Sociability and Belonging: A Study of Social Interactions and Neighbours in Later Medieval England

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History

September 2021

Abstract

People's social experiences during the medieval period were shaped by everyday interactions and relationships. Whilst there exists a scholarship which examines social experiences and the construction of relationships in a variety of institutional settings, including fraternities or parishes, much less attention has been paid to quotidian, informal relationships. Focusing on fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England, with an emphasis on London, this thesis seeks to remedy this lacuna by addressing two research strands. It asks how people interacted socially outside of any institutional grouping and considers how these relationships were constructed and maintained. Additionally, it asks how people understood relationships formed through spatial proximity, i.e. relationships of neighbours.

I explore a range of narrative sources including depositions, coroners' rolls, and miracle narratives. I read these sources as fictive, recognising the motivations and distortions present in the texts' construction. Chapter one critiques the term 'community' and proposes sociability as an alternative framework to study ordinary social interactions. Chapters two and three examine relationships between neighbours. A lexicographical study of the Latin and Middle English vocabulary enables me to better understand medieval conceptualisations of a neighbour, both as a recipient of charity and as someone living nearby. Chapter four studies how boundaries of relationships were negotiated, how people were included or excluded, through the concept of belonging. Relationships are performative, formed through the constant repetition of interactions and behaviours. The case study of Bardney Abbey, examined in chapter five, allows us to view social relationships as performative and dynamic over time.

My research demonstrates how we need to appreciate quotidian relationships as an essential part of medieval social experiences. How these relationships were configured was influenced by cultural norms and they overlapped with social ties in other contexts. Moreover, how social relationships and sociability were understood changed throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

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Acknowledgements

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and that I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Introduction

After parish mass one Sunday afternoon in April 1292, villagers socialising and dancing together at the village alehouse came upon the lifeless body of a little girl drowned in a pond.[1] Thinking it was the child of a local poor woman, Christina, they first ignored the body. On realising the child was Joan, the daughter of a substantial village family, her body was retrieved, and a large crowd gathered to pray into the night. The testimonies recorded for the canonisation proceedings for Thomas Cantilupe, the villagers' former diocesan, portray the parishioners of Marden as united and harmonious in their efforts to support Joan's family. Nevertheless, the details of their narratives betray boundaries to this inclusivity. Thus, the dancers readily discussed how they had planned to dispose of the body secretly when they initially thought it was the daughter of Christina. There was no mention of concern for her wellbeing. The miracle narrative of Joan's recovery thus reveals how social ties were affirmed or denied at times of crisis. The disparity of treatment evident in this miracle led me to question the nature of these undefined relationships. How did people interact with those around them on an everyday basis? How else did people construct the boundaries of whom they did or did not associate with?

Mundane interactions that took place between people face-to-face, and the relationships that built up ad hoc from them, made up much of an individual's social engagement in later medieval England. If we are to better understand the social landscape during this period, or how people governed their everyday lives, it is imperative that we consider what Michel de Certeau terms 'the background of social activity'.[2] The concern of this thesis is to explore the quotidian social practices of 'ordinary' people over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.[3] The overarching question this thesis addresses is how did people interact socially outside institutional and formal settings? This question aims to study mundane, everyday relationships beyond collectivities such as parishes and villages, institutions such as civic bodies, or organised groups including craft guilds and religious fraternities. I am interested in the formation of social relationships, how these were constructed and maintained, and how individuals were included and excluded from them. Moreover, as face-to-face interactions necessitate

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[1] Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (BAV) MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff.123r-140r.

[2] Michel de Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), xi.

[3] I am loosely applying Judith Bennett's definition of 'ordinary people' which she uses to distinguish 'the vast majority of English people' from the elite, gentry, and clerics. The cross-section of population I study in this thesis will be discussed in more detail below. Judith M. Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England,' *Past and Present,* no.134 (1992): 20, n.3.

a level of proximate living, the thesis also will ask how people conceptualised relationships which can be described using the modern term neighbour in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England.

The Scholarly Field

In the first section of this introduction I will outline the development of the scholarly field concerned with social interactions and relationships in later medieval England. In the sections following this I will set out the source material I examine within the thesis and the methodology that I use to approach it. Due to the vast amount of research on the topic of medieval social history in England, an outline of the scholarly field can only ever be partial. In this discussion I will privilege the major dialogues which are pertinent to this thesis and position my own research in the gap left by this scholarship.

The dialogues that I deal with here can be organised broadly into the following: how to understand and characterise medieval social landscapes; how people interacted within organised structures such as guilds and fraternities; and on forms of interaction in the construction of collective identities. I will then turn to consider discussions in scholarship on: the participation of people within social groups or structures based on age, gender, social status, and status as migrants; interactions which fell outside organised or institutional groups; and the relationships between neighbours in the later medieval period.

Understanding Social Experiences and Relationships

From the mid-twentieth century to the 1970s, medieval society has been characterised as a golden age of social harmony and cooperation. Ferdinand Tönnies, in his study of medieval social affiliations, presented the idea of *Gemeinschaft* (community), an old and organic type of association which characterised 'feudal' village society.[4] Tönnies contrasted *Gemeinschaft* with *Gesellschaft* (society), 'the artificial construction of an aggregate of human beings' whereby everyone is isolated and goods are separated, in terms of capitalism, commodities, and the global market of modern society.[5] This idea of a harmonious medieval society fed into discourse on the early modern 'discovery of the individual' during the 1960s and 1970s. Christopher Hill and Keith Thomas, for example, discerned a social change within sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England whereby society shifted from being localised and based on neighbourly relationships to one more centred around the individual.[6] In

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[4] Ferdinand Tönnies, *Community and Society (Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft)*, trans. Charles P. Loomis (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 33-35.

[5] Tönnies, *Community and Society*, 64-102.

[6] Alan Macfarlane, *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study* (London: Routledge, 1999; New York: Harper and Row, 1970), 197; Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson,

contrast to the increasingly individualistic early modern era, the medieval period was characterised as one of collectivity.

The characterisation of the Middle Ages as a period of social cohesion was advanced by medievalists at this time too. Warren Ault used the records of manorial by-laws to study cooperative farming practices in medieval villages. He described medieval England as 'a world of neighbours', focusing on how residents organised and enforced their own agricultural practices.[7] Rodney Hilton considered the medieval peasantry as a social class in his socio-economic study of village society in the West Midlands. Hilton described the antagonism which grew between lords and their tenants in the half century following the Black Death, compared to the 'collective will' expressed within the village 'community'.[8] In *Kingdoms and Communities,* Susan Reynolds discussed collective values and activities through a survey of a variety of social groupings found in medieval Europe such as parishes and guilds. Reynolds aimed to demonstrate the importance of collective action within medieval European society through the use of the term 'community', reflecting that it was 'a fashionable word nowadays'.[9] An emphasis within scholarship on the collective action of 'communities' contributed to an image of social experiences in medieval England as largely harmonious and peaceable.

The narrative of a decline in social harmony with the rise of individualism between the medieval and early modern periods drew increasing criticism within early modern scholarship from the 1980s.[10] In *The Origins of English Individualism*, Alan Mcfarlane examined changes to pre-industrial social structure to demonstrate the presence of individualism and elements of capitalism from as early as the thirteenth century.[11] Keith Wrightson, furthermore, disputed the myth of pre-modern harmony through an examination of rural social change during the late sixteenth to early seventeenth centuries. Centring on interactions between neighbours, Wrightson argued that these relationships involved conflict as well as peaceable ideals of neighbourliness.[12] Such criticisms have helped to prompt work which focused more on revealing the presence of conflict and stratification. Christopher Dyer, in his study of the medieval English village, reasserted the notion of 'village community' in reaction to

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1971), 561; Christopher Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London: Panther, 1964), 469, 471.

[7] W.O. Ault, *Open-Field Farming in Medieval England: A Study of Village By-Laws* (London: Barnes and Noble Books, 1972), 15.

[8] R.H. Hilton, *The English Peasantry in The Later Middle Ages: The Ford Lectures for 1973 and Related Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 54-73.

[9] Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe 900-1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 1.

[10] See for example: Alan MacFarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism: The Family, Property and Social Transition* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978); Lawrence Stone, 'Interpersonal Violence in English Society 1300-1980,' *Past and Present* 101 (1983): 22-33.

[11] MacFarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism*.

[12] Keith Wrightson, *English Society, 1580-1680* (London: Routledge, 2005; London: Hutchinson, 1982), 33, 40-3.

Mcfarlane's denial of its existence.[13] Nevertheless, Dyer works to avoid previous sentimental ideals of village harmony, instead emphasising the functional aspects of cooperation. For Dyer, the collective organisation of agricultural work was primarily about survival rather than 'cooperative idealism' and, therefore, did not negate the presence of interpersonal conflict.[14] In a more recent study, Dyer explored the internal politics and government of English villages during the fifteenth century. Dyer sees the long-term decline in seigneurial authority following the Black Death as influential in the development of the collective administration of the village by a broad governing oligarchy, something he found particularly in East Anglia.[15] The movement away from viewing the social experiences of people in the later medieval period as one of overarching unity opened the way for more nuanced approaches to medieval social experiences, which accounted for aspects of conflict and tension too.

Within medieval scholarship a growing body of work which questioned the use of the term 'community' further helped to erode the idea of the 'golden age' of medieval social cohesion. Miri Rubin identified several issues with how 'community' was applied to the medieval period.[16] She notes, for example, that the term is usually used uncritically. Moreover, 'community' is used to describe all scales of grouping within medieval society, from a fraternity to borough which can lead to a whitewashing of any complexity and difference.[17] Rubin's work helped enable a discussion of the term within scholarship. Christine Carpenter is particularly critical on the use of 'community', as discussed as part of her examination of the identity and social networks of gentry in medieval England. The use of the term within historical scholarship has roots in an anthropological view which saw preindustrial communities as 'harmonious social organisms, free from conflict, from history, and from links with the outside world'.[18] Carpenter thus argues that using 'community' alludes to a 'mythical past' which leads to dangerous assumptions about the structure and nature of medieval social ties.[19]

Following the interventions by Rubin and Carpenter during the 1990s, scholarship has demonstrated a greater awareness of the implications of using a language of cohesion to describe the medieval

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[13] Christopher Dyer, *Everyday Life in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon and London, 1994), 1. Printed first in: Christopher Dyer, 'Power and Conflict in the Medieval English Village,' in *Medieval Villages: A Review of Recent Work*, ed. Della Hooke (Oxford: Oxford University Committee for Archaeology, 1985), 27–32.

[14] Christopher Dyer, 'The English Medieval Village Community and Its Decline,' *Journal of British Studies* 33, no.4 (1994): 418, 408-9, 424.

[15] Christopher Dyer, 'The Political Life of the Fifteenth-Century English Village,' in *The Fifteenth Century*, vol.4: *Political Culture in Late Medieval Britain*, eds. Linda Clark and Christine Carpenter (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 135-57.

[16] Miri Rubin, 'Small Groups: Identity and Solidarity in the Late Middle Ages,' in *Enterprise and Individuals in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Jennifer Kermode (Stroud: Alan Sutton Publishing, 1991), 132-150.

[17] Rubin, 'Small Groups,' 133-4.

[18] Christine Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England,' *Journal of British Studies* 33, no.4 (1994): 342-3.

[19] Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community in Medieval England,' 340, 343.

period. Despite this intervention, however, the term 'community' remains popular within studies of social interactions during the Middle Ages. The result of a continued use of the term has been a tendency towards re-defining and re-iterating what characterises a 'community' for the specifics of every separate study undertaken.[20] The continued application of 'community', moreover, means there is still more work to be done to elucidate the detail and complexity of medieval social landscapes. This is part of what this thesis seeks to address.

Social Connections within Organised and Institutional Groupings

In addition to research seeking to better characterise medieval social experiences as a whole, scholarship has considered in more depth where people had opportunities to interact and build relationships with one another. Often, studies considering social interactions do so within the framework of formally organised or institutional groupings, such as parishes, fraternities, and guilds, following the patterns of surviving source material. Parish inhabitants, for example, were brought together regularly through attendance at the parish church for worship, and the collective responsibility over its maintenance. Thus, parishes provide a valuable subject for the study of social interactions and dynamics. Moreover, as units of ecclesiastical administration parishes can be examined through a variety of surviving source material such as episcopal registers, parochial visitation records, church court records, and churchwardens accounts.[21]

Earlier historians, such as Hill and Macfarlane, characterised pre-sixteenth-century parishes as unified, static, and natural 'communities'.[22] Consequently, a body of scholarship from the late twentieth century sought to rectify this two-dimensional view of the medieval parish. In response to the homogeneity assumed by Hill, John Bossy worked to explore the 'complex of human relations' which made up the society that the Church inhabited within western Europe, 1400-1700.[23] Bossy focused on the role of kin-relationships in constructing Christian community through marriage and baptism and emphasised the necessity of voluntary involvement and participation from members of a parish.[24]

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[20] For more on 'community' within scholarship on the medieval period see chapter one.

[21] While some churchwardens' accounts exist from the mid-fourteenth century, largely from the diocese of Bath and Wells, and the early fifteenth century the survival of these records only becomes more frequent from the second half of the fifteenth century onwards. Clive Burgess, 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts and Parish Government: Lessons from London and Bristol,' *English Historical Review* 117, no.471 (2002): 307. For an outline of parochial source materials see, for example: Gary G. Gibbs, 'London Parish Records and Parish Studies: Texts, Contexts, and Debates over Appropriate Methods,' in *Views from the Parish: Churchwardens' Accounts c.1500-c.1800*, eds. Valerie Hitchman and Andrew Foster (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), 63-87.

[22] Hill, *Society and Puritanism*; MacFarlane, *The Origins of English Individualism*.

[23] John Bossy, 'Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries,' in *Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World*, ed. Derek Baker, Ecclesiastical History Society 10 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 129.

[24] Bossy, 'Blood and Baptism,' 129-30, 143.

Within his influential survey of late medieval Christianity and change during the Reformation, Bossy emphasises the importance of the Christian ideal of unity within medieval Europe, particularly felt by the fifteenth century. Bossy argues that participation in celebrations such as Corpus Christi was 'intended to create unity' through, for example, the kiss of peace placed at the end of Mass.[25] Charles Phythian-Adams' study of ceremonial systems in the context of religious celebration, guilds, and civic ceremonial in Coventry, 1450-1550, similarly argues for the role of ceremony in facilitating both social integration and hierarchy.[26] Eamon Duffy, likewise, saw a 'corporate dimension' to parish celebrations in his study of pre-Reformation religion in England. For Duffy, this helped to foster a collectivist mentality centred around the parish church.[27] Criticism levelled against Duffy's work, however, notes his focus on the parish elite and failure to consider how religious practices shaped identities and social relations outside the church.[28] This body of work emphasises the processes of social cohesion within medieval parishes from the perspective of significant religious changes during the sixteenth century. Nevertheless, it has helped to identify opportunities for social interaction within contexts which have previously been characterised by other functions, namely the religious purpose of parishes.

Scholarship on medieval parishes since the 1990s have considered a broader scope of activities which engendered social connections and additionally have explored elements of hierarchy and division. Judith Bennett's research into the organisation of help- or charity-ales from the 1400s in England argues these events required a large amount of parishioner cooperation and helped to reaffirm the position of the recipient within the parish. Bennett also notes, however, the selective nature of such fundraising activities which targeted specific people and was dependant on their popularity.[29] The work conducted by Clive Burgess on the churchwardens' accounts of St Mary at Hill, London, is important in highlighting how involvement in parish activities varied. Exclusivity is a point of emphasis in Burgess' work, where 'parishioners' is used to define a core group of wealthy men who contributed financially and who organised the administration of St Mary's, as opposed to everyone living within a parish.[30] For Katherine French, limiting 'parishioner' to the wealthy male elite identified by Burgess is too narrow; rather medieval parishioners encompassed a much wider group. She argues that despite

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[25] John Bossy, *Christianity in the West, 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 71.

[26] Charles Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and The Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry, 1450-1550,' in *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700: Essays in Urban History*, eds. Peter Clark and Paul Slack (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), 57-85.

[27] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 126, 131-154.

[28] John Sommerville, review of Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580, The American Historical Review* 99, no.1 (1994): 225; Paul Griffiths, review of Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England 1400-1580, Continuity and Change* 9, no.2 (1994): 356.

[29] Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity,' 23, 29-30.

[30] Clive Burgess, 'Shaping the Parish: St Mary at Hill, London, in the Fifteenth Century,' in *The Cloister and the World: Essays in Medieval History in Honour of Barbara Harvey*, ed. J. Blair and B. Golding (1996), 258-60.

the relative lack of visibility within surviving parish records, women and poor parishioners remained 'an essential aspect of institutional operations'.[31]

French's work on lay involvement in parishes in England provides added depth to our understanding of medieval social relationships and dynamics. Like Burgess, French identifies how financial contributions and fundraising activities were 'a means of integrating individuals into the community of the parish' through a common cause.[32] She further demonstrates, however, how individuals could participate in parish life in less structured or formal ways. The annual celebration of the feast of the dedication in St. Margaret's parish, Westminster, in the late fifteenth century, for example, provided young migrant women the opportunity to contribute through the maidens' collection.[33] In *People of the Parish*, French examines ecclesiastical records from Bath and Wells diocese to ask how community identity shaped religious practice. She suggests that following the Black Death the parish increasingly became the focal point for local life. Nevertheless, parish 'communities' were not necessarily completely inclusive, but could facilitate exclusion, for instance through enforcing public penance for certain behaviours.[34] French's work highlights the participation in social activities and interactions within a grouping by those not centred by the source material, plus how this participation might be structured and experienced differently. While initially medieval parishes were considered as single units of people, current scholarship now recognises and points to the varied levels of participation and integration and the influence of positionalities such as gender, wealth, and status on this.

Religious fraternities and craft guilds have provided medieval historians with another delineated group through which to explore social interactions and relationships in the later Middle Ages. The foundation of religious fraternities, voluntary associations based around the devotion to a particular saint, rose in popularity from the late thirteenth to late fourteenth centuries and remained a significant feature of society till the mid-sixteenth century.[35] Whilst parishes frequently had one or more fraternities, these groups were not limited geographically and some included members from

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[31] Katherine L. French. 'Rebuilding St Margaret's: Parish Involvement and Community Action in Late Medieval Westminster,' *Journal of Social History* 45, no.1 (2011): 148-51. See also: Katherine J. French and Gary G. Gibbs, 'The Poor, The Pious, and The Privileged: Towards a Social and Cultural Topography of Parish Participation in Late Medieval London,' in *The Urban Church in Late Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Clive Burgess*, eds. Christian Steer and David Harry (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2019), 380-1.

[32] Katherine French, 'Parochial Fund-Raising in Late Medieval Somerset,' in *The Parish in English Life, 1400-1600*, eds. Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat A. Kümin (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 115.

[33] French, 'Rebuilding St Margaret's,' 157-8. See also: Judy A. Ford, 'Marginality and the Assimilation of Foreigners in the Lay Parish Community: The Case of Sandwich,' in *The Parish in English Life*, 6, 212-4.

[34] Katherine L. French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 23-4, 43.

[35] Gervase Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity in the Middle Ages: Guilds in England, 1250-1550* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 211.

across the kingdom. Craft guilds and companies, as Heather Swanson describes, were formed initially to provide 'associations for mutual support among members of the same occupation'.[36] Many of these associations developed into wealthy and politically powerful organisations. In London, for example, citizenship from the early fourteenth century was based on membership to a guild.[37] Religious and occupational groups were heavily interlinked with interchangeable vocabularies used to describe them.[38] Many craft ministries developed from religious fraternities and some occupational guilds additionally founded their own religious groups.[39]

Following from initial interest in these organisations from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, shown by historians such as Lucy Toulmin Smith *et al.* and Herbert Westlake, there has been a renewal of work focusing on medieval fraternities from the late 1980s and into the 2010s.[40] Scholarship in the 1980s and 1990s often sought to determine the functions and main purpose of fraternities. Caroline Barron's study of London's religious guilds explains the initial motivation for their foundation was to provide members with proper burial and sufficient intercessory prayers, prompted by fears of indecent burial following the Black Death.[41] Bossy, on the other hand, rejects the idea that the Black Death prompted the foundation of fraternities, although he allows that the plague may have increased participation. Nevertheless, Bossy still emphasises the importance of religious ritual and intercessory functions within religious guilds.[42] Others, such as Virginia Bainbridge and David Crouch, on the other hand, emphasise the political and economic functions of fraternities.[43]

Importantly for the study of medieval social interactions and relationships, scholarship in the 1990s experienced a shift away from the functional aspects of guilds and fraternities towards an emphasis on their social roles. As associations which promoted notions of fraternal love and friendship, both occupational and religious groups helped to create and reinforce social ties. Derek Keene uses the

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[36] H. Swanson, *Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 5.

[37] Charlotte Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London, 1430-1540* (London: University of London Press, 2022), xix.

[38] Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities*, 67-9; Ken Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community in Late Medieval East Anglia, c.1470-1550* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2001), 9-10.

[39] Caroline M. Barron, 'The Parish Fraternities of Medieval London,' in *The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of F.R.H. Du Boulay*, eds. Caroline M. Barron and Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1985), 14.

[40] Lucy Toulmin Smith, Joshua Toulmin Smith, and Luje Brentano, eds., *English Gilds: The Original Ordinances of More Than One Hundred Early English Gilds*. Original Series 40 (London: N. Trubner, 1870); H.F. Westlake, *The Parish Guilds of Medieval England* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1919).

[41] Barron, 'The Parish Fraternities of Medieval London,' 13, 24-5, 36.

[42] Bossy, *Christianity in the West,* 58-62. See also: Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 142.

[43] Virginia R. Bainbridge, *Gilds in the Medieval Countryside: Social and Religious Change in Cambridgeshire, c.1350-1558* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1996), 123-47; David J.F. Crouch, *Piety, Fraternity and Power: Religious Guilds in Late Medieval Yorkshire 1389-1547* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2000), 1-2, 245-7. See also: Joseph P. Ward, *Metropolitan Communities: Trade Guilds, Identity, and Change in Early Modern London* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 6.

surviving wills for London's tanners to trace how connections between craftsmen were reinforced through intermarriage, apprenticeship, and guardianship between tanner households.[44] Ken Farnhill stresses the role of many East Anglian religious guilds in facilitating socio-political networks for members.[45] Research undertaken by Rosser additionally has been crucial to understanding the social role of fraternities. Rosser suggests that guilds and fraternities provided an important system of support and credit for members. This was especially the case during periods of social dislocation, for example for urban migrants who were less likely to have support networks already in place.[46] Likening members of confraternities to fictive kin, Rosser's work has traced some of the ways guilds and fraternities purposefully implemented a sense of collectivity. Rosser's book, *The Art of Solidarity,* examines how the performance and rhetoric of fraternal love and companionship, such as the reconciliatory kiss of peace, was used within English guilds to construct a sense of unity and common identity.[47] As recognised by Rosser, however, there was a tension between a language of fraternity used by guilds and the enforcement of social hierarchy both within associations and between members and non-members.[48] Annual patronal feasts, for instance, promoted unity but also served to reinforce internal social hierarchies through dress and table placement.[49] The development of scholarship on the organised groupings of parishes, guilds, and fraternities, in later medieval England can help us to think about the different opportunities people had to build relationships. Activities undertaken within these contexts helped to promote solidarity and connections between members, but it is now recognised within scholarship that the availability and experience of these connections was differentiated based on aspects including status and gender.

Forms of Social Interaction

In another strand of research, historians have sought to better understand the ways people communicated and how this helped form collective identities. As Chris Wickham outlines, 'if we want to understand fully how peasant society worked and changed, we have to study not just how peasants

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[44] Derek Keene, 'Tanners' *Widows, 1300-1350,*' in *Medieval London Widows 1300-1500,* eds. Caroline M. Barron and Anne F. Sutton (London: Hambledon Press, 1994), 4, 10, 15.

[45] Farnhill, *Guilds and the Parish Community*, 16-17, 41, 60.

[46] Gervase Rosser, 'Solidarités et Changement Social. Les Fraternités Urbaines Anglaises à la Fin du Moyen Age,' *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 48, no.5 (1992): 1129; Gervase Rosser, 'Crafts, Guilds and the Negotiation of Work in the Medieval Town,' *Past and Present*, no.154 (1997): 9.

[47] Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity*, 108.

[48] See also: Mervyn James, 'Ritual, Drama and Social Body in the Late Medieval Town,' *Past and Present* 98 (1983): 3-29; Kate Crassons, 'The Challenges of Social Unity: The Last Judgement Pageant and Guild Relations in York,' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 37, no.2 (2007): 305-334.

[49] Gervase Rosser, 'Going to the Fraternity Feast: Commensality and Social Relations in Late Medieval England,' *Journal of British Studies* 33, no.4 (1994): 432, 440, 443

related to lords, but how they related to each other'.[50] In the 1990s, influenced by sociological and anthropological work, Chris Wickham and Phillipp Schofield both explored the circulation of gossip as a social practice in the Middle Ages. In response to what he sees as an avoidance of the subject within historical studies, Wickham uses an example court case from Tuscany in the twelfth century to open out a discussion of gossip and identity. He argues that gossip, defined as talk about a person when they are not present, was part of how social groups constructed themselves. In this way, gossip served to reinforce shared values as well as set boundaries for the group based on who was included and discussed and who was not.[51]

Schofield focuses more on the socially disruptive potential of gossip in his study of the manor of Hinderclay, Suffolk in the thirteenth century. As Schofield outlines, the circulation of gossip within a peasant group functioned to construct an individual's position within that group. Gossip could therefore be deployed tactically to discredit someone.[52] More recently, Sandy Bardsley approaches the topic of gossip from a different angle, outlining patterns of gendered understandings of gossip in medieval England. Bardsley traces the feminisation of deviant and disruptive speech across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in England, which included increasingly portraying women negatively as gossiping.[53] Whilst the circulation of information about others remained crucial to a mostly face-to-face society in later medieval England, this sat in tension with who was considered a legitimate participant in this form of interaction. Research on medieval gossip has been influential in broader dialogues around medieval speech and social memory and is additionally important for the subject of this thesis in providing a way of considering interrelationships beyond purely practical activities.[54] This work, moreover, provides a useful example of how we can approach the study of practices of social inclusion and exclusion.

Interconnected with the oral circulation of information, since the millennium historians have studied the formation of collective memory. Joel Rosenthal examines Proof of Age proceedings to study

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[50] Chris Wickham, *Community and Clientele in Twelfth-Century Tuscany: The Origins of the Rural Commune in the Plain of Lucca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 205.

[51] Chris Wickham, 'Gossip and Resistance among the Medieval Peasantry,' *Past and Present* 160 (1998): 3-24.

[52] Phillipp R. Schofield, 'Peasants and the Manor Court: Gossip and Litigation in a Suffolk Village at the Close of the Thirteenth Century,' *Past and Present* 159 (1998): 3-42.

[53] Sandy Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues: Speech and Gender in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006).

[54] On social memory see: James Fentress and Chris Wickham, *Social Memory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Harriett Webster, 'Mediating Memory: Recalling and Recording the Miracles of St Thomas Cantilupe,' *Journal of Medieval History* 41, no.3 (2015): 306; Fiona Harris-Stoertz, 'Remembering Birth in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England,' in *Reconsidering Gender: Time and Memory in Medieval Culture*, eds. Elizabeth Cox, Liz Herbert McAvoy and Roberta Magnani (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2015), 50; Bronach C. Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender in Medieval England: Men, Women, and Testimony in the Church Courts, c.1200-1500* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019) 5.

memory and 'community' in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England. Rosenthal argues for the value of memories recorded in the testimonies for insight into communal life in late medieval towns and villages, as well as their integral part of important events such as baptisms.[55] Rosenthal, additionally, begins to unpick the constructed nature of these memories asking what perspective we are being presented with. Proof of Age testimonies present the recollections of a homogenous group of older, middling status men, who gave evidence on the age of an heir. These witnesses, Rosenthal argues, further used their testimonies to emphasise their own connections with the family of the heir and their role in the baptism in question.[56]

More recently, Bronach Kane explores gendered patterns of memory making and recall through the use of church court records between 1200 and 1500. Kane focuses on how people 'remembered their past in order to convey aspects of their personal identities and subjectivities'.[57] Within this, Kane points to the ways that people had agency in memory recall, but also the role of social and cultural norms on the construction of these memories. Deponents adapted cultural narratives to add meaning to their memories.[58] The temporal and spatial descriptions of women being witnessed outside at night, for example, would have carried implications around streetwalking or prostitution. In this way deponents could shape their account of someone as suspect, recounting specifics to present their testimony as reliable.[59] Scholarship which deals with the role of social memory in medieval society can help us to think about ways to approach the analysis of narratives of social encounters and relationships. This is important for this thesis because, as discussed below, narrative sources make up most of the primary material studied. Moreover, reputation in later medieval England was highly influenced by *publica fama*, or locally held knowledge about an individual. Social memories circulating about and individual, therefore, are a necessary part of how we understand how interactions impacted the position of individuals within a social grouping.

Social Experiences Based on Identity

Since the 1990s, there has been an increasing focus too within historical study of the Middle Ages on people's social experiences based on interconnecting axes of identity such as age, gender, status, and ethnicity. In terms of the former, Rosenthal explores the lived experiences of old age in later medieval England, highlighting the contextualised variety of practices of retiring or withdrawing from society in the fifteenth century. Whereas it was accepted that London's municipal juries could request a

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[55] Joel T. Rosenthal, *Telling Tales: Sources and Narration in Late Medieval England* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 28, 35.
[56] Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, 21, 54.
[57] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 29.
[58] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 58.
[59] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 61.

withdrawal from officeholding after reaching 70 years old, on the grounds of age or infirmity, for example, coroners across England were periodically forced into retirement due to their age.[60] Rosenthal's work focuses on elite practices as retirement was not often a financially viable option for labourers and craftsmen. Shulamith Shahar's cultural study of old age in Western Europe between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries takes a more pessimistic view of the position of elderly people within society, suggesting that they constituted a marginalised group. Shahar instead points to the vulnerability that people, wage-earners and widowed or unmarried women especially, faced when they reached old age and found it difficult to continue to work. She also maintains that if elderly peasantry were able to 'retire' from active labour, they experienced a loss of status as well as a prohibition from holding any manorial positions.[61]

Barbara Hanawalt's study on childhood and adolescence in London during the Middle Ages contributes to our understanding of the social experiences of earlier life stages. Hanawalt contributed to a body of work seeking to rectify previous assumptions made by historians that the concept of childhood was not recognised during the medieval period.[62] As part of this work Hanawalt explores the subject of adolescent peer groups, drawing attention to the age-based tensions between young apprentices and their masters and other members of craft guilds. For example, she discusses apprentices' involvement in unruly activities and during riots.[63] Yet, for Hanawalt, there is no evidence of a distinct youth culture, in terms of 'organised youth gangs', in medieval London. Hanawalt's work on childhood in medieval London opens up the question of how adolescent experiences were influenced by gender, for example in the way that adulthood seems to have begun culturally later for young men than for young women.[64]

Scholarship undertaken by Jeremy Goldberg combines further the study of age and gender, for example in *Women, Work, and Life Cycle* where he traces patterns of migration, life-cycle service, and

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[60] Joel T. Rosenthal, *Old Age in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 101.

[61] Shulamith Shahar, *Growing Old in the Middle Ages*, trans. Yael Lotan (London: Routledge, 1997), 136, 158.

[62] The English translation of Philippe Ariès' work, for example, prompted some historians in the 1970s to claim that medieval childhood did not exist. Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979; London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977); Lloyd deMause, *The History of Childhood* (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974).

Many scholars have since demonstrated that childhood was a life-stage understood within the Middle Ages. See for example: Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2001); Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'The Medievalists and the Study of Childhood,' *Speculum* 77, no.2 (2002): 440-60; P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender in Later Medieval England,' *Viator* 39, no.1 (2008): 249-262.

[63] Barbara H. Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London: The Experience of Childhood in History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 109-28, 163.

[64] Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London,* 128.

marriage for young women in rural and urban contexts.[65] Elsewhere, Goldberg studies the gendered understanding of childhood in medieval England through an examination of the terminology used to describe children in addition to the narratives of children's deaths in coroners' rolls.[66] Goldberg argues that play as children held an important role in negotiating individuals' gendered identities.[67] He notes that where group play amongst children is recorded, it is usually amongst slightly older boys. More recently, Goldberg addresses the gap in scholarship on lay single men in medieval England by studying the social experiences within this cohort. He outlines the tendency for single, young men to participate in homosocial activities including 'drinking and womanising' which, unlike Hanawalt, Goldberg sees as part of 'a male homosocial culture'.[68] Goldberg further notes the pattern of bachelor clustering in cheaper urban accommodation in York and London, which would have been influential to who these men interacted with on a day-to-day basis.

Much of French's work on the medieval parish focuses on women's participation and therefore is insightful in how we consider the influence of gender in discussions on medieval social experiences.[69] French examines localised and gendered practices of later medieval seating arrangements. Using the parish of St Margaret, Westminster, French draws out the strategies women used to increase social connections and promote their household, namely through changes to seating arrangements. This example is used further to demonstrate the importance of lifecycle, including marriage, pregnancy, and widowhood, in determining who women sat with in church.[70] In *The Good Women of the Parish*, French studies the variety of ways that ordinary women actively engaged in their parish following the Black Death.[71] In terms of the study of social relationships and interactions, French examines the formation of single-sex groups which had become common in parishes by the mid-fifteenth century. Women's groups could either be guild-like in nature or exist as more temporary groupings for

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[65] P.J.P. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy: Women in York and Yorkshire c.1300-1520* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

[66] Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender,' 251-4.

[67] Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender,' 249-262.

[68] P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking the Single Man in Later Medieval England,' in *Single Life and The City, 1200-1900*, eds. Julie De Groot, Isabelle Devos, and Ariadne Schmidt (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2015), 125.

[69] See for example: Katherine L. French, 'To Free Them From Binding: Women in the Late Medieval English Parish,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 27, no.3 (1997): 387-412; Katherine L. French, 'Women in the Late Medieval English Parish,' in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Medieval Women and Power*, eds. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 156-73; Katherine L. French, 'Women Churchwardens in Late Medieval England,' in *The Parish in Late Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2002 Harlaxton Symposium*, eds. Clive Burgess, Eamon Duffy, and Sheldon Hutchinson Trust (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2006), 302-21.

[70] Katherine L. French, 'The Seat Under Our Lady: Gender and Seating in the Late Medieval English Parish Church,' in *Women's Space: Parish, Place and Gender in the Middle Ages,* eds. Sarah Stanbury and Virginia Raguin (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2005), 141-160.

[71] Katherine L. French, *The Good Women of the Parish: Gender and Religion After the Black Death* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008).

fundraising. Groups within a parish could be distinguished by the household occupation or marital status of the members. French emphasises the role of women's parochial organisations in facilitating sociability and negotiating hierarchy.[72] The work conducted by French provides us with insight into the ways in which women socialised and built connections within the context of the parish.

Shannon McSheffrey alternatively tackles the question of how masculinity and status influenced social relationships in her work on marriage, sex, and masculinities in the civic culture of later medieval London. In her chapter on reputation, gender identity, and sexual morality in the fifteenth-century, McSheffrey explores how ideas of 'patriarchy, governance, and reputation' shaped the interactions that older male householders had with those within their neighbourhood and sphere of influence.[73] This included, for instance policing against fornication amongst local residents or 'prompting' couples towards marriage. The perceived roles of these men are located by McSheffrey within the context of the extensive regulation and punishment of sexual misbehaviour in later fourteenth and fifteenth century London.[74] Thus, as McSheffrey demonstrates, these householders also shaped the marital and sexual relationships of others. Themes of masculinity and status in later medieval England are addressed also in Ian Forrest's recent monograph, *Trustworthy Men*, through the study of governing lay parishioners. Here, Forrest seeks to draw further attention to the social hierarchy and inequality within medieval parishes. He outlines the importance of a group of male parishioners, identified as masters or governors, who took part in episcopal governance of the parish by acting as lay jurors presenting misdemeanours at visitation.[75] The position of these 'trustworthy men', Forrest argues, created power imbalances with other residents as well as within the group of those who made up the governors. This was exacerbated by processes of self-selection, their ability to 'command trust and cast doubt upon the trustworthiness of others', and their control over sexual morality in the parish.[76] In this way, Forrest aims to shed light on the structures of hierarchy and inequality, by focusing on the elite rather than the underrepresented in the parish.

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[72] French, *The Good Women of the Parish,* 118-56. See also: Katherine L. French, 'Maidens' Lights and Wives' Stores: Women's Parish Guilds in Late Medieval England,' *Sixteenth Century Journal* 29, no.2 (1998): 399-425; Claire S. Schen, 'Women and the London Parishes 1500-1620,' in *The Parish in English Life,* 250-68.

[73] Shannon McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity in Late Medieval London Civic Culture: Governance, Patriarchy and Reputation,' in *Conflicting Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Jacqueline Murray. New York: Garland Press, 1999), 243-278. See also: Shannon McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture in Late Medieval London* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 164-89.

[74] McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 253.

[75] The role of this group as witnesses or jurors during parochial visitation was distinct from the office of churchwarden. Ian Forrest, *Trustworthy Men: How Inequality and Faith Made the Medieval Church* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), 165.

[76] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 163-200, 221-238, 234.

In the last couple of decades there has been a growing body of scholarship which has sought to expand our understanding of the social experiences of migrants. Much of this work has focused on practices of assimilation and experiences of alienation and thus is valuable when thinking about how to approach social inclusion and exclusion. Marjorie McIntosh identified the selective attitude of town authorities towards immigration in her study of migration to English market towns 1290-1650. Those who brought trade or skills might be able to assimilate successfully. There also existed, however, suspicion against migrants related to political conflict, for example of Scottish migrants in northern England.[77] Justin Colson studies the fraternity ordinances for Germanic alien 'communities' in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century London, enrolled in the Commissary registers.[78] For Colson, these organisations speak to the diversity of immigrant populations in London which demonstrated a sense of shared identity as well as internal diversity. London's alien fraternities provided members with the freedom of religious expression through their variety in form and membership.[79] Peter Fleming similarly emphasises the diversity in migrant experiences in his work on interactions between Irish, Welsh, and English populations in medieval Bristol. He points to the existence of both harmony and conflict between Welsh and English residents, plus the presence of dual identities. In contrast, Fleming notes that the discrimination of Irish residents created a more solidified sense of self-identity and cohesion.[80] Mark Ormrod, Bart Lambert, and Johnathan Mackman recently conducted a study of immigration into England during the later Middle Ages. Their purpose was to elucidate the lives and experiences of alien migrants, including the opportunities and difficulties they faced. Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman use a broad but thorough approach to trace a shift in attitudes towards alien populations. Whereas merchants and artisans were welcomed for their skills during the thirteenth century, by the fifteenth, attitudes were much less positive and migrants experienced greater restrictions from participation in civic life.[81] Taken together, the body of scholarship which uses axes such as ethnicity, gender, and age as a focus for the study of the lives of people in later medieval England can help us to better appreciate the differences that people experienced, influenced by their

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[77] Marjory McIntosh, 'Locals, Outsiders, and Identity in English Market Towns, 1290-1620,' in *Local Identities in Late Medieval and Early Modern England*, eds. Norman L. Jones and Daniel Woolf (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 71-91.

[78] Justin Colson, 'Alien Communities and Alien Fraternities in Later Medieval London,' *The London Journal* 35, no.2 (2010): 111-43. Here I use 'alien' (*alienigenus*) to refer to people who had migrated from outside England and 'who owed no direct allegiance to the sovereign power'. W. Mark Ormrod, Bart Lambert, and Johnathan Mackman, *Immigrant England, 1300-1550* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2019)*, 7-8.

[79] Colson, 'Alien Communities and Alien Fraternities,' 124-6.

[80] Peter Fleming, 'Identity and Belonging: Irish and Welsh in Fifteenth-Century Bristol,' in *The Fifteenth Century*, vol.7: *Conflicts, Consequences and the Crown in the Late Middle Ages*, ed. Linda Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 175-193.

[81] Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman, *Immigrant England,* 257.

positionality. This is something which is important to appreciate in the study of less categorised or defined collectivities too and therefore is relevant for this thesis.

Towards a Study of Ephemeral Social Connections

In an article from over twenty years ago, McIntosh offered a different direction for the study of social experiences in medieval England. McIntosh called for scholarship to move beyond formal social groupings towards the examination of more loosely structured relationships. To tackle this herself, McIntosh applies the anthropological concept of 'social capital' as an analytical tool.[82] Social capital here refers to the level of standing and respect an individual held within society and social networks which was produced through interactions. McIntosh uses this to examine how social interactions operated to build social networks amongst women both in England, during the fourteenth to mid-seventeenth centuries, and in Nigeria during the first half of the twentieth century.[83] Despite this, there still remains a lacuna within current scholarship which deals with informal social relationships and interactions.

The issues with focusing solely on structured or formal social connections, identified first by McIntosh, have been recognised in recent years by Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel, and by Charlotte Berry.[84] Additionally, some modest headway in the direction away from institutional groups has been made within scholarship. This work can provide useful pointers in how to tackle the study of less defined social connections. Sharon Farmer examines the gendered strategies of coping with life in poverty in the context of late thirteenth-century Paris.[85] Farmer draws attention to the different ways poor men and women relied on networks of support from neighbours and thus prioritises ad hoc, informal modes of support over institutionalised charity. To achieve this, Farmer uses the recorded narratives of miracles attributed to Louis IX of France to consider social interactions which are otherwise largely invisible.[86] Influenced by McIntosh's work on social capital, Sherri Olson studies the process of 'neighbourhood formation' within Ellington Village, part of the estate of Ramsey Abbey in Cambridgeshire. Olson emphasises the centrality of the interpersonal and group relations between women in this formation. Likewise, she argues for the importance of face-to-face interactions which,

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[82] Marjorie K. McIntosh, 'The Diversity of Social Capital in English Communities, 1300-1640,' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29, no.3 (1999): 460.

