. Although this thesis has proven that in many ways they aided the experience of the pilgrim, more research is needed to fully understand how they also contributed to complications in the religious experience.

In the introductory chapter, I stated that a crucial aim of this thesis was to shed light on the experiences of the medieval pilgrim and that this may be achieved via an archaeological analysis of the contemporary cult church as it has the potential to provide a much greater amount of information on the societies of our past than has hitherto been exposed. The pilgrimage schemes may be seen as a reflection of the priorities and intentions of such a society. Such issues were dealt with in chapter 2, where the historiographical and theoretic-methodological backgrounds were examined to demonstrate the lack of unification between disciplines in previous work and the need for analyses that combine theory and empiricism. I noted that in order to uncover such information, this study required an approach that left behind traditional architectural, art and archaeological methodologies. This was largely due to the fact that the buildings needed to be observed in their own contemporary and historical framework. A combination of archaeology and documentary evidence was crucial to this; one may complement the other as both stand as witnesses to their generation. This ‘reading’ of the medieval church formed the basis of this thesis in order to uncover and reconstruct the experiences of the medieval pilgrim as recorded in a building that formed an inherent part of their daily lives.

One of the main objectives was to produce a theoretical framework for understanding the experiences of medieval pilgrims of varying identities and status in the cult church. Existing scholarship on the medieval cult church was limited in its fundamental concentration of specific empirical evidence of the building. Primarily, this was a result of the authors who, often deriving from historical or art historical disciplines, were more reluctant to combine methodologies and instead remained focussed on using traditional methods, as outlined in chapter 2. Dana Arnold put this down to, for example, the placement of the study of the history of architecture under the branch of art history – a discipline ‘whose primary concern is properly with aesthetics’ (Arnold 2006, xvii). Aestheticism, or appreciation for the majority of past literature on this topic, has viewed the visual and architectural mastery of a building as a secondary consideration, particularly and, most surprisingly, art historical, and is often lacking in the field of buildings archaeology. Moreover, archaeologists have often favoured art for its function and agency over its aestheticism (McClain 2012, 159). This is the argument concerning asceticism versus aestheticism. Although this implies some confliction between the religious and the artistic, my contention is that the two were inextricably linked,

interwoven concepts of the creation and experiential intentions of the cults of saints. One was used to complement, enhance and even house the other. The issue of ‘how art *works*’ was a central concept and art was used to structure experience and interpretation (Marrow 1986, 152, own emphasis) – artistic magnificence was created to be used, to display the holy, rather than be solely admired (Stevenson 2010, 16). Thus, what we have seen in this thesis are not only objets d’art but ‘objects of faith’.

An observational outcome is the need for the development of archaeological syntheses that encompass both the devotional infrastructure and the wider social context of a building. There has been some reluctance by archaeologists to use theoretic-methodological frameworks from neighbouring disciplines to study the medieval church. Only large-scale spatial reorganisation or morphology, or even architectural stylistic change, is focussed upon, rather than the gradual addition and modification of areas of the church. Nor is the resultant sensory impact of such changes often considered on the visitors of such grand buildings so integral to daily medieval life. As a result, the wealth of archaeological evidence contained in individual churches as well as between cathedrals and parish churches has been overlooked. And yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, the alteration, development and manipulation of medieval buildings revealed shifts and changes in intentions, and ways in which people used and needed religious space to structure experiences for particular identities and relations. As such, I hope to have proven that isolated studies towards the media we use for our data sets, and restricted methodologies resulting from the division of academic disciplines, only reduce the credibility of our analyses. By simplifying our investigations and considering how people moved through, interacted with and experienced the spaces, and the intentions behind the consequent perceptions and interpretations of the buildings, are we able to understand these edifices a great deal more. But we should not be afraid to admit that the subject is still in its infancy and should therefore be open to suggestions and tools favoured by other related disciplines so that we may achieve a more complete or, perhaps, more proper understanding of the sensoriality of the past.