[83] McIntosh, 'The Diversity of Social Capital,' 459-90.

[84] Justin Colson and Arie van Steensel, eds. *Cities and Solidarities: Urban Communities in Pre-Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2017), 12; Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London,* xxi.

[85] Sharon Farmer, *Surviving Poverty in Medieval Paris: Gender, Ideology, and the Daily Lives of the Poor* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005).

[86] Farmer, *Surviving Poverty,* 7-8.

she notes, often have been overlooked by medievalists.[87] Olson, therefore, approaches the study of women's relationships through their interactions and activities, for example their role during births and baptisms. More recently, in *The Margins of Late Medieval London,* Berry considers the social and geographic margins of urban society in London. She uses a range of methodologies, including quantification, social network analysis, and geographic information system (GIS), to focus on London's poor and migrant populations living in the suburbs.[88] In this way, Berry provides a holistic approach to uncovering their lived social experiences and how they negotiated positions of marginality. Since McIntosh's call for studies of social connections which existed informally and were less well defined, some progress has been made but the subject is still largely underdeveloped within historical research. This is a lacuna which my thesis seeks to address.

Relationships Between Neighbours

Lastly, it is important to outline the scholarly contributions within another significant topic of this thesis, the study of neighbours in medieval society. This topic has gained increasing traction within historical studies of the Middle Ages. Relationships between neighbours are important within my thesis because they made up an important part of people's day-to-day social interactions. These relationships, moreover, were not codified or formalised in the same way as, for instance, guilds or fraternities. There is already an established body of work which has grown up around neighbour and neighbourhoods in medieval Italian cities.[89] Dale Kent and Francis Kent, for example, study the socio-political importance of neighbourhoods, or districts (*gonfaloni*), in fifteenth-century Florence. They explore the identity and organisation of these districts which included ties of kinship, neighbours, and friendship. Kent and Kent argue for the importance of relationships with neighbours to facilitate individuals' participation in local governance as well as in the organisation of local tax assessments.[90]

The importance of these relationships is recognised for medieval England too, though in most cases the discussion of neighbours has been peripheral to the main focus of scholarly studies. McIntosh

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[87] Sherri Olson, 'Women's Place and Women's Space in the Medieval Village,' in *Rural Space in the Early Middle Ages and Early Modern Times: The Spatial Turn in Premodern Studies*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2012), 215.

[88] Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London*, xxxiv-xl.

[89] See for example: Diane Owen Hughes, 'Kinsmen and Neighbours in Medieval Genoa,' in *The Medieval City*, eds. Harry A. Miskimin, David Herlihy and A. L. Udovitch (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 95-111; Christine Klapisch-Zuber, '"Kin, Friends, and Neighbours": The Urban Territory of a Merchant Family in 1400,' in *The Italian Renaissance: The Essential Readings*, ed. Paula Findlen (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 97-123; Nicholas A. Eckstein, '*Pittori, amici e vicini*: The Formal and Informal Bonds of Community Amongst Florentine Artists,' in *Sociability and its Discontents: Civil Society, Social Capital, and their Alternatives in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe,* eds. Nicholas Eckstein and Nicholas Terpstra (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 109-128.

[90] Dale V. Kent and Francis William Kent, eds. *Neighbours and Neighbourhood in Renaissance Florence: The District of the Red Lion in the Fifteenth Century* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1982).

conducted important work historicising social regulation in a local context through the study of small towns and villages in England. Her aim is to bridge the gap between patterns identified in social history within the later medieval and early modern periods. McIntosh argues for a gradual increase between 1370 and 1600 of regulation by jurors in local courts of the behaviour of their neighbours.[91] McSheffrey continues the theme of neighbourly regulation within her study of sexual and marital relationships in London during the second half of the fifteenth century. McSheffrey explores how both sexual and marital relationships were governed by external bodies, arguing that neighbours frequently played a role in the marriage-making of young couples.[92]

Colson's research into the evolution of occupational distribution in London between the 1370s and 1550s contends that choices to live nearby others in the same craft, based on economic motivations, were ossified through the 'strong communities' that built up between neighbours.[93] Sarah Rees Jones likewise takes a spatialised approach to the study of political discourse around the street in late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century London. Within this she demonstrates how the language of neighbourliness was appropriated to influence how people responded to the regulation of public nuisance.[94] Whilst not providing a direct examination of relationships between neighbours in medieval England, such scholarship has provided valuable insights and opened up the discussion on neighbours.

The strand of research which primarily focuses on relationships between neighbours, in comparison, is still nascent, though work in this area is beginning to appear.[95] Rees Jones' work on the geographical distribution of the cult around Richard Scrope, Archbishop of York, following his execution in 1405 takes a more direct approach to the subject of neighbours and neighbourhoods. Here, Rees Jones outlines the presence of a neighbourhood identity based on associations with the Scrope family in

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[91] Marjorie K. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour in England, 1370-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[92] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 31, 41-2, 78, 157. See also for the sixteenth century: Diana O'Hara, '"Ruled by my friends": Aspects of Marriage in the Diocese of Canterbury, c.1540-1570,' *Continuity and Change* 6, no.1 (1991): 9-41.

[93] Justin Colson, 'Commerce, Clusters and Community: A Re-evaluation of the Occupational Geography of London, c.1400-c.1550,' *The Economic History Review* 69, no.1 (2015): 120.

[94] Sarah Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street: Chaucer and the Regulation of Nuisance in Post-Plague London,' in *Roadworks: Medieval Britain, Medieval Roads*, eds. Valerie Allen and Ruth Evens (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 97-126.

[95] See for example: Matthew L. Holford, 'Pro patriotis: "Country", "Countrymen" and Local Solidarities in Late Medieval England,' *Parergon* 23, no.1 (2006): 47-70; Jamie Taylor, 'Neighbours, Witnesses, and Outlaws in the Later Middle Ages,' *English Language Notes* 48, no.2 (2010): 85-98; Justin Colson, *Neighbourhood, Commerce and Sociability in Late Medieval London* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2022).
There has also been a growing number of PhD theses which include the topic of neighbours: Justin R. Colson, 'Local Communities in Fifteenth Century London: Craft, Parish and Neighbourhood,' (PhD Thesis, Royal Holloway, University of London, 2011); Lisa J.H. Liddy, 'Domestic Objects in York c.1400-1600: Consumption, Neighbourhood and Choice,' (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2015).

Micklegate, York, as well as the social connections which developed within it.[96] Susan McDonough's study of late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century Marseille, France, examines practices of social regulation within the ordinary population. McDonough uses civic court case narratives and focuses specifically on neighbourly expectations of acceptable behaviour.[97] This work offers direction in considering the agency of people described as neighbours, and how their values on a local scale might differ from those held by authorities or society at large. Bronach Kane and Simon Sandall have edited a collection of essays dealing specifically with medieval and early modern experiences of neighbourhood in Europe.[98] They aim to emphasise the importance of local relationships and interactions, namely relationships between neighbours, and seek to draw together medieval and early modern scholarship.[99] Within this collection, Lisa Liddy conducts a detailed small-scale study on two York parishes, 1400-1600. Liddy examines surviving wills from St Michael-le-Belfry and St Margaret, Walmgate, to link concepts of neighbourliness to the charitable provisions made by the testators.[100] This growing body of work is necessary to better understand configurations of neighbour but does by no means offer us a complete picture. My thesis contributes to this strand of research by offering a direct study of the relationships between neighbours in later medieval England.

Research Agenda

From this discussion of the ways in which scholarship has tackled questions related to the study of social interactions and relationships in later medieval England, we can outline some broad themes about the position of current scholarship on the subject. Collectively, over the last three to four decades, scholarship has been influenced by an attempt to pushback against earlier assessments of late medieval social relationships and associations which held underlying assumptions about their monolithic and harmonious nature. Medieval collectivities are now understood to be more complex and varied, including tension and conflict as well as support and unity. Studies which centre on the

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[96] Sarah Rees Jones, 'Richard Scrope, The Bolton Hours and The Church of St Martin in Micklegate: Reconstructing a Holy Neighbourhood in Later Medieval York,' in *Richard Scrope: Archbishop and Martyr,* ed. P.J.P. Goldberg (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2007), 214-36.

[97] Susan A. McDonough, *Witnesses, Neighbours, and Community in Late Medieval Marseille* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013).

[98] Bronach C. Kane and Simon Sandall, eds. *The Experience of Neighbourhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2021).

[99] For early modern scholarship dealing with neighbours see, for example: Keith Wrightson, 'The "Decline of Neighbourliness" Revisited,' in *Local Identities,* 19-49; Marjorie K. McIntosh, 'Networks of Care in Elizabethan English Towns: The Example of Hadleigh, Suffolk,' in *The Locus of Care: Families, Communities, Institutions, and the Provision of Welfare Since Antiquity*, eds. Peregrine Horden and Richard Smith (London: Routledge, 1998); Naomi Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours in Early Modern England: Biblical Translations and Social Norms,' in *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300-1800*, eds. Laura Gowing, Michael Cyril William Hunter and Miri Rubin (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 150-176.

[100] Lisa Liddy, ''All to Make Mery With': Testamentary Bequests to Neighbours in Fifteenth- and Sixteenth-Century York,' in *The Experience of Neighbourhood*, 149-60.

opportunities people had for collective interaction, including in parishes or guilds, has helped add depth to our understanding of medieval social experiences. Questioning the mode and access to participation in the parish, for example, can help us to think about the levels of exclusivity within social organisations and other groupings. Scholars, further, have focused on particular types of interactions, such as gossip and memory, which has contributed to how we consider the mechanisms of social connections during the medieval period. Historians have brought to attention the ways in which axes such as gender and status influenced how people interacted with one another and the social experiences they had. Current scholarship, furthermore, has taken steps towards examining relationships between neighbours and other, more ephemeral connections and groupings.

This body of literature is important and informs the work of this thesis. The varied approaches that historians have taken to tackle medieval social relationships provides us with guidance on how to approach this topic, for example, by considering how the ways that people interacted helped to form a sense of group cohesion. A considerable proportion of the work exploring positionality discussed so far has drawn heavily from, or centred around, the city of London. This will be useful within this thesis, which privileges the analysis of material from medieval London. Drawing on this scholarship will help me to consider how the relationships and encounters I study were shaped by gender, status, age, and so on within the context of London specifically, and thus provide a more coherent picture of the social experiences I study.

My position towards previous studies on medieval social relationships, therefore, is not one of criticism. Yet there remains a tendency to hold in focus structured and institutional relationships. In her study on social capital, McIntosh uses the terms formal and informal to distinguish between different social connections, as part of her adoption of concepts of social capital and networks. Formal, in this way, describes male-dominated, organisations or institutions which 'performed legal, economic, religious, and/or charitable functions'.[101] This category would include, for example, guilds and parishes. On the other hand, informal denotes 'loosely defined networks of friendship, neighbourliness, and assistance', which McIntosh sees as particularly important for women and lower status men.[102] Where informal and formal are used in this thesis, they are applied with these definitions in mind. It is essential to identify and recognise the complexity, variety, and importance of organised modes of social interaction in later medieval England. Everyone was a member of a parish, and fraternities and craft organisations became a popular way to network and socialise. This focus within scholarship is influenced by the subject matter of the readily available source material. An

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[101] McIntosh, 'The Diversity of Social Capital,' 459.
[102] McIntosh, 'The Diversity of Social Capital,' 460, 490.

overall emphasis on formal groupings is problematic for our understanding of later medieval social experiences, however, as it can only ever be a partial view. Relationships that people had with one another were not confined to legally, administratively, or geographically contained entities but existed and spread more organically.

My thesis will begin to address the remaining gap in scholarship on social connections and relationships by analysing how cultural norms and expectations shaped how people interacted informally and in particular with their neighbours during the later medieval period. To further our understanding of medieval experiences of social interactions we need to move beyond a view which privileges only relationships which were structured and more readily visible within the surviving records. Medieval people would have experienced a myriad of quotidian and mundane interactions which would have helped form connections which existed outside any organised grouping. These encounters would have taken place on a daily basis, passing in the street, meeting at the tavern, or whilst fetching water from a communal well. The lacuna in studies which place these social interactions and relationships at the forefront is what this thesis seeks to address.

Sources

One of the prevailing reasons why the historiography on medieval social relations and interactions has an overwhelming institutional emphasis is because of the source material available. Institutions and organisations had the capacity and need to produce documentation, as for example we see with the 1389 guild returns. As such these have attracted the most scholarly attention. This is rarely the case with most quotidian and mundane interactions that are noticed only in cases of dispute, fatality, or other exceptional circumstances.[103] In order to address the main research questions, how people interacted outside formal contexts and how people understood relationships with neighbours, I have privileged the study of narrative sources. These include court records, depositions, coroners' records, and miracle narratives. I have chosen to focus on this source type as they often include incidental details about social interactions. Moreover, the purpose and way these narratives were produced, can betray socio-cultural norms and expectations around mundane social relationships.

The sources used for this thesis include urban and rural examples from across England between c.1290 and c.1500 but with a particular emphasis on London. This scope has been chosen in part for practical reasons. Breadth will help to balance the difficulties of studying ephemeral relationships and interactions. Additionally, by using a range of material, from both secular and ecclesiastical sources, my aim is to provide a more holistic view than can be found studying one source type. The use of a

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[103] McIntosh, 'The Diversity of Social Capital,' 460, 469; Holford, 'Pro patriotis,' 48.

wide range of material as a way to tackle subjects less readily visible in the sources has been successfully applied in studies by Elizabeth Papp Kamali and Charlotte Berry in their work on medieval conceptions of felony and culpability, and marginality in London, respectively. In order to build a contextual understanding of how criminal intent was viewed and circulated, Kamali deploys a diverse range of sources which include a variety of legal records in addition to literary and theological texts.[104] Likewise, Berry examines testamentary and property records in addition to civic and ecclesiastical court documents to tackle the topic of marginality in London.[105] As the most important city in England with the highest population and population density across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, London has a rich documentary record including Consistory court depositions, coroners' and Assize of Nuisance rolls, and churchwardens' accounts. An emphasis on this city, therefore, allows us to consider the different perspectives found in the sources together within one location.

As we have seen, one of the sources I study are the depositions recorded as part of the canonisation process in respect of Bishop Thomas Cantilupe of Hereford (d.1282). The canonisation inquiry took place between July and November 1307, though Cantilupe was not formally canonised until April 1320.[106] The testimonies to thirty-eight miracles, which date between 1287 and 1312, survive in Vatican Library, MS Vat. Lat. 4015.[107] Witnesses were examined individually about the alleged miracles through a set of pre-determined questions. Their testimonies were recorded as responses to these questions, translated into Latin, and written up in a neat, manuscript copy.[108] The content of these narratives, therefore, was shaped by the purpose of the questions posed, which was to determine the veracity of the miracles, and thus the sanctity of Thomas Cantilupe. The testimonies purport to present a description of the events surrounding a miracle as they happened, yet they rely on witnesses remembering events from years earlier and tend to follow established hagiographical motifs. The value of these testimonies here is that they provide narratives of plausible, personal experiences of the events and interactions surrounding a moment of crisis.

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[104] Elizabeth Papp Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 7-8, 11, 15-20.

[105] Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London*, xxxiv-xxxvii.

[106] Patrick H. Daly, 'The Process of Canonisation in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries,' in *St Thomas Cantilupe Bishop of Hereford: Essays in his Honour*, ed. Meryl Jancey (Leominster: The Friends of Hereford Cathedral, 1982), 132-3.

[107] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015.

[108] Other manuscripts were produced during the inquiry which include accounts of the miracles and which survive. These, however, are less detailed. BAV, MS Ott. Lat. 2516, Bibliothèque nationale de France, MS Lat. 5373. Discussed in: Webster, 'Mediating Memory,' 292-308.

A further hagiographical source material I use is the collection of miracles attributed to Henry VI.[109] It is thought this text was compiled in Latin for John Morgan, Dean of Windsor, by an anonymous monk from Canterbury c.1500, based on a vernacular compilation of miracles recorded at Henry VI's tomb between 1481 and 1500.[110] Although this collection has been linked to Lancastrian attempts to canonise Henry VI, John Theilmann suggests this assumption should be revised.[111] Instead Theilmann argues the text may have been more of a devotional piece made for prosperity.[112] These narratives are likely to be less immediate than the testimonies to miracles recorded for Thomas Cantilupe's canonisation. Nevertheless, these miracula can still provide valuable insight into normative interactions contained in the narratives.

Another clerical source I use are episcopal visitation records. An unusually detailed set of records for monastic visitations undertaken by Bishop William Alnwick of Lincoln (d.1449) are bound together in a single manuscript volume.[113] The manuscript records the depositions, known as *detecta*, of religious on the spiritual, fiscal, and moral condition of their monastic house.[114] During the visitation the members of a religious house were examined individually by the bishop or his representative, who likely came with pre-prepared questions.[115] As the purpose of the visitation was to uncover any departure from good order and the Rule, the *detecta* recorded tend to provide us with a negative view into life inside the convent. Often the *detecta* exist essentially as lists of complaints made by members of the religious house. This view is something which needs to be taken into account when examining the narratives found in *detecta*. The records for a series of episcopal visitations to Bardney Abbey, Lincolnshire, are recorded for various dates in the 1430s and 1440s. These will be employed in the last chapter of this thesis to offer an example of how we might study social interactions and relationships as dynamic over time, in this case between the monks of Bardney Abbey.

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[109] Paul Grosjean, ed. *Henrici VI Angliae Regis Miracula Postuma* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1935). An English summary of some of the miracles can be found in: Roland Knox and Shane Leslie, eds. and trans., *The Miracles of King Henry VI: Being An Account and Translation of Twenty-Three Miracles Taken From the Manuscript in the British Museum (Royal 13 c.viii)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923).

[110] John M. Theilmann, 'The Miracles of King Henry VI of England,' *The Historian* 42, no.3 (1980): 459-60; Knox and Leslie, *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 16.

[111] Theilmann, 'The Miracles of King Henry VI,' 456.

[112] Theilmann, 'The Miracles of King Henry VI,' 469.

[113] Lincolnshire Archives (LA), DIOC/V/j/1. The MS has been transcribed and translated in: A. Hamilton Thompson, ed. *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln,* vol.2*: Records of Visitations Held by William Alnwick Bishop of Lincoln A.D. 1436-1449*, part 1 (London: Canterbury and York Society 24, 1919).

[114] Linda Rasmussen, 'Why Small Monastic Houses Should have a History,' Midland History 28, no.1 (2003): 11; A. Hamilton Thompson, ed., *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln,* vol.1*: Injunctions and Other Documents from the Registers of Richard Flemyng and William Gray Bishops of Lincoln A.D. 1420-1436* (London: Canterbury and York Society 17, 1915), ix-xxxi.

[115] The process of visitation is discussed in more detail in chapter five.

A further category of source material I will examine is legal documents from ecclesiastical courts, namely the consistory courts of York and London. Consistory courts were the highest episcopal courts run by clergy trained in cannon law and presided over by an Official, or judge.[116] Whilst church courts dealt with *ex officio* cases, a public charge involving a formal presentation to court brought by the bishop's official, as well as instance cases, private litigation brought by a plaintiff, the consistory courts mostly dealt with the latter.[117] The procedure for instance litigation included a plaintiff who brought their suit to court and provided proof, usually in the form of witnesses, or deponents. The plaintiff's charge against the defendant was written up as a libel. The claims made in this libel then were written out as positions for the defendant to answer. Documents known as articles often were produced which reduced the positions to statements which were contested by the parties. Proctors acted as trained representatives for the plaintiff and defendant of a suit.[118] The witnesses were examined privately using questions based on the articles or on interrogatories, additional questions put forward by the defendant. Their statements were written up as depositions which were translated into Latin. The depositions were presented in court allowing the defendant to provide exceptions to the plaintiffs witnesses and produce their own witnesses to support this. The Official, as judge, would review the evidence of the case and conclude the suit by issuing a sentence.

Before the fifteenth century the court of the Archbishop of York was centralised as the Court of York (*Curia Eboracensis*). This court heard litigation from the diocese as well as appeals from the province of York. From the fifteenth century the *Curia Eboracensis* was split into the York Consistory court, the archbishop's general court, and the Chancery court, the personal court of the prelate.[119] The records which survive for York are the fullest and most extensive for medieval England.[120] Cause papers for the *Curia* and Consistory court survive for around 570 cases between 1301 and 1499.[121] The local term 'cause papers' describes the collection of documents which were used in court such as the libel, articles, depositions, and sentences. Today these are collected into separate files for each case. Within

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[116] R.H. Helmholz, *The Oxford History of the Laws of England*, vol.1: *The Canon Law and Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction from 597 to the 1640s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 213.

[117] Richard M. Wunderli, *London Church Courts and Society on the Eve of the Reformation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Medieval Academy of America, 1981), 32.

[118] Advocates were further trained in canon law and often advised proctors. Bronach C. Kane, 'Memory and Gender in the Late Medieval Church Courts of York,' (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2008), 51.

[119] 'What are Cause Papers?', *Research Guide*, Borthwick Institute for Archives, accessed 23rd April 2020, https://www.york.ac.uk/borthwick/holdings/research-guides/what-are-causepapers/.

[120] Borthwick Institute for Archives (BIA), CP.E. and CP.F. series. Act Books and Cause Papers survive for thirteen dioceses in the late medieval period: Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 24.

[121] Charles Donahue, *Law, Marriage, and Society in the Later Middle Ages: Arguments About Marriage in Five Courts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 64.

this material, depositions were written records of the responses given by the witnesses for the plaintiff and for the defendant in response to predetermined questions.

For the Consistory court of London, less material survives, but there are two extant books of depositions dating from the last decades of the fifteenth century where the depositions from cases have been copied.[122] The later deposition book (1487-1496) has been transcribed and translated online by McSheffrey.[123] It is this set of records that I have used here. The types of cases brought to these courts included, for example, marriage, defamation, testamentary, and breach of faith suits. Cases related to church business also included suits related to ecclesiastical dues such as tithes, clerical pensions, church property rights, and assaults on the clergy.[124] These documents have been used to study aspects of legal and social history. Recent work, for example, has considered depositions for insight into medieval gender, sexuality, marriage, life-cycles, and memory.[125] Historians have also studied the records for church courts as a whole for insight into court procedure.[126]

Consistory court depositions were constructed with the purpose of persuading the presiding officer, usually the archbishop's Official, in favour of the party the witnesses were testifying for. They were shaped, therefore, to fit a particular narrative and the legal requirements of the suit.[127] Nevertheless, like the testimonies given for the canonisation of Thomas Cantilupe, the depositions often provide rich narratives surrounding the subject of the dispute. Their value for the research here, again, lies in what they can reveal about social interactions. Marriage and defamation suits detail fractured interpersonal relations, as well as an individual's social networks which can help to build up a picture of how informal ties operated.

Legal records from secular courts make up another source type used in the thesis. I will make use of the verdicts of juries recorded in coroners' rolls. On the discovery of an unexpected or violent death the finders were obligated, under common law, to summon the coroner. The body and the place where the body was found were to be left until the coroner arrived. The coroner examined the body

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[122] London Metropolitan Archives (LMA), DL/C/0205, DL/C/A/001/MS09065, DL/C/A/001/MS09065B.

[123] LMA, DL/C/A/001/MS09065, DL/C/A/001/MS09065B. Shannon McSheffrey, ed. and trans., *Consistory: Testimony in the Late Medieval London Consistory Court*, accessed 23rd April 2020, http://www.consisory.cohds.ca/.

[124] Helmholz, *Laws of England*, 229.

[125] See for example: Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* Frederik Pedersen, *Marriage Disputes in Medieval England* (London: Hambledon, 2000); Shannon McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation: Public and Private in the Making of Marriage in Late-Medieval London,' *Speculum* 79, no.4 (2004): 960-990; Jeremy Goldberg, *Communal Discord, Child Abduction, And Rape in The Later Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Tom Johnson, 'The Preconstruction of the Witness Testimony: Law and Social Discourse in England before the Reformation,' *Law and Society* 32, no.1 (2014): 127-147; Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*.

[126] See for example: R.H. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974); Donahue, *Law, Marriage, and Society*; Wunderli, *London Church Courts and Society*.

[127] This is discussed further in the methodology section of the introduction.

and called a jury of local men. This jury was tasked with returning an account about how the victim had met their death. The findings of this inquest jury were written up as the verdict in the coroner's roll.[128] The concern with recording the verdict was to demonstrate that the correct procedure had been followed and that an explanation for the death in question had been found.[129] As Kamali describes, these verdicts worked to produce 'a tidy narrative' making use of legal conventions to explain the death and help assign culpability.[130]

A series of coroners' rolls survive for London which record cases between 1300 and 1378.[131] This source material has been used in historiographical discussions around death and crime, as well as marital violence and gendered, spatial divisions of labour.[132] The reported events, narrativized by the inquest jury are of value here as they illuminate connections and relationships which surrounded the deaths in question. I primarily will use examples found in the London rolls.[133] I will also make some reference to cases from the Bedfordshire coroners' rolls, dating between c.1265 and 1380, which have been calendared by Roy Hunnisett.[134]

The Assize of Nuisance Rolls which exist for London are another set of secular legal records which I draw upon.[135] The Assize functioned as a legal mechanism to allow freeholders to make complaints about property that caused, or had the potential to cause, damage. Here, I will focus on the private action cases brought to the Assize and recorded in the three Nuisance rolls. Once a complaint was made, the nuisance in question was examined by the mayor and aldermen of London. If the case was

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[128] For more detail on this process see: R.F. Hunnisett, *The Medieval Coroner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 100-115.

[129] Jeremy Goldberg, 'The Drowned Child: An Essay in Medieval Cultural History,' *WerkstattGeschichte* 63 (2013): 10.

[130] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 16, 113.

[131] The records of cases do not span uninterrupted across these years. There are gaps between 1302 and 1320, and 1340 and 1367. Reginald R. Sharpe, ed. *Calendar of Coroners Rolls of the City of London, A.D. 1300-1378* (London: Richard Clay and Sons, 1913), vii. For details on the London office of coroner see: William Kellaway, 'The Coroner in Medieval London,' in *Studies in London History: Presented to Philip Edmund Jones*, eds. A.E.J. Hollaender and William Kellaway (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1969), 75-91.

[132] For example: Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'Violent Death in Fourteenth- and Early Fifteenth-Century England,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18, no.3 (1976): 297-320; Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'Seeking the Flesh and Blood of Manorial Families,' *Journal of Medieval History* 14 (1988): 33-45; P.J.P. Goldberg, 'The Public and Private: Women in the Pre-Plague Economy,' in *Thirteenth Century England III: Proceedings of the Newcastle Upon Tyne Conference 1989*, eds. P.R. Coss and S.D. Lloyd (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1991), 75-89; Sara M. Butler, 'Cultures of Suicide?: Suicide Verdicts and the "Community" in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century England,' *The Historian* 69 (2007): 427-449; Sara M. Butler, 'Spousal Abuse in Fourteenth-Century Yorkshire: What Can We Learn from the Coroners' Rolls?' *Florilegium* 18, no.2 (2001): 61-78.

[133] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001-9. These previously were archived as Guildhall, MS. No.126, Rolls A-I. These rolls have ben calendared: Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls*.

[134] R.F. Hunnisett, ed., *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls* (Streatley: Bedfordshire Record Society, 1961).

[135] LMA, CLA/040/02/001-003. These rolls previously were archived as Miscellaneous Rolls DD, FF and II in the Corporation of London Records Office. These rolls have been calendared: Helena M. Chew and William Kellaway, eds., *London Assize of Nuisance 1301-1431: A Calendar* (Leicester: London Record Society, 1973).

determined in favour of the plaintiff, the defendant usually was ordered to rectify the nuisance within a customary forty days. The records made in the roll consist variously of a summary of these proceedings including a description of the complaint made by the plaintiffs, any response given by the defendant, and an outline of the inspection and subsequent judgement. These rolls include 661 cases from 1301 to 1431 which reveal moments of friction between those living alongside one another.

Lastly, I study the relationships made visible in the churchwardens' accounts for the parish of St Mary at Hill, London, which exist from 1420 to 1559.[136] These accounts are some of the best recorded for London, and England, during this period. Only eleven London parishes have surviving fifteenth-century material, and sometimes this spans only a few years.[137] As churchwardens' accounts are not narrative documents, but rather lists of expenditure and revenue, they can only provide a financial perspective to the experiences of the individuals mentioned within them. As Burgess warns, we cannot assume that these accounts provide a complete record of parish activities or business, nor that the accounts remain consistent between different wardens' terms of office.[138] Despite these difficulties, the accounts for St Mary at Hill have been used in studies of medieval parishes to examine various aspects of parish life.[139] French, Bennett, and Burgess have demonstrated, moreover, the value of these sources in considering the relationships amongst parishioners, for example in participation of celebratory activities and the dynamics between wealthy and poor parishioners.[140] It is in this capacity that these churchwardens' accounts will be used in the thesis as a supplementary source material.

The choice of these sources is motivated by the aim to study a range of source types whilst keeping this body of material coherent. This collection provides perspectives from clerical as well as secular discourse. In addition to extending over two centuries, these sources were each produced for different purposes. What each source type provides in terms of insight into how people interacted on a quotidian basis, outside an institutional context, therefore, will vary. This will help me to build a more rounded picture of medieval interpersonal relationships. Despite their variety, the primary sources I use here make up a body of material that can be collectively described as legal narratives. These

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[136] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001. This previously was archived as Guildhall, MS 1239/1. There is a printed edition of these accounts: Henry Littlehales, ed., *The Medieval Records of a London City Church (St Mary at Hill) 1420-1559.* Early English Text Society Original Series 128 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and co., 1905).

[137] Gibbs, 'London Parish Records,' 73.

[138] Burgess, 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts,' 308, 312-4.

[139] For example: Gabriel Byng, *Church Building and Society in the Later Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017); John Schofield, 'Medieval Parish Churches in the City of London: The Archaeological Evidence,' in *The Parish in English Life,* 38, 54; Ronald Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year 1400-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 24; Colson, 'Local Communities,' 33.

[140] French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 157-79; Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity,' 19-41. Burgess, 'Shaping the Parish,' 246-86.

narratives largely concern interactions between people who came into frequent or close contact with one another. The exceptions to this are the collection of miracles attributed to Henry VI, which are *miracula* rather than legal, and the churchwardens' accounts which do not have a narrative structure.

The final matter which needs to be addressed here regarding the various sources used for this thesis relates to who is represented within the narratives. Consistory court litigants included a wide range of the population in terms of social status, though not including aristocratic parties or those of the lowest status.[141] Whilst these courts thus provide valuable insight into non-aristocratic populations, this is by no means a representative cross-section of society. Generally, litigants were substantial, middling status individuals and witnesses who were older, male, and considered respectable were over-represented.[142] Kane explores the gendered cultural understandings of memory recollection within depositions, highlighting how older male retellings were considered more credible.[143] This has an impact on whose narrative we are presented with when studying depositions. The method of approaching these sources as fictive, considering the agency of the witness or deponent themselves, can help us to address this. This approach, discussed in more detail below, enables us to think about the ways the content of the narrative is shaped and distorted by the perspective and prejudices the deponent might have. Despite these over-representations, we still find a range of individuals involved or described in church court suits who represent most of the ordinary population in society. Witnesses who gave depositions and individuals mentioned within these narratives include those of more modest status. For York Consistory court suits, Goldberg found more women acting as plaintiffs in marriage disputes than men during the fourteenth centuries. This pattern reduces over the later fifteenth century, however, and outside matrimonial and defamation suits women are found significantly less as litigants.[144] A different pattern is identified by McSheffrey for London church courts during the fifteenth century, where there was only a slightly higher proportion of men who sued than women.[145] A skewed cross-section of the population found in litigants has raised questions about the value of these sources in providing insight into society.[146] As Goldberg argues, however, this unrepresentative nature can provide us with an appreciation of the society the cases exist in.[147]

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[141] Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation,* 160.

[142] Frederik Pedersen, 'Demography in the Archives: Social and Geographical Factors in Fourteenth-Century York Cause Paper Marriage Litigation,' *Continuity and Change* 10, no.3 (1995): 420-2.

[143] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 13-4.

[144] P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Gender and Matrimonial Litigation in the Church Courts in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of the Court of York,' *Gender and History* 19, no.1 (2007): 44-6.

[145] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 110-1.

[146] Pedersen, 'Demography in the Archives,' 420-2.

[147] P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Debate: Fiction in the Archives: the York Cause Papers as a Source for Later Medieval Social History,' *Continuity and Change* 12, no.3 (1997): 425.

Those who brought complaints to the London Assize of Nuisance represented the section of the population who had substantial wealth. The Assize concerned the private property between freeholders which necessitated a level of prosperity.[148] Earlier Assize complaints, from the beginning of the fourteenth century, often involved aldermen or their families. Men serving as aldermen are found, on occasion, both as plaintiff and one of the aldermen sitting in judgement.[149] Throughout the Assize rolls, the most prominent occupation of parties listed was that of goldsmith (twenty-seven litigants). This was followed by tailors and mercers (twenty-three and twenty-two respectively). Although these crafts included a spectrum of social status and wealth, the Goldsmiths and Mercers were particularly dominant in the mayoralty from the mid-to-late fourteenth century.[150] The section of society most visible within these rolls, therefore, were made up of merchants and wealthier craftsmen who had their own freehold. Nevertheless, we are still able to glimpse a wider range of society within the rolls. The cases throughout the Assize periodically refer to the tenants who lived in the properties in question.[151] There are also cases where the defendants were the tenants to the property.[152] Whilst not directly present within the complaints, less wealthy residents were clearly part of the wider issues delt with by the Assize and their interactions are recorded in the rolls.

Miracle stories are generally more wide ranging in their inclusion of most members of medieval society.[153] Harriett Webster argues that the commissioners for the canonisation of Thomas Cantilupe were anxious to ensure the quality of the witnesses providing testimonies on the reported miracles.[154] The primary witnesses for the Joan of Marden case were prosperous peasant families. Richard Finucane identifies Thomas Schonk, one of the witnesses, as a leading member of the parish. He appears several times selling land in the Marden manor court rolls and he was later elected as ale-

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[148] Henry de Bracton, *De legibus et consuetudinibus Angliae*, ed. Samuel E. Thorne (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977), 189-90.

[149] Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* xxx-xxxi. See for example Solomon le Cotiller in: LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.3. № 29, CLA/040/02/001, f.6d. № 66.

[150] John F. Cherry, *Medieval Craftsmen: Goldsmiths* (London, British Museum Press 1992), 53, 55; T.F. Reddaway, *The Early History of The Goldsmiths' Company 1327-1509* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975); Anne F. Sutton, *The Mercery of London: Trade, Goods and People, 1130-1578* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 74-6.

[151] Tenants are mentioned related to alleged nuisances in, for example: LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.21. № 187; CLA/040/02/002, f.15 № 525, f.40. № 618; CLA/040/02/003, f.3. № 630, f.10. № 652.

[152] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.39d № 617. In another case tenants are listed among the group of plaintiffs: LMA, CLA/040/02/003, f.12 № 655.

[153] Rachel Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate: Miracle Stories and Miracle Collecting in High Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 112-4; Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*; R.C. Finucane, *The Rescue of the Innocents: Endangered Children in Medieval Miracles* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1997); Hilary Powell, 'The "Miracle of Childbirth": The Portrayal of Parturient Women in Medieval Miracle Narratives,' *Social History of Medicine* 25, no.4 (2012): 795-811; Susan J. Ridyard and Jeremy A. Ashbee, 'The Resuscitation of Roger of Conwy: A Cantilupe Miracle and the Society of Edwardian North Wales,' *Journal of Medieval History* 41, no.3 (2015): 309-24.

[154] Webster, 'Mediating Memory,' 303.

taster in 1314/5.[155] Nevertheless, as Webster notes, the canonisation inquiry more generally 'contains the testimonies of people from many different stations in life' and from both men and women.[156] The preamble to the testimonies for the miracle at Marden records how the witnesses were 'respected ordinary people, common and better' from the parish of Marden.[157] For this miracle we find those of more modest standing too. John de Pirebrok, for example, was a servant of the alehouse owner, Walter de la Wyle.[158] Although not a witness herself, Christina de Greneway, described as a 'poor woman' (*pauper mulier*) who begged, is mentioned within the testimonies.[159]

Like miracle narratives, coroners' rolls include a range of individuals from different sections of society. In theory, coroners were to investigate any and all unexpected or suspicious deaths regardless of status. Hanawalt notes the low representation of upper-class individuals within coroners' rolls. She suggests this is possibly because retainers could offer protection and carry out attacks on behalf of elite individuals.[160] From the study of coroners' rolls from London and Oxford, Hanawalt concludes that those involved in homicides in an urban context were mostly those of middling rank, including tradesmen and servants.[161] Further, the majority of both suspects and victims were men; women only made up seven percent of homicide suspects in London.[162] Again, despite this over-representation of middling status individuals the coroners' rolls include a broader range of the population too. Indeed, in the London rolls for instance there is the oft-cited case of fifty recipients of funeral doles (*pauperes*) who died in a crush at Blackfriars' gate in 1322.[163] In the Bedfordshire rolls there are numerous cases involving lower status individuals. These include, for example, Emma, a washerwoman who died in 1267 after falling into a vat of boiling water while she was working.[164]

The verdicts, in which these individuals feature, were mediated by the jurors tasked with explaining the death reported to the coroner. The inquest jurors were of higher status, those with some means and standing. A statute from 1300, reiterated in 1360, stipulated coroners' jurors were to be 'most sufficient'.[165] Accounts of interactions between people recorded in the verdicts, therefore, is mediated

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[155] Finucane, *The Rescue of Innocents*, 193.

[156] Webster, 'Mediating Memory,' 299.

[157] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.123r.
'*nobiles uel populares homines communes et meliores ut dixit parochie de maurdin*'.

[158] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.131v.

[159] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.131v.

[160] Hanawalt, 'Violent Death,' 308.

[161] Hanawalt, 'Violent Death,' 309.

[162] Hanawalt, 'Violent Death,' 306.

[163] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/002, № 35.

[164] Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, 5, №.13; Carole Rawcliffe, 'A Marginal Occupation? The Medieval Laundress and her Work,' *Gender and History* 21, no.1 (2009): 156-8.

[165] Sara M. Butler, *Forensic Medicine and Death Investigation in Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2015), 81-2.

by the perspective of the men of middling status which made them. This is also true of the churchwarden's accounts for St Mary at Hill, London. French shows how churchwardens were not necessarily always elite members of the population and stresses the varied nature of this office throughout medieval England.[166] French argues, the role of churchwarden often came with respect and status and frequently was made up of the middling sort.[167] The over-representation of middling status individuals, especially men, is a generic problem across the source material used in this thesis. Nevertheless, as shown, in practice the sources still include a wider range of the population, including men and women from a variety of statuses. Although, reflecting the source material, those of middling status are prominent within the thesis, my study includes a broader range of the ordinary population.

Methodology

The aim of this thesis is to study social connections in depth and explore how they were enacted. My work favours a case-study perspective, using detailed examples to ask questions about broader social trends. As Olson proposes, the study of individuals can help us avoid considering culture as a single, homogenous system.[168] The narratives that are recorded in the sources chosen here, however, are neither unproblematic nor unmediated. It is necessary, therefore, to approach this material with careful consideration to avoid misinterpretation.

Some scholars have approached the study of informal social ties through Social Network Analysis (SNA). This methodology, developed within the social sciences, has become an established approach within historical study.[169] By plotting the nodes (individual people or subjects) and the edges (the relationships or interactions between the nodes) of a network, it is possible to trace its density and any clustering. SNA is most revealing where larger datasets are used. This approach, therefore, is not

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[166] French, *The People of the Parish*, 68, 75; Byng, *Church Building and* Society, 139, 160, 172.

[167] French, *The People of the Parish*, 68, 73. Byng also suggests the office of churchwarden may have served as a rung on a career ladder, and often drew on those who had previous experience, for example in local government. Byng, *Church Building and Society*, 162, 165.

[168] Sherri Olson, *A Mute Gospel: The People and Culture of the Medieval English Common Fields* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 2009), 20.

[169] Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community,' 365-6; Charlotte Berry, '"To Avoide All Envye, Malys, Grudge and Displeasure": Sociability and Social Networking at the London Wardmote Inquest, c. 1470-1540,' *The London Journal* 42, no.3 (2017): 201-217; David Gary Shaw, *The Creation of a Community: The City of Wells in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); David Gary Shaw, 'Social Networks and the Foundations of Oligarchy in Medieval Towns,' *Urban History* 32, no.2 (2005): 200-222; Cornell Jackson, 'Using Social Network Analysis to Reveal Unseen Relationships in Medieval Scotland,' *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities*, 32, no.2 (2017): 336-343; Anne Polden, 'The Social Networks of The Buckinghamshire Gentry in The Thirteenth Century,' *Journal of Medieval History* 32, no.4 (2006): 371-39. There have been several PhD theses making use of SNA in recent years: Bethany Jane Hamblen, 'Communities of the Hinterland: Social Networks and Geographical Mobility Beyond the Walls of Late Medieval York,' (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2008); Colson, 'Local Communities,'; Charlotte E. Berry, 'Margins and Marginality in Fifteenth-Century London,' (PhD Thesis, University of London, 2018), Chapter 4.

always as effective when dealing with ordinary people, who often only appear fleetingly within the surviving records. Whilst SNA can allow us to trace the structure and range of social ties an individual engaged in, this approach can only provide us with a surface view of these relationships.

One form of historical analysis which has been productive in examining people's social experiences is a close study, recognising the fictive qualities of narrative sources. Through a close reading we can unpick how the narratives reflect particular perspectives. This can provide us with insight into the cultural norms and expectations around quotidian social interactions and relationships held by middling status individuals. This approach has proved successful elsewhere in exploring social relationships during the later medieval period.[170] It is this methodology that is privileged for this thesis.

How to approach the study of narrative sources has been the subject of scholarly interest in recent decades, particularly in relation to depositions and testimonies. One of the main issues raised within this discussion is how to approach the historicity of the narratives. Hayden White recognises that historical texts are not literal retellings of events as they happened. Instead, White uses 'narrativity' to consider how narratives incorporate real and imaginary elements, something which he argues has become too separated within historiographical interpretation.[171] In the same vein, Natalie Zemon Davis tackles the constructed nature of sixteenth-century French remission letters, created to persuade the king to grand pardons for homicide.[172] Davis' work has been highly influential in the development of current methodological approaches to narrative source material.[173] Davis argues these letters contained fictional qualities. The narrative explaining the events leading to the homicide were skilfully crafted by the supplicants and their legal counsel to solicit sympathy and deflect culpability.[174] Whilst containing fictional elements, Davis explains, these narratives 'needed to present an account that seemed both to the writer and reader real, meaningful, and/or explanatory.'[175] Building on this approach, Goldberg uses the term 'fictive' rather than 'fictional' to describe the nature of medieval court documents. He argues that this helps to negate the resonances that fictional has of

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[170] For example: Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*; Goldberg, *Communal Discord*; Shannon McSheffrey, 'Detective Fiction in the Archives: Court Records and the Uses of Law in Late Medieval England,' *History Workshop Journal* 65 (2008): 65-78.

[171] Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 4.

[172] Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and Their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1987).

[173] This is even indicated in the number of articles which make reference to this monologue in the title: Pedersen, 'Demography in the Archives,' 405-436; Goldberg, 'Debate: Fiction in the Archives,' 425-445; McSheffrey, 'Detective Fiction,' 65-78; Malcolm Gaskill, 'Reporting Murder: Fiction in the Archives in Early Modern England,' *Social History* 23, no.1 (1998): 1-30.

[174] Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 3, 5, 15-6.

[175] Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*, 3.

'invention and falseness'.[176] I will approach the narratives studied in this thesis as fictive. Whilst recognising that the depositions and accounts recorded do not necessarily represent the historicity of the events described, I will consider them as narratives which nevertheless provide plausible accounts of social experiences. Including content which worked within the parameters of contemporary cultural practices or behaviours was necessary, within depositions or other testimonies, for the narrative to be persuasive. By approaching these narratives as fictive, we can ask what the construction of these accounts can tell us about social values and norms.

Analysing narrative material as fictive requires an appreciation of their production. Scholarship has moved away from understanding testimony evidence as presenting the unmediated 'real voices' of the witnesses they purport to represent. Instead, it is important to recognise the relationship between the oral, vernacular testimony given and the Latin deposition which was written. The legal processes that led to the construction of these texts now are seen as creating distance between what was spoken by the witness, and what was recorded.[177]

In the particular case of persons testifying to the Cathar inquisition, John Arnold argues that the testimonies concerning individual religious beliefs were shaped by the questioning process. Arnold further argues that the inquisitors had their own specific understanding of Catharism and this was imposed onto the subject being questioned.[178] The inquisitorial record that Arnold is concerned with, however, was produced in a very different context to the judicial records I deal with in this thesis, with the latter involving far less coercion. The witnesses in church court instance litigation deposed voluntarily and in order to support the party who asked them to testify. A deponent testifying in a disputed marriage case, therefore, might at worst fail to help secure the verdict desired by the party for whom they appeared. The person interrogated by the inquisitor might ultimately help condemn their friend, neighbour, kin, or even themselves through their testimony.

Clerical oversight still influenced the production of narratives found in court records. These texts were not verbatim transcripts of testimonies. As Goldberg argues for church court depositions, the words that witnesses spoke were 'pruned' and 'tidied' to fit into an appropriate legal framework and

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[176] Jeremy Goldberg, 'The Priest of Nottingham and the Holy Household of Ousegate: Telling Tales in Court,' in *Town Courts and Urban Society in Late Medieval England 1250-1500*, ed. Richard Goddard and Teresa Phipps (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019), 64, n.12.
[177] Tom Johnson outlines these historiographical shifts: Johnson, 'The Preconstruction of the Witness Testimony,' 127.
[178] John H. Arnold, *Inquisition and Power: Catharism and the Confessing Subject in Medieval Languedoc* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 7, 9.

rhetoric.[179] The recasting of testimony from first to third person is a clear example of this. The same is found for the miracle testimonies studied here. Distance from the underlying oral testimony is further created by the shift in language from vernacular to Latin. This is highlighted in a note made during the examinations of witnesses to the miracle of Joan le Schirreve's recovery from having drowned. The note explains that the commissaries requested the presence of two local Franciscans, Walter de Risebury and John de Brompton, to help with a 'better interpretation and understanding of the language of England, given that certain words differ in the diocese of Hereford from several other dioceses of the kingdom of England'.[180] Despite such interventions, the legal narratives I study here generally are reflective of the voices of those they claim to represent, unlike the inquisitorial records that Arnold uses. As the note explaining the necessity of the Franciscans' interpretation demonstrates, there was clearly a concern on the part of the commissaries that the Latin deposition produced did reflect the sense of the testimony given.

We should not confuse the participation of those providing testimony in the production of their narratives, however, with the creation of unfiltered accounts. Recent historical scholarship has discussed the influence of witnesses themselves in the production of depositions for church court suits. Goldberg demonstrates how church court witnesses, chosen by the litigants, were also prepared by legal council, proctors, on how to answer the articles of a suit.[181] The articles were a list of positions, or arguments, put forward by the plaintiff which were used to examine the witnesses. The questions posed from these articles, Goldberg argues, were designed to prompt specific responses to help the plaintiff's suit.[182] To take an example from this thesis, in the marriage dispute case John Wistow c. Elena Cooper from 1490-1 it was necessary for John as the plaintiff to demonstrate that Elena willingly entered into a contract of marriage with him in order for his suit to enforce their marriage to be successful.[183] The questions, therefore, prompt the deponents to discuss how they knew this was the case. One of the deponents for the plaintiff, Alice Kant, therefore described how it was Elena who actively organised their handfasting. According to Alice, Elena had approached her to ask to use her house for the occasion. Alice's deposition thus portrays Elena as not only willing in the creation of the

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[179] Jeremy Goldberg, 'Echoes, Whispers, Ventriloquisms: On Recovering Women's Voices from the Court of York at the End of the Middle Ages,' in *Women, Agency and the Law, 1300-1700*, eds. Bronach Kane and Fiona Williamson (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), 34.

[180] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.129r. '*pleniorem interpretationem et et* [sic] *intelligentiam linguae Anglianae que quantum ad aliquae vocabula diuersificatur in diocese Hereford a pluribus aliis diocesibus regni Angliae*'. The English translations for this case-study are my own.

[181] Goldberg, *Communal Discord,* 33-44.

[182] Goldberg, *Communal Discord,* 38-9.

[183] BIA, CP.F.280.

marriage contract but the primary initiator, supporting John's argument for the validity of their marriage.

As McSheffrey emphasises, litigants and witnesses were capable of using legal processes and documentation 'in complex and sophisticated ways'.[184] Kane has studied the gendered narrative strategies that deponents used in their accounts to create convincing narratives.[185] To illustrate, in the marriage dispute Alice Walker c. John Kydde from 1418, John brought four male witnesses to provide testimony that he had not married Alice because he was with these witnesses at the time she alleged the contract was made. The depositions described how the five men, including John, had gone to stay at his parents' house on the day in question where they spent the day fishing and the evening drinking late into the night. Using a methodology influenced by Davis, Kane demonstrates how the witnesses for the defendant played on cultural expectations surrounding the behaviour of young men within these narratives to help portray John as a bachelor unready for marriage.[186]

Tom Johnson also warns against assuming depositions present an uncomplicated window onto the lives of the ordinary population.[187] Rather, witnesses were able to use selective retellings or shift the focus of the narrative to emphasise one aspect.[188] In the context of parish visitations, for example, Forrest emphasises that the 'trustworthy men' chosen to represent the parish could couch their own interests 'in the language of public order'.[189] Approaching the study of the source material with an awareness of how the narratives were shaped by both the clerical production of the text and by the deponents themselves will help to identify what expectations the narratives speak to, placing the social norms that are portrayed in context.

A close study of narrative sources as fictive is a key component of this thesis because of its applicability to different source types. This approach allows us to study a source for insight into later medieval social interactions presented within them whilst assessing the context and perspective that is being highlighted. This method helps us to approach each source critically and to appreciate that they present only a particular perspective. For example, relationships found represented within the Assize of Nuisance rolls from London will be portrayed in connection to physical property. The complaints made by plaintiffs to the mayor and aldermen in these cases will centre on situations which allow them to fulfil the legal criteria for their suit. The relationship that Thomas and Alice Yonge had with Stephen atte Fryth, who lived in the adjoining property, is only visible to us, for example, in the form

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[184] McSheffrey, 'Detective Fiction,' 73.
[185] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 57-80. See also: Kane, 'Memory and Gender,' 56-7.
[186] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 78-9; Davis, *Fiction in the Archives*.
[187] Johnson, 'The Preconstruction of the Witness Testimony,' 127.
[188] Johnson, 'The Preconstruction of the Witness Testimony,' 142.
[189] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 194.

of their complaints over the existence of a forge he used and the nuisances it allegedly caused the couple.[190] Through a careful appreciation of this context, however, this partiality can be illuminating.[191] In contrast, testimonies recorded as part of the canonisation inquiry into Thomas Cantilupe, Bishop of Hereford, are directed towards demonstrating the veracity of an alleged miracle. How actions are portrayed within the narratives recorded for the witnesses, therefore, is shaped by the criteria the inquiry used to determine whether the event in question was miraculous or not.[192] Was there, for example, any medical intervention which could have resulted in Joan's recovery from drowning at Marden rather than the intervention of the bishop. Yet what unifies these sources is their fictive nature and inclusion of plausible, incidental details. By studying a range of source material in this way, we can build a more holistic picture of later medieval sociability and belonging than through a consideration of one source type.

Though the close reading of narrative sources comprises the largest part of this thesis, chapter two deploys an analysis of the vocabulary of 'neighbour' as a window onto cultural understandings and constructions of the concept in later medieval England. This method was applied in James Schultz's pioneering study on medieval childhood. Rejecting Phillippe Ariès' ahistorical interpretation of childhood, Schultz examines the language used to describe children in High Middle German between 1100 and 1350 to elucidate the 'culturally specific construction of childhood' in this context.[193] By examining the meanings and resonances within this lexicon, Schultz identifies how the language used to describe children did not distinguish based on gender but instead privileged virginity.[194] What this work demonstrates here is that an examination of the vocabulary surrounding a subject or concept can challenge the way that we think about and understand its place in medieval society.

Applying Schultz' methodology, Goldberg likewise examined the language used to describe children within Middle English, demonstrating there were both gender-specific and gender-neutral terms which could be used. Goldberg argues that the multiple ways in which the vocabulary surrounding children could be applied informed the understanding of these words when they were employed. The Middle English knave, for example, was used to describe male babies and young children. The term was applied also to male servants or more generally common folk, where it took on a more pejorative

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[190] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.39d. № 617.
[191] See chapter three.
[192] See chapter two.
[193] James A. Schultz, 'No Girls, No Boys, No Families: On the Construction of Childhood in Texts of the German Middle Ages,' *Journal of English and German Philology* 94 (1995): 59-81; Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood*.
[194] Schultz, 'No Girls, No Boys, No Families,' 63-4.

meaning.[195] Emma Martin, more recently, uses a lexicographical approach to develop a more nuanced view of how idleness, leisure, and work were understood in medieval English society following the Black Death.[196] By using this methodology in chapter two, I will examine the Latin and Middle English vocabulary used to describe relationships akin to the modern 'neighbour'. Studying the contexts in which this vocabulary was used can reveal what underlying associations and resonances were evoked in these relationships. A better appreciation of this language will allow us to gain a fuller understanding of medieval notions of neighbour and neighbourliness. I will use this approach as a foundation on which to build my study of medieval understandings of neighbour and how these relationships were enacted and negotiated.

Lastly, my research will be informed throughout by the concept of performativity. I have limited my study by focussing on narrative sources particularly from legal contexts, privileging specific vignettes or moments of interaction often resulting in dispute or conflict. I will use performativity theory in order to move from such, often ephemeral incidents and interactions to reconstruct social relations and in particular how ideas of sociability and belonging played out. Performance and performativity have become increasingly used within scholarship to consider social actions and behaviours.[197] The initial body of scholarship on the topic has been retrospectively termed 'practice theory' by Susan Crane.[198] Within this field it is Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity that has had the largest impact both within academic and socio-political discourse. Butler severs the determinist connection between a person's sex and gender, arguing that gender is a social construct created through performance – the constant repetition of collective acts which reference cultural norms.[199] As a social construct, Butler understands gender as something which is 'always doing,' formed through repeated

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[195] Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender,' 252. See also Goldberg's examination of the vocabulary around servanthood: P.J.P. Goldberg, 'What Was a Servant?' in *Concepts and Patterns of Service in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. Anne Curry and Elizabeth Matthew (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 1-20.

[196] Emma Martin, 'The Performance of Idleness in Late Medieval English Society: Work, Leisure and The Sin of Sloth,' (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2017). See also: Jeremy Goldberg and Emma Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' in *A Cultural History of Work in the Medieval Age*, ed. Valerie Garver (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 165-79.

[197] See for example: Jeffrey Jerome Cohen and Bonnie Wheele, eds., *Becoming Male in the Middle Ages* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1997), x, xiii; Woolf and Jones, *Local Identities*, 4; Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail, eds., *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 2; Carol Symes, *A Common Stage: Theatre and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, 2.

[198] Susan Crane references Pierre Bourdieu, Michel de Certeau, Marshall Sahlins, and Marcel Mauss. Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 5, 181, n.11.

[199] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 32; Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Construction: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,' in *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, ed. Sue-Ellen Case (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1990), 274, 278; Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993), xiv-xvi.

performance.[200] The performance of gender equates to collective, repeated acts which over time are renewed, revised, and consolidated. These performative acts reference cultural norms which constitute and normalise gender, but which are also themselves produced by performative acts.

Performance is applied usually with a more literal emphasis within medieval studies, akin to a theatrical performance. In part, this may be explained by the influence of theatre studies on the field, which also incidentally influenced Butler, leading to a more literal, theatrical understanding of performance.[201] Like Judith Butler, Carol Symes uses theatre studies in her understanding of performativity within medieval society.[202] In considering urban public space in terms of a stage, Symes explores how performances – such as the public sealing of a charter - were actively used to 'carve out' power and authority in the northern French city of Arras during the long thirteenth century.[203] Symes sees medieval performativity as very much a conscious, active process. This study is particularly valuable as it draws attention to the complex non-verbal communication that makes up such performances, as well as their multiple audiences and the equally varied reactions they could illicit.[204]

In contrast to a more literal interpretation, Crane sees performance within scholarship as intersecting 'agency and prescription, innovation and memory, self and social group,' arguing performative actions are 'deliberately communicative'.[205] Miriam Müller, in her study of later medieval arson in England, similarly understands these 'performed violences' as acts which are communicative. Müller argues that medieval arson took place within specific socio-cultural, local contexts and therefore needs to be assessed as such.[206] The importance of context additionally has been emphasised elsewhere. Symes explains that the meaning of an action or utterance varied based on time and place; the difference in appropriateness, for example, of flying a falcon in a forest versus in Notre Dame.[207] Performativity theory, as applied by Butler, is a useful concept for this thesis as it emphasises the constant, repetitive nature of actions. In this way, interactions help to construct the social ties and relationships which are

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[200] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 25.

[201] Moya Lloyd, 'Performativity, Parody, Politics,' in *Performativity and Belonging*, ed. Vikki Bell (London: Sage Publications, 1999), 201-2; Butler, 'Performative Acts,' 276-8. For example: Symes, *A Common Stage*; Sarah Beckwith, 'Ritual Theatre and Social Space in the York Corpus Christi Cycle,' in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, ed. Barbara Hanawalt and David Wallice (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[202] Symes, *A Common Stage*, 7.

[203] Symes, *A Common Stage*, 4.

[204] Symes, *A Common Stage*, 144, 163.

[205] Crane, *The Performance of Self*, 3.

[206] Miriam Müller, 'Arson, Communities, and Social Conflict in Later Medieval England,' *Viator* 43, no.2 (2012): 195.

[207] Symes, *A Common Stage*, 151.

the focus of this thesis. Moreover, it reminds us that what is visible in the source material is not the whole picture, but rather a snapshot of continuous, reinforcing interactions.

Thesis Outline

Chapter one begins my study by positioning it within the discourse on the term 'community' in medieval social history. In this chapter, I discuss in more depth how the continued use of the term has tended to undermine its usefulness for the purposes of this study. I offer 'sociability' as an alternative concept to think about social relationships in later medieval England. This perspective privileges the interactions which took place between individuals and therefore better allows me to explore relationships which were more ephemeral or existed outside of any organised or institutional structure. Chapter one thus seeks to address the first of my main research questions, how people interacted within mundane, everyday relationships by exploring the forms of, and occasions for, what might be termed informal sociability in later medieval England.

Most daily social interactions would have taken place within a local context. Chapters two and three, therefore, narrow the focus from chapter one to consider in particular relationships which were akin to the modern 'neighbour'. In chapter two I study the lexicon of neighbour-related terms during the later Middle Ages as a way to unpack the cultural meanings around this relationship. During this period there were two key usages of 'neighbour' which are mirrored in modern uses of the noun. One holds Biblical resonances related to universal love and charity, and the other describes someone who lives in close proximity. The second part of chapter two will examine the scriptural resonances of this relationship within the context of quotidian experiences, and how this changed over time. Chapter three will turn to consider the practices and expectations that characterised neighbourliness with respect to the second key usage of 'neighbour', viz. someone living nearby. The particular focus will be on how people who lived in the same locality, a meaning encoded in the medieval Latin neighbour-word *vicinus* n., understood their relationships to one another. I will explore this first in respect to a broad physical proximity before turning to neighbours in a more immediate setting. For this chapter, I focus on material principally drawn from London.

Chapter four brings together my two related research strands to consider both quotidian social relationships, and more specifically relationships between neighbours. Here, I explore the boundaries of social groupings and how they were negotiated through a series of case studies. As boundaries serve as the active sites for group formation, studying them can add insight into the nature of social collectivities and the expectations held within them. In this vein, I ask whether we can consider relationships between neighbours as bounded. Within this chapter, I employ the concept of belonging

as a way to approach the study of how boundaries of groups were negotiated and how people were included within, or excluded from, them.

The final chapter is positioned as a coda and provides a detailed study of Bardney Abbey, Lincolnshire. Although the shift in focus away from mundane social interactions between people, both women and men, within primarily non-elite and urban contexts is perhaps not ideal, the rare survival of an unusually full set of monastic visitation returns contained within a relatively short span of time presents a window onto lived lives not otherwise available. By focusing on one specific, nominally enclosed, grouping, namely Bardney Abbey, over several years we are able to observe social interactions not so much as a series of vignettes from which a larger picture is extrapolated, the methodology in earlier chapters, but rather as performative and part of a larger dynamic. Chapter five thus serves as a window through which we can view a dynamic picture of social relationships made up of repeated behaviours and interactions over time.

1: Informal Relationships and Sociability in Later Medieval England

At the start of the thesis, this chapter deals with the first of my research questions outlined in the introduction. Namely, how people interacted socially in an everyday, mundane setting. In this chapter, I will first review the issues with the use of the term 'community' in medieval studies and its inapplicability within this thesis. Following this I will outline an alternative approach to the study of social interactions and relationships through the concept of sociability. The second section of this chapter will explore forms of and occasions for quotidian sociability. Lastly, in the third section I will consider how participation in such sociability was influenced, for example by age, gender, and status, and how sociability changed throughout the later medieval period.

Community and Sociability

'Community' is a term often found in discussions of medieval social relationships within scholarship. As outlined in the introduction, issues with this usage were highlighted in the 1990s by Rubin and Carpenter. They reason that the term 'community' has become vague and ill-defined and has been applied to describe almost any group of any scale.[208] Moreover, Carpenter reminds us that that within older, anthropological and sociological scholarship 'community' was used to denote 'a primitive, preindustrial form of social organisation,' which was regarded as natural and without conflict.[209] Maryanne Kowaleski further notes that 'community' often remains associated with harmony, mutual obligation, and a sense of organic unity.[210]

Despite these concerns, and Carpenter's call to abandon the term, 'community' is still frequently used in scholarship on the medieval period. Indeed, since the 1980s and 1990s 'community' has been applied to a wide range of situations and thus remains imprecise as a descriptor. Brian Stock used 'textual communities' to define a group, such as a heretical or reformist group, surrounding a particular use of a text within his exploration of literacy in western society during the eleventh and

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[208] This has been argued by: Rubin, 'Small Groups,' 134; Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community,' 344; Shaw, *Creation of a Community*, 2.

[209] Carpenter, 'Gentry and Community,' 342-3. See for example, Tönnies, *Community and Society*, 33-35.

[210] Shaw, *Creation of a Community*, 5; Maryanne Kowaleski, 'Introduction,' *Journal of British Studies* 33, no.4 (1994): 338.

twelfth centuries.[211] In contrast, Esther Cohen described the courtroom, in her study of the socio-cultural functions of late medieval French law, as a 'community of consent'.[212]

Some scholarship has attempted to pin down what is meant by 'community' by considering common characteristics, for example by distinguishing between communities of place, interest, and collective action.[213] David Shaw, in his examination of the city of Wells, concludes that a community contained: a group mentality and articulation, public recognition, collective actions in addition to interests, shared cultural assumptions, and voluntary participation.[214] He further determines that using community in reference to categories of people such as by race, sexuality, or nationality is inappropriate.[215] Imtiaz Habib challenges this by using the term to distinguish English black people from white society in the early modern period, whilst recognising the potential separateness between them and lack of interaction as a group.[216] Barbara Rosenwein introduces 'emotional communities' to describe groups of people with the same emotional schematic.[217] There is added difficulty with this term and the contemporary usage of the Latin *communitas*. Zvi Razi translates *communitas,* found in manorial records, as 'community' to refer to 'the people of the manor'.[218] The closeness of the contemporary vocabulary and modern terminology, however, creates further confusion about the meaning of 'community'.

Rees Davies argues that abandoning the use of community would be 'nominalist reductionism'.[219] Davies' argument is that we should not dismiss the use of a term purely on the basis that the word does not provide us with a clearly defined phenomenon. Instead, for Davies, 'communities defy easy

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[211] Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 88-240.

[212] Esther Cohen, *Crossroads of Justice: Law and Culture in Late Medieval France* (Leiden: Brill, 1992), 72. See also: Julie Hardwick, 'Between State and Street: Witnesses and the Family Politics of Litigation in Early Modern France,' in *Family, Gender, and Law in Early Modern France*, eds. Suzanne Desan and Jeffrey Merrick (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), 352.

[213] Ian Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 58; Katherine Allen Smith and Scott Wells, eds., *Negotiating Community and Difference in Medieval Europe: Gender, Power, Patronage, and the Authority of Religion in Latin Christendom* (Boston: Brill, 2009), 1; Colson, 'Local Communities,' 19.

[214] Shaw, *Creation of a Community*, 2-5.

[215] Shaw, *Creation of a Community*, 2.

[216] Imtiaz Habib, *Black Lives in the English Archives, 1500-1677: Imprints of the Invisible* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008), 11-2.

[217] Barbara H. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007), 2, 25.

[218] Zvi Razi, 'Family, Land and the Village Community in Later Medieval England,' *Past and Present* 33 (1981): 12. There is as yet, no systematic study investigating contemporary usage of *communitas* and how the term was understood.

[219] Rees Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities in Wales and the Wester British Isles, c.100-c.1400,' in *Law, Laity and Solidarities: Essays in Honour of Susan Reynolds*, eds. Pauline Stafford, Janet L. Nelson and Jane Martindale (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 185-6.

categorisation or definition' based on their plasticity and often temporary nature.[220] Whilst this may be the case, the result of a continued use of the term has been a tendency towards re-defining and re-iterating what characterises a 'community' for the specifics of every separate study undertaken. Defining the term 'community' in this way falls into the trap Bruno Latour warns against of creating an artificial 'starting point' for the study of the 'social' rather than following the groupings that the actors themselves create.[221] Within this thesis, it is important to allow space to consider how medieval people constructed and conceived of their own social groupings. 'Community' has become synonymous with 'group of people' but with a remaining sense of naturalistic unity. Whilst scholarship has moved beyond characterising medieval society as harmonious and unified, 'community' retains these underlying emotive and nostalgic connotations.[222] Scholarship dealing with community then appears to have reached an impasse. There is general agreement over the limitations of the term, but no alternative is offered. 'Community' continues to be used, shaped to fit a particular study's own interpretation or focus. The aim of this thesis is to uncover ephemeral and quotidian social practices and groupings amongst ordinary people. It would be insufficient, therefore, to use such a vague and catch-all term when trying to examine these aspects of medieval social experiences more directly than scholarship has hitherto.

By approaching the subject of social collectives from a different perspective, we can begin to break away from the burden of 'community'. In his critical study of the term and concept 'social', Latour's chapter *No Group, Only Formation* encourages a movement away from a method of study which began with defining the type of group studied.[223] Instead of a 'sociology of the social', Latour proposes the 'sociology of associations' and defines 'the social' as connections.[224] This new approach involves the study of actors' 'activity of forming and dismantling groups.'[225] This thesis similarly advocates this approach within the context of later medieval social relationships. One of the main foci for this thesis are interactions within the social groups studied and how these helped to construct and maintain them. Thus, it may be more profitable to use this function as a starting point to think about the relationships I am studying. Rather than trying to force groups and the social ties that they were made up of into a definition of community with set characteristics, I will instead focus on the actions and behaviours within these relationships to shift the way we think and discuss social groups and their

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[220] Davies, 'Kinsmen, Neighbours and Communities,' 185-6.
[221] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 29.
[222] Shaw, *Creation of a Community*, 2; Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity,* 192.
[223] Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 27-42.
[224] Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 4.
[225] Latour, *Reassembling the Social*, 29.

interactions. I will consider pertinent social theories to help structure my understanding of these social phenomena.

Pierre Bourdieu developed his theory of 'habitus' as part of a study into the generation of social practice. For Bourdieu, a habitus is a system of what he calls dispositions which help form, and structure, unconsciously regulated practices, or actions.[226] Dispositions can include gestures, postures, expressions, intonations, and tone. The sociolect of an individual, for instance, is the way they speak which is determined by their social class or participation in a social group. There might be numerous habitus within a society, just as there are numerous social classes. This system works like a feedback loop with the 'objective structure' of the habitus influencing an individual's practices and leaving on them dispositions. The actions and mindset of an individual are influenced, for example, by the social class they grew up in, leaving them with habits and tics. These dispositions influence the form practices take, which themselves feed back into the objective structure of the habitus. This last point allows the habitus to be reproduced, but also allows for changes over time as the form of the habitus is influenced by an individuals' own responses and actions within a given situation.[227] The theory of habitus forms an interesting way to think about how society and social environments structure, and are structured by, the engrained habits and behaviours of individuals. The theory works for the mechanisms of larger-scale social phenomena, as with class. Whilst habitus might influence the practices studied within this thesis, the system does not fit the study of local, small-scale groupings.

Certeau's work on *The Practices of Everyday Life* may provide a more profitable theoretical framework to understand how social practices worked within informal social relationships. Certeau concentrates on the 'ordinary' person and everyday social practices or 'ways of operating', arguing for the need to consider modes of behaviour alongside representations of society.[228] Ways of operating are the means by which the ordinary population consumes a culture, not just passively but tactically. Individuals use, or 'poach' social codes within a culture to their own ends and practices.[229] The sociolect of a group might be appropriated or adopted by an external individual. Whereas habitus concerns larger societal processes, Certeau's 'everyday practices' fits the small-scale study of informal social groups. Moreover, it provides a framework to think about how cultural cues and expectations are used by individuals, or even groups, within behaviours and actions to engender certain results. The theoretical understandings of social practices put forward by Bourdieu and Certeau enable us to think analytically about how cultural norms and social context influence and are shaped by the social behaviours of

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[226] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 72.
[227] Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 85-6.
[228] Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life,* xi-xii.
[229] Certeau, *The Practices of Everyday Life,* xxi-xxii.

individuals or groups of people. Nevertheless, they do not reach the heart of this study: how people interacted socially within quotidian ties and relationships and how these were shaped and negotiated. Ways of operating, whilst a smaller-scale focus on social practice, also includes too broad a range of behaviours. Ways of operating encompasses all facets of societal behaviour.

In more recent historiography, there have been attempts to use 'community' as an analytical tool rather than a descriptor. Rosser posits that the term's use as a concept as well as a historical experience allows comparison of different 'social, political, and technological environments' beyond medieval England.[230] Furthermore, French regards 'community' as a multivalent concept concerning repeated social interactions.[231] I would argue, on the other hand, this is unproductive as the term is now too broad and amorphous to have any critical weight, it is now a blunt analytical tool. Sociability is a concept which is developing as an area of study within early modern historiography and, I argue, provides an alternative way to consider the problem of informal social practices.[232] Sociability can be defined as the practice of social interactions that are both intentional and incidental.[233] Mark Hailwood sees the practice of sociability as necessarily voluntary associations, and in this way the focus is not on prescribed relationships, for example members of a fraternity.[234] These interactions are primarily for the purpose of socialising than other functional needs like business or networking. That is not to say, however, that these motivations did not overlap.[235] Tim Reinke-Williams implements sociability, as informal social interactions, of labouring women in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London to consider how they constructed respectable reputations and identities.[236] Sociability, then, allows us to focus on social interactions as a way to study past relationships from a different perspective, through how they were enacted.

In this way, I study the relationships and groups that develop out of quotidian, mundane sociability in later medieval England. As Hailwood states, 'some of the most potent bonds in any society, those that motivate people's decisions and actions, develop from choices made about with whom time should

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[230] Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity*, 192.

[231] French, *The People of the Parish*, 24.

[232] See for example: Eckstein and Terpstra, *Sociability and Its Discontents*; Mark R. Cohen, 'Sociability and the Concept of Galut in Jewish-Muslim Relations in the Middle Ages,' in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication and Interaction: Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner*, eds. Benjamin H. Hary, John L. Hayes, and Fred Astren (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 37-51; Jennifer Bishop, 'Speech and Sociability: The Regulation of Language in the Livery Companies of Early Modern London,' in *Cities and Solidarities*, 208-224.

[233] Phil Withington, 'Company and Sociability in Early Modern England,' *Social History* 32, no.3 (2007): 295.

[234] Mark Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 6-7.

[235] See: Berry, '"To Avoide All Envye,"' 201-217.

[236] Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1.

be spent informally, and for pleasure.'[237] Without denying the significance of migration, travel, and long-distance networks in the later medieval period, most informal quotidian relationships would have built up from regular interactions. My study of social relationships and groups, then, centres on the day-to-day sociability that took place within them, in the context of relative proximity. I will not apply the term 'community' to this research. Although there have been attempts to add precision and realism to the use of the term, there remains too much ambiguity and idealistic positive associations to 'community' for it to be useful here. As Rubin cautions, the 'inability to detach ourselves from community both reveals and feeds a certain escapism' within medieval studies.[238] The use of the theoretical concept of sociability helps to redirect the thesis away from categorising the groups and relationships I study within a definitive set of features, towards the interactions within these relationships, which is an important focus of my work.

Characterising Sociability

The rest of this chapter will review the source material for this thesis to ask what is visible in terms of evidence for later medieval sociability and what forms this took. The following section will consider patterns of sociability influenced by gender, age, and status as well as how practices and perceptions of sociability changed over the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. This chapter cannot fully capture the variety and richness of medieval sociability which took place outside formal institutions and organisations. Yet that is not to say that the study of later medieval English sociability is futile or that these narrative sources have little value in this respect. Where social interactions are described, they are often peripheral to the main focus of the record. These descriptions are particularly valuable as they are less likely to have been manipulated and are not necessarily atypical. Careful and detailed analysis of the various narrative sources, then, can provide us with vignettes of social interactions which would otherwise be invisible. In turn these can help to build a better understanding of how informal relationships were structured and practiced.

Intentional Sociability

Within later medieval England there were countless opportunities to engage in sociability through specific activities. The importance of eating and drinking as a way of establishing and maintaining relationships is well-attested to, both within sociology and historiography.[239] Within the context of the

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[237] Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, 6.
[238] Rubin, 'Small Groups,' 135.
[239] Arjun Appadurai, 'Gastro-Politics in Hindu South Asia,' *American Ethnologist* 8, no.3 (1981): 494; Stephen Mennel, Anne Murcott, and Anneke H. van Otterloo, eds., *The Sociology of Food: Eating, Diet and Culture* (London: Sage Publications, 1992), 115-7; Martha Carlin and Joel T. Rosenthal, eds., *Food and Eating in*

later medieval period, patronal feasts were an important occasion of sociability between members of craft guilds and fraternities. Rosser argues these feasts were significant in developing solidarity within guilds which often encompassed social diversity.[240] Such feasts facilitated the fostering of economic and political relationships and networks whilst reaffirming the social hierarchy within the guild.[241] On election, the mayor of London was expected to host a banquet at his home.[242] The consumption of food and drink was also a feature of parish festivities. Church ales, found more commonly in southern England, were charitable events where drink was sold to raise money for parish expenses. Yatton parish in 1499 held two extra ales that year because the church plate had been stolen the previous year by Davy Gibbs.[243] Bennett emphasises the social solidarity that church-ales helped to develop, noting they would have required a large amount of cooperation and organisation amongst parishioners.[244]

Sociability outside these organised events and groups also involved people eating and drinking together. Writing of London artisanal and mercantile households, McSheffrey states: 'the sharing of food and drink was integral to social interaction.'[245] To illustrate, in 1266 Ralph le Felun, Geoffrey le Veyere, and 'another unknown' man began arguing on 'the king's highway between Goldington and Bedford'.[246] As a result of this argument, the others assaulted Ralph and Geoffrey stabbed him. The context for these men arguing was they had been drinking together in a tavern. Similarly, one day in 1322 at Vespers Luke atte Hetthe, cornmonger, 'had sat drinking in a certain tavern solar which John de Oxenford of William de Wengrave [held] in the same parish' of St Peter de Cornhill with John le Avener, clerk to the Earl of Chester, and his groom, and William de Wircestre.[247] The men got into a quarrel and John and William attacked Luke with a quart and pushed him onto the stairs. The purposes of Ralph and Luke drinking with their companions was not specified in the inquest verdicts, but their motivations may have been primarily sociable.

The London defamation case Robert Woode c. Joan Patryk provides a more explicit example of sociability. Robert brought a suit against Joan for allegedly defaming him by claiming: 'that man that

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Medieval Europe (London: Hambledon Press, 1998), xi; C.M. Woolgar, 'Gifts of Food in Late Medieval England,' *Journal of Medieval History* 37, no.1 (2011): 8.

[240] Rosser, 'Going to the Fraternity Feast,' 440.

[241] Laura Crombie, 'Honour, Community and Hierarchy in the Feasts of the Archery and Crossbow Guilds of Bruges, 1445-81,' *Journal of Medieval History* 30 (2011): 11.

[242] Caroline M. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages: Government and People 1200-1500* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 152.

[243] French, 'Parochial Fund-Raising,' 130.

[244] Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity,' 23, 27.

[245] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 982.

[246] Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, 2-3, № 5.

[247] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/002, № 18. '*in quodam solar taberna quam Johannis de Oxenford de Willelmo de Wengraue in eadem parochia bibentes sedissent*'. My own English translation.

drank att home in my howse with yowe last cut my purse'.[248] Thomas Dod, one of the witnesses who testified for the plaintiff, detailed that 'on the day of the Annunciation of the blessed Mary or thereabouts, this witness went to the dwelling-house of John Patryk, Joan's husband, within the parish of St. Sepulchre in the city of London, for the sake of drinking with John Patryk and Joan his wife'.[249] In this example, Thomas Dod specifies that the reason for meeting at Joan and John's house was to spend time drinking together.

As Goldberg reminds us, medieval houses were 'complex and fluid spaces.'[250] They were sites for domestic and economic activity, as well as to reflect cultural ideals and power structures. Goldberg suggests, further, that the daily interaction between members of artisanal households helped to establish a sense of collective identity.[251] It is evident that houses were used also as a site of sociability to engage with those outside the household. According to Adam de Elyngeham's testimony for the proof of age of Robert de la Legh, before he witnessed Robert's baptism in November 1306, he had dined with his neighbour William de Suthewick 'where he remained the whole of that day.'[252] This legal process, established by the mid-thirteenth century, used the testimonies of local jurors to determine whether an heir to a tenant-in-chief had reached the age of majority. Historians have questioned the historicity of these testimonies which tend to follow highly formulaic narratives.[253] Despite their fictive nature, however, these testimonies provide accounts of normative behaviour which is valuable when considering practices of sociability. Walter le Deyner likewise apparently remembered the birth of William, son of William Marchal of Kingstanley, Gloucester in 1309 because John le Taverner of Chichester 'came towards his house by the way near the wood of Wetyndon' when he was robbed and killed.[254]

Similar descriptions of individuals traveling to others' homes are found in Consistory court depositions. One witness in the London defamation suit John Calle c. Elizabeth Hertford from 1487 deposed that he 'followed Thomas Walker from the house of Edmund Pokethop of Islington across to his house'

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[248] Robert Woode c. Joan Patryk in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.

[249] Woode c. Patryk in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*in die annunciacionis beate Marie vel circiter, iste juratus accessit ad domum habitacionis Johannis Patryk, mariti dicte Johanne, infra parrochiam sancti Sepulcri civitatis London situate, causa bibendi cum eisdem Johanne Patryk et Johanna eius uxore'.* The English translations for this source material are from: McSheffrey, *Consistory*.

[250] Jeremy Goldberg, 'Making the House a Home in Later Medieval York,' *Journal of Medieval History* 45:2 (2019): 162.

[251] Goldberg, 'Making the House a Home,' 180.

[252] J.E.E.S. Sharp and A. E. Stamp, eds. *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol.7: *Edward III* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1909), 138, № 171.

[253] For a discussion on this see: William S. Deller, 'Proofs of Age 1246 to 1430: Their Nature, Veracity and Use as Sources,' in *The Later Medieval Inquisitions Post Mortem: Mapping the Medieval Countryside and Rural Society*, ed. Michael Hicks (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016), 136-9; Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, xvi-xvii.

[254] Sharp and Stamp, *Inquisitions*, vol.7, 438, № 629.

when he heard the alleged defamation take place.[255] Here we find descriptions of what appear to be pre-planned invitations to eat and drink in the houses of others. Examples of individuals hosting others at home, or indeed sharing others' hospitality at their home are found additionally in coroners' records and miracle narratives. The events described leading up to the death of Gerard Andreu de Garbiak in 1324 involved Agnes and Guy 'Fulberd' eating supper with Robert de Holewell at Robert's house.[256] In one late fifteenth-century example, Thomas Mumford had two 'particular friends' who lived locally come to his house 'in order to eat with him' one evening after he had lost his purse.[257]

The functionality of homes varied based on context, wealth, and status. It follows these factors had an impact on patterns of sociability too. Urban mercantile and artisanal homes held important socio-economic roles. McSheffrey demonstrates homes were used amongst the wealthier urban population as places to conduct marriage negotiations.[258] Such negotiations were often accompanied by a meal. Goldberg likewise points to the use of wealthier urban homes for entertaining guests and fostering professional networks.[259] Accommodating commensality, in contrast, may have been less of a feature for rural and more modest houses. Using the probate inventories, Goldberg explains how, in contrast to urban examples, in peasant households a greater proportion of items concerned domestic uses such as sleeping arrangements.[260] Likewise, smaller urban houses and rents often did not feature kitchens, and some may have had little or no cooking facilities.[261] Instead, as Martha Carlin demonstrates, there was a reliance on buying hot, fast food from cookshops.[262] Scholars have also identified the use of alehouses as places where those without the space themselves could socialise with their peers.[263] It appears, therefore, that eating and drinking in the home was a form of sociability which was particularly associated with wealthier, urban households who had the space to cater for visitors. Whereas there are clearly occasions when rural and less substantial households did use their homes to socialise with others, it is likely that, in this context, greater use was made of other locations such as drinking establishments.

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[255] John Calle c. Elizabeth Hertford in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'*itste juratus sequebatur Thomam Walker a domo Edmundi Pokethorp de Iseldon predicta versus domum suam*'
[256] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/003 № 10. It is possible that they were also joined by some or all of: John de Holewell, William de Dene and his servant Peter.
[257] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 252. '*precipui amatores*', '*cenaturi cum eo*'. My own English translation.
[258] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 971-5.
[259] P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Space and Gender in the Later Medieval English House,' *Viator* 42, no2 (2011): 228-9.
[260] P.J.P. Goldberg, 'The Fashioning of Bourgeois Domesticity in Later Medieval England: A Material Culture Perspective,' in *Medieval Domesticity: Home, Housing and Household in Medieval England,* eds. Maryanne Kowaleski and P.J.P. Goldberg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 127.
[261] Martha Carlin, 'Fast Food and Urban Living Standards in Medieval England,' in *Food and Eating,* 42. Sarah Rees Jones, 'Building Domesticity in the City: English Urban Housing Before the Black Death,' in *Medieval Domesticity*, 90.
[262] Carlin, 'Fast Food,' 49, 51.
[263] Carlin, 'Fast Food,' McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 983; Goldberg, 'Space and Gender,' 215.