No study can be comprehensive and this thesis does not pretend to be so. Particular churches were chosen for their specific pilgrimage qualities and surviving evidence related to sensory events, as outlined in the introduction, but further sites could be used as examples. Focus was also narrowed to pilgrimage infrastructures with examinations of how they were developed and changed over the years and thus were received by

several audiences. The lack of more detailed architectural studies of the underlying intentions behind the developments in the medieval church building across the entire medieval period also makes it problematic to quantify the wider impact of pilgrimage in relation to other specific needs of the institutions. Some churches were added to and altered whereas others were morphologically transformed from their very fabric in order to cater to the cults. The specific distinctions between these shifts has been overlooked as yet and so they cannot be linked to a more single overarching process of building work related to the ‘golden age of pilgrimage’.

As a result, this study set up a dialogue between people and things and people and buildings rather than simply analysing the characteristics of stylistic change or patterns of development. Too many case sites would have clouded conclusions as specific changes may have been missed, and too much detail would have peppered the archaeological and documentary evidence leading to numerous discrepancies and windows for possible error or limitation in the methodology. However, some aspects of the case sites have not been explored, such as production techniques or some liturgical or doctrinal priorities. Nor have detailed analyses of references to pilgrimage in wills, all contemporary literature or artistic media. While these topics are extremely valid and important aspects of an investigation into the medieval church, they would have led to a divergence from the chosen aims and objectives of this study, largely the focus on pilgrimage. The breadth of such topics would warrant several further theses.

As a result of this study, it may be suggested that the medieval church is not the only locale in which the pilgrimage experience was created. In fact, focussing only on cathedrals or parish churches, which were places of largely prescribed rites, customs and practices, may only limit our studies. Although it may be difficult to deduce the ways in which everyday life informed religious experience, the landscape surrounding the church and the journey leading up to it may be seen as more significant religious environments than has previously been allowed (cf. Candy 2009; Locker 2013).

More importantly, what needs to be taken seriously is the suggestion that the greatest sufferer, or perhaps survivor, of the impact of the ‘puritanisation’ enforced on traditional religion by the 16<sup>th</sup>-century Reformation was the English church, particularly the major cult sites, whose devotional infrastructure was radically changed as a result (cf. Milner 2011). The sensorially stimulating delights of late-medieval Catholic

religion were replaced; the olfactory, kinaesthetic, audible and even visuality of faith were dramatically scaled down, and emphasis was placed on the supremacy of the Word proffered only through sight and sound. As such, it could be argued that the inherent synaesthetic experience, or focus on the corporeal interaction for late-medieval devotion, determined its demise and was, in fact, a primary catalyst in the iconoclastic reforms.

A major consequence of the reforms was the sudden loss of interactive worship and thus an ultimate censoring of the sensory. A dramatically different landscape would have faced the medieval person when stepping into church around the year 1538. The building would seem a shell of its former self, devoid of the sensory: the bareness of the interior, the vandalism of the shrine and the lack of embellishment adorning the stone surfaces. The following is a description of the sheer intensity of destruction enforced during this period:

From Cumberland to Kent, from Bristol to Bury St Edmunds the images came down...the Mass was abolished...the altars were drawn down and the walls whited, windows broken or blotted out to conceal "feigned miracles"... veils and vestments, chalices and chests and hangings, the accumulation of generations of pious donations, were surrendered to the King's commissioners (Duffy 2005, 478).

Churches were transformed into ruins that stood as empty reminders of an era of religious life so grand, yet so ephemeral. The senses had ultimately been eradicated, the pilgrimage shrines abolished and the veneration of images ended, rendering the practice of saintly veneration almost obsolete. Yet this was not the first time English monasteries had been suppressed or their buildings sacked of their treasures. It was, however, the first time that an entire form of religion had been virtually wiped out (Aston 1984, 231).