As identified above, drinking establishments were a commonly cited place where people ate and drank together. William, son of Peter of Bromham, Stephen de Rivers, William the Cobbler, and Margery le Wyte, for example, had been drinking together in September 1301. This gathering was recorded because, on leaving the drinking house, William shot an arrow at John Hokerynge, who had been following them, hitting Margery and killing her.[264] Evidence for drinking establishments in England during the Middle Ages begins to appear from the twelfth century. Distinctions have been made within scholarship between several forms of medieval drinking establishment, though as John Schofield reminds us, differences were often ambiguous.[265] Generally speaking, alehouses were the smallest. They were semi-domestic and sold ale.[266] Taverns catered to wealthier clientele and included the provision of wine. While some taverns could feature bedchambers, smaller taverns may also have been run in a semi-domestic setting. Brewhouses refers specifically to establishments that sold beer. The presence of Brewhouses grew in London with the introduction of hops from c.1420.[267] This introduction and development was fuelled by demand from the resident alien population and was slow to spread across the rest of England.[268] Until the later sixteenth century, beer was brewed largely by Dutch or German migrants.[269] Inns were also larger and often included accommodation catering to travellers.[270] Before the Black Death, most ale production was small-scale and localised, produced for domestic consumption as ale quickly soured.[271] If the ale was consumed on site, it was within the rooms of the brewing household. This leads to the ambiguity in records between alehouses and people's homes.

The historical development of English drinking houses has been characterised, particularly in early modern historiography, as a progression from ale-producing individuals to the 'institutional alehouse' of the early modern period. According to this trajectory drinking establishments only became an 'essential feature' for the social life of ordinary populations in the sixteenth century.[272] Yet, as indicated in the testimonies provided for the miraculous recovery of Joan from drowning at Marden, the alehouse of Walter de la Wyle was an important place for parishioners to drink and spend time

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[264] Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, 107, № 259.

[265] John Schofield, *Medieval London Houses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 53.

[266] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 981.

[267] Schofield, *London Houses*, 53.

[268] Derek Keene, 'Material London in Time and Space,' in *Material London c.1600*, ed. Lena Cowen Orlin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 65-6.

[269] Keene, 'Material London,' 65-6. Hostility against Dutch beer brewing is evident in fifteenth-century slander cases from London: Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman, *Immigrant England,* 244.

[270] John Hare, 'Inns, Innkeepers and the Society of Later Medieval England, 1350-1600,' in *Journal of Medieval History* 39, no.4 (2013): 478.

[271] James A. Galloway, 'Driven by Drink? Ale Consumption and the Agrarian Economy of the London Region, c.1300-1400,' in *Food and Eating,* 91.

[272] Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200-1830* (London: Longman, 1983), 34; Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, 1-2.

together c.1292. The local economic importance of alehouses and taverns is illustrated further by the by-law from Newton Longville, Buckinghamshire, made in 1348 that 'all the lord's tenants, free and customary, agreed that if anyone of them shall lead his neighbours [*vicinos*] away to a tavern outside town that he shall incur the penalty of 12d.'[273]

McIntosh argues that in later medieval England the 'lesser public houses' had 'an important economic and social role among the poor.'[274] The lack of space and sometimes cooking facilities in lower-status urban housing meant alehouses, as modest and commonplace drinking establishments, provided an important alternative location for commensality.[275] The urban presence of alehouses and taverns, and thus also their everyday social significance, is indicated further by their use as locators in descriptions of architectural space. In his deposition as part of a defamation suit, William Brownyng described having a conversation with the defendant, William Huntingfeld, who was 'sitting on a bench next to the house at the sign of the White Horse on Lombard Street'.[276] The *Annales Paulini* documents the summoning of all the brewers and taverners before the London mayor in 1309. The *Annales* records there were 354 taverners and 1,334 brewers.[277] Whether or not these precise totals should be taken at face value, they are suggestive of the prominent place drinking-houses held in London's landscape.[278]

Drinking establishments, especially alehouses, were often associated with disruptive or disorderly behaviour by later medieval authorities, and this is something which is frequently replicated in scholarship.[279] Yet, as Hanawalt and Goldberg remind us, sexual danger was a potential risk for women

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[273] '*Omnes tenentes domini tam liberi quam custumarii concesserunt quod si quis eorum deducet vicinos suos ad tabernam extra villam quod incurrent penam xij d.*' W.O. Ault, *Open-Field Husbandry and the Village Community: A Study of Agrarian By-Laws in Medieval England* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1965), 66. English translation from: Ault, *Open-Field Farming,* 102.

[274] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 78.

[275] Carlin, 'Fast Food,' 42, 46-7, 51; Goldberg, 'Making the House a Home,' 175; Sarah Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space and Gender in Medieval Europe,' in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 256.

[276] Cecily Clerk c. William Huntingfeld in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'*sedens super scabellum prope domum ad sigum albi equi in Lumberdstrete*'.

[277] William Stubbs, ed., *Chronicles of the Reigns of Edward I and Edward II,* vol.1: *Annales Londonienses and Annales Paulini* (London: Longman, 1882), 267.

[278] Often these numbers are cited in scholarship without comment. Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 20; Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'The Host, The Law, and the Ambiguous Space of Medieval London Taverns,' in *Medieval Crime and Social Control*, ed. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 211; Schofield, *London Houses*, 53.

[279] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 68, 74. See, for example: Mark Bailey, 'Rural Society,' in *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes: Perceptions of Society in Late Medieval England*, ed. Rosemary Horrox (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 168; Clark, *The English Alehouse*, 34; David G. Hey, *An English Rural Community: Myddle Under the Tudors and Stuarts* (London: Leicester University Press, 1974), 227.

who frequented urban taverns.[280] Women were involved in the retail of ale in taverns and alehouses as alewives and tapsters and these roles could hold sexual connotations and links to sex work.[281] Individuals were presented, for example, for keeping alehouse-brothels. In 1422 it was reported that a vacant area of land behind the 'Pye' in Queenhithe, London, was being used by sex workers and thieves.[282] In 1472 John Derby was presented in York for patronising the tavern of John Betson with prostitutes.[283]

Historians, moreover, often characterise medieval drinking houses as masculine spaces which were often sites of violence. Jennifer Thibodeaux maintains, for example, that drinking establishments were masculine social spaces where women were 'marginalised and ostracised'.[284] Hanawalt describes taverns as places which 'facilitated' violence but recognises that this portrayal is influenced heavily by the surviving court records and ordinances which are used for source material for medieval drinking.[285] In the context of early modern England, Hailwood challenges the characterisation of drinking houses as masculine spaces, pointing to the presence of women socialising in these locations without reprisal. Hailwood theorises that gendered behavioural constraints were 'relative rather than absolute.'[286] Likewise, Colson notes that the disreputability of medieval drinking houses is often something taken for granted by historians. Colson argues rather that the 'social world of the tavern was much more complex'.[287]

The conduct treatise, *How The Goode Wife Taught Hyr Daughter*, which circulated during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, conveyed the ideals of, what Felicity Riddy labels, a 'bourgeois ethos'.[288] The *Goode Wife* voices concern around drinking establishments, but this is centred more around behaviour than location:

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[280] Hanawalt, 'The Host, The Law,' 210; P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Pigs and Prostitutes: Streetwalking in Comparative Perspective,' in *Young Medieval* Women, ed. Katherine J. Lewis, Noël James Menuge, Kim M. Phillips (New York: St Martin's Press, 1999), 179.

[281] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 77; Judith M. Bennett, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 122-3, 133.

[282] A.H. Thomas, ed. *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls: Preserved Among the Archives of the Corporation of the City of London at the Guildhall*, vol.4: 1413-1437 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1943), 138.

[283] Goldberg, 'Pigs and Prostitutes,' 179.

[284] Jennifer D. Thibodeaux, 'Man of the Church, or Man of the Village? Gender and the Parish Clergy in Medieval Normandy,' *Gender and History* 18, no.2 (2006): 391. See also: Martin A. Lynn, *Alcohol, Sex and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2000), 61; Gwyn A. Williams, *Medieval London: From Commune to Capital* (London: Athlone Press, 1963), 21-2.

[285] Hanawalt, 'The Host, The Law,' 210, 213, 216.

[286] Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, 195.

[287] Justin Colson, 'A Portrait of a Late Medieval London Pub: The Star Inn, Bridge Street,' in *Medieval Londoners: Essays to Mark the Eightieth Birthday of Caroline M. Barron*, eds. Elizabeth A. New and Christian Steer (London: University of London Press, 2019), 39.

[288] Felicity Riddy, 'Mother Knows Best: Reading Social Change in a Courtesy Text,' *Speculum* 71, no.1 (1996): 67.

(65) Ne go thou nought to the taverne,

Thy godnes for to selle therinne;

Forsake thou hym that taverne hanteth [haunt],

And all the vices that therinne bethe.

Wherever thou comme at ale other wyne,

(70) Take not to myche, and leve be tyme;

For mesure therinne, it is no herme,

And drounke to be, it is thi schame [shame].[289]

This passage warns against women overindulging while drinking at a tavern. Yet, it simultaneously legitimates women's presence in the tavern if accompanied with moderate and sober behaviour. This supports McSheffrey's finding that depositions given by women of modest status in marriage suits from the late fifteenth century include descriptions of them spending time in drinking houses.[290] These women did not deny their presence in taverns which, McSheffrey identifies, indicates they did not consider this shameful.[291]

As suggested by the range and frequency of drinking houses being used, these places were integral to everyday life and sociability in later medieval England. Hailwood's comment that the importance of early-modern alehouses lay with the 'attractions of sociability' as much as the consumption of alcohol, applies to the later medieval period too.[292] Beat Kümin, in his study of early modern drinking houses, offers a nuanced approach, applicable to the study of medieval establishments. Kümin argues that we need to consider the 'infinite versatility' of these establishments which were characterised by both continuity and change.[293] No alehouse or tavern, in this way, would have conformed completely to regulations and societal expectations and therefore need to be approached with more nuance. Much like today, some drinking houses would have been considered respectable establishments, whereas others would have been avoided by those keen to maintain their reputation. Along these lines I will return to consider how contemporary perceptions of drinking establishments changed over time later in this chapter.

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[289] Eve Salisbury, ed., 'How The Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter' in *The Trials and Joys of Marriage* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2002), accessed 23rd April 2020, https://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/salisbury-trials-and-joys-how-the-goode-wife-taught-hyr-doughter.
[290] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 984.
[291] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 982, 985.
[292] Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, 9.
[293] Beat Kümin, *Drinking Matters: Public Houses and Social Exchange in Early Modern Central Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 4, 191.

One integral part of informal sociability, which would have accompanied eating and drinking in the home and alehouse, was conversation. Examples of people chatting and telling each other stories are found throughout the sources studied for this thesis. This is visible in the miracle of Joan le Schirreve. The testimonies of Joan's mother, Cecilia, and her godmother, Joan Wase, concerning the moment before John managed to tell them Joan had fallen into the pond, are illuminating. Joan Wase's deposition includes how:

> he [John] said that Joan had drowned. Since these were childish words, Ralph, tailor of
> the same village, then related some words of consolation about this girl to Cecilia and the
> witness [Joan Wase]. They did not pay attention to the words of the aforesaid boy.[294]

Cecilia's testimony similarly notes that she 'did not understand' the words John was telling the two women because she and Joan Wase were with Ralph 'who was telling something' to them.[295] Although the nature of their conversation is not remembered or detailed fifteen years later, the accounts provide a tantalising glimpse into their informal interactions. Cecilia and Joan, her godmother, were too busy in conversation at the alehouse with another companion for them to realise what John was telling them.

Sometimes the records provide detail about the types of conversations people might have. The description of Thomas Mumford inviting friends to eat with him at home after losing his purse was part of a narrative of the miraculous retrieval of the lost money. The miracle was included in the collection of late fifteenth-century miracles attributed to Henry VI. Thomas, a citizen of Lichfield, had intended to take the money to the king's tomb when the purse containing seven shillings broke and was lost. At the dinner table, his companions remonstrated with him for mourning something irretrievable. In return for this advice, Thomas 'occupied them with a well-known story, *de rustico et avicula*.'[296] It was whilst recounting this story that his purse suddenly materialised and dropped into his hand. The constructed image is one of informal sociability through eating and conversation.

De rustico et avicula was a fable with a long history and which circulated widely during the Middle Ages. This version of the fable originates as an exemplum in Petrus Alfonsi's twelfth-century *Disciplina*

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[294] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.134r. '*et dixit que Johanna erat submersa et quia erant verba puerilia et tunc Radulphus Cissor vestium eiusdem ville narrabat quedam uerba solacii ipsuis Cecilie et testi non curaerunt de verbis dicti pueri.*'

[295] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.127. '*et dixit predicte Cecilie quedam verba que dicta Cecilia non intellexit quia loquebatur cum Johanna commatre ipsius Cecilie matre dicti Johannis et cum quod Radupho Cissore pannorum dicte ville qui narrabat quedam facta ipsius Cecili et Johanne commater sue.*'

[296] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 252. '*consultores suos et commensals exhileraret, gracia mutue congratulacionis famosam illam fabulam narrare cepit, que de rustico et avicula poetico more conscribitur*'. My own English translation.

Clericeilis.[297] The narrative tells of a little bird who escapes being captured by a peasant through its wit and wordplay. As the bird escapes from the man, it leaves three pieces of valuable knowledge: do not always believe what is told, hold onto what you have, and never grieve what is lost. The reference to this fable creates an element of metatextuality to the miracle, replicating in the story the situation Thomas himself faces. The choice of fable was possibly a didactic strategy by the clerk to resonate with Thomas' situation and emphasise the moral readings of the miracle. Another reading would be that Thomas himself chose this story to bring humour to the situation, mocking his lamenting of the loss of money. In providing context for the miraculous re-appearance of the money, the narrative paints a picture of a group providing solace and advice to a friend over a meal at his house.

Another miraculous recovery accredited to Henry VI, from 1490, involved several young men returning home from London to White Roothing in Essex. John Wall, described as an adolescent (*ephebus*), travelled with Dominic Pokepart, another youth (*iuvenis*), and the driver of the loaded waggon they accompanied. The chronicle narrates how this group passed the time spent on the journey by retelling customary stories (*usitatae fabulae)*.[298] The narrative purpose of this detail was to create a contrasting scene with the tragic accident that followed. John Wall, who had been walking close to the waggon, was crushed when it suddenly overturned. In accentuating the terrible nature of the accident in this way, the clerk ultimately adds to the efficacy of the miracle of John's later recovery. The detail of the young men telling stories together, moreover, added immediacy to the miracle and would have reflected a recognisable everyday social practice. This miracle narrative, therefore, reveals a form of sociability contemporaries expected of a group of young men, passing the time through storytelling.

Conversations would also often have revolved around local topics. Walter de Ludeworth testified for a proof of age that he knew Robert de la Legh had reached is majority by 1328 because he was at the church for the baptism of another child, Alice, daughter of Walter Man, when Robert was also baptised. Walter recounted how:

> he saw the aforesaid Robert baptized before the said Alice, whereby a long delay
> occurred, for which cause she wept, and he knows by the age of the said Alice, who

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[297] Lenora D. Wolfgang, 'Caxton's "Aesop": The Origin and Evolution of a Fable: Or, Do Not Believe Everything You Hear,' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 135, no.1 (1991), 74, 77. The French version of the fable, *Lai de l'Oiselet* survives in at least five manuscripts from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Lenora D. Wolfgang, *Le Lai de l'Oiselet: An Old French Poem of the Thirteenth Century* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1990), 3-6.

[298] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 64-67.

survives, that the aforesaid Robert has completed the age of 24 years, as they have often computed [calculated] among themselves.[299]

This testimony claims that both Walters, and possibly others, remembered the baptism of Robert because Alice cried, and that this memory was actively maintained through retellings and discussions between them over the following two decades. As historians have shown, the legal mechanism for proofs of ages relied on the births of prominent heirs being discussed by residents.[300] By extension, therefore, conversation around these topics must have been a constant and prevalent form of everyday sociability. Retelling of local events also features in the testimonies for the miracle of Joan le Schirreve. Roger, the vicar of Marden, testified that 'he does not know anything of the said miracle except through common retelling, but generally everyone from his parish says that the said Joan, although [she] had been submerged and died, she was miraculously resuscitated by the merits, and by the invocation of the name of, St Thomas.'[301] As might be expected, conversation, whether about local news and events, past or present, stories and fables, or chatting more generally formed an essential way people interacted with one another.

Playing games was another common form of sociability throughout the medieval period. As Serina Patterson argues, 'games were one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the Middle Ages,' across the social spectrum.[302] In 1321 Michael le Gaugeour and John Faukes were playing 'hazard' in the 'brewhouse then held by John de Douuegate of William de Canefeld' in Abbey-Church Lane, London.[303] They quarrelled, presumably as a result of this game, which subsequently resulted in William stabbing Michael. Two years later Stephen, a taverner, was at the tavern of William de Staneforde playing tables, an early form of backgammon, with Arcus de Rikelinge of Brabant. This was evidently a form of gambling as it was reported Arcus stabbed William later that evening because he was angered that Stephen 'had won money from this Arcus'.[304]

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[299] Sharp and Stamp, *Inquisitions*, vol.7, 138, № 171. According to another testimony, Robert was also upset during the baptism, because the priest excessively sprinkled (*superflue*) the holy water on his face. This proof of age, therefore, includes two references to the perception/awareness of infant emotions.

[300] Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, xxii, xxiv, 13-5, 56; Harris-Stoertz, 'Remembering Birth,' 50, 55-6.

[301] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.139r. '*nec sciebat aliquid de dicto miraculo nisi per relatum communem set communiter omnes de parochia sua dicebant quod dicta Johanna cum fuisset submerse et mortua fuerat miraculose resuscitata meritis et ad inuocationem nominis dicti sancti Thome*'.

[302] Serina Patterson, 'Introduction: Setting up the Board,' in *Games and Gaming in Medieval Literature*, ed. Serina Patterson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 2.

[303] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/002, № 5. '*bracine quam Johannis de Douuegate tunc tennit de Willemo de Canefeld*'. English translation from: Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls,* 38-9.

[304] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/003, № 8. '*et idem Stephanus denarios ipsus Arci lucratus fuit*' My own English translation.

Boardgames are found within narrative sources often interconnected with drinking and talking, however, they appear in other contexts too. Archaeological excavations have uncovered 'play assemblages' in houses, churches, and in open spaces.[305] The latter is evident in the 1355 marriage dispute case Maud de Bradelay c. John de Walkington from the Court of York. As part of a larger strategy of character assassination against witnesses brought by Maud, Robert de Harwod deposed that he had heard Robert Katersouth 'commit perjury in the street of North Street when playing among his friends'.[306] Similarly, Peter Webster deposed that Robert Katersouth often played a game called 'Croysers', during which he often perjured himself.[307] Robert was an unusually young witness and there was doubt whether he had in fact reached the canonical age of majority, fourteen, making him able to testify in court. In addition to indicating that Robert had a history of failing to uphold oaths, this description of him provided by Peter and Robert de Harwood would have served to emphasise his youth. Descriptions of him playing with friends in the street evoked the image of children at play which characterised medieval notions of childhood.[308]

The participation in recreational activities, and how this participation was perceived, was also influenced by status. The later fourteenth and fifteenth centuries saw the introduction of legislation which aimed to curb leisure activities such as sports and board games amongst the ordinary population, especially servants and able-bodied men. In contrast, boardgames were considered appropriate aristocratic pass-times. Excavations further have uncovered gaming assemblages, such as pieces and boards, at sites including castles and monasteries.[309] The value of games such as chess in this context was their parallels with warfare, involving both chance and strategy.[310] Moreover, gambling in this context fed into a culture of conspicuous consumption.[311] It is possible, however, that the more elite association with boardgames lessened in the later medieval period as they were played more widely.[312] McIntosh traces a continued increase in the number of prosecutions of people playing

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[305] Mark A. Hall, 'Jeux Sans Frontières: Play and Performativity or Questions of Identity and Social Interaction Across Town and Country,' in *Objects, Environment, and Everyday Life in Medieval Europe*, ed. Ben Jervis, Lee G. Broderick and Idoia Grau-Sologestoa (Turnhout: Brepols, 2016), 191.

[306] BIA, CP.E.82. '*sciuit et audiuit ipsum esse periurum in vico de Nortstretes ludedo inter socios suos'.* English translation from: P.J.P. Goldberg, ed., *Women in England c.1275-1525: Documentary Sources* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 159.

[307] BIA, CP.E.82.

[308] Orme, *Medieval Children*, 164; Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender,' 258-9.

[309] Hall, 'Jeux Sans Frontières,' 191.

[310] Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 173.

[311] Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 175.

[312] Hall, 'Jeux Sans Frontières,' 207; Mark A. Hall, '"Merely Players"? Playtime, Material Culture and Medieval Childhood,' in *Medieval Childhood: Archaeological* Approaches, eds. D. M. Hadley and K. A. Hemer (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2014), 51.

games over the course of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[313] Whilst the prosecutions aimed at restricting this sociable practice, their existence speaks to the popularity of this pastime.

Sociable pastimes could also be more active. According to the verdict given by the coroner's jury from London in May 1301, Peter de Huntyngdon and Andrew Prille were drinking at the house of Walter Vigerous and 'with the consent of each one there, they were willing to wrestle'.[314] During this wrestling, Peter's right leg broke and he died five days later. In a less fatal incident, one miracle attributed to Henry VI involved William Bartram recovering after a serious injury sustained during a game of football.[315] The clerk described:

> the game at which they had met for common recreation is called by some the foot-ball-game. It is one in which young men, in country sport, propel a huge ball not by throwing it in the air but by striking and rolling it along the ground, and that not with their hands but with their feet.[316]

Whilst William recovered from his injuries, Henry, son of William de Ellington, was not so fortunate. A surviving writ to the sheriff of Northumberland includes the coroners' inquest, held at Newcastle Upon Tyne, for Henry's death whilst 'playing football' (*ludens ad pilum*) at Ulgham on Trinity Sunday 1280.[317] It records how Henry received an accidental knife wound when he collided with David le Keu as they both ran for the ball. References to football games also appear in several proofs of age records.[318] Whilst it is unlikely that they all alluded to actual, separate games, the fact the recorder chose a game of football as a default testimony suggests this game was recognisable and was played commonly enough.

Archery practice was a prescribed physical activity from at least 1363 but one which also enabled sociability as men often practiced in groups.[319] Archery could also include a competitive element. In 1496, for example, John Walton used the town courts in Nottingham to sue for 5s. 10d. he claimed he

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[313] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 11.

[314] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 21. *'ex concensu vtrusque ibidem luctar volebant'.* My own English translation.

[315] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 159-161.

[316] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 159. *'porro ludus ad quem mutue recreacionis gracia excercendum convuenerant, a quibusdam pedipililudium dicitur. Est enim, quo solent adolescentes rustici et lasciui ingentem pilam non iactando in aera. Sed solotenus volutando: nec minibus quidem sed pedibus pulsitando atque versando propellere.'* English Translation from: Knox and Leslie, *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 131.

[317] Henry C. Maxwell Lyte, ed., *Calendar of Inquisitions Miscellaneous, Chancery*, vol.1 (London: HM Stationary Office, 1916), 559; F.P. Magoun Jr. 'Football in Medieval England and in Middle English Literature,' *The American Historical* Review 35, no.1 (1929), 35.

[318] For example: Kate Parkin, ed., *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol.22: *1 to 5 Henry VI (1422-1427)* (London: HM Stationary Office, 2003), 199, 327-8, № 189, 360, 361.

[319] Steven Gunn, 'Archery Practice in Early Tudor England,' *Past and Present* 209 (2010): 53.

won from Thomas Belt 'shooting at butts' (*sagittando ad metas*).[320] Central to the narratives surrounding Joan le Schirreve's miraculous recovery from drowning is perhaps a more spontaneous, pleasurable activity. The testimonies agree that after arriving and having a drink at the alehouse, the younger people (*iuniores*) formed a dance-line. This was led by Thomas Schonk, husband of Joan Wase the little girl's godmother, and moved through the alehouse and adjoining garden where the pond was located.

Many of these sporting activities would have served as sociable occasions for their participants. Descriptions given of the dance in Marden, for example, indicate participants talked to one another while dancing. Furthermore, these activities could provide opportunities for sociability through spectatorship. In a study of reported deaths relating to archery practice found in coroners' rolls, Stephen Gunn found that at least sixteen accidents reported involved the injury of spectators.[321] In a similar vein, as part of the proof of age for John, son of Robert de Walton in Lancashire, John de Andern testified to witnessing his baptism in December 1379 because he was 'at the church for a cockfight between John de Sikes and Robert del Heth'.[322]

The physical games that spectators could attend, such as wrestling, were sometimes part of organised events and could draw large crowds. The inquest jurors into the death of William the Ruff in 1267 used his attendance at wrestling matches as part of the determination that his death was not the result of an argument he had with John of Goldington. Both William and John, allegedly, had recovered sufficiently from the axe-wounds to the head that they inflicted on each other that William was able to, amongst other things, spectate at wrestling.[323] Instead the inquest found he died of a later illness. In 1385 the Mayor and Aldermen of London made a proclamation banning wrestling matches, whether 'privily or openly', along with plays until the King returned from his exhibition to Scotland.[324] Wrestling matches, furthermore, made up part of the entertainment which took place during the annual St

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[320] W.H. Stevenson, ed., and James Raine, trans., *Records of the Borough of Nottingham: Being a Series of Extracts from the Archives of the Corporation of Nottingham,* vol.3: *1485-1547* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1885), 47.

[321] Gunn, 'Archery Practice in Early Tudor England,' 61.

[322] J.L. Kirby, ed., *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Mortem*, vol.18: Henry IV (London: HM Stationary Office, 1987), 227, №.61.

[323] Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, 6-7, № 19. It appears as if almost a year had passed between the violent dispute and William's death.

[324] Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: H, c.1375-1399* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1907), 272.

Bartholomew's fair at Smithfield which was held for three days before the eve of St Bartholomew's day, from 23rd August.[325]

The appearance of games in relation to annual feasts and events have led some historians to emphasise the seasonality of these sociable activities. Jean-Michel Mehl suggests that boardgames, as well as football, were traditionally seasonal, played over the Christmas festivities.[326] Sarah Mawhinney, similarly, connects football to Shrovetide.[327] In a more extreme form of this argument, Phythian-Adams suggests the existence of a medieval ritual half-year.[328] Running from Christmas to Midsummer, Phythian-Adams argues, the ritual half year was when the majority of religious celebrations, and by extension leisure activities, took place.[329] The ritual half-year has been criticised by Duffy as an 'oversimplification' which would not have been perceived by medieval contemporaries.[330] As Jenette Dillon points out, sports and recreation including wrestling, archery, and football took place at Smithfield beyond the purview of St Bartholomew's fair.[331] Certainly, much of the evidence discussed in this thesis does not fit such a pattern. It is perhaps more accurate to acknowledge that, whilst particular festivities became associated with certain games, for example football at Shrovetide and board games at Christmas, it does not necessarily follow that these games were only associated with such festivities, restricting their use during the rest of the year.

Incidental Sociability

Thus far this section has explored medieval sociability in the context of intentional practices and activities, such as visiting someone's house to drink together, or arranging with others to play football. Whilst these were not always planned, they represent specific occasions for sociability. Not all social interactions took place during these occasions, however, they could also be incidental. We see this in the miracle of Cecily, the five-year-old daughter of Thomas and Alice Featherstonehaugh, included in the miracles attributed to Henry VI. A courier was traveling by horse through Wolsingham, County Durham, when 'by chance he was seen in the middle of the street and was called from a window' by

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[325] Janette Dillon, 'Clerkenwell and Smithfield as a Neglected Home of London Theatre,' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 71, no.1 (2008): 121-2. See also: Jim Ellis, 'Archery and Social Memory in Sixteenth-Century London,' *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 79, no.1 (2016), 32-3.

[326] John-Michel Mehl, trans. Thomas Pettitt, 'Games in Their Seasons,' in *Custom, Culture and Community in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. Thomas Pettitt and Leif Søndergaard (Odense University Press, 1992), 71.

[327] Sarah E. Mawhinney, 'Coming of Age: Youth in England, c.1400-1600,' (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2015), 217-8.

[328] Charles Phythian-Adams, 'Ritual Constructions of Society,' in *A Social History of England, 1200-1500*, eds. Rosemary Horrox and W. Mark Ormrod (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006)*,* 380-1; Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and The Citizen,' 44-6.

[329] Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*, 5, 46.

[330] Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 46-7.

[331] Dillon, 'Clerkenwell and Smithfield,' 121.

friends.[332] Dismounting and being 'prevailed upon for the sake of friendship and camaraderie, he [the courier] entered [the house], in order to take up a drink with friends [*amicis*]'.[333] The man stayed there till around Vespers. On realising how delayed he was he quickly mounted his horse to leave. Unfortunately, the horse kicked out and hit Cecily in the head as she had been looking at the horse from the mounting-block. Cecily later miraculously recovered after her family took her to church to invoke King Henry. Although the courier drank and spent time with his friends inside, this example demonstrates the potential for streets to foster sociability.

Historians have recognised the social and societal importance of streets as spaces in the medieval period. Studies have questioned how street-spaces were used and how they influenced the construction of identity and authority.[334] For Symes, the street was an arena from which space was carved out by competing authorities, jurisdictions, and peoples through performance.[335] Pamela Hartshorne identifies streets as integral parts of the structuring of the city and thus 'the architectural expression of public social practice.'[336] As Hartshorne's definition indicates, the discussion of streets as a space interrelates heavily with debates on the definition of public/private spaces within a medieval context.[337] Medieval streets, therefore, are acknowledged as a locus for social interaction.

Chance conversations which took place in the street can also appear on record. Two such occasions are found within depositions in William Newport c. Isabel Newport, a suit for marital separation *a mensa et thoro*, brought to the London Consistory Court between January 1491 and July 1492. One witness, Thomas Goodeale, deposed that:

> in the public street commonly called Fenchurch Street, this witness was present when
> Isabel met this witness. After they had spoken for a while, Isabel said these words, "Calle

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[332] Grosjean, *Henrici VI,* 178-181. '*fortuitu in medio vico aspicitur, vocatusque e fenestra vel hostio apropiavit domui*'. My own English translation.

[333] Grosjean, Henrici VI, 178-181. '*Dein[de] victus tum amicicie tum societatis gracia desiliens intravit saltem biberium cum amicis una sumpturus*'. My own English translation. *Amicus* n. can refer to both friends and kin. I have determined the translation of this word throughout the thesis based on context. Dictionary for Medieval Latin from British Sources (DMLBS), *amicus* 2 a, b.

[334] Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space,'; Kim M. Phillips, 'Public and Private: Women in the Home, Women in the Streets,' *A Cultural History of Women*, vol.2: *In the Middle Ages*, ed. Kim M. Phillips (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 105-126; Laura Gowing, '"Freedom in the Streets": Women and Social Space, 1516-1640,' in *Londonopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London*, ed. Paul Griffiths and Mark S. R. Jenner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 130-151.

[335] Symes, *A Common Stage*, 3,4, 133, 135.

[336] Pamela B. Hartshorne, 'The Street and the Perception of Public Space in York, 1476-1586,' (PhD Thesis, University of York 2004), 15.

[337] For more on this debate see: Phillips, 'Public and Private,' 105-126; Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space,' 246-258; McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 960-990; Goldberg, 'Space and Gender,' 205-232.

not me Isabell Newport but calle me Isabelle Horseley, for y had lever [liefer] the balde

hooreson Cokkoold wer hangyd than he shuld be my husband".[338]

The testimony here implies that the conversation was substantial as Isabel spoke with Thomas 'for a while' before the topic of her name was brought up. Socialising in public spaces such as streets was not risk free for women in England. Sarah Rees Jones describes how gendered spatial conduct in the later medieval period put women at risk of being labelled immoral or vulgar if their work involved their presence on the streets, for example hawking goods.[339] The term 'common', for example, which denoted public spaces, when applied to women – as in 'common woman' or 'common as the street' – took on associations with sex work.[340] Using the example of pre-modern association between London's common fields and sex work, Laura Gowing demonstrates how male witnesses describing being with women in these areas were very careful to give context to the situation.[341] In a similar vein, if this interaction were unusual, we might expect Thomas to have gone to greater lengths to explain their meeting. The lack of further expansion on Thomas' meeting with Isabel in Fenchurch Street suggests that this interaction was considered unremarkable, excepting what Isabel said regarding her marriage.

The apparently unremarkable meeting between Isabel and Thomas on Fenchurch Street speaks to the relative freedom that women seem to have been permitted to walk abroad or even to converse with men they knew. This stands in contrast to what we know of the much more circumscribed movement of women at least of middling and higher social rank in an Italian context.[342] Fabrizio Nevola suggests sociability within Italian streets was gendered where women's social encounters were more limited, and their presence was more about moving through streets rather than congregating.[343] The characterisation of pre-modern Italian streets as spaces where women were notably absent, especially those of higher social status, has seen some revision in recent years.[344] Elizabeth Cohen, for example, highlights the agency and variety of circumstance that women experienced in Rome c.1600. Instead of relying on the ideals of enclosure found within didactic literature, Cohen shows how even wealthy

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[338] William Newport c. Isabel Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'*in strata publica vulgariter nuncupata Fanchirchstrete civitatis London, presens fuit iste juratus ubi et quando dicta Isabella obviabat huic jurato et post plura communicata et habita inter eos, dicta Isabella dixit hec verba*'.
[339] Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space,' 252.
[340] Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space,' 253, 258.
[341] Gowing, '"Freedom in the Streets",' 143-4.
[342] Natalie Tomas, 'Did Women Have a Space?' in *Renaissance Florence: A Social History,* eds. Roger J. Crum and John T. Paoletti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 311-28; Evelyn Welch, *Shopping in the Renaissance: Consumer Cultures in Italy, 1400-1600* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 34-5.
[343] Fabrizio Nevola, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2020), 190.
[344] The relative absence of women in public life in Renaissance Italy is argued in, for example: Samuel K. Cohn Jr., *Women in the Streets: Essays on Sex and Power in Renaissance Italy* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 35-7. This revision is noted in: Nevola, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy*, 18, 245.

women negotiated these spaces by bringing attendants when traversing streets.[345] Considering the example of Isabel Newport in this broader context, however, suggests that the ability to stop and converse with men in the street may have been something more readily available to ordinary women in London.

Beyond simply meeting by chance in the street, it can be argued that any location which allowed people to gather could facilitate informal sociability. Churches and churchyards provide an obvious example of this. In theory lay church attendance at this time was mandatory and, as French emphasises, 'parish worship was collective and social.'[346] The popular exemplum of the gossip of two women being recorded by a demon during a service is found in English sermons, poems, and plays from the thirteenth century into the sixteenth.[347] In one petition to Edward I made in 1302, the Franciscans of Bury St Edmunds requested a courthouse at Cattishall would not be rebuilt.[348] They argued that it caused them nuisance because when it rained people sheltered in their church, making such a noise that the friars were unable to say Mass. The implication here is that those taking shelter were talking together. Historians, moreover, point to the use of churchyards for secular, social purposes beyond religious celebrations and as burial grounds. Churchyards are recorded as sites for fundraising activities such as charity ales, for meetings, markets, business contracts, recreation, and even soliciting sex.[349] Markets too necessitated interactions between people and would have offered the chance for informal sociability to take place. The same can be said of communal wells and other water facilities.[350] As noted by Kane and Gowing, doorways and streets were often where pre-modern women's domestic activities took place and would have acted as 'the backdrop to networks of female neighbours and kin.'[351]

References to sociable interactions taking place in markets or workplaces more broadly are not frequent in the sources studied here. There are some examples however, which make clear that work was an activity which facilitated sociability too. Goldberg has identified a church court case from

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[345] Elizabeth S. Cohen, 'To Pray, To Work, To Hear, To Speak: Women in Roman Streets c.1600,' *Journal of Early Modern History* 12 (2008): 292, 294.

[346] French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 3.

[347] The gendered aspect to this story has been discussed in: Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues,* 52. See also: Margaret Jennings, 'Tutivillus: The Literary Career of the Recording Demon,' *Studies in Philology* 75, no.5 (1977): 1-95.

[348] The National Archives (TNA), SC 8/1/21.

[349] Goldberg, 'Pigs and Prostitutes,' 179; Howell, 'Spaces of Late Medieval Urbanity,' 14. Caroline Barron lists churchyards as open green spaces for Londoners without private gardens: Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 252. Mark Hailwood states church-ales often took place in the churchyard or church-house, whereas Judith Bennett finds in Wakefield manor ales were hosted by reputable householders: Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, 5; Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity,' 29.

[350] Tony Scrase, 'Crosses, Conduits and Other Street Furniture in the South West of England,' in *Shaping Urban Identity in Late Medieval Europe*, eds. Marc Boone and Peter Stabel (Garant, Leuven-Apeldoorn, 2000), 212.

[351] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender,* 230; Gowing, '"Freedom in the Streets",' 137.

Scarborough where deponents describe a group of people spending the day preparing a loom for new cloth. As the process took all day, it also involved the group drinking and chatting together 'as is the custom among neighbours [*vicinos*] in the said town of Scarborough'.[352] Urban areas in Italy often featured public troughs for clothes-washing. Whilst evidence for these sites is not found in England, the congregation of laundresses at particular locations to undertake their work is suggested in civic records.[353] The Coventry Leet Book in 1468, for example, ordered that 'noman ne womoan forhensfurth [from henceforth] wasshe lomez [woven cloth] nor clothes at þe Cunditis [conduits]' with the threat of a 4d. fine.[354] In 1417 the Mayor and Aldermen of London imposed fines for those impeding the use of wharfs and stairs 'the poor common people' for 'fetching, drawing, and taking water, or in beating and washing their clothes' or 'other reasonable things.'[355] Henry, son of Thomas Duloe, and John, son of Hugh de Lodey, who were likely young men, went outside to play wrestle whilst they were attending a vigil in Duloe in 1266.[356] Whilst not the focus of this thesis here, this last example illustrates how informal social practice could and did take place at organised or formalised events and spaces, for example at guild feasts, baptisms, or hock Monday festivities.

Contextualizing Sociability

The last section of this chapter will reflect on the discussion of quotidian sociability so far, to consider how participation in different forms of sociability was affected with respect to age, gender, and status and how perceptions of informal sociability changed over time. One clear observation which can be made about evidence for sociability found in the sources is the overwhelming male-focus of this material.[357] All the examples studied within this thesis that involve sporting activities, like football, only involved men. The collection of Henry VI's miracles described football as 'one in which young men […] propel a huge ball […] with their feet.'[358] It is likely that during this period, games and sports were culturally prescribed male-only activities. In her study of local court presentments for misbehaviour, McIntosh found that, till the end of the sixteenth century, games which were reported

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[352] Goldberg, 'Making the House a Home,' 168.

[353] Rawcliffe, 'A Marginal Occupation?' 154.

[354] Mary Domer Harris, ed., *The Coventry Leet Book: or Mayor's Register Containing the Records of the City Court Leet*, vol.1. Early English Text Society Original Series 134 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and co., 1907), 338.

[355] H.T. Riley, *Memorials of London and London Life in the XIIIth, XIVth and XVth Centuries* (London: Longmans, Green, and co., 1868), 649; Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: I, 1400-1412* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1909), 178.

[356] The juror's reported they both fell and reportedly a knife on John's Belt injured Henry. The inquest didn't attribute his death later to this injury. Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, 3-4, № 8.

[357] This predominance is also noted elsewhere by Goldberg: Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 124.

[358] Grosjean, *Henrici VI,* 131. *'Est enim, quo solent adolescents rustici et lasciui ingentem pilam non iactando in aera. Sed solotenus volutando: nec minibus quidem sed pedibus pulsitando atque versando propellere.'* English translation from: Knox and Leslie, *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 131.

were 'almost exclusively male'.[359] Despite these local presentments, and many parliamentary statutes banning indoor and outdoor activities, references to these games and the presentments themselves demonstrate that men continued to participate. It is likely that these interactions formed an important part of informal sociability for men and boys. The frequency of references to men socialising suggests there may have been a culture of male homosociality within later medieval England. This fits with patterns of social interaction found elsewhere. Participation in local governance, for example London's Wardmote courts, and occupational guilds were largely restricted to men only.[360] As Berry shows, meals provided wardmote jurors with the opportunity for sociability and social advancement.[361]

Men predominate further in forms of sociability beyond physical sports. The image of a group of men spending time together in a tavern drinking or playing games is one repeated throughout the records. As we have established, drinking houses were spaces which accommodated for both men and women from a wide social spectrum. Simultaneously, however, there appears to have been a cultural association between groups of young men and participation in homosocial drinking practices. Before he was stabbed, Reginald de Freestone had been 'singing and shouting' with a group of his companions including John Bocche and Walter le Skynnere.[362] Kane identifies the exploitation of the image of single men socialising together as a group by the male deponents of the York marriage suit, Walker c. Kydde, to bolster the case against a marriage contract taking place.[363] As outlined in the introduction, the deponents standing for the defendant, John Kydde, lent on cultural conventions of the male homosocial activities of drinking and fishing to demonstrate that John was neither present at the time of the alleged marriage contract, nor ready to enter into married life. Goldberg notes patterns of 'bachelor clustering' evident in the 1377 poll tax returns for Kingston Upon Hull and Colchester.[364] Living in close proximity, as Goldberg argues, would have provided the opportunity for collective socialising.

It may be that male homosociality is over-emphasised to some extent in surviving records due to anxieties around activities socially proscribed as male. Hanawalt in her study of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century homicide cases in Northamptonshire, London, and Oxford, observed that most of

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[359] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 98.

[360] Katherine L. French, *Household Goods and Good Households in Late Medieval London: Consumption and Domesticity After the Plague* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021), 19; Berry, '"To Avoide All Envye,"' 202-3.

[361] Berry, '"To Avoide All Envye,"'212.

[362] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/002, № 14. '*cantantes et clamantes*'.

[363] Kane, 'Memory and Gender,' 189.

[364] Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 121-2.

the recorded suspects and victims were men.[365] Hanawalt reasons one cause of the low percentage of women as suspects or victims could be their social roles, which meant they were less likely to suffer violent death in this context or be involved in 'tavern brawls'.[366] Following this line of argument, it is possible that women's engagement of sociability was less likely to result in crisis or disruption, and therefore necessitate recording within coroners' rolls or regulating legislation.[367]

Goldberg and Martin suggest women may have had less time to take part in activities where the main purpose was sociability. Additionally, as domestic tasks often were not perceived as work, there may have been less cultural space for women to participate in leisure or recreation, where the latter is considered recompense for labour.[368] Instead, as noted earlier, domestic work may have helped to facilitate social interactions between women and sociability would have been a significant part of these tasks.[369] Fetching water and washing clothes often were undertaken at communal facilities, engendering conversation. Patterns of homosociality amongst women, then, may have been facilitated through their work. Furthermore, like residential clustering among single men, Goldberg also identifies patterns of clustering for single women in poll tax returns.[370] Same-sex sociability for women is indicated further in more formal contexts. French draws attention to the numerous women's groups that were organised within parishes by the mid-fifteenth century. Women-only membership was variously organised around, for example, marital status or occupation and they helped fundraise for the parish. French likens the functions of women's parish groups to religious guilds which enabled participants to socialise together with others of similar status.[371]

Descriptions of organised activities and celebrations similarly suggest the prevalence of social interactions organised around gender. Occurring on the Monday and Tuesday after Easter, Hocktide was a parish fundraising festivity whereby married women and men took turns in capturing each other and ransoming them to raise money for the parish. French identifies this festivity with urban married couples, which developed into a phenomenon in the later fifteenth century.[372] Whilst interpretations of this event by historians in relation to normative gender roles has varied, there was a clear separation between men and women who worked in homosocial groups to raise money.[373] Another event, recorded in a case from the Court of York, called 'Somergame' took place in Selby, Yorkshire in

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[365] Hanawalt, 'Violent Death,' 306.
[366] Hanawalt, 'Violent Death,' 307.
[367] Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking, 124.
[368] Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 175-7; Goldberg, *Women in England*, 43.
[369] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 230; Gowing, '"Freedom in the Streets",' 137.
[370] Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 122; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* 309.
[371] French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 142, 149.
[372] French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 159, 164.
[373] French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 159-60; Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and The Citizen,' 249.

1469 and also involved clearly gendered groups.[374] These groups were made up of young men and women who came together with a queen and king elected for the event. A similar pattern of gender distinction may have characterised May Day celebrations which could also include the election of mock-queens and mock-kings.[375]

The practice of homosociality in informal social interactions, however, should not be overstated. Goldberg identifies the Selby 'Somergame' as having a particular emphasis on unmarried individuals. It seems likely that this festivity, alongside May Day celebrations would have allowed opportunities for courtship between young men and women.[376] Furthermore, there are also plenty of examples of mixed groups spending time together informally. The occasion when Robert Wood allegedly stole the purse of Joan Patryk involved both men and women drinking at Joan's house. Thomas Dod testified in 1491 that he:

> went to the dwelling-house of John Patryk, Joan`s husband, within the parish of St. Sepulchre in the city of London, for the sake of drinking with John Patryk and Joan his wife, and after a while at this witness's request Robert Woode and his wife and another widow whose name this witness does not know entered, to have a drink.[377]

Similarly, the testimonies of Joan Wase and Cecilia le Schirreve on the miraculous recovery of Cecilia's daughter Joan, recount how at the time they were having a conversation with Ralph in the alehouse. Examples of men and women drinking together is illustrated further with the verdict of Margery le Wyte's death in 1301. Jurors determined Margery had been killed by an ill-aimed arrow after she had been drinking with three other men at a drinking establishment.

In addition to cases of mixed sociability, examples of sociable pastimes where only men are mentioned does not mean these moments were exclusively male. This is illustrated returning to the testimony of Thomas Dod. According to his deposition the drinking party included three women and three men. John Patryk and Robert Woode are named and listed ahead of their wives, but Joan Patryk is the only woman who was named.[378] Whilst this may be a decision made by the recording clerk, Johnson stresses the need to recognise the agency of the witness, in this case Thomas Dod, in centralising, emphasising, or marginalising aspects of the narrative.[379] In Thomas' deposition, whilst the women

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[374] Goldberg, 'Desperately,' 127-8.

[375] Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*, 27-30.

[376] Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and The Citizen,' 248-9.

[377] Woode c. Patryk in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*in die annunciacionis beate Marie vel circiter, iste juratus accessit ad domum habitacionis Johannis Patryk, mariti dicte Johanne, infra parrochiam sancti Sepulcri civitatis London situate, causa bibendi cum eisdem Johanne Patryk et Johanna eius uxore*'.

[378] Woode c. Patryk in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.

[379] Johnson, 'The Preconstruction of the Witness Testimony,' 141-2.

make up half of the party socialising, their presence is de-emphasised in the deposition. It follows that in other situations, they may not have been mentioned at all.

Descriptions of the composition of people involved in moments of sociability involving gaming or sports may in part reflect convention and expectation rather than the reality of who was present. There are no women mentioned in examples of men wrestling or playing football discussed above. The presence of women as spectators at similar events, however, is indicated in the *Goode Wife*:

> Ne go thou not to no wrastylynge [wrestling],
>
> Ne git to no coke schetynge [shooting],
>
> (75) As it wer a strumpet other a gyglote,
>
> Or as a woman that lyst to dote [be foolish].
>
> Byde thou at home, my doughter dere.[380]

In warning against attending wrestling or archery events, the poem indicates the presence of women as spectators. The involvement of women in active forms of sociability is indicated indirectly too in some examples. In 1272, the death of Maud, daughter of Reynold Smith was recorded in a coroner's inquest at Goldington. Maud was 'sitting at her mother Eleanor's doors on Goldington Green' when she was shot in the eye with a small arrow by Alfred son of Gode of Salph End who was shooting at a target.[381] Maud was evidently fairly close to where the shooting practice was taking place, and it is conceivable, therefore, that she was spectating. This example relates to archery practice, but it is likely that this was the case with other recreational forms of sociability such as football, wrestling, and even board games.

Like women, children may be an under-represented section of society when it comes to records of sociable interactions and activities. As with the example of Maud at Goldington, there is some indication that these sections of the population, other than adolescent boys and men, also engaged in sporting activities, if only to spectate. Recorded amongst the miracles of Henry VI, for example, is the account of how the four-year-old Thomas, son of Thomas Fowle, sustained an injury in a similar situation to that described for Maud. Where we do find references to children's activities they often revolve around play. This follows the cultural understanding of play as a particular characteristic of childhood.[382] In the testimonies for the miraculous recovery of Joan le Schirreve of Marden, before she fell into the pond witnesses described her playing with other children outside in the garden. Her father, Adam, explained that he and Cecilia allowed Joan to stay at the alehouse with them because:

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[380] Salisbury, 'How The Goode Wife Taught Hyr Doughter.'; MED, shẹtinge ger., 1b.; doten v., 1a.

[381] Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, 19, № 44.

[382] Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender,' 258-9.

many other neighbour's children were there. She [Joan] also had remained at length together in the alehouse with the other children in the presence of the witness, and [then] in the presence of several others she went with the children from the alehouse and ran into the garden of the aforesaid Walter in whose house was the alehouse.[383]

Joan was allowed to remain at the drinking house where her parents were only because of the presence of other children her age. While John and Joan were at the pond, throwing stones, 'with them were two other boys of the same village the name of whom and whose sons they were does not occur for the memory of the said witness [Adam] as he said.'[384] An expectation that children would play together is also demonstrated in another miracle story from the canonisation proceedings from Thomas Cantilupe. When Edith, wife of William Drake, testified about the miraculous recovery of her son John from drowning she explained how when she saw John, who was one and a half, leave the house she thought he had 'gone to play with other small children in the quarry or public street'.[385] These examples support Goldberg's observations over the frequency of children described as playing in coroners' rolls. Such expectations may seem self-evident, but it is necessary to be aware of the influence of age in the informal social interactions in which people in the later medieval period took part.

Cultural associations linking forms of sociability to age was not confined to children and play alone. There also appears to have been age-related norms in relation to sports and board games. For example, the clerk who collated the miracles attributed to Henry VI described those playing the football game, where William Bartram sustained a serious injury, as *adolescentes*.[386] The youth of Henry and John who are recorded as wrestling together at a vigil in 1266 is indicated by their descriptive identifiers as sons of Thomas Duloe and Hugh de Lodey respectively.[387] Fears around the negative outcomes of leisure activities centred on the engagement of servants and apprentices. As these positions usually were occupied by young people at this time, as a period of life-cycle service, these concerns included an age-related element.[388] I am not arguing here that only younger adults

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[383] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.124r. '*erat ibi multi alii paruuli vicinorum. cum autem stetisset aliquandum in dicta taberna cum aliis paruulis coram dicto teste, et coram aliis pluribus fuit egressa cum dictis paruulis de dicta taberna et incucurrit gardinum predicti Walteri in cuia domo erat taverna*'.
[384] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.124r. '*cum eis erant duo alii pueri eiusdem ville de quorum nominibus et quorum essent filij non occurrit memorie dicte testis ut dixit.*'
[385] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.140v. '*predictus filius suus qui surrexerat a dormitine statim iuisset ad ludendum cum aliis paruis in quarreriam seu via publica*'.
[386] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 131. '*Est enim, quo solent adolescents rustici et lasciui ingentem pilam non iactando in aera. Sed solotenus volutando: nec minibus quidem sed pedibus pulsitando atque versando propellere.*'
[387] The juror's reported they both fell and reportedly a knife on John's Belt injured Henry. The inquest didn't attribute his death later to this injury. Hunnisett, *Bedfordshire Coroners' Rolls*, 3-4, № 8.
[388] Goldberg, 'What Was a Servant?' 7-8.

and adolescents engaged in sports and games but that there was a cultural association between this age group and these forms of sociability. The descriptions of Robert Katersouth playing croziers in the street in York were used by deponents to emphasise his youth and therefore inability to provide valid testimony in court.[389] This example may indicate there was an overlap, or linkage, between associations of young children, such as Joan, engaging in play, and adolescents playing boardgames and sports.

Returning to the testimonies on the miracle of Joan le Schirreve in Marden, some depositions show that there were age-related distinctions in who those present interacted with socially. The children who were at the alehouse, including Joan and John, played together near the pond separately from their parents and apparently without much adult supervision. Additionally, Joan's father Adam le Schirreve, describing the context for the miracle, deposed that at the alehouse 'according to their manner and custom the young people [*juniores*], after a single drink being accepted, they had arranged themselves up in a dance'.[390] Similarly, Thomas Schonk, who led the dance, described how it was the 'young people [*juniores*] who were in the said tavern [who] arranged themselves in a dance.'[391] At the time of the examinations, which took place around fifteen years after the miracle, Thomas Schonk gave his age as 'around thirty-nine' which would mean he was roughly in his mid-twenties at the time of the dance.[392] The other dancers who provided testimonies were recorded as a similar age to Thomas.[393] As recognised by historians, ages provided for individuals within medieval records were very approximate. It was common practice to round up or down ages to the nearest decennial.[394] We can only take the ages provided by the witnesses, therefore, as an approximate indicator of their ages. According to their testimony, the witnesses who participated in the dance at Marden were young adults at the time.

In contrast, Adam testified that he was 'not in the said dance but had remained with the others, advanced in years and the aged [*prouectis et senibus*], in the said alehouse'.[395] His deposition recorded his age as sixty which would mean he was in his mid-forties when Joan miraculously recovered from drowning.[396] Cecilia, Joan's mother, also remained in the drinking house and testified she was 'more

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[389] BIA, CP.E.82.

[390] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.124v.
'Et secundum modum et usum eorum juniores post potum semel acceptum posuissent se in corea.'

[391] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.131v. *'juniores qui erant in dicta taberna posiverint se in chorea'.*

[392] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.131v. *'T[ri]ginta nouem annorum u[e]l circa'.*

[393] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff.131v, 137r-v.

[394] Shahar, *Growing Old,* 29.

[395] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.124v.
'ipse testis non fuit in dicta c[h]orae set remansit cum aliis prouectis et senibus in dicta taberna'.

[396] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.124r.

than fifty' at the time of the inquiry.[397] Unfortunately there are no ages given for Joan Wase and Ralph who Cecilia spent time talking with in the alehouse. Adam's descriptions of aged people may have referred to their position during the inquiry as opposed to the perception of their ages at the time of the miracle. Whether or not the age-gap was significant in reality, comments made by the witnesses suggest there was a perceived difference between them. The conclusions drawn from these approximate ages should be made tentatively but there does appear to be a distinction, based on age, on what sociability the parishioners of Marden engaged in whilst at the alehouse of Walter de la Wyle.

Lastly, in addition to understanding sociability as something which was experienced differently dependant on age and gender, as well as status, a chronological dynamic can be discerned. The Black Death of 1348-9 resulted in the deaths of what is thought to amount to around a half of the population in England.[398] The lack of references to the plague within church court depositions and testimonies for Proofs of Age have been noted by Goldberg and Rosenthal, respectively.[399] For Goldberg, this suggests people were unwilling to talk about it, contributing to a process of collective 'airbrushing' of the social trauma of the plague.[400] The lack of narrative evidence from the ordinary population about the impact of the Black Death makes it difficult to truly appreciate the huge impact this disaster must have had on quotidian social experiences and on how people interacted with one another on a daily basis.

The significant decrease in the population resulting from the Black Death, and thus shortage of labour, meant the cost of labour increased. Parliament issued the Ordinance of Labourers in 1349 which sought to freeze wages to their 1346 rate, in an effort to curb this increase. This was repeated with the 1351 Statute of Labourers, and its subsequent revisions.[401] Initial enforcement of this new legislation does not appear to have continued within any success beyond the plague outbreak in 1361, and workers' wages rose.[402] In addition to a rise in living standards, as highlighted by Goldberg and

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[397] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.126v. '*quinquagenariam et ultra*'.

[398] John Aberth, *From the Brink of The Apocalypse: Confronting Famine, War, Plague, and Death in the Later Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 2010; London: Routledge, 2000), 90-2; Ole Jørgen Benedictow, *The Black Death, 1346-1353: The Complete History* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004), 383; Jim L. Bolton, 'Looking for Yersinia pestis: Scientists, Historians, and the Black Death,' in *The Fifteenth Century*, vol.12: *Society in an Age of Plague*, eds. Linda Clark and Carole Rawcliffe (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 37-8.

[399] Goldberg, *Communal Discord*, 96; Joel T. Rosenthal, *Social Memory in Late Medieval England: Village Life and Proofs of Age* (Cham, Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 113-4.

[400] Goldberg, *Communal Discord*, 96.

[401] Alexander Luders et al., eds. *Statutes of the Realm: Printed by Command of His Majesty King George the Third in Pursuance of an Address of the House of Commons of Great Britain*, vol.1 (London: George Eyre and Andrew Strahan, 1810), 311-3. Chris Given-Wilson calculates that over one third of parliaments passed laws relating to the regulation of labour between 1351 and 1430. Chris Given-Wilson, 'The Problem of Labour in the Context of English Government, c.1350-1450,' in *The Problem of Labour in Fourteenth-Century England*, eds. James Bothwell, P.J.P. Goldberg, and W.M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2000), 85.

[402] Mark Bailey, *After the Black Death: Economy, Society, and the Law in Fourteenth-Century England* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2021), 7, 74, 79; David Stone, 'The Black Death and Its Immediate Aftermath: Crisis and Change in the Fenland Economy, 1346-1353,' in *Town and Country in the Age of the Black Death: Essays in*

Martin, higher wages and greater security in employment meant labourers were able to spend less time working and more time pursuing leisure activities or socialising.[403] As is evident from the examples studied in this chapter, many forms of medieval sociability continued as people still engaged in games, took part in commensality in homes and drinking houses, and spectated and participated in sports.

The socio-economic changes which followed the Black Death, including the continued rise of real wage rates in the late fourteenth century, moreover, changed how sociability amongst the labouring population was perceived.[404] The preamble to the Statute of Labourers employed a language of idleness and the sin of greed to describe labourers unwilling to work.[405] The ability for people to choose to work less resulted in elite anxieties about idleness which often were linked to leisure activities. Legislation was implemented, furthermore, in an attempt to control the pastimes of the ordinary population. A Parliamentary statute from 1388 ordained: 'such servants and labourers shall have bows and arrows, and use the same the Sundays and holydays, and leave the pleyes at the ball nother hand nor foote, and theise other plaies coytes [quoits], dice, casting of the stone [bowling], kailes [skittles], and suche other plaies covenable'.[406] Instead of engaging in games and sports, therefore, able-bodied men were instructed to practice archery instead. The legislation against leisure activities, targeting male labourers and servants, was symptomatic of elite anxieties surrounding vagrancy, idleness, and disorder. These fears, felt particularly in post-plague society, fed into rhetoric about the damaging or disruptive effects of young, low status men engaging in these forms of sociability and leisure.[407]

Population mobility and migration amongst the labouring population was a characteristic of society throughout the medieval period. Mark Bailey, in his study of patterns in the migration of surfs from manorial court rolls, argues for the difficulty in determining absolute rates of migration and any definitive changes following the Black Death.[408] Bailey argues for the importance of regional variation

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Honour of John Hatcher, eds. Mark Bailey and Stephen Rigby (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 227-231; Richard Britnell, *Britain and Ireland 1050-1530: Economy and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 357, 495-7; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 296; Graham Platts, *History of Lincolnshire*, vol. 4: *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1985), 175.

[403] Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 170-1; P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Introduction,' in *The Black Death in England*, eds. W.M. Ormrod and P.G. Lindley (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2003), 8.

[404] Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, 497.

[405] Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 171; Bailey, *After the Black Death*, 77.

[406] Alexander Luders et al., eds. *Statutes of the Realm: Printed by Command of His Majesty King George the Third in Pursuance of an Address of the House of Commons of Great Britain*, vol.2 (London: George Eyre and Andrew Strahan, 1816), 57.

[407] Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 174.

[408] Mark Bailey, 'Servile Migration and Gender in Late Medieval England: The Evidence of Manorial Court Rolls,' *Past and Present* (2022): 2-3, accessed 26th October 2022, https://doi.org/10.1093/pastj/gtac015.

and reminds us that the majority of post-plague migration remained rural.[409] Nevertheless, immigration remained crucial to sustain urban populations which had been reduced considerably during the plague outbreaks of 1348-9 and 1361-2.[410] Incentives for those migrating into towns and cities included economic opportunities and increasing wages, which rose further than in rural areas. Urban economic growth over the second half of the fourteenth century, however, was regionally varied. Established, manufacturing towns especially, including York, Coventry, and Salisbury, benefited from the export of cloth to continental markets.[411] Following the Black Death, London captured an increasing proportion of domestic trade and experienced considerable immigration during the 1350s which helped to sustain an economic boom for the following three decades.[412] By the fifteenth century, London was drawing apprentices regularly from Northern England and Wales, in addition to counties in closer proximity.[413] For Goldberg, those migrating within later medieval England can be characterised largely as either young adults engaging in life-cycle service or landless labourers who continued to move for employment.[414] Both Goldberg and Kowaleski further argue that during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century young single women made up a significant proportion of those migrating to urban centres.[415]

From an urban perspective, the immigration of young, unmarried men and especially women and their engagement in life-cycle service provided them with independence from their families and parents. This gave them greater freedom to meet, socialise, and engage in courtship.[416] Simultaneously however, such urban migration coupled with the successive outbreaks of plague following 1348, would have caused significant dislocation to people who were separated from familial ties or other support networks.[417] While guilds and fraternities are not the focus of this thesis, it is important to

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[409] Bailey, 'Servile Migration,' 1-39. See also: Christopher Dyer 'Migration in Rural England in the Later Middle Ages,' in *Migrants in Medieval England, c.500-c.1500*, eds. W. Mark Ormrod, Joanna Story, and Elizabeth M. Tyler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 242-3.

[410] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 281, 338; D.M. Palliser, 'Urban Society,' in *Fifteenth-Century Attitudes*, 134-7; Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, 205-6; Sarah Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages: The Rules and Realities of Population Mobility,' in *Migrants in Medieval England,* 265, 275; French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 38-9.

[411] Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, 360; Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 267, 275.

[412] Bailey, *After the Black Death*, 156.

[413] Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 274; Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London*, 101-7.

[414] P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Migration, Youth and Gender in Later Medieval England,' in *Youth in the Middle Ages*, eds. P.J.P. Goldberg and Felicity Riddy (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2004), 91.

[415] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 296-8; Maryanne Kowaleski, 'Singlewomen in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: A Demographic Perspective,' in *Single Women in the European Past, 1250-1800*, eds. Judith M. Bennett and Amy M. Froide (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 57-8.

[416] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 327. Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 129-30.

[417] Rosser, 'Solidarités et Changement Social,' 1128; Ben R. McRee, 'Charity and Guild Solidarity in Late Medieval England,' *Journal of British Studies* 32, no.3 (1993): 205; Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 284, 295.

note their influence on sociability following the Black Death. The popularity of religious and craft associations grew considerably in the fourteenth century, though their existence can be traced back earlier to the twelfth century.[418] As promulgated in work by Rosser, both fraternities and guilds could provide migrants with fictive kin networks to help establish themselves, as well as 'personal connection, identity, and role' in an urban centre.[419] Space within these institutions for sociability can be found, for example, in their patronal feasts which, as Rosser describes, enabled members to build new relationships, including introducing unmarried members.[420] In this way, guilds would have provided an increasing number of people from the second half of the fourteenth century with additional opportunities for engaging sociably with others and creating social connections.

The economic growth that London experienced towards the end of the fourteenth century included the production of high quality and luxury items which enriched the mercantile and artisanal population.[421] For these urban bourgeois households, improved living standards allowed them to purchase luxury items, including those related to sociability. In her recent study of the material culture of London households, French notes how mazers, a type of luxury drinking cup, became a ubiquitous item in bequests made by London's merchants and artisans from the second half of the fourteenth century.[422] The popularity of mazers continued until the early sixteenth century and their use demonstrates the continued importance of conviviality. In one surviving mazer, for example, we find 'Hold ʒower [your] tunge [tongue] and sey þe best/ and let ʒower neyʒbore sitte in rest/ hoe so lustyye [desirous] god to plese/ let hys neyʒbore lyve in ese.'[423] Inscriptions such as these, found on drinking cups, promoted sociability and ideas of Christian love and charity. This commensality, however, as French points out, was one of sober and restrained behaviour as mazers spilled easily and therefore required care to drink from.[424]

Urban bourgeois households, in the century after the Black Death, were further able to invest in household furnishings. French argues for the increased use of parlours among London's merchants and artisans 'as a place for socialising with intimates' as demonstrated by the presence of fireplaces

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[418] Ben R. McRee, 'Religious Guilds and Regulation of Behaviour in Late Medieval Towns,' in *People, Politics and Community in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. Joel Rosenthal and Colin Richmond (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1987), 109-10; Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity*, 211.

[419] Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity*, 114.

[420] Rosser, 'Going to the Fraternity Feast,' 432, 443.

[421] French, *Household Goods*, 40; Christopher Dyer, *Making a Living in the Middle Ages: The People of Britain 850–1520* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 305.

[422] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 54-8.

[423] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 33, 56 n.69. Maplewood Mazer, 10 x 16 x 9.5cm, M.165-1914, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, accessed 1st July 2022, https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O103993/mazer-unknown/.

[424] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 33-5, 58, 62-3.

and soft furnishings, such as wall hangings, located in parlours from probate inventories.[425] This accords with Goldberg's study of fifteenth-century probate inventories from York which notes the presence of wall hangings and cushions in the halls of artisanal and mercantile households.[426] The use of these furnishings is characterised by Goldberg as an urban bourgeois phenomenon; not only did they provide comfort and signify status, soft-furnishings were used as part of the entertainment of guests. For Goldberg, such sociability was crucial to establishing and maintaining business connections.[427]

While the use of homes, amongst urban merchants and artisans, as sites of sociability continued following the Black Death, wealthier urban inhabitants also increasingly made use of drinking establishments. As argued by McSheffrey, taverns could provide space outside the home for bourgeois households to engage in respectable sociability.[428] For example, recorded in the depositions for a marriage suit in 1488 from the London Consistory court, a wealthy family are described as making a trip to the tavern known as the Cardinal's Hat.[429] Henry Heed was accompanied by his wife, his daughter Margaret Heed, the man Margaret was allegedly contracted to, and Sir Thomas Bryan who served as the Chief Justice for the Court of Common Pleas, 1471-1500.[430] Evidently, these high-status individuals saw the Cardinal's Hat as respectable enough to patronise.

As noted earlier in this chapter, taverns often provided wine and therefore catered to wealthier patrons, whereas alehouses were generally modest and only served ale. Evidence from the later fifteenth century indicates that this distinction may have become more pronounced and shaped how respectable these drinking establishments were considered as places to engage in sociability. The use of taverns for interactions beyond purely sociability may have helped to create a sense of respectability and legitimacy in some cases. London taverns, as pinpointed by Colson, functioned as sites where deeds were witnessed, likely owing to their public, secular nature where witnesses would be present.[431] Furthermore, drinking houses located near marketplaces in towns could serve as 'sites of economic exchange'.[432] The economic uses of taverns are indicated in a breach of faith suit from the London Consistory court. In January 1496, Hugh Standish deposed he was present at the Pope's Head tavern, Lombard Street, with James Oldbury, Jerome Huriell, John Buggale, Vincent Toteler, and others. Hugh was asked to bear witness to Vincent's promise to pay John 'the debt specified on a

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[425] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 84.
[426] Goldberg, 'Making the House a Home,' 170-3.
[427] Goldberg, 'The Fashioning of Bourgeois Domesticity,' 126, 132-3, 136.
[428] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 130.
[429] William Hawkyns c. Margaret Heed in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
[430] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 984, see n.105.
[431] Colson, 'Local Communities,' 285.
[432] Colson, 'A Portrait of a Late Medieval London Pub,' 44.

certain document, to be paid at certain terms, to John, as it appeared by certain indentures made and recited between them,' and subsequently to write up a deed.[433] As this example indicates, taverns were venues that could be used for legitimate, legal business.

There is evidence to suggest that taverns additionally were used by institutionalised groups. The churchwardens' account books for St Mary at Hill, London, noted for 1483-5 that 5s. was paid to 'syngers on Sʒ Barnaees even yn wyne spent at tavern, and at any other festes of the yer to syngers within the queer [choir]' over the year.[434] The record suggests that the tavern was used as a venue for the parish to reward the choir for their services. Under 'Exspences ffor the proffit of the chirch' for 1490-1 is listed 4d. 'spent at the tavern in wyne'.[435] Henry Littlehales explained these expenses as a custom of 'drinking upon the conclusion of business,' which would suggest such drinking houses could function for more organised events and interactions too.[436] Similarly, Colson suggests that the Star Inn, located in the parish of St Margaret Bridge Street, London, functioned as a *de facto* hall for the Fishmongers' Company from 1488 until 1508 when they established a hall on Stockfishmonger row.[437] The sense of legitimacy and respectability within higher-end drinking establishments may explain the pattern, identified by McSheffrey, of couples of more modest status using taverns, as alternative places to the patriarchal household, to engage in courtship and contract in marriage.[438] These drinking houses, therefore, could function as legitimate sites for conducting individual business and affairs and these more formal and institutional uses likely helped to shape perceptions of the sociability that took place there.

In contrast, from the later fifteenth century, alehouses, which generally accommodated lower-status patrons, increasingly were equated with 'promoting disorder and vice'.[439] Moralists and preachers frequently criticised those gathering in alehouses.[440] By-laws which attempted to restrict 'unruly' drinking establishments peaked in the later fifteenth century and proprietors were presented for allowing bad order and governance within their drinking establishments.[441] William Jonson, for example, was presented in 1483 for allowing suspect people to frequent his alehouse in Tooting Bec,

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[433] John Buggale c. Vincent Toteler in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*Vincencius Toteler promisit dicto Johanni Buggale fide sua media quod solveret debitum in quodam scripto obligatorio specificato ad certas terminos solvendum dicto Johanni prout apparet per certas indenturas inter eos factas*'.
[434] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.45v.
[435] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.78v.
[436] Littlehales, *Records of a London City Church,* xxxi.
[437] Colson, 'A Portrait of a Late Medieval London Pub,' 46.
[438] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 982-4.
[439] Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 127.
[440] Galloway, 'Driven By Drink?' 95.
[441] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 68, 74-6.

Surrey.[442] A statute from 1495 ruled that justices of the peace could 'take suertie of the kepers of ale houses of their gode behavyng'.[443] The implication of this ruling is that such measures were necessary to ensure alehouses did not promote bad order. In line with the 'infinite versatility' which Kümin uses to describe early modern drinking houses, it is probable that taverns and alehouses were not placed within two distinct categories of respectable and disreputable.[444] Rather, individual establishments existed along a continuum of respectability. Nevertheless, by the end of the fifteenth century, alehouses were increasingly labelled by moralists and the governing elite as places which promoted vice.

Concerns over the potential for alehouses to be disorderly should be viewed in the context of a rise in bourgeois social conservatism that scholarship has traced over the late Middle Ages. Maintaining a good reputation was crucial to participating socially and economically within society and involved cultivating trustworthiness, honour, and status. Over the fifteenth century, as Hanawalt outlines, 'individual control over personal behaviour' and conduct became increasingly important in the cultivation of reputation.[445] Peter Coss points to the concern with deference and correct precedence found in fifteenth century courtesy books which often stressed the importance of physical comportment.[446] The ability of an individual to be self-controlled, as well as obedient to those with authority over them, was understood as good 'governance'.[447]

Ideas of governance were gendered. Bardsley argues that the period encompassing the late fourteenth century and the fifteenth century saw a trend whereby women were increasingly associated with ungoverned and disruptive speech. This is traced by Bardsley who demonstrates the association of women during this period with the new charge of scolding, as well as the feminisation of defamation presentments in church courts, visible by the fifteenth century.[448] Ill-governance for women, then, included the use of disruptive speech. Sexual conduct, further, was an important facet

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[442] Marjorie K. McIntosh, 'Finding a Language for Misconduct: Jurors in Fifteenth-Century Local Courts,' in *Bodies and Disciplines: Intersections of Literature and History in Fifteenth-Century England*, eds. Barbara A. Hanawalt and David Wallace (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 99; McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 76.

[443] Luders, *Statutes of the Realm*, vol.2, 569.

[444] Kümin, *Drinking Matters*, 4, 191.

[445] Barbara A. Hanawalt, ''Good Governance' in the Medieval and Early Modern Context,' *Journal of British Studies* 37, no.3 (1998): 248. See also: McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 164-89; Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 291.

[446] Peter Coss, 'An Age of Deference,' in *A Social History of England,* 72-3.

[447] Hanawalt, ''Good Governance',' 248; McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 137; Sara Butler, *The Language of Abuse: Marital Violence in Later Medieval England* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 250-1.

[448] Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues,* 69-89.

of women's reputations in late medieval England.[449] McSheffrey argues, however, that sexual morality made up an important part of good governance for men too which emphasised the importance of self-control and sober behaviour.[450]

Governance also concerned the ability to exercise good rule over those under one's sphere of influence, for example patriarchal control over a household.[451] As Rosemary Horrox argues, lords and masters had obligations to support those in their service and to maintain their interests.[452] Scholars have noted a greater willingness for local and governing elites to regulate social and moral behaviour of residents of lower socio-economic status.[453] McIntosh argues that, within the context of lesser public courts, the second half of the fifteenth century saw a growing 'attention to misbehaviour' which went against ideals of self-control and discipline.[454] In particular, she outlines a significant rise in reported offences in relation to sexual misbehaviour and disorderly behaviour within alehouses from c.1460 onwards, peaking in the early sixteenth century.[455] McSheffrey likewise highlights the increase in the regulation and punishment of sexual behaviour by civic authorities in London dating from the later fourteenth century. She argues that growing anxieties about someone's good governance and sexual behaviour became especially prevalent amongst London's governing elite towards the end of the fifteenth century.[456]

I argue that attitudes towards practices of sociability too were bound up in later fifteenth century bourgeois ideas about good governance and social regulation. Alehouses functioned as significant locations for sociability amongst those of modest and lower socio-economic status. Alehouses provided space for men and women to socialise together, engage in commensality as well as to play games. From a late fifteenth-century bourgeoisie perspective, however, these forms of sociability became increasingly problematic. Already we have seen how alehouses faced increased regulation

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[449] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 67, 175. See also: Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street,' 101, 117-8; Kim M. Phillips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England, 1270-1540* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 83-96, 146; Goldberg, 'Pigs and Prostitutes,' 172-193.

[450] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 150; McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 259.

[451] Butler, *The Language of Abuse*, 250-1; McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 137-8.

[452] Rosemary Horrox, 'Service,' in *A Social History of England,* 68.

[453] See for example: Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London*, 137-57; Forrest, *Trustworthy Men,* 163-200; Sarah Rees Jones, 'Emotions, Speech, and the Art of Politics in Fifteenth-Century York: House Books, Mystery Plays, and Richard Duke of Gloucester,' *Urban History* 44, no.4 (2017): 586-603; McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 245, 253-6; McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 7, 12-4, 54-107; Frank Rexroth, *Deviance and Power in Late Medieval London,* trans. Pamela E. Selwyn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 191-222.

[454] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 31, 68. See also: Marjorie K. McIntosh, 'Local Change and Community Control in England, 1465-1500.' *Huntington Library Quarterly* 49, no.3 (1986): 219-242.

[455] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 68.

[456] McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 253, 258-60. See also: Shannon McSheffrey, 'Whoring Priests and Godly Citizens: Law, Morality, and Clerical Sexual Misconduct in Late Medieval London,' in *Local Identities,* 63.

and became associated with social disorder and misbehaviour. Legislative attempts to prohibit board games and sports, furthermore, continued across the fifteenth century. The 1388 statute was revised in 1409-10 and again in 1477-8 where, whilst outdoor activities such as football, tennis, and bowling were permitted, the list of banned indoor activities was extended.[457] The statute of 1495, which ordered those who kept alehouses to provide sureties for good behaviour, additionally banned labourers, servants, and apprentices from playing tennis, bowling, cards, and dice, except for during the Christmas season where servants were able to play in the houses of their masters.[458] Recreational activities such as board games and cards were considered disruptive to work and many were tied to gambling, raising fears about wasted resources, for example servants stealing and spending their masters' money.[459]

Examples studied in this chapter indicate that, whilst there may have been a cultural norm of homosociality, in practice mixed groups of men and women socialising together was more prevalent than the sources initially suggest. It is possible, however, that the rise in social conservatism in the later fifteenth century, especially among wealthier urban residents, encouraged increasingly gendered practices of sociability. In a parochial context, for example, both women's groups and Hocktide celebrations, which encouraged connections based on gender, developed from the mid-to-late fifteenth century.[460] Along these lines, a growth in concern vocalised around disruptive behaviour taking place in alehouses may indicate a perceptible change in the social make-up of clientele. Economic recession during the fifteenth century meant women increasingly were excluded from the labour market.[461] This, Goldberg argues, contributed to a shift in the status of female servants from those engaged in life-cycle service, to lower-status domestic servants.[462] Whereas urban artisanal servants were predominantly men, young women were employed as domestic servants within mercantile households.[463] In the case of the latter, wealthy householders may have exercised greater control over members of their households, restricting the freedoms of their servants in socialising outside the home.[464] Goldberg shows that male, homosocial culture during the medieval period was linked to 'aggressive masculinity' manifest through antisocial behaviour such as drinking, violence, and 'womanising'.[465] It is possible that this contributed to a perception by the end of the century that

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[457] Luders, *Statutes of the Realm*, vol.2, 163, 462-3; McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 99.
[458] Luders, *Statutes of the Realm*, vol.2, 569.
[459] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 100-1.
[460] French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 159, 164.
[461] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 337; McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 261. The mid-fifteenth century recession will be discussed more in chapter two.
[462] Goldberg, 'What Was a Servant?' 20.
[463] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 200-1.
[464] McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 245, 250, 266; Goldberg, 'Making the House a Home,' 178.
[465] Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 125.

alehouses were spaces dominated by young men of modest means and therefore fuelling anxieties about their disorderly potential.

What is visible from this study is the rich variety of informal sociability available to the ordinary population in later medieval English society. In addition to the opportunities to socialise found in participation in parishes or guilds, people spent time drinking and chatting at drinking houses, taking part in, or watching, sporting activities, and engaging in chance encounters with others in the street. Thinking about quotidian social experiences in terms of sociability offers us with a way of advancing historical scholarship beyond the ultimately sterile concern with community. This approach highlights these important, quotidian aspects of life for the ordinary population which have hitherto been neglected through a focus on the institutional or well-defined.

Medieval sociability was performative, constantly referencing cultural associations based on ideals around positionalities including gender, status, and age. The cultural norms surrounding these positionalities affected what forms of sociability was available to people, and how they participated in them. Whereas wealthier people could engage in commensality at home, drinking establishments were of particular importance to the social lives of those without such resources. Participation in games and sports was a proscribed male activity and homosociality was a cultural ideal emphasised throughout the source material. This, however, did not necessarily always reflect actual practice; the decentring of women and women's sociable practices in the surviving records does not equate to their absence in reality. It is probable that woman, such as Maud watching archery Goldington Green, engaged in games and sports by spectating.

This chapter has demonstrated, furthermore, how perceptions of ordinary sociability altered within the contexts of the aftermath of the Black Death and the economic recession during the mid-to-late fifteenth century. Both these periods saw elite discourses around idleness and greed which fed into fears around labourers and servants engaging in leisure activities such as board games and sports. Moreover, the end of the fifteenth century saw the increasing importance of good governance and reputation within society. As a result, there was, in the words of McIntosh, a 'growing attention to misbehaviour' as governing elites sought to regulate the behaviour of others.[466] This included legislation to restrict leisure activities and control behaviour within alehouses, which became characterised as sites of social disorder and misbehaviour.

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[466] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 31, 68.

2: Later Medieval Understandings of Relationships between Neighbours I: *Quis est meus proximus*?

Neighbour and neighbourhood are subjects regularly referred to in pre-modern historiographical work, often without further definition or expansion.[467] Neighbour n. in its modern usage has several meanings. It can indicate a person who lives nearby.[468] Related to this, neighbour n. can describe something, or someone, positioned in close proximity to another. Furthermore, neighbour n. has Biblical resonances which relate to a 'fellow human', to whom there are obligations to love and help based on Matthew 19:19.[469] Thus, neighbourly adj. indicates the characteristic nature or action of a neighbour.

The aim of this chapter is to begin to address my second main research question: how were relationships between neighbours conceptualised in later medieval England. In the first part of this chapter, I will use the methodology developed by Schultz's study of words for children in High Middle German.[470] Thus, I will analyse the contextual usage of the language surrounding relationships denoted by the modern 'neighbour' in Latin and Middle English. By examining the lexicon in this way, I will unpack later medieval conceptions of this relationship. As part of this, I will review the broader legal and religious contexts to the lexicon which influenced how the language surrounding 'neighbour' was used and understood. This work is important to avoid imposing unqualified or assumptive understandings of 'neighbour' in the analysis of source material. Moreover, I will use the cultural meaning around these relationships, encoded in the lexicon and its usage, to inform my reading of the documentary evidence. This will allow me to develop a much more nuanced understanding of how the language operates in the case studies I examine. Thus, the second part of this chapter will study the narrative source material used in the thesis to explore the scriptural resonances of 'neighbour' in the context of everyday social experiences and how this might change over time. Chapter three will

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[467] For example: Barbara A. Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound: Peasant Families in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 257-267; Sharon Wright, 'Broken Cups, Men's Wrath, and the Neighbour's Revenge: The Case of Thomas and Alice Dey of Alverthorpe (1383),' *Canadian Journal of History* 43, no.2 (2008); 241-251; McDonough, *Witnesses, Neighbours, and Community*, 97-121.

[468] Oxford English Dictionary (OED), neighbour, n. 1a.

[469] OED, neighbour, n. 1b.

[470] See my methodology in the introduction. Schultz, 'No Girls, No Boys, No Families,' 59-81. See also: Goldberg, 'What Was a Servant?' 1-20; Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender,' 249-262; Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 165-79.

follow on from this by considering the second meaning of neighbour n. as someone who lives in close proximity.

As outlined in the introduction to this thesis, the historical study of neighbours in medieval England has seen some expansion, particularly within the last couple of decades. Direct study of this relationship, however, is still required. Despite this growing interest in relationships between neighbours, the term often is left unqualified or unexplained. Philippa Maddern's work on later medieval gentry friendships, for example, fails to fully consider the meaning of neighbour in contemporary thought.[471] Although it acknowledges the close connections between friendship and neighbourliness, the chapter arguably ends up conflating the two. At best, an uncritical approach to medieval neighbours leads to the assumption that medieval conceptualisations of neighbour are self-evident and unchanging. Schultz identifies a similar issue with the treatment of 'childhood' within medieval studies, arguing that often historians have sought 'in the past something that resembles childhood in the present.'[472] At worst, then, an unanalytical application of 'neighbour' leaves us in danger of using the term in the modern sense without appreciating the different meanings and associations medieval people held of those living in close proximity.