In 1544 the traditionalist Bishop of Winchester, Stephen Gardiner, denounced the conduct of the reformers of the English church insinuating they were robbing religion of its synaesthetic experience. Gardiner exclaimed,

Thes men speak mich of prechyng, but note well thys,  
they wold we shuld se nothyng in remembrance of Christ, and therefore can they not abyde image. They wold we shuld smel nothyng in memori of Christe, and therfor speak they against anyntyng and hallywather. They wold we shuld taste nothyng in memory of Christe, and therefore they cannot away with salt and holy brede. A supper they speak of, wich they wold handle lyke a dryngkyng. Finally they wold have all in talkyng, they speak so myche of prechyng, so as all the gates of our sences an wayes to mannis under standyng shuld be shut up, savyng the eare alone.

The nature of this consequential sense of loss needs to be explored by analysing the effects on the developing and adapting saintly infrastructure of the English church and therefore just how saintly worship changed as a result of the reforms. This highlights the potential in the application of theoretical approaches to the archaeological and material conditions of religious practice, which may allow a competent attempt at understanding how ephemeral effects such as sensory stimuli materialised and were experienced.

Until now, the sensory approach has remained the preserve of art historians in regard to the medieval period, and prehistorians in reference to archaeology. This thesis exploited both such methods, combining them with analyses of documentary records. The latter was significant for this particular study and made examining the contemporary context of the church more viable than, for example, the prehistorian's examination of society. In this respect, the use of the sensory approach, and with it methods such as phenomenology, were appropriate given that the archaeological record may be complemented, upheld or even dismissed by the documentary records. Of course, the sensory approach has its limitations. Although this did mean that results might be classified as subjective, which is a recurrent criticism of the sensory or phenomenological approach, the incorporation of the contemporary literature was used to add a larger degree of objectivity. Indeed, there are valid criticisms of any documentary material, and acts such as bias have been outlined in the introduction; regardless of these omissions and/or limitations, such sources were invaluable to this study. They were also consistently complemented by the materiality itself – archaeological material did not simply include the main fabric of a building, but its decorative additions over time thus aiding conclusions so that they were never purely based on one category of evidence.

Re-thinking the significance of the medieval church as a sensory agent and as specifically tailored towards the burgeoning pilgrim trade of the medieval period, does not diminish its position or importance in archaeology or architectural history. Yet the unconventionality of this method of inquiry allows for the possibility of fruitful research stemming from this particular area – notably, the relationship between parishioners (rather than solely pilgrims) and the church buildings themselves. The impact of the senses on other religious events besides acts of pilgrimage lies beyond the scope of this thesis, as do comparisons of the larger pilgrimage sites across Europe. However, the

framework for the analysis has provided an innovative approach that may be fruitful when applied to other shrine sites in England and even Europe or, if necessary, to built structures of any age. The use of documentary evidence may suggest that this method of investigation is more concrete or less troublesome than the prehistorian may encounter, yet this is not entirely true as this is an experiential account and so it seeks to uncover how people understood, perceived and, in turn, reacted to contemporary buildings and situations. Thus, the subjectivity is perhaps just as great. This hinges on the idea that similar material conditions have to be examined from varying perspectives; people that lead different routines have different intentions and circumscribed environments, all of which they may bring to bear when encountering the pilgrimage church.

Still, what is important for this study is how these material conditions were used in order to form an understanding for the visitor which could then produce an experience. In turn, a more universal language of signs or symbols, or cues were created; an underlying meanings discourse which could be manipulated, developed and challenged to produce a certain affect. Perhaps this is evidence of a larger shift in medieval society as a whole: the senses were becoming increasingly important throughout the entirety of medieval life, not only religion. Such processes of change need to be more critically and contextually understood by the archaeologist.

Examining the use of all the senses over just one and the creation of reconstruction narratives highlighted the universality of the approach used in this thesis as it considers *all* identities over prioritising one, the latter of which may lead to biased or unrepresentative viewpoints. Subsequently, the socio-sensual perspective deployed here to examine church art and architecture is also a useful lens through which to analyse other medieval and subsequent periods' expressions of sanctity and sacred space, and will help to develop new ground in terms of the theoretical and methodological examinations of these themes by building on previous cross-disciplinary scholarship on ecclesiastical buildings, stained glass, hagiography/pilgrimage studies and, most importantly, analyses of the 'sensory' culture of our past, giving the project importance to a wide interdisciplinary audience.