More recently, some scholarship has recognised the vocabulary used to describe neighbour. Jamie Taylor, for instance, studies the position of neighbours and witnesses in the context of fourteenth-century outlawry. Taylor recognises the distinction between the Latin nouns *vicinum*, which had links to legal discourse, and *proximum*, found in discussions of scripture and pastoral manuals.[473] In her study of neighbourliness and charitable provision in later medieval York, Liddy further notes the range of vocabulary used to describe 'neighbour' and variety of meanings that the Middle English 'neighbour' could convey.[474] Naomi Tadmor contributes a more in-depth understanding of the language of neighbour in her cultural study of early modern biblical translations and neighbourliness. Tadmor traces the Biblical roots of the Latin vocabulary to early modern discourse on neighbourly love.[475] Whilst valuable, this work only deals with one aspect of relationships between neighbours and does not focus on how this was understood during the Middle Ages. This area of research, therefore,

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[471] Philippa Maddern, '"Best Trusted Friends": Concepts and Practices of Friendship Among Fifteenth-Century Norfolk Gentry,' in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1992 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1994), 100-117.

[472] Schultz, 'No Girls, No Boys, No Families,' 60.

[473] Taylor, 'Neighbours, Witnesses, and Outlaws,' 87.

[474] Liddy 'Testamentary Bequests to Neighbours,' 150.

[475] Naomi Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible: Scripture, Society, and Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 23-49; Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours,' 150-76.

requires further, more detailed examination in order to contribute to our understanding of what the relationship between neighbours meant in medieval England.

The Language of Neighbour

To better appreciate medieval understandings of neighbour, I will consider what terms were used to describe this relationship, when they were used, and how. The meanings a word takes on is determined by the context in which it is found. Thus, one word can take on many different meanings when used in more than one context. When a word is used in more than one way, these different usages become embedded in the word itself. Underlying associations can be evoked even when the term in question is used in a different context. It is important to recognise, therefore, the range of underlying resonances that accompany a word to fully appreciate how it is used in a given context. To provide a better appreciation of how relationships akin to the modern neighbour were conceptualised in later medieval England, the following section of this chapter will analyse the contextual usage of the language used to describe this relationship. Within the confines of the thesis, I cannot hope to offer an exhaustive linguistic study. I focus primarily on Latin vocabulary as this is the language in which my source material is written. I also consider the Middle English vocabulary as this was the vernacular spoken by the non-elite population. Using the illustrative quotations found in dictionaries for medieval Latin and Middle English will allow me to consider the use of words denoting neighbour in a wide range of genres and thus gain a general sense of how they were understood and used. Given the importance of scriptural resonances to the meaning of 'neighbour', I will also consider the usage of Latin vocabulary found within the Vulgate Bible.

Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources

There are a number of Latin words which were used in a way which approximates to the modern 'neighbour'. Those most commonly found are the nouns *proximus* and, to a greater extent, *vicinus*. This vocabulary will be the focus of my analysis here. Within the *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (DMLBS) there are also several nouns related to *vicinus*, including *convicinus*, *circumvicinus*, *vicinitas*, and *vicinia*, for which the editors offer the meaning of 'neighbour'. *Vicinitas* n. further takes on the meaning of 'neighbourhood' and, in some contexts, denotes the 'condition of being a neighbour'.[476] For example, Durham Priory's Halmote Court records for the vill of Shields (*Sheles*) from 1365 includes the phrase 'for the sake of good neighbourhood [*boni vicinitatis*] and

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[476] DMLBS, *vicinitas* 1d, 2c.

love'.[477] In this way, *vicinitas* n. seems to connote 'neighbourliness'. Adjectival forms from the *vicin-*root connote something close or nearby. We find, therefore, *convicinus* adj., *vicinitas* adj., and *vicinia* adj. can signify something as physically close.[478] Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica* includes the sentence 'the monastery was pleasantly situated for the woods and sea adjoining [*vicinitate*]'.[479] The nouns *propinquus*, *affinis*, and *finitimus,* likewise, all appear in the DMLBS with quotations relating to 'neighbour'.[480] The primary meaning given for the latter relates to the sense of being nearby or situated on a boarder, with the secondary meaning of being 'imminent'.[481] As adjectives, *proximitas*, *propinquus*, *affinitas*, and *affinis* can refer to a close relationship such as a friendship or kinship.[482] For instance, a civil plea from 1200 uses *propinquus* n. in the following: 'if the aforesaid Galiena is the closer [*propinquior*] heir of the same'.[483]

Despite the availability of this lexicon of Latin vocabulary relating to the modern word for 'neighbour', not all of it was commonly used in this way. An indication of how this vocabulary was applied throughout the medieval period can be gleaned from the quotations under the entries for each Latin word in the DMLBS providing illustrative examples of how each word was used. With the variety of terminology available, it is inevitable that usages would have varied in terms of geography, time, and context. All three of the DMLBS illustrative quotations for *finitimus* n., for example, date to before 1100. Examples that use *vicinitas* n. to refer to something akin to 'neighbourliness' date from 1251-1368 and are limited mostly to documentary sources. These examples also are concentrated geographically around Scotland, which suggests this usage was not as frequent elsewhere. The number of illustrative quotations given to support a definition of a Latin word in the DMLBS, of course, can only be a crude yardstick to the popularity of the term in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, within the confines of this thesis, it serves to give some perspective on which terms were more commonplace.

Before beginning a lexicographical analysis of *proximus* n. and *vicinus* n. in more depth, it is worth taking note of another Latin word, *amicus* n., which often is found alongside words approximating 'neighbour'. The primary translations for *amicus* as a noun and adjective, offered by the editors of the

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[477] DMLBS, *vicinitas* 1d*. 'causa boni vicinitatis et amoris'*. English translation from: John Booth and William H.D. Longstaffe, eds., *Halmota Prioratus Dunelmensis, 1296-1384,* Surtees Society 82 (Durham: Andrews and Co., 1889) 44.

[478] DMLBS, *convicinus* b, *vicinitas* 1, *vicinia* 2.

[479] DMLBS *vicinitas* 1. English translation from: J.E. King, ed and trans., *Beadae Opera Historica* vol.1 (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), 416-7.

[480] DMLBS, *propinquus* 2, *affinis* 1, *finitimus* 1b.

[481] DMLBS, *finitimus* 1.

[482] DMLBS, *proximitas* 3, 4, *propinquus* 4, 5, *affinitas* 2, *affinis* 2.

[483] DMLBS, *propinquus* 5b. William Paley Baildon, ed. *Select Civil Pleas,* vol. 1: AD. 1200-1203, Selden Society 2 (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1890), 1.

DMLBS, are friendly and friend.[484] Medieval friendship is a subject of study in its own right and often scholarship has focused on the ideologies of this relationship and how it was understood in a monastic and theological context.[485] As will be discussed in more detail below, in a Biblical context the Latin words *proximus*, *vicinus*, and *amicus* covered the usages which in Hebrew had been described using two words, *réa* (רֵעַ) and *shakhen* (שָׁכֵן), which broadly referred to a friend or fellow person and a close residence, respectively.[486] The close association between friendship and neighbour in medieval discourse has been recognised and additionally their connection with ideas of love and charity. The latter has been observed, for example, by Rosser in the context of religious fraternities.[487]

While the relationships of friend and neighbour often are discussed and placed together within historiography of the Middle Ages, these relationships were distinct. The Latin *amicus* n. does not directly translate to the modern term 'neighbour' despite its concurrence with nouns such as *vicinus* and *proximus*. The subject of medieval friendship is not the focus of this thesis, which concerns more ephemeral relationships that were not necessarily positive. *Amicus* n., moreover, held stronger connotations to other social ties too. The term was used to refer also to a kinsman, agent or advocate, or even mistress.[488] As noted by Julian Haseldine, *amicus* was also applied to cases of political patronage or alliance.[489] Diana O'Hara, in the context of early modern marriage making, notes that descriptive terms including 'friend' are not self-explanatory but 'often extended to embrace a range of real and fictive relationships'.[490] Whilst the ties of friendship, neighbour, kinship, and so on would have overlapped in many cases, to maintain focus within the thesis, the term *amicus* n. and the concept of friendship will not be studied in more detail here.

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[484] DMLBS, *amicus* 1, 2a.

[485] For example: Julian P. Haseldine, 'Friendship and Rivalry: The Role of Amicitia in Twelfth-Century Monastic Relations,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 44, no.3 (1993): 390-414; John R. Fortin, 'Friendship in the Rule of St Benedict,' *The Downside Review* 127, no.446 (2009): 49-63; Brian Patrick McGuire, *Friendship and Community: The Monastic Experience 350-1250* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

[486] As Naomi Tadmor notes, while *réa* could be used to denote a fellow person 'in near proximity', the sense of 'close habitation' was instead evoked with the use of *shakhen*. Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible*, 25-6. For more on the connections between *vicinus*, *proximus*, and *amicus* see: Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours,' 151-3, 155-7.

[487] Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity,* 93, 116-7. This is particularly the case for studies on Italian cities, for example: Kent and Kent, *Neighbours and Neighbourhood*, 8; Klapisch-Zuber, '"Kin, Friends, and Neighbours",' 97-123. See also: Kane and Sandall, *The Experience of Neighbourhood*, 173-238; Hanawalt, *The Ties that Bound*, 261; Maddern, 'Concepts and Practices of Friendship,' 100-117.

[488] DMLBS, *amicus* 2b-3. McSheffrey further notes the use of the word friend to refer to someone's guardian. McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 247.

[489] Julian P. Haseldine, 'The Monastic Culture of Friendship,' in *The Culture of Medieval Monasticism*, ed. James G. Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 177.

[490] Diana O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint: Rethinking the Making of Marriage in Tudor England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 48.

The entries for *proximus* and *vicinus*, incorporating both nominal and adjectival forms, are the most populated in the DMLBS. The DMLBS includes 42 illustrative quotations from various sources under *vicinus* and a further 75 for *proximus*. Furthermore, within the sources examined for this thesis, it is *vicinus* n. that we find almost exclusively used to denote the modern 'neighbour'. Occasionally *convicinus* n. is found instead of *vicinus* n. For example, Adam le Schirreve, when giving testimony about his daughter's miraculous recovery from drowning, deposed that he did not discover her body in the pond because: 'he was in the said alehouse, engaging with his neighbours [*cum conuicinis suis*]'.[491] For the following section of this chapter, I will focus on *vicinus* and *proximus*, as nouns but also as adjectives, to analyse the usages, contexts, and discourse surrounding this vocabulary. By understanding the broader sense of these words, we can gain a better insight into how they were used and the meaning and resonances they carried in the later medieval period. Within this exploratory study I will use these quotations as a springboard to help elucidate the resonances each term held.

Turning first to *vicinus,* almost half of the texts cited in the DMLBS for illustrative quotations use the adjectival form. Mostly *vicinus* adj. is used to describe something being close or near to another, in particular in terms of physical proximity. In Bede's prose Life of St Cuthbert *vicina* adj. is used to describe a nearby forest [*de vicina*].[492] The phrase 'in his land which lies near [*vicina*] the land of Philip de O.', found in a charter from Chester c.1209, similarly describes the proximity of two pieces of land.[493] There are also some examples where *vicinus* adj. serves as a measure of time. For example, from Walter of Wimborne's *De mundi vanitate,* 'if she might be pregnant, if she is with child and near [*vicina*] birth,' or 'the time of celebration […] is near [*vicinum*],' from the *Literae Cantuarienses*.[494] In most cases, this usage is found in devotional texts such as the *Vita Sancti Edwardi Regis* or monastic texts like the Letter Books of Christ Church, Canterbury. Occasionally, *vicinus* adj. is used to describe a person who lives nearby. For instance: 'þat man sall have wytnes [witnesses] of tua leil [lawful] men or of women nychtburis [*mulierum vicinarum*],' appears in the laws from the boroughs of Berwick, Roxburgh, Edinburgh, and Stirling of c.1270.[495]

The most common usage for *vicinus* in the nominal form in the DMLBS illustrative passages is to describe a person dwelling nearby. For example, 'our women neighbours [*vicinas nostras*]' is found in Gervase of Tilbury's encyclopaedic *Otia imperialia*.[496] These passages span the medieval period from

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[491] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.125r. '*erat tamen in dicta taberna alia tractans cum conuicinis suis'.*
[492] DMLBS, *vicinus* 2. '*caesis de vicina silva ramusculis*'.
[493] DMLBS, *vicinus* 2. '*in terra sua que jacet vicina terre Philippi de O.*'.
[494] DMLBS, *vicinus* 2c. '*si sit pregnans, si sit gravis et vicina partui,*'; '*solempnitatis tempus … vicinum existit.*'
[495] DMLBS, *vicinus* 1b. '*vir ille habeat testimonium duorum legalium virorum vel mulierum vicinarum.*' Extracts from: Thomas Thomson and Cosmo Innes, eds., *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland,* vol.1: *1124-1423* (London: Record Commission, 1844), 340.
[496] DMLBS, *vicinus* 1.

the earliest reference in Bede's *Historia ecclesiastica,* to the mid-fourteenth century. Within the Formulary of Combe Abbey, dating to c.1340, one letter includes: 'from the malevolent persecution by neighbours [*per viscinos*], together we rise up'.[497] The provenances of many of these examples are from legal documents. To illustrate, the settlement between Sir Henry Bucointe and Lady Lucy Garland, and her son William Paris, included the phrase 'by the oath […] of eight law-worthy male neighbours [*vicinorum*]'.[498] A significant number of examples from the DMLBS use the plural form *vicini* to refer to a panel of jurors. The court rolls of the manor of Ruislip, Middlesex, record that Roger Cobbler was convicted 'by six of his law-worthy neighbours [*vicinos suos*]' for withholding rent he owed to John King in 1290.[499] Again, in 1314, John de Ponynton 'pleaded against his neighbours [*vicinos suos*] in the lord king's court at Westminster'.[500] Four additional examples are found in the DMLBS where *vicinus* n. denotes a geographical area in close proximity rather than a person. Aelred of Rievaulx (d.1167) uses the feminine form, *vicina* n., for the phrase: 'in the vicinity [*vicina*] of this church'.[501] Here, the *vicina* is identifiable by its proximity to the church. There is, then, a strong spatial element to the meanings evoked by *vicinus* as both a noun and adjective.

We can compare these patterns of use with those for *proximus.* The majority of quotations found in the DMLBS definition for *proximus* illustrate the adjectival form. *Proximus* adj. is found in a large variety of texts throughout the medieval period, including John Ford's sermons, the Patent Rolls, Roger Bacon's *De nullitate magiae,* and the *Gesta Henrici V*. While this adjectival usage could, like *vicinus* adj., denote spatial proximity, most often *proximus* adj. is cited in relation to a sense of being close in time. This is demonstrated in the Exchequer memoranda rolls which includes in 1332: 'from the feast of St. Michael immediately [*proximo*] past'.[502] Likewise, the *Gesta Henrici V* uses the phrase '*in proximo*' to refer to the immediate future.[503] Related to describing something as being close in condition to another, *proximus* adj. also was used to signify a close kinship between people. In this way, The Dukes of Orleans and Bourbon are described in the *Gesta* as 'of closer [*proximiori*] royal

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[497] DMLBS, *vicinus* 1. '*ex persequcione malivola per viscinos in nos insurgents*'.
English translation from: H.E. Salter, W.A. Pantin, and H.G. Richardson, eds. *Formularies Which Bear on the History of Oxford c.1204-1420* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942), 303.
[498] DMLBS, *vicinus* 1b. '*per sacramentum … octo legalium hominum vicinorum*'. TNA, E 40/3431. (1235-36).
[499] DMLBS, *vicinus* 1b. '*per vi legales vicinos suos'.*
Extract from: Frederic W. Maitland, ed., *Select Pleas in Manorial and Other Seignorial Courts,* vol.1: *Reigns of Henry III and Edward I*. Selden Society 2 (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1889), 38.
[500] DMLBS, *vicinus* 1c. '*pro eo quod dictus Johannes implicitat visinos suos in curia domini Regis apud Wesmonasterium'.* Extract from: Charles Gross, ed. *The Guild Merchant: A Contribution to British Municipal History*, vol.2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1890), 308. My own English translation.
[501] DMLBS, *vicinus* 4. '*in vicina hujus ecclesie'*. Extract from: Aelred of Rievaulx, 'De sanctis ecclesiae Haugustaldensis, et eorum miraculis libellus,' in *The Priory of Hexham*, vol.1: *Chronicles, Endowments, and Annals*, ed. James Raine, Surtees Society 44 (Durham: Andrews and Co., 1864), 181.
[502] DMLBS, *proximus* 5b. '*a festo sancti Michelis proximo preterito*'.
[503] DMLBS, *proximus* 6b.

kin'.[504] Similarly, William of Malmesbury's *De gestis Pontificum Anglorum* describes how Oswald 'came to see Archbishop Oscytel, of York, who was his closest [*proximo*] kinsman.'[505] When used adjectivally, then, *proximus* maps onto the modern usage 'next', 'immediate', or 'closest'.

In contrast to this range of applications for *proximus* adj., the only definition for the nominal form of *proximus* in the DMLBS is the modern 'neighbour'. There are only six illustrative quotes for this usage. These examples range from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries, but a significant proportion (four) date to the two earliest centuries. Five of the six quotations have devotional or theological origins. Theodore of Tarsus, Archbishop of Canterbury (d.690), for instance, directed in his *Paenitentiale* that 'he who dishonours the wife of his neighbour [*proximi*], three years abstaining apart from his own wife.'[506] *Proximus* n. often appears connected to Gospel notions of loving both God and ones' neighbour as exhorted by Christ in Matthew 19:19. A collection of works known as the *Collectanea Pseudo-Bedae* includes: 'he who loves wine, not detesting the cup, […] who [loves] God, not [hating] a neighbour [*proximum*], […] without which, no man will be able to understand or be educated.'[507] Old Testament notions relating to the Commandment not to covet that of one's neighbour are also cited, for example in Theodore's *Paenitentiale*. The more limited use of *proximus* n. to mean neighbour, and the concentration of this usage to earlier in the medieval period, suggests that it was not commonly used in this way by the later Middle Ages.

From a comparison between *vicinus* and *proximus* in both their nominal and adjectival forms some patterns begin to emerge. The primary usage for *proximus* adj. is to connote a sense of closeness or adjacency, applied in various ways. Within this, the usage most emphasised by the examples in the DMLBS is to locate an event in time. This corresponds to appearances in the sources studied for this thesis where the term is used almost exclusively in this way. In 1300, to illustrate, the London coroner was informed of the death of John de Bois on 'Sunday after [*proxima*] the feast of St. Martin'.[508] The application of *proximus* adj. to signify closeness continues in its use to denote close kinship. This adjective is found often qualifying kin-related nouns such as *parentela* and *sanguis*. It is likely,

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[504] DMLBS, *proximus* 7. '*dux Aurilianensis et dux Burbonii de proximiori parentela regali*'.
Benjamin Williams, ed., *Henrici Quinti, Angliae Regis, Gesta* (London: English Historical Society, 1850), 44-5.
[505] DMLBS, *proximus* 7b. '*ad archiepiscopum Eboracensem Oskitellum quem proximo consanguinitatis gradu attingebat venit*'. English translation from: David Preest, trans., *William of Malmesbury: The Deeds of the Bishops of England (Gesta Pontificum Anglorum)* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2000), 165.
[506] DMLBS, *proximus* 12. '*qui maculat uxorem proximi sui iij annos absque uxore propria jejunet*'. This penitential instruction links back to repeated Biblical instructions against 'defiling' a neighbour's wife (Ezekiel 18:11, Leviticus 20:10) as well as the Commandment not to covert a neighbour's wife (Deuteronomy 5:21).
[507] DMLBS, *proximus* 12. '*qui amat vina, non execratur crateras, … qui Deum, non proximum; … sine qua nemo eruditus aut sapiens esse poterit.*' Extract and English translation from: Martha Bayless and Michael Lapidge, eds. *Collectionea Pseudo-Bedae* (Dublin: School of Celtic Studies, 1998), 150-1.
[508] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, Nº 4. '*die dominica proxima post festum sancti Martini*'. English translation from: Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls*, 4.

therefore, that when *proximus* n. was used, it could evoke a sense of intimacy analogous to kinship. In contrast, *proximus* n., as someone who dwells nearby, is found far less. Where this usage does appear, it is restricted largely to earlier medieval, patristic texts and often in reference to Scripture.

Across the uses for *vicinus* n. and *vicinus* adj., on the other hand, there is a clear emphasis on geographical positioning. Although *vicinus* could be used adjectivally to locate something in time, the range of applications for this word is more restricted to a spatial focus. Emphasis in the DMLBS is placed on *vicinus* n. as a nearby resident and/or juror. This observation relates to the fact that the sources cited as using *vicinus* n. are predominantly legal or administrative material. Yet it is apparent that by the later medieval period the noun *vicinus* had become the dominant word used to describe someone analogous to the modern 'neighbour' and the use of *proximus* n. in this way became much more infrequent.

Legal Influence

The conspicuous prevalence of *vicinus* n. in a legal context, particularly its transferred use to denote a juror, is worth discussing further. Both secular and ecclesiastical legal systems relied on information drawn from inhabitants of local areas to operate and govern effectively. The need for this information in part originated from the reliance on memories of hearing and seeing legal procedures before the greater use of written evidence.[509] In this way, such information, or social knowledge, made up a vital part of the legal proof used in various courts. By the later medieval period, as mapped by Johnson, social knowledge was gathered by legal bodies primarily through either witness testimonies, *publica fama,* or jurors verdicts. Johnson uses the term 'knowledge work' to think about the processes of information gathering and the construction of this social knowledge in legal contexts.[510]

The link between 'neighbours' and those undertaking this work is recognised within recent historical scholarship.[511] Johnson identifies the act of watching as part of this knowledge work which he notes was also 'understood as a widespread moral duty among neighbours' through frankpledge.[512] In terms of the construction of social knowledge through testimonies, eyewitnesses were often used, for example, to determine suits brought to church courts. In canon law, two eyewitnesses constituted full

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[509] M.T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066-1307* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1993; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979), 255, 262-3.

[510] Tom Johnson, *Law in Common: Legal Cultures in Late-Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 184, 185-6.

[511] Bronach C. Kane, 'Neighbourhood and Local Knowledge in Later Medieval England,' in *Experience of Neighbourhood*, 30-47; Johnson, *Law in Common*; Forrest, *Trustworthy Men;* Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*.

[512] Frankpledge was a system of mutual behavioural surety between groups of ten adults known as a tithing, which declined following the Black Death. Johnson, *Law in Common*, 194.

proof. As Charles Donahue outlines, the system of witness proof developed within canon law from the 'sworn testimony of neighbours', which also led in secular courts to the system of juries.[513] Kane notes that the records of ecclesiastical courts used *vicinus* n. to 'describe a neighbour as one who dwells nearby.'[514] 'Neighbours' were brought by plaintiffs, for instance, to provide testimony on the validity, or indeed the non-existence, of an alleged marriage.[515] In a marriage separation suit from the 1490s in London, William Newport c. Isabel Newport, one witness's relationship to the parties is described in his deposition using the term *vicini*.[516] The memories of nearby residents, and the communication networks which sustained them, were also utilised through witnesses for suits involving tithe or parish boundary disputes due to the reliance in these cases on the spatialised social memories of a locality.[517]

Publica fama was information that was common belief or opinion in a locality and which was 'socially acceptable as reliable' because it constituted information known by everyone.[518] First used by royal courts, *fama* was adopted by bishops in the thirteenth century in the context of court suits, visitations, and inquests.[519] The presence of *publica fama* about the subject of an ecclesiastical suit often was expressed formulaically, by the clerks who wrote up witness depositions, as *'publica vox et fama'* or 'public voice and report'. In canon law, *fama* qualified as partial proof. Again, *fama* was 'embedded in local knowledge' which was described often in terms denoting neighbour and neighbourhood.[520] For example, within a deposition for a defamation suit brought to London's Consistory court in 1487, we find the following phrase: 'public voice and fame [report] circulated and circulate concerning it [the defamation] among John's neighbours [*vicinos*].'[521] Other examples used the adjectives *convicinus* and *circumvicinus* instead. John Howard deposed, concerning an alleged defamation in 1488, that 'public voice and fame circulated and circulate concerning them in the parish and other neighbouring [*convicinis et circumvicinis*] places and parishes'.[522] The presence of *fama* in documents relating to

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[513] Charles Donahue, 'Proof of Witnesses in the Church Courts of Medieval England: An Imperfect Reception of the Learned Law,' in *On The Laws and Customs of England: Essays in Honour of Samuel E. Thorne*, eds. Morris S. Arnold et al. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), 141.

[514] Kane, 'Neighbourhood and Local Knowledge,' 34.

[515] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender,* 141-2. For an example of neighbours being used as witnesses is marriage suits see: McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 115-6.

[516] Newport c. Newport, in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. This suit will be discussed in more detail in chapter four.

[517] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 8, 191-2.

[518] Wickham, *'*Gossip and Resistance,' 4.

[519] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 254.

[520] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 254.

[521] John Bradfield c. Joan John, in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
 'dicit quod […] inter vicinos eiusdem Johannis laboraverunt et laborant publica voc et fama ut dicit.'

[522] Joan Essex c. Agnes Badcock, in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. *'et super eis in dicta parrochia et aliis locis et parochiis eidem convicinis et circumvicinis laboraverunt et laborant publica vox et fama'*.

defamation suits in particular is explained by the stipulation in canon law that the alleged defamation was common knowledge, countering the difficulty in otherwise providing 'affirmative proof'.[523]

Juries were made up of a group of men, usually drawn variously from a local elite, who's knowledge work involved collecting information about a case to produce a single verdict which could be accepted as viable facts.[524] Historical scholarship in the 1980s challenged the idea that juries were self-informing, that they brought to the case their own knowledge, acquired because of their proximity to the crime and people involved. Nevertheless, the connection between jurors, local knowledge, and neighbours is affirmed currently within historiography.[525] It is thought that the use of juries came of age during the legal administrative changes of Henry II's reign, though the origins of this system lay in the early medieval period.[526] Pre-Conquest and Anglo-Norman law codes included vicinage – the requirement for jurors to be drawn from the local area.[527] The 1166 Assize of Clarendon stipulated twelve men were to be appointed from every hundred to report illicit behaviour to sheriffs.[528]

Whilst *jurator* n. was the Latin for juror, the role was interconnected closely with *vicinus* n. and related words.[529] The use of '*hominum de visneto*' to describe jurors is found in various twelfth- and thirteenth-century legal records.[530] This stemmed from the sense of physical propinquity which accompanied *vicinus*, the early requirement for jurors was that they were drawn from men of the

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[523] Helmholz, *Laws of England*, 572.

[524] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 264; Johnson, *Law in Common*, 197-8.

[525] J. S. Cockburn and Thomas A. Green, eds. *Twelve Good Men and True: The Criminal Trial Jury in England, 1200-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 65, 73-4, 77, 79, 111. See also: Mike Macnair, 'Vicinage and the Antecedents of the Jury,' *Law and History Review* 17, no.3 (1999): 538-9, 548-9. For a critique of MacNair's work see: Patrick Wormald, 'Neighbors, Courts, and Kings: Reflections on Michael Macnair's Vicini,' *Law and History Review* 17, no.3 (1999): 597-601; Anthony Musson, 'Appealing to the Past: Perceptions of Law in Late-Medieval England,' in *Expectations of the Law in the Middle Ages*, ed. Anthony Musson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 166; Taylor, 'Neighbours, Witnesses, and Outlaws,' 87.
Resulting from the questions raised in *Twelve Good Men and True*, historical research on medieval juries in England has been much more nuanced in accounting for different forms of juries and the various contexts in which they were found. See for example: James Masschaele, *Jury, State, and Society in Medieval England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 46; Anne Reiber DeWindt, 'Local Government in a Small Town: A Medieval Leet Jury and Its Constituents,' *Albion* 23, no.4 (1991): 628-30; Cynthia J. Neville, 'Neighbours, The Neighbourhood, and the Visnet in Scotland, 1125-1300,' in *New Perspectives on Medieval Scotland, 1093-1286*, ed. Matthew Hammond (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 164-5; Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 75-124.

[526] Masschaele, *Jury, State, and Society*, 46; John Marshall Mitnick, 'From Neighbour-Witness to Judge of Proofs: The Transformation of the English Civil Juror,' *The American Journal of Legal History* 32, no.3 (1988): 203; Macnair, 'Vicinage,' 537.

[527] Taylor, 'Neighbours, Witnesses, and Outlaws, 87; Macnair, 'Vicinage,' 537, 567.

[528] Macnair, 'Vicinage,' 583; Taylor, 'Neighbours, Witnesses, and Outlaws,' 88.

[529] J.H. Baker, *An Introduction to English Legal History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019; London: Butterworths, 1979), 80; Masschaele, *Jury, State, and Society*, 96.

[530] DMLBS, *vicinus* n. 4, *vicinetum* n. This phrase is found for example in: TNA, E 40/3431. (1235-36); Frederic W. Maitland, ed., *Select Pleas of the Crown,* vol.1: *A.D. 1200-1225.* Selden Society 1 (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1888), 59, №.104; Francis Palgrave, ed., *Rotuli Curiae Regis: Rolls and Records of the Court Held Before The King's Justiciars or Justices,* vol.1. (London: Record Commission, 1835), 65, 68; David Crook, ed., *Curia Regis Rolls of the Reign of Henry III*, vol.20 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 87.

locality the crime or event took place in. Panels of *vicini* were used additionally for their knowledge of local boundaries and customs and to witness conveyancing agreements.[531] It seems likely that the emphasis on panels of jurors being composed of local residents led to the use of *vicin-* root words being used synonymously with *jurator* n. in some documentary records.[532] The role of jurors shifted and developed over the course of the Middle Ages. From the end of the thirteenth century at the latest, the roles of jurors and witnesses had become distinct, reducing any self-informing role they may have had.[533] By the fifteenth century, moreover, not all jurors were drawn from the relevant village or hundred to the case.[534] Nevertheless, as demonstrated, the noun *vicinus* continued to be used in association with juries in England.

With respect to jurors, we can see how the sense of geographical proximity, which accompanied the use of *vicinus* n. in a legal context, was applied relatively loosely. Examples from London's Assize of Nuisance rolls use the phrases such as 'eighteen men from the neighbourhood [*visneti*] of Bread Street,' and 'by the honest men from the neighbourhood [*homines de visini*] of Castle Baynard,' to describe jurors summoned to deliberate on a complaint.[535] Whereas these examples summoned residents from an immediate street or ward, the area that juries were drawn from could also be defined in terms of a hundred, ward, or even manor. For gaol delivery sessions, juries were called from within the relevant county.[536] Whilst *vicinus* n. was used to describe individuals chosen as jurors, in part based on their geographical proximity to the subject of the case, the extent of this proximity was flexible.

Despite the reliance on such social knowledge, courts did not accept it unquestioningly but rather, were concerned that the information produced was considered legitimate and truthful.[537] Forrest argues that standards of knowledge in the medieval period existed as a spectrum. Thus, trustworthy testimony of lay witnesses and jurors, provided for episcopal authorities, was pragmatic and so was 'something to be accepted rather than known beyond doubt'.[538] For Forrest, pragmatic trusting

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[531] Macnair, 'Vicinage,' 556, 568; Kane, *Popular Memory*, 217. See also: Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 95, 254-5, 295-6.

[532] More, detailed research is needed on the relationship of the Latin *jurator* n. and *vicinus* n. within the context of the medieval English legal system.

[533] Mitnick, 'From Neighbour-Witness,' 204; Daniel Klerman, 'Was the Jury Ever Self Informing?' in *Judicial Tribunals in England and Europe, 1200-1700*, eds. Maureen Mulholland, Brian Pullan and Anne Pullan (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 74-5.

[534] Cockburn and Green, *Twelve Good Men and True*, 56, 88; Klerman, 'Was the Jury Ever Self Informing?' 59.

[535] These examples date from 1318 and 1356, respectively. LMA, CLA/040/02/001 ff.29d, 68. № 234, 453. *'xviii visneti de Bredstrate', 'per probos homines de visini castri baynard'.* Unless otherwise stated, the English translations for the Assize of Nuisance rolls are my own.

[536] J.B. Post, 'Jury Lists and Juries in the Late Fourteenth Century,' in *Twelve Good Men and True*, 69.

[537] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 265; Johnson, *Law in Common*, 184.

[538] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 251, 261.

required reliability and definitiveness. These characteristics of trustworthy knowledge in a legal context have been supplemented by Johnson's recent work which characterises 'good knowledge' as that which was local, discerned, and manifest.[539] To be discerned meant the information was collected discriminately for the purposes required and to be manifest meant that the knowledge was clear and evident.

As Forrest and Johnson agree, the requirements for trustworthy and legitimate knowledge meant its production was 'bound up in the trustworthiness' of those undertaking the knowledge work.[540] The positive reputation of those providing testimony was considered an important part of their ability to produce reliable information. As Forrest identifies, institutional trustworthiness mostly was coded as someone who was male, advanced in age, and usually elite.[541] This affected who was chosen as juror or to represent a parish at visitation but also how witness depositions were weighted. The individuals chosen to undertake knowledge work for secular and ecclesiastical courts, therefore, did not represent a cross section of a local population. Yet the use of the Latin word *vicinus* n. to describe them, and the importance of locality to sourcing legitimate knowledge, created a link between 'neighbours' and what was institutionally recognised as trustworthy testimony. We can see, then, how neighbours in a legal context could be considered arbiters of legitimate knowledge. In terms of its legal application, therefore, *vicinus* n. was used to describe nearby residents of varying geographical scales who were able to construct trustworthy and legitimate social knowledge for legal bodies.

Christian Influence

In addition to the influence of legal terminology on medieval notions surrounding relationships denoted by the modern 'neighbour' was the influence of Christian teaching on the subject. Christianity was central to Western medieval society and teaching derived from the Bible was embedded within medieval culture. Relationships which can be translated as the modern 'neighbour', moreover, feature prominently within this context. It is, therefore, worth considering these appearances within the Bible in greater depth. Tadmor traces the language used in translations of the Bible from the Hebrew *reʹa* (עֵרַ). The word *reʹa* has a broad usage including referencing a friend or fellow person and is used in the Ten Commandments. Whilst *reʹa* 'can also be applied to a person living in near proximity, there is nothing in it to denote near-by habitation.'[542] Close residence was instead described through the use of *shakhen* (שָׁכֵן).[543] In the Greek version of the Bible, *reʹa* and *shakhen* were divided into several Greek

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[539] Johnson, *Law in Common*, 186.
[540] Johnson, *Law in Common*, 190.
[541] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 133.
[542] Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours,' 151.
[543] Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours,' 151, 153.

words which were distinct from one another. *Hetairos* (ἑταῖρος) referred to a friend, partner, or comrade, while *plesion* (πλησίον) denotes a member of a community or neighbour. The latter was used in the Ten Commandments. *Philos* (φίλος), additionally, was used to refer to a friend.[544] The Vulgate Bible, a revised Latin translation compiled by St Jerome c.405, and the standard Bible text of the medieval era, retained three distinct usages with *proximus*, *vicinus*, and *amicus*.[545]

Relationships akin to the modern neighbour are mentioned in the last three of the Ten Commandments: a person is not to bear false witness against, nor to covet a neighbour's wife, nor anything belonging to them (Deut. 5:20-21).[546] In the New Testament, Jesus commanded 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour [*proximum*] as thyself' (Matt. 19:19).[547] Furthermore, in Luke, a lawyer asks: 'And who is my neighbour [*proximus*]?'[548] In response, Jesus relays the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-36). The Good Samaritan helped a man who was robbed, providing him with care and shelter. The answer to who is a *proximus*, therefore, was the person that showed mercy. The identification of the non-Israelite as *proximus* served to illustrate that anyone and everyone could be, and should be treated as, a *proximus*. The parable also ties into one of the meanings underlying the modern understanding of 'neighbour', which reflects this Biblical notion of 'fellow person' as opposed to the narrower understanding of someone who lives nearby.[549]

Scholarship in recent decades has illustrated the pervasiveness of Biblical content within medieval Western society, despite limited literacy and access to the Bible itself.[550] From the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries, Youri Desplenter and Jügen Pieters argue, the Decalogue became increasingly prominent in theological discussion. In the fifteenth century, the Ten Commandments developed into the 'primary moral code of conduct' which took prominence over the Seven Cardinal

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[544] Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours,' 152; Tadmor, *The Social Universe of the English Bible*, 27.

[545] Frans van Liere, *An Introduction to the Medieval Bible* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 4. St Jerome's translation was produced in order to improve on the *Vetus Latina* – the Old Latin Bible. However, St Jerome never translated the all the books that made up the Vulgate, therefore the Latin Vulgate text includes a combination of both Latin versions. See Van Liere, *An Introduction*, 80.

[546] Here, I am using Augustine's schema for numbering the Commandments. Greti Dinkova-Bruwn, 'The Ten Commandments in the Thirteenth-Century Pastoral Manual *Qui bene present*,' in *The Ten Commandments in Medieval and Early Modern Culture*, eds. Youri Desplenter, Jügen Pieters and Walter Melion (Boston: Brill, 2017), 117.

[547] Within this chapter, I have used the Douay-Rheims version for the English translation of the Bible. For more on this see: Swift Edgar, ed. *The Vulgate Bible: Douay-Rheims Translation,* vol.1: The Pentateuch (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2010), xxv.

[548] Luke 10:29.

[549] OED, neighbour, n. 1b.

[550] See for example: Eyal Poleg, *Approaching the Bible in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 8; Eyal Poleg, '"A Ladder Set Up on Earth": The Bible in Medieval Sermons,' in *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, eds. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 212; Katherine Zieman, *Singing the New Song: Literacy and Liturgy in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 133, 138.

Sins.[551] Furthermore, scriptural notions of 'fellow person' continued within Middle English with the phrase 'even-cristen' particularly used in devotional contexts.[552] *Proximus* n., along with *vicinus* n., was rendered 'neighebor' in the c.1380s Wycliffite Bible and in later English translations. I will examine the contextual uses of *vicinus* and *proximus*, both as nouns and adjectives, which appear in the Vulgate Bible to better understand the influences of Christian thought on how 'neighbours' were conceptualised in the Middle Ages.

The Vulgate Bible

Overall, *vicinus* appears 43 times across the Vulgate. All but one of the thirteen examples of *vicinus* adj. are found in the Old Testament. The usage of *vicinus* adj. within the Vulgate is solely to describe something as spatially nearby. In Daniel, for example, we find: 'Joakim […] had an orchard near [*vicinum*] his house'.[553] The remaining 30 examples of *vicinus* take the nominal form and in most instances refer to someone in close proximity. God says in Isaiah: 'you that are near [*vicini*] know my strength.'[554] The examples of *vicinus* n. in the Old Testament provide a range of behaviours and interactions between neighbours. Many of the Psalms repeat a variation on: 'I am become a reproach among all my enemies, and very much to my neighbours [*vicinis*]'.[555] There are additionally several examples where *vicini* are referenced in relation to providing or receiving aid or assistance.[556] Only six are from the New Testament. For example, Luke 1:65 reads: 'and fear came upon all their neighbours [*vicinos*].'[557]

With 187 instances, *proximus*, as both an adjective and noun, occurs much more frequently then *vicinus* in the Vulgate. As with *vicinus*, the nominal form is much more prevalent. *Proximus* adj. is found only 28 times. Nineteen of these are in the Old Testament. This adjective is used much more broadly than *vicinus* adj., which reflects the findings from the passages in the DMLBS. *Proximus* adj. is used to describe a similarity in nature or condition, to locate something in time, or to qualify *sanguis* n., thus to denote kinship.[558] Unlike the illustrative examples in the DMLBS, the Vulgate also includes *proximus*

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[551] Youri Desplenter and Jügen Pieters, 'Introduction: Exploring the Decalogue in Late Medieval and Early Modern Culture,' in *The Ten Commandments*, 1-2, 6-7. See also from this volume: Lesley Smith, 'The Ten Commandments in the Medieval Schools: Conformity or Diversity?' 13-14.

[552] Middle English Dictionary (MED), ēven, adj. 16c. The discussion of 'even-cristen' will be continued in more detail below.

[553] Daniel 13:4. '*Joakim … erat ei pomarium vicinum domui suæ*'.

[554] Isaiah 33:13. '*cognoscite, vicini, fortitudinem meam.*'

[555] Psalms 30:12. '*Super omnes inimicos meos factus sum opprobrium, et vicinis meis valde*'. See also: Psalms 43:14; 78:4; 79:7; 88:42.

[556] See for example: Exodus 3:22. 'every woman shall ask of her neighbour [*vicina*], and of her that is in her house, vessels of silver and of gold, and raiment,' '*sed postulabit mulier a vicina sua et ab hospita sua, vasa argentea et aurea, ac vestes*'.

[557] Luke 1:65. '*et factus est timor super omnes vicinos eorum*'.

[558] See for example: Proverbs 10:14, John 6:4, Leviticus 18:6.

adj. as a spatial descriptor akin to the modern 'close' or 'nearby'. In most cases, this is used to describe places such as towns or cities. In Mark 1, Jesus tells his disciples: 'Let us go into the neighbouring [*proximos*] towns and cities'.[559]

There are a further 159 examples of *proximus* n. in the Vulgate. The contexts where these appear are very variable and cannot all be discussed in depth within the confines of this thesis. Considering the primary ways in which *proximus* n. is used, however, can be revealing about how the term was understood within a Biblical context. The main contexts in which *proximus* n. is found relate to prescriptions on behaviour. These include instructions against causing harm to another as well as exhortations to love and provide aid to *proximi*. We find many variations on: 'love thy neighbour [*proximum*], and be joined to him with fidelity.'[560] We find also, for example, 'cursed be he that secretly killeth his neighbour [*proximum*]'.[561] Within the most significant of the Old Testament instructions, the Ten Commandments, two direct against committing adultery with the wife of a neighbour or killing a neighbour.[562] Given the centrality of the Commandments in Christian practice by the later medieval period, it is important to note that it is *proximus* n. which is used.

The nominal use of *proximus* n. also changes between the Old and New Testaments. Of the 159 instances, 142 (82%) appear in the Old Testament. Here, references to *proximus* n. broadly refer to people within a common social milieu. We find, for example, in 1 Maccabees: 'and they said every man to his neighbour [*proximum*]: Let us raise up the low condition of our people'.[563] Sometimes the scope of *proximus* n. is narrower and indicate a sense of physical closeness. Deuteronomy includes the instruction 'thou shalt not take nor remove thy neighbour's [*proximi*] landmark'.[564] These examples align with observations within scholarship that the Old Testament 'neighbour' or '*proximus*' referred to a 'fellow Israelite' or someone in 'near proximity'.[565]

In contrast to the contextual variety in the Old Testament, uses of *proximus* n. within the New Testament are much more uniform. In part, this may be because *proximus* n. is referenced much less in the New (seventeen times) than the Old Testament (142 times). Examples from the New Testament exhort followers to love their neighbour: 'thou shalt love thy neighbour [*proximum*] as thyself.'[566] In these examples, the application of the noun *proximus* is expanded from the Old Testament. This is

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[559] Mark 1:38. '*eamus in proximos vicos, et civitates*.'
[560] Ecclesiasticus 27:18. '*dilige proximum, et conjungere fide cum illo*.' See also: Galatians 5:14.
[561] Deuteronomy 27:24. '*maledictus qui clam percusserit proximum suum*'.
[562] Deuteronomy 5:20-21, Exodus 20:16-17.
[563] 1 Maccabees 3:43. '*et dixerunt unusquisque ad proximum suum: Erigamus dejectionem populi nostri*'.
[564] Deuteronomy 19:14. '*non assumes, et transferes terminos proximi tui*'. See also Deuteronomy 27:17.
[565] H.H. Rowley, *Dictionary of Bible Themes* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1968), 65; Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours,' 153.
[566] Matthew 19:19. '*diliges proximum tuum sicut teipsum.*'

illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan, where in conclusion Jesus asks, 'which of these three [the priest, Levite, and Samaritan], in thy opinion, was the neighbour [*proximus*] to him that fell among the robbers?'[567] The answer was the Samaritan, a non-Israelite. In Christ's teachings in the New Testament then, *proximus* n. takes on a new meaning: applying to all humanity and suggesting an obligation of support and aid, as the Samaritan helped the man who was robbed.

Within the Vulgate, we can distinguish patterns of use that are echoed in the DMLBS quotations. Both word forms are used primarily nominally, but the spatial application of *vicinus* adj. influences the resonances of *vicinus* in its nominal form. *Proximus* on the other hand is used much more broadly as both an adjective and noun. Taken together, the contexts in which *proximus* is found give a sense of closeness, arguably applied as 'fellow-Israelite' in the Old Testament. This application is challenged and expanded to 'fellow person' in the New Testament with the parable of the Good Samaritan. This aligns with Tadmor's point that the Vulgate use of *proximus* implied an application to 'all human beings who may come together in near proximity, whether familial, communal, or geographical.'[568]

The predominance of *proximus* n. in the Vulgate, and in particular its use in key passages within the New Testament, meant that it took on stronger devotional resonances than *vicinus* n. within medieval thought. As seen in the illustrative quotations for the DMLBS, within medieval devotional discourse, the nominal form of *proximus* took on the meaning akin 'to fellow person' to whom one had obligations of love and support. These meanings follow the term's application found in the Vulgate. Many examples in the DMLBS even reference the Gospel commandment to love your neighbour [*proximum*] as yourself. Taylor notes further that *proximus* appears as the term of use in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century pastoral manuals and 'other Scriptural discussions of neighbourliness.'[569] *Vicinus* n., on the other hand, held much less of a scriptural association. The connection of the word to physical propinquity meant it was used in a legal context to describe jurors who were drawn from the relevant locality. That is not to argue, however, that *proximus* n. is found only in a devotional context and *vicinus* n. in a secular, legal context. Moreover, across the Middle Ages there seems to have been a declining use of *proximus* n. more broadly, in favour of the noun *vicinus*. The quotations used to illustrate *proximus* n. as 'neighbour' in the DMLBS only date to the thirteenth century. Many of the sources studied from this thesis on the later medieval period are from church court material or,

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[567] Luke 10:36. '*quis horum trium videtur tibi proximus fuisse illi, qui incidit in latrones?*' *Proximus* n. is also used by the lawyer who asked Jesus who is a neighbour (Luke 10:29), and by Jesus in his original instruction to love 'thy neighbour as thyself' (Luke 10:27).
[568] Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours,' 153.
[569] Taylor, 'Neighbours, Witnesses, and Outlaws,' 87.

for example, evidence for canonisation proceedings, but all almost exclusively use *vicinus* or *vicin-* root words. In contrast, *proximus* within this material is nearly always used to locate an event in time.

Middle English 'Neighebor'

To better appreciate how relationships with those dwelling nearby were understood in the later medieval period, we also need to consider vernacular usages, through the Middle English word 'neighebor'. As the source material that I use is almost exclusively written in Latin, a fuller analysis of the Middle English is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, a brief consideration of the undertones accompanying 'neighebor' is valuable. Thinking about the Middle English terminology can add depth to the cultural meanings we see within the Latin vocabulary. To achieve this, I have used the Middle English Dictionary (MED) definition of 'neighebor, n.' and the illustrative quotations accompanying it.

The editors of the MED offer only one sense of the word 'neighebor'. This sense brackets a range of particular usages or meanings, namely 'one who dwells nearby,' a fellow citizen, an inhabitant of a country, a neighbouring country, or as a surname.[570] When we look at the eighty-three illustrative quotations under neighebor n., we can see, however, that there are two main usages which map closely onto the resonances held of *vicinus* n. and *proximus* n. in the DMLBS. Thirty-five examples parallel the broader Gospel understanding of 'neighbour' found in the Good Samaritan, which at an earlier period was linked to the nominal form of *proximus*. For example, Guy of Warwick's *Speculum* includes 'ȝif þi neiheboure misdoþ þe […] For-ȝif [forgive] hit him.'[571] This usage has some overlap with the Middle English even-cristen n. which is glossed in the MED as 'fellow Christian; fellow man, neighbor (in the Biblical sense)'.[572] Looking at the way even-cristen is applied, it is apparent it was used in the same way *proximus* n. is in the Vulgate, for instance to quote the Ten Commandments.[573]

The second main usage corresponds to *vicinus* n. to mean someone dwelling nearby, with thirty-nine illustrative passages in the MED. Some, earlier examples apply this meaning broadly, as in the Peterborough chronicle from 1121: 'All this year dwelled the king Henry in Normandy, of this king engaged in strife with France and his other neighbours [nehhebura].'[574] In other, later examples the implication is one of closer spatial proximity or locality. For example, an entry for 1452 from the Dublin

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[570] There is also a reference to 'neighebor' as 'a bee', from John Trevisa's translation of Bartholomaeus Anglicus' *On the Properties of Things*. MED, neighebor, n. 1b.

[571] MED, neighebor, n. 1c.

[572] MED, even adj. 16c.

[573] MED, even adj. 16c. Dan Michel and Pamela Gradon, eds., *Ayenbite of Inwyt: Or Remorse of Conscience.* Early English Text Society Original Series 23 (London: Trübner, 1965), 10.

[574] MED, neighebor, n. 1a. 'eall þis gear wunode se cyng Henri on Normandig for þes cynges unsehte of France & his oðra nehhebura.'

Assembly Roll instructs that 'No hagards man dwellyng whitin the cite shulde no sell no maner of corne outewardes to no straungeris, but onely to harr neghteboris within the cite.'[575] The register of Godstow Nunnery, Oxfordshire, records in 1475 that 'Thomas and Cecilie […] shold have […] commune of pasture to ther bestis, as other negbores […] were I-wonyd [wont] to haue.'

In some illustrative passages the incorporation of both the Latin nouns *vicinus* and *proximus* into the Middle English 'neighebor' is made explicit. In the c.1440s *Promptorium Parvulorum sive Clericorum*, the earliest known English-Latin dictionary, 'neyhborowre' is rendered as '*proximus, vicinus, proxima, vicina*.'[576] It should also be noted that *Promptorium Parvulorum* also includes more specifically 'neyhbore, of þe same strete', which is translated as *convicanius, convicania*.[577] Furthermore, in the English vernacular of the Wycliffite Bible from the 1380s the nominal forms of both *vicinus* and *proximus* are rendered as 'neighebor'. *Vicinus* n., found in the Vulgate Psalms 30:12, becomes 'neighebor': 'ouer alle myn enemys I am maad [made] repref [disgraced], and to my neȝhebores gretli; and drede to my knowen.'[578] In both the Ten Commandments and the parable of the Good Samaritan, *proximus* n. is translated to 'neighebor'. Thus, we find 'thou shalt not spek aȝens thi neiȝbore fals witness,' plus 'and who is my neiȝebore?'[579] The use of neighebor in the Wycliffite Bible exemplifies the incorporation of two meanings in this Middle English word; viz. someone who lives in close proximity and a fellow person in a Gospel context.

Where the different meanings denoted by the nouns *proximus* and *vicinus* are distinguished in Latin by the use of these two terms, they are harder to distinguish where 'neighebor' is used to describe both in the vernacular. Tadmor argues that the Wycliffite translation was a process whereby relationships within the Bible were framed within contemporary, 'parochial' language.[580] Yet we have seen that the Middle English 'neighebor' was a term used to describe both someone in physical proximity and an 'even-cristen' in the Gospel sense. How 'neighebor' was applied within the Wycliffite Bible would have reinforced as well as reflected the way the word was understood and used. The use of 'neighebor', therefore, would have taken on the connotations of both *vicinus* and *proximus*.

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[575] MED, neighebor, n. 1a. John T. Gilbert, ed. *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin,* vol.1 (Dublin: Joseph Dollard, 1889), 275. A 'hagards man' is the owner of a stackyard or yard for storing grain. MED, hagard n.

[576] Albert Way, ed., *Promptorium parvulorum sive clericorum, dictionarius anglo-latinus princeps*. Old Series 89 (London: Camden Society, 1865), 352. See also: Linda Voigts and Frank Stubbings, '"Promptorium Parvulorum": Manuscript Fragments at Emmanuel College and Their Relation to Pynson's "Editio Princepts",' *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 9, no.4 (1989): 363.

[577] Way, *Promptorium parvulorum,* 352.

[578] John Wycliffe, *The Holy Bible, Containing the Old and New Testaments with the Apocryphal Books*, ed. Josiah Forshall and Frederic Madden (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1850)*,* 765 - Psalms 30:12.

[579] Wycliffe, *The Holy Bible,* 239, 182 - Exodus 20:16, Luke 10:29.

[580] Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours,' 154.

In some examples, we get a sense that the dual use of the word could result in some conflation. The poem *King Edward and the Shepard* illustrates how the usage of 'neighebor' could fit somewhere between the two key meanings of the modern 'neighbour'. The poem includes: 'sith [if] þou art neghtbur myne, I wil my nedis do and thyne'.[581] This quote is taken from a section of the poem when King Edward, in disguise, offers to help a shepherd recover money owed to him by the Crown. The offer evokes a sense of neighbourly obligation that is taught in the parable of the Good Samaritan as the King explains 'sith [if] þou art neghtbur myne'. However, the localised, proximate aspect to this use of 'neghtbur' is demonstrated by the shepherd's response. He asks Edward 'Whos son art thou of oure towne? Hat not [is not] thi fadur Hochon [Hugh]'.[582] Edward's offer, framed in the language of 'neighebor', prompts the shepherd to assume he lives locally. The term here falls between the two key usages, evoking a sense of support to a fellow-person whilst including an underlying notion of locality.

In addition to 'neighbour', there are three Middle English cognates in the MED which also merit consideration. 'Neigheborred' n. appears to have been an uncommon term with only three examples included in the MED.[583] Two date to the early thirteenth century and use 'neigheborred' in a way which coincides with the modern 'neighbourliness'.[584] 'Neigheborhede' n. commands a much larger entry in the MED with eleven illustrative quotations, all but one dating from the fifteenth century.[585] Generally, the word is used to evoke a sense of 'neighbourly feeling'. In Reginald Pecock's *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, the 'degre of neiȝborehode' is used in a discussion of the Ten Commandments and instructions to 'Loue thou thi neiȝbore as thi silf'.[586] In this sense, 'neigheborhede' does similar work to even-christen and the Latin noun *proximus*.

Lastly, 'neigheborshipe' n. appears with only three examples in the MED, two dating to the mid-to-late fifteenth century and a further from c.1325. The MED renders 'neigheborshipe' as 'acts of neighbourliness' or 'a neighbourly attitude', but there are also more underlying connotations of

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[581] MED, neighebor, n. 1a. Melissa Furrow, ed., 'King Edward and the Shepherd,' in *Ten Bourdes* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2013), 150.

[582] Furrow, 'King Edward and the Shepherd,' 150-1.

[583] MED, neigheborred, n.

[584] For example: 'he gives her [the church] alms not for God's love or for neighbourhood [neheboreden], nor for kinship, nor for honour to heaven', 'hie giuen here elmesse noht for godes luue ac for neheboreden. oðer for kinraden. oðer for onur to hauen.' Extract from: Richard Morris, ed., *Old English Homilies of the Twelfth Century,* vol.2. Early English Text Society Original Series 53 (London: Trübner, 1873), 83. The third example is an entry from the *Promptorium Parvulorum* which translates 'neyborede' as *proximitas* or *vicinitas*. *Vicinitas* n. can denote either 'neighbourhood' or even the 'condition of being a neighbour'. DMLBS, *vicinitas* 1d.

[585] MED, neigheborhede n. The exception is Gerald of Wales' *Expugnatio Hibernica*: Frederick J. Furnivall, ed., *The English Conquest of Ireland, 1166-85: Mainly from the 'Expugnatio Hibernica' of Giraldus Cambrensis,* Part I: *Text*. Early English Text Society Original Series 107 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, and co., 1896), 31.

[586] MED, neigheborhede n. 1b. Reginald Pecock, *The Repressor of Over Much Blaming of the Clergy*, ed. Churchill Babington (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1860), 512.

locality and physical proximity within the surrounding textual contexts. In the statute-book Rawlinson MS B 520, for the year 1453 we find:

> Sir Edmond be way of oppressione hase distroyd the landes of the said beseker [supplicant] and dryffen away his tenants because he wolde do no neyghburshep ne suffre theyme to occupie and maynor their saide parte.[587]

In this illustrative quote we can see the effects of a conflation of meanings, distinct in the Latin *vicinus* and *proximus*. The reference to Sir Edmond's lack of 'neyghburshep' speaks to a sense of good-will and obligation, in a similar way to 'fellow person', but does so in a localised context.

The neighbour-related words found in the MED, outlined here, do not have many illustrative quotations. Yet the concentration of these examples into the later medieval period is striking. The Middle English 'neighebor' appears used throughout the high and later medieval period, but there is a clear trend whereby Middle English words surrounding 'neighebor' become more widespread from the mid-fourteenth century and especially in the fifteenth century. Throughout this period, 'neighebor' and cognates, for example 'neigheborhede', were used both to refer to a 'fellow person' who should be shown love and charity following the parable of the Good Samaritan, as well as a person who lived in close proximity. Further, the patterns of use in the language surrounding what can be described through the modern term 'neighbour' suggest a level of cross-fertilisation in the two key meanings within later medieval thought. These trends are reflected in, if not in part encouraged by, the application of 'neighebor' in the Wycliffite Bible for the nominal forms of both *vicinus* and *proximus*.

Gospel Understanding of Neighbour in Context

The implications for patterns of use and changes over time that we see after unpacking the medieval vocabulary for relationships denoted by the modern 'neighbour' can now be placed in context. In the rest of this chapter, I will focus on how the Gospel understanding of neighbour, as someone to whom there are obligations to love and help, was enacted in, and shaped by, social practices and interactions. Here, and throughout the rest of this thesis, I will understand neighbourliness as the performance of neighbour relationships according to cultural norms and ideals. This will be studied in the following section through a close study of the narrative sources used in this thesis. These case studies will be discussed within the broader context of socio-cultural changes evident throughout the later medieval period. Examining the usage of Latin vocabulary akin to 'neighbour' in context can help us better understand the resonances being evoked and therefore the cultural meanings around these

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[587] MED, neigheborshipe n. 1.

relationships. Chapter three will then study in more depth medieval expectations around the second understanding of neighbour as someone living nearby.

There will always be a level of artificiality in distinguishing between the two meanings of 'neighbour' in a scriptural sense or as someone living nearby. As demonstrated, the notions of 'neighbour' expressed by the nominal forms of *vicinus* and *proximus* could overlap and be conflated. The earlier study of the *vicinus* n. and *proximus* n. in the DMLBS identified the former was used much more commonly to denote someone akin to the modern neighbour. The illustrative examples provided for this use range throughout the medieval period into the mid-fourteenth century. In contrast, this meaning for *proximus* n. was restricted to use within devotional and scholastic material, dating no later than the thirteenth century. This pattern aligns with the heavier scriptural associations *proximus* n. had from its predominant use in the Vulgate. Although it is not so clear within the selection of examples provided in the DMLBS, I would suggest that the drop-off in the use of *proximus* n. for this meaning coincided with a growing application of the noun *vicinus*. As noted before, all the sources used in this thesis, including those produced in an ecclesiastical setting, use *vicinus* n. when discussing a 'neighbour'.

We find enactments of neighbourly behaviour in the Gospel sense portrayed within the record of miracle testimonies for the 1307 papal commissioner's inquiry into the sanctity of Bishop Thomas Cantilupe of Hereford. Testimonies for the miraculous recovery of Joan le Schirreve, of Marden, Herefordshire, from drowning in 1292, provide an example of this. Joan was the five-year-old daughter of Adam and Cecilia. She had followed her parents to the alehouse of Walter de la Wyle which they visited one Sunday afternoon in April that year. Adam and Cecilia allowed Joan to stay at the alehouse, playing in the garden with other children her age. During this play, Joan was pushed into the pond by her godmother's son, John, of a similar age. This accident initially went unnoticed, and Joan subsequently drowned. When John was finally able to alert Cecilia and his mother, Joan Wase, of the situation, they rushed out of the alehouse to recover her.

Descriptions of support for Joan and her family, provided by other residents, feature heavily in the testimonies for this miracle. When Joan was taken from the pond, the depositions recount how bystanders, with Cecilia and Adam, stayed and kept vigil beside Joan's body. Adam's testimony gives the most detailed account and describes how he came out into the garden to see 'the same girl's mother and many bystanders [*multos astantes*] who mourn and weep around her'.[588] They then, 'stood near the aforesaid bank from the setting of the sun into the dark night, continuing in prayer and because of [their] devotion, all the men removed the hose from their knees, so that they might

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[588] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.125r. '*et matrem ipsius puelle et multos astantes plangere et flere circa eam*'.

pray like the women, with bare knees on the ground'.[589] Joan was later brought home. By the urging of others, who were worried about the health of Cecilia, because she was pregnant, a fire was lit. It was in this setting that Joan miraculously recovered at daybreak. On her recovery, Joan was taken to the parish church, accompanied by 'a great number of parishioners [*parochianorum*] from the village' to give thanks.[590] Despite the concerns of Adam's neighbours (*vicini*) over Joan's health, he took her hastily to Hereford Cathedral, followed by:

> 'many of their neighbours [*vicinis*], from those who had prayed for the resuscitation of the said girl and others, many from the surrounding villages, around thirty in number, went with him, some in bare feet.'[591]

We can see these actions, taken by bystanders, as reflective of Christian notions of neighbourliness as outlined in the Good Samaritan; providing aid and support, as well as spiritual succour, during a crisis.

When approaching this example to study medieval practices of neighbourly behaviour, we need to acknowledge the ways the context and production of the narratives shaped what was included within them. This raises the question of to what extent the detail in these miracle stories reflect how people would have experienced situations and interactions similar to those described in this example. Rachel Koopmans distinguishes between 'personal experience narratives' of miracles and more abstract 'legendary stories'. The former were made by and about an individual and, although these stories were adjusted through retelling in different contexts, would have had immediate relevance to audiences as something which could plausibly happen to them.[592] The latter were more widely applicable across the hagiographical tradition, conforming more to certain structures and motifs, for example narratives which involve the incorruptible body of a holy person after their death.[593]

In the story of Joan's miraculous recovery, we can detect some 'legendary' motifs. Witnesses described how Joan's body was found and recovered at dusk, but she only revived at daybreak the following morning. This timeline is something found repeated in child-drowning miracles and Goldberg has pointed to the religious symbolism within this. With an example of a little boy from the miracles of St Thomas Becket, Goldberg compares his drowning to the Passion of Christ: 'his drowning and

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[589] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.125v. 'c*um autem stetissent iuxta predictam ripam ab ocasu solis usque ad obscuram noctem perseuerantes in dicta oratione et propter deuocionem omnes uiri amouissent caligas a genibus suis ut orarent tam ipsi qui mulieres nudis genibus super terram*'.

[590] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.128v. '*et multitudine parochianorum dictae villae'.*

[591] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.126r.
'*et multi ex vicinis suis tam ex hiis qui orauerant pro resuscitacione dicte puelle qua ex aliis circa triginta numero uenerunt cum eo et aliqui ex ipsus nudis pedibus et multi de villis circumpositis'.*

[592] Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate*, 22, 24-5.

[593] Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate*, 14, 17.

subsequent removal from the water as darkness fell echoes Christ's death on and subsequent deposition from the cross,' and the boy's revival 'takes place, like the Resurrection, at dawn.'[594] These resonances would also have been present in the timeline of Joan le Schirreve's recovery. There is also possible symbolism in the fact that it was Joan's godmother, her namesake, Joan Wase, who pulled her from the pond. Thomas Schonk evocatively deposed how it was 'Joan, his wife and [who] lifted up the said Joan from the holy font, plunged into the pond' and retrieved the child from the water.[595] As Goldberg reflects for the Becket miracle, 'the resonances of some of the details would not be missed by a medieval audience.'[596] We can see, therefore, how the construction of the testimonies for the miraculous recovery of Joan was shaped through the use of stylised, hagiographical motifs.

Though the stories told about this miracle would have been influenced by such hagiographical motifs and traditions, their existence as witness depositions means they are more representative of personal experience narratives. The procedures of enquiry for canonisation had become more coherent and established throughout the thirteenth century, particularly during the pontificate of Innocent III (1198-1216).[597] By the start of the fourteenth century, when the canonisation of Thomas Cantilupe took place, canonisation procedures had become lengthier and involved 'meticulous examination' and authentication of often large numbers of miracles and testimonies.[598] Whilst the accounts of the miraculous recovery of Joan may not have reflected exactly what happened, therefore, in order for the narratives to be accepted by the papal commission they needed to be considered plausible. The frequency of child-drownings in both miracle narratives and coroners' rolls has been recognised and discussed within medieval scholarship.[599] Goldberg reasons in relation to child-drowning accounts, 'it matters not what may or may not have been the actual circumstances that lie behind the narratives' but argues 'they clearly draw upon and mirror circumstances from everyday life'.[600] In this way, we can consider the interactions between people described within the depositions as reflective of cultural practices and expectations.

Within the testimonies given by the witnesses to this alleged miracle, various terminology is used to describe the people present. At the beginning of his testimony, Adam recalled that he and Cecilia were

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[594] Goldberg, 'The Drowned Child,' 19-20.
[595] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.132r.
'*et Johanna vxor ipsius testis que de sacro fonte leuauerat dictam Johannam submersam de ripa*'.
[596] Goldberg, 'The Drowned Child,' 19.
[597] André Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages,* trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 33-5, 37-9.
[598] Vauchez, *Sainthood in the Later Middle Ages,* 61-2.
[599] Goldberg, 'The Drowned Child,' 19-20; Finucane, *The Rescue of Innocents*, 103; Eleanora C. Gordon, 'Accidents Among Medieval Children as Seen from the Miracles of Six English Saints and Martyrs,' *Medical History* 35 (1991): 150.
[600] Goldberg, 'The Drowned Child,' 14.

at the alehouse 'with a hundred good people or so from the said parish.'[601] Those who took part in the vigil and prayers are described as 'men and women' (*viri et mulieres*) or as bystanders (*astantes*).[602] Joan, the wife of Walter de la Wyle recounted how she approached 'the mourners' (*plangentes*) when she heard people lamenting outside.[603] When Cecilia was encouraged to get into bed, near a fire, it was 'by the urging of bystanders'.[604] Despite this variation, I argue there is a significant neighbourly element to the collection of people who are described as witnessing the miracle and supporting Joan and her family. Both Stephen de Pirebrok and William le Pipere, who were questioned about the alleged miracle, describe those at the alehouse as 'neighbours [*vicini*] of the parish'.[605] The Latin *vicinus* n. is found scattered throughout the record of Adam's testimony. He described how, when arriving at the alehouse, he saw that 'many other neighbour's [*vicinorum*] children were there,' which persuaded him to let Joan stay too.[606] Cecilia's testimony similarly includes how the couple went to the alehouse with 'many of their neighbours [*convicinis*].'[607] Adam later explained that he was not initially present when Joan's body was removed from the pond because 'he was still in the said alehouse discussing other [things] with his neighbours [*convicinis*]'.[608] Further, it was his neighbours (*vicini*) who accompanied him to Hereford Cathedral. From these repeated references to *vicin-* root words, then, it seems apparent that those present at the alehouse and who witnessed the alleged miracle were people who could be considered neighbours to Cecilia and Adam.

In part, the use of the language of neighbour reflects the local context of those present. When the examiners asked Joan, who also gave testimony as a young adult, about the other witnesses she deposed that they 'are from the aforesaid parish where she herself was born'.[609] Similarly, Cecilia testified that it was residents from the parish (*parochiani*) who accompanied the family to the church, and later 'many from the villages roundabout' joined the procession to Hereford.[610] These descriptions coincide with the geographical applications of *vicinus* n. that we find in the illustrative quotations in the DMLBS. These neighbours are understood as residents encompassing a broad local area; from the large parish of Marden as well as those from villages surrounding Marden village who joined in the celebration of Joan's recovery.

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[601] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.124r. *'et boni centum personae vel circa de dicta parochia'*.
[602] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff.128r, 125r.
[603] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.136v.
[604] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.133r. '*per suasu astantium*'.
[605] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff.137v, 139r. '*testis cum multis aliis vicinis parochie*', '*alij vicini sui de parochia*'.
[606] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.124r. '*erat ibi multi alii paruuli vicinorum.*'
[607] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.127r. '*cum multis eorum convicinis*'.
[608] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.125r. '*erat tamen in dicta taberna alia tractans cum convicinis suis*'.
[609] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.123v. *'et qui sunt de predicta parochia de qua ipsa est oriunda'.*
[610] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.128v. '*multi ex villis circumvicinis*'.

I argue, however, that there are additionally strong resonances with the Gospel sense of a 'neighbour' if we look at how bystanders, or *vicinos*, were involved in the events surrounding the miracle. Witnesses' recollections of bystanders keeping vigil by the pond into the night, invoking Thomas' aid, provides an evocative account of a group offering support through Christian prayer. Furthermore, during this time of crisis, a group of people made up of neighbours (*vicini*), provide practical aid to Adam and Cecilia in a way which is reflective of scriptural instructions to love and aid one's neighbour. The testimonies, for example, recount the efforts made to resuscitate Joan. Assistance in drowning miracles often took the form of loosening clothes, opening the child's mouth, and holding them upside down. Ralph de la Broke deposed that 'they had held the said girl with [her] head lowered to the ground and [her] feet raised up, she was suspended [thus] for a little time, and water passed from the mouth of this girl'.[611] The desire to drain water from the body by holding the child upside-down is understandable, as it is something practical that can be done and provides what looks like visible improvement; water leaving the body. Joan Wase and Thomas Schonk specified that 'Nicholas, son of Gilbert of the same parish [Marden], lifted, with his hands, the said Joan from the ground with [her] feet above and [her] head hanging down'.[612]

The unusual detail of testimonies for Joan's miraculous recovery allows us to glimpse actions of support beyond the practical aid offered when Joan was first pulled from the pond. After a long time at the pond-side, and later in the tavern, Cecilia took her daughter home. The reasoning given within the testimonies for this move was because 'some of the bystanders [*astantibus*] said that if a fire was not made, this Cecilia [who was] pregnant, would be harmed by the coldness of her dead daughter who she was holding with herself in bed, besides her own flesh.'[613] Thomas Schonk testified that 'the mother of the said girl, by the urging of bystanders [*astantium*], lay down [on] a bed, because she was near [to giving] birth and weak and also weighed down with grief.'[614] Those accompanying Cecilia and Adam to their home are described by Stephen de Pirebrok as neighbours (*vicini*).[615] Here we see an example of neighbours, providing Cecilia with advice and demonstrating their concern for her safety. This group supported the family, remaining in their house throughout the night.

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[611] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.130r. '*tenuerant dictam puellam capite inclinator ad terram et pedibus sursum eleuatis per aliquantulum tempus suspensam et per os ipsius puell[a]e exiuerat aqua*'.

[612] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.134v. '*Nicholaus a[tte] filius Gilberti eiusdem parochie eleuatu manibus suis dictasque Johannam de terra per pedes sursum capite pendente deorsum*'.

[613] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.128v. '*quorum aliqui ex astantibus dicebant quod si non fieret ignis ipsa Cecilia grauida ex frigiditate filie mortue quam secum in lecto tenebat iuxta carnem suam nudam grauaretur.*'

[614] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.133r. '*premodum mater dicte puelle per suasu astantium iacuit lectum quia erat propinqua partui et debilis ac dolore grauata*'.

[615] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.138r.

The devotional emphasis to descriptions of large numbers of bystanders gathering at the tragedy of a drowned child is indicated by their frequency within miracle narratives. There is a long tradition of these descriptions, which often include references to neighbours. They appear in earlier miracle collections, such as those fastidiously recorded by Benedict of Peterborough (1171-3) and William of Canterbury (1172-7) for St Thomas Becket. Eight-year-old Philip, son of Hugh alias Scot, drowned while playing with a frog near a pool in an ironstone quarry. Once Hugh had recovered the body, 'the people [*vulgus*] gathered together' at his house, sympathising with Hugh's parents.[616] They all tried to revive the boy, hanging him upside down and beating the soles of his feet. A fire was lit, and vigil kept till he recovered the following morning. Likewise, in the late fifteenth-century collection of miracles attributed to Henry VI, six-year-old John Bythewey was playing with his younger brothers when he fell into the river at Dorchester. His neighbours (*vicini*) gathered and invoked Henry VI's aid, leading to his recovery.[617]

By considering the aims of the canonisation inquiry into Thomas Cantilupe in 1307, we can see how the process of inquiry helped to create an emphasis on a Gospel understanding of neighbour, despite the use of the Latin noun *vicinus*. There were several strands which made up the canonisation proceedings. The commissioners were concerned determining with the life and virtues of the bishop, the alleged miracles attributed to him, as well as the *fama* of his sanctity and popular devotion towards him.[618] Webster argues that the commissioners for this inquiry worked to emphasise the individuality of each witness, despite their overall 'communal recollection'.[619] The personalised discrepancies between the eleven testimonies given by the residents of Marden is apparent. Yet, I would argue that the questions the commissioners asked of witnesses betray a concern with identifying the existence of a collective devotion towards Thomas Cantilupe in Marden. Those giving testimony to Joan's miraculous recovery were asked variously: 'if, because of the said miracle, this witness and her neighbours [*conuicini*] have been made more devoted and firmer in faith, and if, because of this [miracle], they glorify God and the said St Thomas.'[620] Uncovering a sense of collective devotion as part of the inquiry would help to address the presence of *fama* and popular devotion towards the archbishop. To achieve this end, the language of neighbour is employed through *vicinus* n. which evokes a sense of Christian fellowship akin to even-cristen or the noun *proximus*.

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[616] Edwin A. Abbot, *St Thomas of Canterbury: His Death and Miracles*, vol.2 (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1898) 164. The full account of the miracle is found on pages 162-169. '*infertur in domum cadaver; vulgus glomeratur in unum et anxio parentum dolori compatitur*'. My own English translation.

[617] Knox and Leslie, *The Miracles of King Henry VI*, 167.

[618] Daly, 'The Process of Canonisation,' 131; Finucane, *The Rescue of Innocents*, 169.

[619] Webster, 'Mediating Memory,' 307, 302.

[620] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.137r. '*Item interogata si ex dicto miraculo ipsa testis et eius conuicini fuerant effecti deuotiores et in fide firmiores et si ex hoc glorificarunt deum et dictum sanctum Thomam.*'

Vicinus n. is used repeatedly in the questions presented to witnesses. Joan le Schirreve was asked whether her neighbours (*vicini*) and others talk about her resuscitation as a miracle attributed to Thomas Cantilupe.[621] Other witnesses were also asked about the effects of the miracle on their devotion and that of their neighbours (*convicini, vicini*).[622] The framing of the questions, which emphasised the enactment of Gospel notions of neighbourliness, shaped what was included and stressed within the witnesses' accounts. In response to the latter question, those testifying responded that 'on account of this [the miracle] they more frequently come, [as] pilgrims, to the tomb of St Thomas.'[623] This line of questioning thus directs the witness to reflect on, and speak to, a sense of collective devotion and neighbourliness, shaping the emphasis in their account. If identifying collective devotion towards the bishop was one of the markers in establishing his sanctity, the presence of multiple witnesses is something which those promoting the cult would have been keen to present. Clement V chose the three commissioners who undertook the canonisation inquiry into the life and miracles of the bishop.[624] Yet, as Patrick Daly notes, it was those promoting the sanctity of Thomas, namely his episcopal successor Richard Swinfield, who chose the postulator. As postulator, Henry de Schorne took an active role in preparing the case and encouraging canonisation.[625] It was Henry, for example, who chose 152 of the 181 witnesses that made depositions.[626] Whilst de Shorne did not directly contribute to the questions asked, he could choose miracle cases and witnesses which would emphasise the attributes the commissioners sought.[627]

We should also acknowledge the agency of the witnesses in shaping the narrative. Whilst more speculative, it seems probable that the witnesses, in particular Joan, Adam, and Cecilia, too would have been concerned to demonstrate the veracity of their miraculous experience. The presence and involvement of other residents within the narrative similarly helped to add weight to their claim to a miraculous event. It is possible that the enactment of support by neighbours (*vicini*), akin to the Gospel meaning of the relationship, helped witnesses to present Marden and their devotional practices idealistically to the papal commissioners. The witnesses for this miracle were questioned in the presence of the commissaries, a group of internationally important bishops, in St Katherine's Chapel, in Hereford Cathedral. Before providing their testimony, the witnesses swore to tell the truth on the Bible. In this setting it seems likely that they would have been keen to portray themselves positively.

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[621] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.123v.

[622] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, ff.131r, 135r, 137r.

[623] BAV, MS Vat. Lat. 4015, f.135r.
'*respondit quod sic et quod propter hoc frequentius veniunt peregrini ad tumulum dicti sancti Thome.*'

[624] Clement V assigned the role to the French bishop of Mende, William Durand, the bishop of London, Richard Baldock, and the papal nuncio in England, William de Testa. Daly, 'The Process of Canonisation,' 128-9.

[625] Daly, 'The Process of Canonisation,' 130

[626] Daly, 'The Process of Canonisation,' 131.

[627] Finucane, *The Rescue of Innocents*, 169.

The witnesses describe themselves offering spiritual succour and prayer, practical aid and concern, and once Joan recovered, collective celebration and thanksgiving. Their accounts set a scene of harmonious and habitual sociability; the young people took up a dance 'as was their custom'. The picture presented in these testimonies, then, is one of a harmonious group of villagers and parishioners who frequently socialised together. Moreover, these residents were unified in coming together in support of Joan's family during a time of crisis. Those present at the alehouse on the day of the miracle are described as providing spiritual, emotional, and practical support, in line with scriptural instructions to love one's neighbour, and joining in the celebrations when Joan miraculously recovered.

The appearance of *vicinus* n. and *vicin-* root words within the recorded testimonies for the miraculous recovery of Joan exemplifies the declining use of *proximus* n., even within ecclesiastical material, by the later medieval period. The use of *vicinus* n. over *proximus* n. would have been encouraged further in this case by the legal context the testimonies were produced in, as part of a canonisation inquiry. We also see visible elements of cross-fertilisation between different understandings of neighbour as *vicini* or *convicini* are used to describe people who lived locally but also are used to evoke a scriptural understanding of neighbour to whom there are obligations to love and help. This is demonstrated by the witnesses providing Adam and Cecilia support and assistance when Joan was retrieved from the pond. Whilst the portrayals of neighbourly behaviour in the narratives are heavily informed by the motivations behind their production, in addition to long-standing hagiographic traditions, they offer a glimpse into conventional practices of such relationships.

Changes to how medieval contemporaries understood the relationship between neighbours as 'fellow people' in the Gospel sense over the later medieval period is visible when we consider the records for the marriage dispute Maud de Bradelay c. John de Walkyngton from the Court of York, 1355. As part of a systematic attempt to discredit Maud Katersouth, a key witness to an alleged marriage, the witnesses for the defendant portrayed Maud as poor, untrustworthy, and therefore vulnerable to bribery. Several witnesses testified that, after being lent cloth to sell by Thomas de Castleford, a chaplain, Maud was consistently unable to pay back the money owed from selling the cloth. In doing so she broke the promises she had publicly made to Thomas. Robert de Harwod deposed that what Maud said was not trusted by her neighbours (*vicini*) and that he had heard from others that her son, Robert, had admitted that he and his mother were bribed by Maud de Bradelay to give testimony.[628]

Whilst these depositions attempt to discredit Maud's own testimony, they also reveal the efforts of her neighbours to support her with ad hoc employment and provisions. Robert de Popilton testified

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[628] BIA, CP.E.82.

that 'but for a little bread or a draught of ale she [Maud] will fetch water for the use of her neighbours [*vicini*] and mill in their homes and work as one poor little woman is able, and thus she lives and is supported among her neighbours [*vicinos*],' and so was reputed as untrustworthy.[629] Robert de Harwod similarly claimed that Maud was 'a little poor woman and needy'.[630] He deposed that, because Maud had no work, she 'daily obtains her food and likewise takes her necessities around her neighbours' [*vicinorum*] houses with flattering words.'[631] Further, we can see Thomas Castleford's decision to lend Maud cloth to sell as similarly charitable in providing work for her. The depositions supplied against Maud, paint a picture of her being regularly supported by her *vicini* through ad hoc employment and provisions.

The act of charity is something closely connected with Gospel uses of the noun *proximus*. Eliza Buhrer notes that charity, in its 'original context' was the love that existed between God and humanity.[632] Augustine of Hippo explained that charity included the love of self and one's neighbour (*proximus)* for the sake of God.[633] Later, in his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas saw *caritas* n. as 'the love of God and our neighbour [*proximi*]'.[634] In this way, therefore, the friendship with a fellow-person, or loving one's *proximum*, was an opportunity to love God.[635] For Aquinas, this love found expression in attending to spiritual and physical welfare.[636] Whilst, as demonstrated in the first part of this chapter, the term *proximus* n. fell largely out of use after the thirteenth century beyond a narrow theological and devotional discourse; the ideas connecting the Gospel understanding of neighbour with charity and universal love continued into the later medieval period. The parable of the Good Samaritan spoke of an obligation of care and support towards a fellow-person. The Seven Corporal Acts of Mercy, popular throughout the period, were based on Matthew 25:31-40. These Corporal Acts included feeding the hungry, giving water to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the stranger, visiting the sick, relieving the imprisoned, and burying the dead. Furthermore, charity, was considered the most

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[629] BIA, CP.E.82. '*pro modico pane vel uno tractu ceruisie alt conferre aquam ad usuos vicini suorum et molere in domibus eorumdem et laborare ut una paupercula potest et ita vivit et sustentatur inter vicinos suos'*. English translation from: Goldberg, *Women in England*, 159-60.

[630] BIA, CP.E.82. '*Maud est paupercula et egena'*. English translation from: Goldberg, *Women in England*, 159-60.

[631] BIA, CP.E.82. '*cotidie circum domus vicinorum suorum verbis adulatoriis adquirens victuale suum et mutuo capiens necessaria sua'*. English translation from: Goldberg, *Women in England*, 159-60.

[632] Eliza Buhrer, 'From *Caritas* to Charity: How Loving God Became Giving Alms,' in *Poverty and Prosperity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, eds. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 114.

[633] Buhrer, 'From *Caritas* to Charity,' 116.

[634] '*[caritas] qui est amor Dei et proximi'*. Thomas Aquinas, *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis: Opera omnia, iussu impensaque Leonis XIII*, vol.8: *Secunda secundae Summae theologiae a quaestione* (Rome: Typographia Polyglotta, 1895), 41 - question 3, article 2.