In all, I hope this thesis has exposed the tension put forth by many scholars that 'relic cults had little or no influence on architectural planning' (Tatton-Brown 2002, 90) and poses the questions: what were the most important aspects of the medieval religious

experience, and what contributed to its visitors most significantly? Such questions must be answered in full light of the importance of the sensory stimuli of the medieval period. This should be a fundamental consideration of future archaeological analyses. Recognising the possibilities of sensory investigations will greatly expand our conclusions and knowledge of medieval life far beyond simple readings of material culture or built structures, as when used in combination they become more than individual texts, but rather entire novels with the possibilities of exposing the meanings of medieval life!

# APPENDIX I

## DATA RECORDS OF CASE SITES: CULT & PILGRIMAGE HISTORY

### CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

51.2797° N, 1.0831° E

**DATE OF RESEARCH VISIT(S):** September 2010 and August 2011

**DEDICATION:** Jesus Christ, the Holy Saviour

**DESCRIPTION:**

In the 1170s the locations related to the cult of St Thomas Becket consisted of: the place of martyrdom in the north transept (the altar of the swordpoint); the tomb in the crypt of the Romanesque Trinity Chapel; the chlamys or coat of the martyr; and the altar in the Trinity Chapel. As Becket's body remained in the original burial place until 1220, the new Trinity Chapel did not become another sacred site for several decades, yet the Corona took the place of the old Trinity altar sometime after construction ceased in 1184. Therefore, between *c.*1185 and 1220 there were four sacred sites and after 1220, the new shrine made a fifth. Canterbury also possessed the relics of SS Dunstan, Alphege Anselm, Archbishop Thomas Arundel, Archbishop Chichele, Archbishop Lanfranc, Archbishop Langton, Archbishop Walter, Archbishop Warham, Archbishop Sudbury, Cardinal John Morton, The Black Prince, Henry IV, Joan of Navarre, and Our Lady of the Undercroft. In addition to the locations associated with the Becket cult, the Sacrists' rolls inform that there were eight pyxes distributed by altars and images of veneration. These included a large box in the nave and smaller ones at the image of St Osyth, St Dunstan's shrine, at the picture of the Annunciation, at the chasuble of St Thomas, before the Rood in the crypt, at the images of SS Apollonia and Barbara, and at the image of St Giles (Woodruff 1939, 42; Klukas 1983, 149).

Following Edward I's reign the term '*chlamys*', which referred to the coat, disappears from the records and the *caput* is instead mentioned in close connection with the tomb in four of the Royal Expense Rolls (twice in Edward II's and once in Edward III's) (Scott-Robertson 1880, 519). It appears that at this time there were two stations associated with the head or skull: Erasmus states that the perforated skull was seen in the crypt encased in silver with an orifice through which the crown could be viewed and kissed (Scott-Robertson 1880, 516). Thus, this appears to be the '*caput Thomae*' of the crypt which, during the reigns of Edward II and III, was located near the tomb of Becket. Following this, Edward III's Expense rolls refer to both the *corona* and the *caput*. The *corona* is identified as being in the upper church, close to the shrine, and the latter between the swordpoint and the image of Our Lady in the Undercroft. During the 14<sup>th</sup> century it therefore seems that the *caput* was in the crypt somewhere near the tomb (Scott-Robertson 1880, 519). The issue becomes tricky when we find that in the Expense rolls of 1297 and 1300, there is no mention of the *caput*, but the *corona* is identified as being in the crypt. The movement of the *corona* appears to have taken place c.1307. In 1312 it is coupled with the shrine in the upper church when mentioned with Edward II's oblations whereas previously it had been cited in the crypt. In 1314, two years later, it is adorned with gold, silver and precious stones and so we may assume that it was brought from the crypt into the Trinity Chapel soon after 1307, during which time the coat was also removed from its position in the crypt and substituted with the head or *caput* (Scott-Robertson 1880, 520). This fits with the offering made by Henry V in 1413 at the tomb of Becket. He presented a gold headpiece ornamented with pearls and precious stones costing £160 – the *caput Thomae* (Scott-Robertson 1880, 521).

#### **RECORDS OF ROYAL PILGRIMAGE:**<sup>121</sup>

Henry II made regular journeys to Canterbury between 1174 and 1189; Edward III visited almost once a year; Richard I's first act on arriving at Sandwich on his return from Palestine in 1194 was to give thanks to God and St Thomas for his safe deliverance; and, although often presented as a rather impious ruler, King John made many visits to Canterbury in the early years of his reign. In 1199, John visited during his first month as king (Webster 2011, 204–05), while he and Queen Isabella were also crowned there in 1201. Henry III was also crowned at Canterbury in 1236 (Scott-

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<sup>121</sup> This is a sample of the most notable royal pilgrimages.

Robertson 1880, 510). Henry V offered at the shrine, whilst several Emperors and the Bruces of Scotland were granted safe-conducts to secure them through the troubled times of their reigns (Stanley 1868, 237–8). Henry III continued his support for the blessed martyr (as he did so fervently with Edward the Confessor at Westminster Abbey) in coming to Canterbury as a pilgrim and making offerings, and even celebrating his betrothal to Eleanor of Provence at the cathedral in 1236. Edward I maintained a similar level of devotion to Henry III, visiting the cathedral six times between 1279 and 1303 (Foreville 1958, 15). Edward IV and Elisabeth Woodville visited the shrine in July 1465 in order to gain indulgences at the Feast of the Translation, while the king visited without his wife on 16 June 1460, 1461 and again in 1463. Although no evidence survives of her donations, Margaret of York came to Becket's shrine '*causa peregrinationis*' in 1468 together with her husband – the only journey recognised by her contemporaries Vander Linden and Cheyns-Condé as an actual peregrination (Schnitker 2004, 111) – then again in 1480 (Schnitker 2004, 118–9). The House of York particularly favoured the shrine of Becket; perhaps it 'somehow justified or atoned for their coup d'état' (Schnitker 2004, 117). Becket even appeared in Richard III's Book of Hours, but no king's reign was littered with ties to the Canterbury saint more than Henry IV's who often made up to four expeditions in one year. Not only was he anointed with the holy oil of St Thomas during his coronation, but also he was also physically buried next to Becket's shrine. Henry VII also visited almost every year (Scott-Robertson 1880, 516). In his will, he even asked for a silver-gilt kneeling likeness of himself to be 'set ... as nigh to the Shrine of St Thomas as may well be' to match one already sent to Our Lady's shrine at Walsingham (Stanley 1868, 245; Webb 2000, 139). Finally, Henry VIII received Charles V at Canterbury where they both said their devotions, most likely before the shrine (Stanley 1868, 246).

## **YORK MINSTER**

53.9619° N, 1.0819° W

**DATE OF RESEARCH VISIT(S):** Periodically throughout 2010–2012

**DEDICATION:** St Peter

### **DESCRIPTION:**

At York, there were two primary sacred sites associated with St William Fitzherbert, the former (twice) Archbishop of York (1141–7/1153–4) (see Norton 2006 for a detailed

biography of St William). Since 1154 he had been commemorated by a small altar and tomb in the Minster (this was located in the centre of the east end of the nave), but then on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1284 the bones were moved to a new larger shrine behind the High Altar (in the Lady Chapel), although the original tomb site in the nave was still sanctified and a monument erected over it by Archbishop Melton (1317–40) (Wilson 1977; Gee 1984, 337-50). A new, more elaborate shrine was then constructed in 1471–2 to entice pilgrims to return and offer at the main shrine in time for the consecration (Brown 2003, 236–7).

Data from the fabric accounts in relation to the shrine from the year 1415/16 is most interesting. As the shrine usually amounted to 15s and 30s, those particular years only drew in 2s. 10d (Brown 2003, 236; Nilson 1998, 164). Brown (2003, 236) suggests that even though the east end had been reconstructed in the early 1400s, the shrine had already resided there since 1284 and consequently the little amount of offerings is a direct result of the waning cult of St William.<sup>122</sup>

Moreover, the subsequent decision to build a new shrine in the 1470s was a desire to entice the pilgrims to return and offer at the main shrine in time for the consecration (Brown 2003, 237). What Brown fails to add here is the occurrence of the collapse of the central tower into the nave in 1407 during which the tomb may have been partly demolished and then subsequently reconstructed by 1415/16 and was thus a more popular site to view at this time than the shrine. I believe that Brown may have overestimated the lack of popularity of the shrine.

In addition, William's head was also put inside a gilded silver relic bust carried by angels and crowned with a set of precious stones, while his relics were often carried through the streets of York in a portable reliquary casket for the day of his feasts (his death and elevation). Other relics assumed a secondary status. These included the relics of the Holy Innocents and True Cross, and Archbishop Richard le Scrope's tomb. In addition, various other notable persons, including Archbishops Ludham, de Gray, Langton and Melton were all interred in the Minster and received lesser attention.

#### **RECORDS OF ROYAL PILGRIMAGE:**

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<sup>122</sup> This also coincided with the increased popularity at Richard le Scrope's tomb (Brown 2003, 236).

York benefitted little from royal contributions, except Richard II's, regardless of the Minster's status as the second prestigious cathedral in England (Saul 1997b, 10). No other monarch contributed more to the fabric of York Minster than the Plantagenet king. Richard II's visits likely numbered five, yet to Canterbury he made at least eight visits between 1384 and 1399 (Saul 1997b, 6).

When visiting York in March or April 1396, the itinerary of Richard II states that he gave *'Ivis. vd. de oblationibus factis Innocenti datis'* to the Minster (YML, D&C Chamberlains' accounts, E1/23). The valuable relic of one of the Holy Innocents was enclosed in a silver and gilt shrine adorned with jewels (Harvey 1971, 207, 209; Norton 1997, 61) and was entered into the church in full procession in honour on the feast of the Holy Innocents (28<sup>th</sup> December) (Norton 1997, 60). The relic became another focus of devotion for visiting pilgrims successively aiding the work of the new choir to proceed more rapidly towards its completion over the next few years.<sup>123</sup> As an altar of the Holy Innocents existed in the nave of the Minster, it may be presumed that the reliquary was borne to this locale (Norton 1997, 62).

Moreover, York's display of relics was rather meagre compared to those of other cathedrals and abbey-churches of England and so Richard's gift would have been a significant acquisition in the hope of attracting further visitors. The efficacy of this cult of relics is, however, difficult to ascribe given the relatively low reputation of the Holy Innocents. Norton (1997, 87) inferred that the relic was given not to substantiate any affection Richard had for the Minster, but to provide its pilgrims with another object of devotion. Although he is correct in suggesting that the gift was not given in the hope that pilgrims would make large offerings to pay for the building work, it did help to bolster support for the cult of saints at the Minster. Archbishop Richard le Scrope's tomb received many visitors and thus offerings which, following the collapse of the central tower in 1407, the clergy decided to use towards the construction of the new building (Norton 1997, 87).

Richard III visited York several times during his short reign and even culminated his royal progress in 1483 with a three-week stay in the city and a visit to the Minster (Tudor-Craig 1986). In an inventory of the Minster's vestments, vessels and relics,

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<sup>123</sup> An altar in a 12<sup>th</sup>-century chapel in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral was also in honour of the Holy Innocents.

dating to soon after 1500, a very precious reliquary is listed as being donated by Richard III. The reliquary is described as a large cross on six bases each adorned with angels on pinnacles, with two angels on top of the bases holding the relics of the chasuble and shoes of St Peter. Additionally, it contained *en ronde bosse* enamelled figures of the crucifixion and two thieves, all of which were adorned with stones, rubies and sapphires (Raine 1859, 219, 221).

### **DURHAM CATHEDRAL-PRIORY**

54.7736° N, 1.5761° W

**DATE OF RESEARCH VISIT(S):** Periodically throughout 2010–2012

**PLATE NO:** 1

**DEDICATION:** Christ and Blessed Mary the Virgin

**DESCRIPTION:**

The success of Canterbury's numerous cult sites was an illustrative working example of how multiple devotional stations could draw pilgrims thus exemplifying to the monastic community at Durham how they could add to their income through offerings. In addition to St Cuthbert's shrine in the feretory in the eastern end of the cathedral, the tombs of Bishops Hatfield and Lightfoot lay in the choir and were also venerated by pilgrims. Perhaps Durham also had previous experience of using Canterbury's 'multiple' method as St Cuthbert's original tomb site and the area in which his coffin lay in the cloisters allegedly acted as another foci for the cult. These actions suggest that the Durham community also wanted to increase the prestige of the Venerable Bede by giving him his own 'feretory-esque' setting, by moving his tomb from the eastern apse to the Galilee Chapel. A separation of the two primary saints meant that they were both individually important, promoting the fact that Durham had two enormously important cult saints attributed to the foundation and origin of the church.

### **ST NEOT PARISH CHURCH**

52.2300° N, 0.2600° W

**DATE OF RESEARCH VISIT(S):** September 2010 and August 2011

**PLATE NO:** 2

**DEDICATION:** St Neot

**DESCRIPTION:**

The history of St Neot parish church is rather complex, but a saint ‘Nioth’ appears in a 10<sup>th</sup>-century list of forty-eight saints with Cornish connections (Olson and Padel 1986, 49–51). The parish is the second largest in Cornwall with its church serving as a minster from its earliest inception. Although the church was likely to have been in existence around the period c.900 x 1066 (Orme 2007, 14), the earliest record of St Neot occurs in the *Inquisitio Geldi* of 1083/4 (as Sanctus Anietus) and then again in Domesday Book (1086) which makes reference to the priests or clerks of St Nieti who held a manor called Neotestou/Nietestou (DB 4/28; DB 5/14/2; Doble 1929, 41; Padel 1988, 128). There is, however, a 1066 entry confirming that Godric the priest was holder of the land of Nietestou: the last Dean of the Collegiate church. Alfred the Great is said to have visited St Gueriir (Guerryer), thought to be St Neot (Turner 2006, 128). During the Norman Conquest, the manor at St Neot (named Fawton) was given to Robert, Count of Mortain who then abolished the college, leaving the endowment of only one priest. Then, in 1095, the advowson was given by his son William, Earl of Mortain, to the priory of Montacute in Somersetshire, to which the rectory was appropriated (Doble 1929, 41; Axworthy 1906, 21; Rushforth 1927, 151). Therefore St Neot became an ordinary parish church by the early Middle Ages, but by 1095 the estate had passed into secular hands and was granted a newly founded church by the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century.

Neot was said to be a hermit who built a small community that grew into the collegiate church. It is thought that the holy well, which still survives a short distance from the village, together with the Saxon stone cross in the churchyard, are all that survive from the 9<sup>th</sup> century community (Doble 1929, 46; Axworthy 1906, 441ff; Rushforth 1927, 150-1). The *vitae*<sup>124</sup> proclaim that the translation of Neot’s body to a shrine north of the altar took place during the rebuilding of the church on account of the volume of pilgrims the shrine was attracting which the current building was not large enough to accommodate and so had to be enlarged (Doble 1929, 24). However, in a list of English saints’ burial locations dated 1020, the body of St Neot is described as lying at St Neots in Huntingdonshire and we can suppose that if that was the case, the founders of the Priory there (founded c.970x80) stole the relics previously, upholding the proposed date of c.974 (Doble 1929, 26). Gorham (1820, cvii–cviii, 82) even noted that the warden of

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<sup>124</sup> One 11<sup>th</sup> century *vita*; a second executed in the 12<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century in the south-west of England (possibly Exeter) which draws on the first and a copy of which was kept in the abbey of Bec; a third metrical life based on the second *vita*; and a fourth which was included in John of Tynemouth’s 14<sup>th</sup>-century *Nova Legenda Anglie* (Orme 2000, 201).

St Neot's shrine in Cornwall was interred into St Neots Priory in c.974 as he brought the remains.

The theft hypothesis is still difficult to believe, given the distance between Cornwall and Huntingdonshire. The parish of St Neots in Huntingdonshire originally formed part of Eynesbury until 1113 when the Priory of St Neots was given the whole manor in which their Priory was situated – a separate township with the name St Neots was then given to the area to establish the foundation. Others argued that the remains were simply translated to the new foundation (Richards 1981, 260). However, the translation to Huntingdonshire is appended to one version of his life only – in the earlier of the two Latin *Vitae, Vita Sancti Neoti* (BHL 6054) – there is no other mention elsewhere (Richards 1981, 267).

According to the 12<sup>th</sup>-century historian Orderic Vitalis, the remains of the saint were also temporarily removed to Croyland (Crowland, Lincolnshire) to ensure safety from the Viking raids in the early 11<sup>th</sup> century (Orme 2000, 202), but they were later moved back to Eynesbury and eventually lost. It still remained, however, that a '14<sup>th</sup>-century shrine' stood in the north side of the chancel in the Cornish church where Neot's relics were originally enshrined and that some sepulchral remains were still extant when the shrine was opened in 1795 (Doble 1929, 26–7). Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury also stated that he found the bones of 'the precious confessor St Neot' in the Huntingdonshire Priory with the exception of one arm bone which was left in Cornwall (Doble 1929, 34).

With regards to the actual church building, it is said that St Neot himself built a church on the site of the ancient chapel of St Guerryer, and about the year 884 it was greatly enlarged (Axworthy 1906, 21). It is possible that a small chapel existed during the saint's lifetime, and then a larger church was built as a memorial some fifty or sixty years later. Then, one early medieval writer noted,

When the sun has six times measured the houses of the signs and the year has seven times rolled around, the temple was rebuilt in a greater fabric, being enlarged by some very religious persons. This was, therefore, thought a reasonable opportunity to transfer the body of the servant of God to another part of the same church. It was accordingly, with watchings and prayers and fastings, lifted up from thence, was stored up and deposited in a place very proper on the northern side of the altar of the said church (Axworthy 1906, 22).

The general consensus stands that following Neot's death in 877,<sup>125</sup> his remains were then translated to the north side of the altar in 884 – this complies with the above account which also alludes to his body being moved after seven years (Axworthy 1906, 17). A 17<sup>th</sup>-century wooden tablet which hung either above or on the eastern wall adjacent to the shrine, displaying a verse about the saint (the hooks for which are still visible in the wall),<sup>126</sup> actually stated that he flourished in 896. This perhaps accounts for the enlargement work during this early stage to cope with the influx of pilgrims. It is likely then that the Norman owners rebuilt the church. There are sporadic entries made to the church throughout the 11<sup>th</sup> to the 13<sup>th</sup> century. However, a rebuilding must have been undertaken in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century as on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1321, Bishop Stapledon re-consecrated the church (Chanter II, f. 161v).

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<sup>125</sup> This is conjecture as the most recently accepted date-range for his death is *c.*865x93 (Orme 2010, 112).

<sup>126</sup> It is debatable where this actually hung. Additional suggestions propose the northern side of the shrine, i.e. in the northern chantry chapel and that it was written before the Reformation. This may have been the case, and it was then moved to hang on the southern side of the shrine for the entire congregation to view (Doble 1929, 59-60).