[635] Gerald J. Beyer, 'The Love of God and Neighbour According to Aquinas: An Interpretation,' *New Blackfriars* 84, no.985 (2003): 116, 120. See: Aquinas, *Summae theologiae,* 163-4 – question 23, article 1.

[636] Beyer, 'The Love of God and Neighbour,' 123.

important virtue.[637] In the Bible, the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 25) deals with judgement and salvation, exemplified by the parable of the Sheep and the Goats. As Sethina Watson summarises '*caritas*, the act of ministering to the bodily needs of fellow Christians, and attending to the very least in society, was what marked the saved from the damned.'[638] Later medieval sermons and homilies also continued to make the connections between charity and loving one's neighbour.[639] One homily from a preaching handbook dating to c.1300 stressed, for example: 'We should be flexible and embrace each other in mutual charity [*caritatem*] and support for each other in our needs, for by nature we are indeed too weak for each one to help himself without the help of his neighbour [*proximi*].'[640] Though the term *proximus* n. was no longer commonly used beyond examples such as this, understandings and expectations around providing charity to 'neighbours' continued.

These expectations around charity towards a neighbour are realised through the provisions given to Maud Katersouth. The depositions describe her neighbours supporting Maud when she is needy and enacting at least two of the Corporal Acts of Mercy by giving Maud bread and ale. There has been a large amount of scholarship on practices of charity throughout the medieval period, more than can be dealt with here. Since the work of scholars including, notably, Michel Mollat, there has been a focus on understanding the relationship between the rich and poor through charitable practices within medieval societies.[641] More recently there has also been an appreciation of more ad hoc, less institutional forms of charity.[642] Patricia Cullum suggests there may have been a gendered aspect to such charitable provision which took place at home. Cullum reasons 'when beggars came to the door, particularly the kitchen door, it was most likely to be the housewife who dealt with them.'[643] This form of charity equates with what we find described in the depositions. It seems likely that those providing

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[637] Miri Rubin, *Charity and Community in Medieval Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 86.

[638] Sethina Watson, *On Hospitals: Welfare, Law, and Christianity in Western Europe, 400-1320* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 30.

[639] Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity,* 103.

[640] *'Revera sic et nos flexibiles esse debemus per mutuam caritatem affligentes amplectentes et in indigencies supportantes, quia satis in natura sumus debiles, ut seipsum unusquisque tantum iuvat sine proximi auxilio'*. Extract and English translation from: Siegfried Wenzel, ed., *Fasciculus Morum: A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 186-7.

[641] Rubin, *Charity and Community*, 3; Michel Mollat, *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*, trans. A. Goldhamer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

[642] For illustrative examples see: Gary Richardson, 'The Prudent Village: Risk Pooling Institutions in Medieval English Agriculture,' *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no.2 (2005): 406-8. See also: Shahar, *Growing Old,* 159; Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity,' 26-9; Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 102; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 305-23.

[643] Patricia Cullum, '"Yf lak of charyte be not ower hynderawnce": Margery Kempe, Lynn, and the Practice of the Spiritual and Bodily Works of Mercy,' in *A Companion to the Book of Margery Kempe*, eds. John Arnold and Katherine Lewis (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2004), 182.

Maud with bread and ale, and odd jobs which were characteristically women's work, were also women.

As we found in the miracle involving Joan la Schirreve, despite the actions of these residents being presented in terms of a Gospel understanding of neighbourly behaviour, the term *vicinus* n. is used. The depositions were produced as part of a legal dispute, and legal records had a heavy association with the nominal form of *vicinus*. Additionally, there is a local aspect to those described in the narrative which helps to explain this terminology. The deponents and those mentioned within their depositions all centre around the parish of All Saints North Street, or the streets of Micklegate, North Street, and Skeldergate (Fig.1). The plaintiff for the marriage suit, Maud de Bradelay, lived on North Street and Robert de Harwod, in his deposition, described himself as a 'neighbour' (*vicinus*) to both Maud de Bradelay and John de Walkyngton. Moreover, the question directed to Thomas Castleford about Robert Katersouth's reputation as a thief specified 'in the neighbourhoods [*in vicis*] of Micklegate and North Street, York'.[644] This marriage dispute, therefore, represents another example of where we can see *vicinus* n. being used in a way which incorporates and interconnects both meanings found under the Middle English 'neighebor' and the modern 'neighbour'. The *vicini* referenced provide charitable support in line with scriptural notions of loving one's neighbour. This is comparable to the aid and succour showed by the neighbours described in the earlier miracle narrative. In the miraculous recovery of Joan from drowning, recorded at the beginning of the fourteenth century, *vicinus* n. was used to describe bystanders from Marden and surrounding villages. Yet, in the later marriage suit, Bradelay c. Walkyngton, the *vicini* were located in a very local setting, they all live within a small urban parish.

We can place the charitable efforts on the part of Maud Katersouth's neighbours from 1355 within broader changes visible in practices of charity at this time. Over the later Middle Ages there was a gradual shift from the foundation and patronage of institutions including hospitals and religious houses, which peaked in the first half of the thirteenth century, towards smaller, more localised almshouses and maisonsdieu from the mid-fourteenth century onwards.[645] The period c.1150-c.1250 has been termed 'the great era of hospital foundation in the West', and some hospitals grew to become major institutions.[646] St Leonard's Hospital in York, for example, had approximately 225 beds to accommodate inmates by 1287.[647] The almshouses of the later medieval period were founded

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[644] BIA, CP.E.82. '*in vicis de Mikilgate et North Stret, Ebor'.* My own English translation.

[645] For a more in-depth chronology of hospitals in England see: Sheila Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital in Medieval England: Gift-Giving and the Spiritual Economy* (Portland: Four Courts Press, 2004), 29-35.

[646] Watson, *On Hospitals*, 6-7.

[647] P.H. Cullum, *Cremetts and Corrodies: Care of the Poor and Sick at St Leonard's Hospital, York, in the Middle Ages* (York: Borthwick Papers no.79, 1991), 9, 30.

mostly by the urban laity, in addition to guilds and civic authorities.[648] These almshouses and maisonsdieu were not long-term institutions. They were very local, catering for a small, focused group of people who often were selected discriminately.[649]
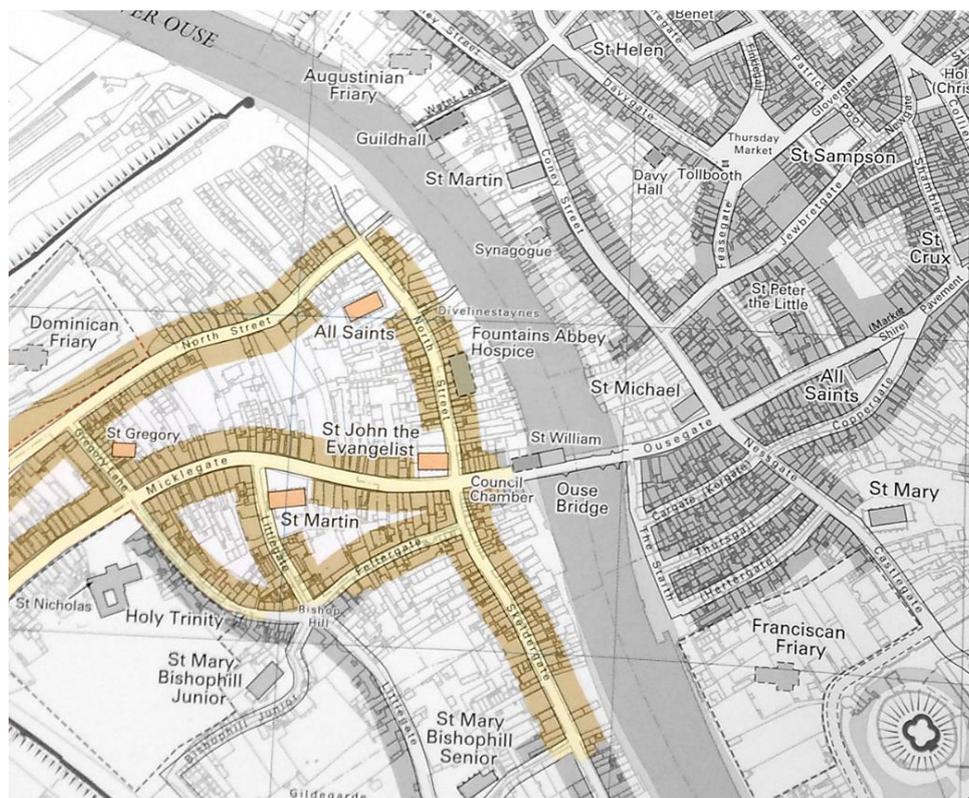
Figure 1: Map showing the streets of North Street, Micklegate, and Skeldergate, All Saints North Street, York. Adapted from: P.V. Addyman, ed. The British Historic Towns Atlas, vol.5: York (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015), map 7. British Historic Towns Atlas©.

In part, this movement in charitable provision reflected the broadening social backgrounds of founders and patrons of institutions. The redistribution of wealth from secular and ecclesiastical magnates to urban artisans and merchants from the later-fourteenth century led to the greater participation of the latter.[650] It was this middling status group which made up the majority of the founders for localised almshouses. Cullum found that a large number of maisondieu foundations in York occurred between the 1380s and 1410s, a period of economic expansion for the city following the Black Death.[651] Cullum characterises this shift to small-scale foundations as a 'step away' from the

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[648] Miri Rubin, 'Development and Change in English Hospitals, 100-1500,' in *The Hospital in History*, ed. Lindsay Granshaw and Roy Porter (London: Routledge, 1990), 56.

[649] Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital*, 25, 44; Patricia H. Cullum, '"For Pore People Harberles": What Was the Function of the Maisonsdieu?' in *Trade, Devotion and Governance: Papers in Later Medieval History* eds. Dorothy J. Clayton, R.G. Davies and Peter McNiven (Stroud: A. Sutton, 1994), 37.

[650] Goldberg, 'Introduction,' 15. For more on the patronage of English hospitals see: Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital*, 35-42.

[651] Cullum, '"For Pore People Harberles",' 43-4; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* 337.

hospital tradition of charitable giving. There were, at this time, concerns about clerical mismanagement of older hospitals. The growth in York's maisonsdieu, for example, may have been encouraged by the financial issues that St Leonard's Hospital was facing in the period up to 1390.[652]

Practices of charitable giving in the decades following the Black Death were informed by more discriminating attitudes towards the poor. The heightened demands for labour after 1348-9 meant that, despite legislative attempts, wages rose.[653] Moreover, as discussed in chapter one, increased wages, along with the improved bargaining power that labourers had, meant they were increasingly able to participate in leisure activities, some choosing to spend less time working.[654] Landowners, employers, and urban elites feared that those who were not 'fully productive' contributed to the economic problems caused by labour demands.[655] With a focus on Cambridge hospitals, Rubin posits that these attitudes helped contribute to a decline in charitable giving after the Black Death, which she sees as a characteristic of the later medieval period.[656] Underlying Rubin's argument is the idea that definitions of poverty are relative and that changes to this would alter perceptions towards poverty.[657] Conversely, Cullum's work has shown a continuation if not growth in charitable provisions at this time. Instead, Cullum argues, small-scale maisonsdieu sought to alleviate, locally, what donors considered as poverty, where people were unable to support themselves by their own work, whether through ailment, disability, accident, or age.[658] This definition did not include unemployed or under-employed wage labourers and peasants. The provision of food and labour to Maud Katersouth by her neighbours characterises the post-plague practice of small-scale and narrowly localised charitable efforts.

A selective pattern of who were considered deserving recipients of charity has also been identified elsewhere. Ben McRee helped revise our understanding of charitable provision from later medieval guilds and fraternities, questioning the extent to which their purpose was to provide material relief to individuals.[659] McRee demonstrates that these provisions were limited and were not aimed towards supporting the chronically poor, unemployed, or underemployed. Rather, they provided for a few 'prosperous, hardworking individual[s] brought low by circumstances' beyond their control.[660] Frank Rexroth similarly emphasises the life-cycle provision aspect of almshouses, which provided for the

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[652] Cullum, '"For Pore People Harberles",' 43-4; Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital*, 33.
[653] Goldberg notes that whilst for men this effect was almost immediate, women's wages only began to rise discernibly from the 1370s. Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* 296.
[654] Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 170-1.
[655] Rubin, *Charity and Community,* 293.
[656] Rubin, *Charity and Community,* 289-295.
[657] Rubin, *Charity and Community,* 6-7.
[658] Cullum, '"For Pore People Harberles",' 44.
[659] McRee, 'Charity and Guild Solidarity,' 197-8; Rubin, *Charity and Community*, 252-4.
[660] McRee, 'Charity and Guild Solidarity,' 203, 209.

respectful and shamefaced poor to protect them from further socio-economic decline.[661] Those who had previously held employment and status but had fallen into financial difficulty, through old age, sickness, or injury, were considered 'especially deserving'.[662] Migration into urban areas was predominately made up of lower status and transient populations, which fed into suspicions, held by civic elites and employing inhabitants, about masterless and itinerant workers.[663] The changes to the practice of charity from the Black Death can be characterised as a shift away from the more indiscriminate charity provided by large institutions, which often catered to pilgrims and strangers, to provision focused on local, known individuals. Throughout the Middle Ages, theological discussions on charity had considered, if faced with limited resources, how to discriminate between recipients. The 'scale of preference', found in canonist Rufinus' *Summa decretorum* from the twelfth century, for example, favoured virtuous individuals as well as those who were known by the donor.[664]

The charity provided by guilds and fraternities focused on members and individuals who were known to the donors. Scholars have, moreover, noted the localised nature of later almshouses and maisonsdieu. Rubin describes how these new foundations used 'an organisational framework based on social ties, co-operation, and responsibility between neighbours.'[665] Rubin found in Cambridge during the second half of the fifteenth century, almshouses catered towards 'the local, known poor'.[666] The establishment of maisondieu to aid those in particular localities is also demonstrated in Cullum's work based on Yorkshire evidence.[667] Although Cullum has identified some further examples of maisondieu where the inmates were immigrants or travellers, Sheila Sweetinburgh found that almshouses in Warwickshire and Wiltshire aimed to cater for local poor who 'belonged to the town' as opposed to migrants or travellers, as with the earlier hospital foundations.'[668] Charity provided by individuals, similarly, often catered to the poor who lived in proximity to the testator. In 1387, for example, Robert Corn, a London citizen, left 10s. to 'the most nedful men and women þat ben in the parche of our lady of abbechirch [St Mary Abchurch],' London, where he was to be buried.[669] Likewise,

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[661] Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 252-3.
[662] Rubin, *Charity and Community*, 73.
[663] Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 285-91.
[664] Rubin, *Charity and Community*, 69-73.
[665] Rubin, 'Development and Change,' 56.
[666] Rubin, 'Development and Change,' 127.
[667] Cullum, '"For Pore People Harberles",' 42.
[668] Cullum, '"For Pore People Harberles",' 49; Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital*, 61, 63.
[669] Frederick J. Furnivall, ed., *The Fifty Earliest English Wills in the Court of Probate, London* A.D. 1387-1439. Early English Text Society Original Series 78 (London: Trübner and Co., 1882), 1.

in 1368 Thomas Morice made bequests to 'the poor and those unable to work' within several parishes including St Dunstan of Stepney, where he held land and was to be buried.[670]

The descriptions of support given by *vicini* towards Maud Katersouth from 1355, the period immediately following the Black Death, exemplify these changes to charitable practices. The deponents brought to undermine Maud's own testimony lent into the contemporary rhetoric of suspicion towards labourers and idleness. The narratives imply that, although provided with opportunities to work, such as being lent cloth to sell, Maud instead used 'flattering words' to take necessities from her neighbours. Descriptions of the residents of All Saints North Street giving Maud work and necessities, however, also illustrate the practice of very localised charity. I argue there is an important connection to be made here in how we understand later medieval conceptions of neighbour relationships. There is a link between the use of *vicinus* n. in a context which references behaviour akin to a neighbour in the Gospel sense, and the increasingly local focus to where charity was directed to. In the descriptions of Maud and her *vicini*, charity towards a neighbour is placed in a narrow setting of close physical proximity. This example provides a demonstration of how Jesus' teaching to love one's neighbour (*proximus*), which originally applied to everyone, was given a narrower meaning and subsumed under the understanding of a neighbour as a nearby resident. In this enactment of charity, moreover, we can see an underlying concern with preventing idleness. Maud is not simply given charity in the form of bread and ale, but provided with small, odd jobs such as milling corn and fetching water. The scriptural meaning of neighbour in this instance becomes very narrowly localised and is used in a way that plays into the concerns of the post-plague era.

It is difficult to make direct comparisons between the portrayals of charitable behaviour towards neighbours in the two examples discussed above. Not only are these narratives found in different source types and produced for very different purposes, they also deal with different subject matter. Whilst the testimonies for Joan's miraculous recovery from drowning were recorded in 1307, before the Black Death, the depositions for Bradelay c. Walkington were made in 1355. What these case studies do offer are snapshot views into how neighbours, in the Gospel sense, were understood at particular moments in the later medieval period. The ways in which *vicinus* n. and related words were applied in these examples help us to better understand how relationships between neighbours were configured in each case. Where neighbours (*vicini*) in the miracle testimonies are made up of residents from the large rural parish of Marden in Herefordshire, the term is applied within the marriage suit depositions to a more immediate geographic setting of several streets in the urban parish of All Saint's

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[670] Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London,* Part 2: *1358-1688* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1890), 107-8.

North Street, York. This discrepancy allows us to see how the changes to practices and understandings of charity following the Black Death had implications for neighbourly relationships and how they were understood and applied in the scriptural sense. The Gospel meaning of neighbour in the decades following the plague was denoted using the Latin *vicinus* n. and held a much narrower application to people who lived in close proximity. This trend follows changes visible in the lexicographical study above.

We should also note that the economic trends underlying the increased suspicion of the labouring poor and migrant populations, which affected the scope of charitable giving and how 'neighbour' in the Gospel sense was understood, did not follow a linear trajectory, nor was it felt evenly throughout England. The end of the fourteenth century and start of the fifteenth century has been characterised as a period of economic growth which existed between the immediate aftermath of the Black Death, and a mid-fifteenth-century recession. Bailey recently, however, has drawn attention to the fluctuations and continued economic uncertainty within this period. The decades following the Black Death in 1348 saw renewed outbreaks of the plague, including in 1361 and 1368, in addition to poor weather conditions, particularly in the years 1349, 1352, 1361, and 1363-4.[671] A subsequent decline in grain yields resulted in increased prices. As we saw in chapter one, wage labourers and migrant workers were regarded increasingly with suspicion and associated with idleness and greed. The descriptions of Maud Katersouth given by deponents for Bradelay c. Walkington exemplify these hostile attitudes which increased against able-bodied beggars in the decades following the Black Death. In London, these concerns similarly increased within the city's civic government.[672] This is illustrated by a proclamation made in 1359 directed against those who: 'have betaken themselves from out of their own country to the City of London, and do go about begging there, so as to have their own ease and repose, not wishing to labour or work for their sustenance'.[673] Goldberg suggests that it is possible that London's economy after 1348 was initially unable to support the levels of rural-to-urban migration from the surrounding countryside.[674] This would have created a visible group of unemployed, able-bodied migrant workers in the city.

From the late 1370s, into the 1380s, saw falling grain prices and deflation.[675] This, coupled with the increase in wages for labourers contributed to a rise in living standards and spending power improved. Goldberg argues, in relation to York, that the period between the 1420s to the 1450s saw an

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[671] Bailey, *After the Black Death*, 169-70.
[672] See: Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 271, 285-6, 291.
[673] Riley, *Memorials of London*, 304.
[674] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* 298.
[675] Bailey, *After the Black Death*, 268.

improvement of women's position in the labour market.[676] There was some economic growth too, for example, in the expansions of cloth production and trade, as well as in the mining and smelting of tin.[677] The cloth industry was geographically concentrated, however, in East Anglia, West Yorkshire, and the Cotswolds.[678] The demand for goods and services enabled a level of craft specialisation in urban centres, especially London.[679] Employment rates were generally higher, and individual wealth improved. It may be, then, that in some areas during these decades, hostile attitudes towards the poor and underemployed fluctuated and were less pronounced.

There is no clear consensus on the economic trends of the fifteenth century. Historians have debated the relative significance of various factors which led to a period of economic depression around the middle of the fifteenth century. Michael Postan, in his influential article from 1939, emphasised the role of continued depopulation and the subsequent decreased agricultural production in the economic decline of the fifteenth century.[680] Later work by Richard Britnell and John Hatcher similarly highlights the role of demography, declining land values, and agricultural contraction in the economic recession during the 1430s.[681] Likewise, Goldberg argues that longer-term demographic decline contributed to a mid-fifteenth century recession. By the mid-1450s, he argues, wages had declined to pre-plague levels which resulted in a constriction of the economic opportunities open to women.[682]

Monetarist historians, including Pamela Nightingale and Peter Spufford, have drawn attention to the bullion shortages which were experienced in Northern Europe in c.1375-1415 and again during the 1440s-60s.[683] For Nightingale, the resulting lack of coinage 'reduced the purchasing power of England's

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[676] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* 337.

[677] Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, 351-2, 354-5; Christopher Dyer, 'England's Economy in the Fifteenth Century,' in *The Fifteenth Century,* vol.13*: Exploring the Evidence: Commemoration, Administration and the Economy*, ed. Linda Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 207.

[678] Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, 360; Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 267, 275.

[679] Dyer, *Making a Living*, 305; Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, 355. See also: Maryanne Kowaleski, 'A Consumer Economy,' in *A Social History of England,* 238-59.

[680] M.M. Postan, 'Revisions in Economic History IX: The Fifteenth Century,' *The Economic History Review* 9, no.2 (1939): 160–67.

[681] R.H. Britnell, 'Postan's Fifteenth Century,' in *Survival and Discord in Medieval Society: Essays in Honour of Christopher Dyer*, eds. Richard Goddard, John Langdon and Miriam Müller (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 49-67; Britnell, *Britain and Ireland*, 498; John Hatcher, 'The Great Slump of the Mid-Fifteenth Century,' in *Progress and Problems in Medieval England*, eds. Richard Britnell and John Hatcher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 247-52, 259. See also: Bailey, 'Rural Society,' 152.

[682] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 297, 337. Jeremy Goldberg, 'Coventry's 'Lollard' Programme of 1492 and The Making of Utopia,' in *Pragmatic Utopias: Ideals and Communities, 1200-1630*, eds. Rosemary Horrox and Sarah Rees Jones (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 97-116.

[683] Pamela Nightingale, 'England and the European Depression of the Mid-Fifteenth Century,' *The Journal of European Economic History,* no.3 (1997): 631-56; Peter Spufford, *Money and its Use in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 339–62. The shortages in bullion resulted from a drop in outputs from Transylvanian gold mines and Bohemian silver mines in the late 1380s and from 1350 onwards, respectively. Gold imports to Europe from Western Sudan were interrupted by economic issues in Egypt during the late fourteenth and early fifteenth century, and the export of gold out of Europe in exchange for luxury

trading partners' in Italy and Flanders.[684] A decline in the demand for wool, Nightingale argues, not only affected those employed in the industry, but also restricted merchants' ability to trade for imports. Conscious of the unavailability of coin, London creditors withdrew credit. This disrupted mercantile trading networks which relied on systems of credit and debt and contributed to a depression in the English economy.[685] In his study focusing on the cloth trade in England, John Lee further points to the role of warfare and political uncertainty in disrupting textile exports and leading to unemployment and unrest. The renewal of war with France at the end of the 1440s, for example, resulted in a Burgundian ban on English cloth imports, 1447-1452 and 1464-1467.[686] Bruce Campbell takes a different perspective to the economic difficulties during the fifteenth century, stressing the influence of climate change. Campbell argues that the middle decades of the fifteenth century were marked by a period of low temperatures and more extreme weather which negatively affected wool and grain production in addition to influencing continued outbreaks of the plague. This led to repeated poor harvests, in 1428, 1432, 1437, and 1438 which led to 'the single greatest English subsistence crisis and grain-price inflation of the fifteenth century'.[687]

It is likely that there was considerable regional variation in the effects of the economic difficulties of the mid-fifteenth century. The 1430s harvest failures, for example, led to a significant bout of famine felt especially in the northeast, an area which further experienced instability due to continued conflict with Scotland.[688] Shifts in rural farming, from arable to the less labour-intensive pastoral farming, further resulted in the movement of labourers to urban areas; at the same time that many towns, such as York, Lincoln, and Coventry, were experiencing economic difficulties.[689] The poverty and unemployment during this period resulting from economic recession would have been especially

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goods additionally contributed to the drain in bullion. J.M. Bolton, *Money in the Medieval English Economy, 973-1489* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 232-3.

[684] Nightingale, 'England and the European Depression,' 635.

[685] Nightingale, 'England and the European Depression,' 638-43. See also: Matthew F. Stevens, 'London Creditors and The Fifteenth-Century Depression,' *The Economic History Review* 69, no.4 (2016): 1083-1107.

[686] John S. Lee, 'Crises in Late Medieval English Cloth Trade,' in *Crises in Economy and Social History: A Comparative Perspective*, eds. A.T. Brown, Andy Burn, and Rob Doherty (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), 325, 327-330. See also: Nightingale, 'England and the European Depression,' 631.

[687] Bruce Campbell, *The Great Transition: Climate, Disease and Society in the Late-Medieval World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 332, 336-7, 346.

[688] Bailey, 'Rural Society,' 152; Bolton, *Money in the Medieval English Economy,* 231-2; Alex T. Brown, 'Surviving the Mid-Fifteenth-Century Recession: Durham Cathedral Priory, 1400-1520,' *Northern History* 47, no.2 (2010): 214.

[689] Bailey, *After the Black Death*, 269; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 289; Jim Bolton, '"The World Upside Down": Plague as An Agent of Economic and Social Change,' in *The Black Death in England*, 64-5; Goldberg, 'Coventry's 'Lollard' Programme,' 101.

noticeable in urban environments through the density of the population and through the stark contrast between wealthy and poor inhabitants living side-by-side.[690]

We cannot offer a single chronology of the economic trends for the mid- to later fifteenth century. There does appear to be some areas of commonality within scholarship, however, which point to economic instability from the 1430s and a period of significant depression from the 1450s into the later fifteenth century. This aligns with renewed anxieties about unemployed workers and underserving poor. Sentiments against supposedly idle workers and unskilled migrants became more pronounced, with the fear that able-bodied poor people preferred not to work, but live off the charity of others.[691] As Rees Jones argues, by the fifteenth century non-householders had become a form of social categorisation in medieval towns which was associated with undesirable immigration. Non-householders included day-labourers or journeymen who increasingly were considered 'rootless' as they had no master to govern them or ensure their good behaviour.[692] As already discussed in chapter one, statutes regulating the leisure activities that servants, wage labours, and apprentices could participate in were revised in 1477-8 and in 1495.[693] These restrictions were rooted in anxieties that these groups would waste the resources of their masters. Furthermore, McIntosh points to two trends in local court juror presentments which demonstrate a rise in less tolerant attitudes towards the poor. From the 1480s onwards, people were presented by jurors for living idly or refusing work.[694] In addition, McIntosh argues, the deep-rooted cultural obligation of 'personal assistance to neighbours' was challenged by jurors who, from the 1460s, increasingly presented people for undertaking these 'customary acts of charity'.[695] These customary acts took the form of providing hospitality or accommodation to itinerant poor.

A continued emphasis on giving to recipients who were local during this period is something found within charitable bequests. In 1496, Katherine Cook from Cambridge left 'emong poor people dwelling in the seid parish [St Mary the Virgin] most feble in natur, 15d. in money'.[696] Bequests which left provision for poor young women to get married also became a popular practice among female testators by the mid-fifteenth century.[697] One wealthy singlewoman, Phillippa Russell, who made her

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[690] Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London*, 13, 16; Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street,' 100; Schofield, *London Houses*, 53.

[691] Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 276-7.

[692] Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 288.

[693] See page 87.

[694] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 81-2, 88-93.

[695] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 83.

[696] Charles H. Cooper, ed. *Annals of Cambridge*, vol.1 (Cambridge: Warwick and Co., 1842), 246.

[697] P.H. Cullum, '"And Hir Name was Charitie": Charitable Giving by and for Women in Late Medieval Yorkshire,' in *Women is a Worthy Wight: Women in English Society, c.1200-1500,* ed. P.J.P. Goldberg (Stroud:

will in 1458, left a generous array of bequests to the areas in London she was connected to. Phillippa left money to contribute to the marriages of 'poor maidens' who lived in the areas Phillippa had lived and planned for her burial, in Lanbourn and Walbrook wards. She left a further £3 6s. 8d. to support the 'indigent householders' of the parish of St Mary Bothaw, where she was to be buried.[698] The emphasis on respectable, deserving recipients within these bequests is illustrated in an earlier will from 1408 made by John Plot, a citizen of London. John stipulated that 'maydenys of gode name and of gode fame haue x marc [£6 13s. 4d.] of my gode [goods] to here [her] mariage'.[699]

The equation between a neighbour as the recipient of love and charity and a neighbour as someone who is known and local, is visible if we turn to a later fifteenth-century miracle narrative. The narratives of miracles attributed to Henry VI survive not as depositions but as a compiled collection. The resulting narratives provide a less immediate account of the miracle than we find with the witness testimonies for the canonisation of Thomas Cantilupe. Nevertheless, compilers of collections were still concerned with providing an account of credible miracles. Additionally, from the late twelfth-century onwards there was an increasing interest to record lay, personal stories in detail.[700] The stories of miracles attributed to Henry VI, therefore, still provide us with plausible, fictive, accounts of behaviour and social interactions.

Within this collection, the miraculous retrieval of William Hill, a chaplain, and John Reynold from a well is undated, but its placement within the collection suggests a rough date of c.1490. The setting for the miracle involved William and John setting off to retrieve a couple of dead ducks which had fallen into a common well in Brighton. The compiler recounts how this act was:

> not because the matter was his [William's] private concern in any way; it was out of charity [*caritate*] that he would have it done, for fear they [the ducks] should rot there, bringing corruption to the water and thereby loathing and queasiness to his neighbours [*vicinis*].[701]

Alan Sutton, 1992), 197-8; Stephanie Tarbin, 'Caring for Poor and Fatherless Children in London, c.1350-1550,' *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3, no.3 (2010): 399.

[698] Judith M. Bennett and Christopher Whittick, 'Phillippa Russell and the Wills of London's Late Medieval Singlewomen,' *The London Journal* 32, no.3 (2007): 254-5.

[699] Furnivall, *The Fifty Earliest English Wills*, 4.

[700] Koopmans, *Wonderful to Relate*, 112.

[701] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 182. '*Non quod ad illum quidem res spectare quouismodo videbatru: sed ea fortasse caritate id fieri procurabat. ne inibi computrescentes. et aquis mundissimis corruptelam. et suis vicinis fastidium generarent et nauseam*.' The English translations for this case-study are my own. For an alternative translation see: Knox and Leslie, *Miracles of King Henry VI*, 142-48.

The narrative details how 'the neighbours [*viciniores*] and the inhabitants of that town, accompany the travellers [William and John], and immediately no small crowd of folk surrounded them.'[702] This description indicates that William and John made up a larger group attempting to clear the well. John volunteered to be lowered into the well, after the crowd had 'discussed, inquiring together by which way it [retrieving the ducks] could be carried out'.[703] As he descended in the bucket the rope came undone and he fell into the deep water at the bottom. William was lowered down immediately in the same way, but also fell into the water. William prayed to God and for intercession from Henry VI and both men were supported miraculously from sinking in the water. The first rescue attempt of John by the bystanders (*qui superius astabant*) failed, but the second time both men were retrieved safely, as the anonymous compiler notes, 'clearly by Grace rather than by diligence or by skill'.[704]

The narrative of this miracle too provides us with an illustration of what might count as expected or appropriate behaviour of a neighbour in the Gospel sense, within a medieval context. The narrative centres around William and John as the recipients of the miracle. However, a close reading of the account suggests that clearing the public well was a communal effort undertaken by a larger group of residents. John volunteered to be lowered into the well as part of a larger discussion amongst neighbours (*vicini*). Though the source recounts the exceptional occasions where a crisis occurs and a miracle is performed, the story can still perhaps offer a window into the mundane. The attempts to improve the safety of a communal facility is presented as conventional, if somewhat idealised, behaviour. Residents worked together collectively to maintain the safety and welfare of other neighbours. Again, despite the resonances of a scriptural understanding of neighbour, it is the term *vicinus* n. which is used.

As with the previous examples, the application of *vicinus* n. here betrays a conflation between the two key understandings of neighbour. The connection of this communal action with a scriptural meaning of neighbourliness is indicated by the location of the narrative within a hagiographical source material, a collection of miracle stories attributed to Henry VI, plus by the use of *caritas* to describe their attempts to prevent harm coming to those using the well. Yet, the neighbourly charity and concern for welfare outlined in this miracle narrative is described in terms of practical efforts to maintain the sanitation within a very localised urban area. The removal of health hazards, in this case contaminants in a well, speaks to contemporary anxieties for this period. Carole Rawcliffe has traced a preoccupation with common nuisances and public sanitation in towns over the high to late medieval period in

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[702] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 182. '*Quod ut conspiciunt viciniores quique ville illius incole, concomitantur euntes, villavitque eos protinus caterva non modica villanorum.*'

[703] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 182. '*Dum ergo collquuntur, et quo id fieri posset modo invicem queritant, ecce scissor ille, quem supra memoravimus, sponte sua dimitti se in fontem expostulat.*'

[704] Grosjean, *Henrici VI*, 184. '*gracia plane magis quam industria vel arte*'.

England.[705] These concerns, which increased from the late fourteenth century, the time this miracle narrative was recorded, included the subject of water pollution.[706] Rawcliffe argues that regulating and maintaining the sanitation of an area was considered 'a manifestation of good neighbourliness' and concern for the wellbeing of the 'urban community'.[707] The miraculous retrieval of William and John from a well, then, contains examples of scriptural notions of neighbourly *caritas* framed within the context of a group of residents from a local area in Brighton.

There are several conclusions which can be made about the findings in this chapter. Firstly, by the period studied in this thesis, *vicinus* n. had become the dominant Latin term to denote the modern 'neighbour' for both primary meanings. *Vicinus* n. had longstanding associations with the use of local residents, or neighbours, as jurors for the production of social knowledge in a legal context. The application of *proximus* n., in contrast, traditionally was found with respect to Christian discussions of neighbour as a fellow person. By the later medieval period, however, the noun *proximus* n. became much less commonplace, narrowly restricted to devotional or theological writings. We have seen how, despite the ecclesiastical context of the canonisation proceedings for Thomas Cantilupe and the later collection of miracles attributed to Henry VI, and the Gospel sense of neighbour evoked in the narratives, these texts use the noun *vicinus*. The use of one word to denote the two key understandings of neighbour also is evident in applications of the Middle English 'neighebor'. The dual application of both *vicinus* and 'neighebor' would have encouraged a conflation of the two meanings of neighbour which we see across the mid-fourteenth and later fifteenth centuries.

Secondly, a trend towards an interconnection between a Gospel neighbour and someone who lives nearby, evident in the use of language, coincides with changing practices of charity. The case studies examined here show only a snapshot in time and therefore we cannot draw a linear trajectory for this trend from the end of the Black Death in the mid-fourteenth century to the end of the fifteenth. Nevertheless, they provide illustrative windows into practices of neighbourliness which point to a Gospel neighbour, as the recipient of charity, being identified more narrowly with a nearby resident than a fellow-person. The narrowing understanding of neighbour in this way, from 'fellow-person' in the parable of the Good Samaritan towards those who were local and known recipients, was part of the broader picture of hardening attitudes towards the poor and needy in society, felt especially with the growth in social conservatism towards the end of the fifteenth century.

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[705] See also: Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street,' 107.
[706] Carole Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies: Communal Health in Late Medieval English Towns and Cities* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 140, 178.
[707] Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies*, 193.

3: Later Medieval Understandings of Relationships between Neighbours II: Dwelling in Close Proximity

Following from chapter two, this chapter will continue to address the question of how people conceptualised relationships between neighbours in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England. The last section of chapter two centred this question on the Biblical resonances of neighbour and how this was understood in relation to practices of charity over time. Here I will explore the other key usage of neighbour, that is to say, someone who lives in close proximity.

The sources used in this chapter are London-centric. Despite the significant change to population size brought about by the Black Death, London remained, across the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the most densely inhabited area in England. The pressures over land use in London, particularly before the plague, caused tensions between those living in close proximity which are brought to light through the London Assize of Nuisance rolls. The Assize of Nuisance functioned as a legal mechanism to allow freeholders to make complaints about the built environment that caused, or had the potential to cause, damage. These complaints highlight the interactions between neighbours which can help us to address how this relationship was understood.

In the first section I will outline how space and neighbourhood will be understood within the chapter. I will then provide context on the Assize of Nuisance rolls which make up the main source-base. In the second section of the chapter, I will ask what expectations were held of neighbours when understood as people who lived in proximity. As I argued in chapter two, this meaning of neighbour could be applied to someone living next door as well as someone living more broadly within a neighbourhood, dependant on context. This section will consider first the expectations of residents within a neighbourhood setting before studying how these expectations were applied more specifically to those living in the immediate vicinity. I will study, additionally, the tensions inherent in these practices of neighbourliness and how these expectations changed during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

Theoretical understandings of space were developed during the Spatial Turn of the 1970s and 1980s.[708] These have subsequently impacted medieval studies. Here I will outline the ways in which

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[708] The work of Henri Lefebvre, Edward Said, Bourdieu, and Michel Foucault has been particularly influential. Henri Lefebvre, *La Production de L'espace* (Paris: Editions Anthropos, 1974); Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*; Michel Foucault and Jay Miskowiec, 'Of Other

scholarship has developed our understanding of space in the Middle Ages where it is pertinent to thinking about medieval social relationships, specifically between neighbours where spatial proximity provides an important element to the relationship. A key component of the sociologist Henri Lefebvre's theorisation of space is the understanding that space is socially constructed. Lefebvre explains the social production of space through his 'conceptual triad' which comprises spatial practice, representations of space, and representational space. Focusing on a modern, urban, and Eurocentric perspective, these elements described how space is perceived through official administrative plans, conceived through cultural symbols and meaning experienced by inhabitants, and lived through emotional and artistic expression, respectively.[709] This work has been highly influential in how space is approached within medieval studies where space is no longer considered an inert or empty container. Rather than being applied wholesale, however, Lefebvre's work has acted as a spring-board for historians thinking about space.[710] Symes' study on the construction of power and authority in thirteenth-century Arras, France, for example, explores how spaces could be 'carved out' of the public space of the street.[711] To illustrate, town criers used loud voices in public streets to help maintain the jurisdictional boundaries of the relevant court. Understanding space from this perspective can help us to think about the construction of neighbourhoods and how activities or interactions between residents might impact this. Further we can consider the agency within this production and how space could be utilised and manipulated to meet social objectives.

Social theorists, too, have considered space as socially productive, influencing behaviour. For Bourdieu, the material structures of an environment produce *habitus*, a system of experiences which informs behaviour, through 'dispositions' – experiences, skills, and habits.[712] Kate Giles notes the importance of built, architectural space in providing cues for correct behaviour during the Middle Ages.[713] Nevola provides an example of this in his study of early modern Italian street life. With an emphasis on movement through spaces, Nevola suggests that landmarks such as churches, shop signs, and benches provided landmarks which enabled the navigation of urban space based on local knowledge.[714] In addition, Nevola argues, the visibility of street corners, and their position at

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Spaces,' *Diacritics* 16, no.1 (1986): 22-27. For a translation of Henri Lefebvre see: Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1991).

[709] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 33,38-39. For a critique of Lefebvre's conceptual triad see: Tim Unwin, 'A Waste of Space? Towards a Critique of the Social Production of Space…' *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 25, no.1 (2000): 11-29.

[710] See for example: Barbara A. Hanawalt and Michal Kobialka, eds., *Medieval Practices of Space* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), ix-xviii.

[711] Symes, *A Common Stage*, 3.

[712] Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 72.

[713] Katherine Giles, *An Archaeology of Social Identity: Guildhalls in York, c.1350-1630* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports: British Series No.315, 2000), 5.

[714] Nevola, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy*, 187-225.

intersections of busy streets meant they functioned as 'nodal points' for exchanging information and disseminating proclamations. These spaces were used by men to congregate and gossip and thus helped to facilitate forms of sociability.[715] Although Nevola's study concerns a different temporal and geographical context to this thesis, it is valuable in helping us to think about the interconnections between space and social encounters.

Spatial organisation, as outlined by Bourdieu, moreover, influences the 'practices and representations' of 'cultural oppositions' such as gender.[716] In her study on the gendered division of labour in manorial households, Hanawalt used coroners' rolls from the late thirteenth to early fifteenth century to propose that women's work largely was confined to in and around the home. Hanawalt contrasted this with the labour activities of men which she saw as predominantly located in fields and forests.[717] Goldberg challenges Hanawalt's reading of coroners' rolls and instead convincingly argues that it was the activities people took part in, in different spaces such as the field and home, which were gendered rather than the spaces themselves. Whilst women were present in spaces outside the home, the work they undertook there differed from their male counterparts.[718] Such debates in scholarship are helpful in highlighting the influence of space on how people behaved in it and how this in turn was shaped by gender, status, and so on. Thinking about the ways in which spaces influenced people's behaviours prompts us also to consider how different spatial contexts might change the tenor of social encounters and relationships.

Before turning to look at neighbourly expectations based on the fact of living within a neighbourhood, we need to first consider what is meant by 'neighbourhood'. Within scholarship on the medieval period, neighbourhoods often are referred to as a given, or conflated with 'community' or a geographical area such as a parish or ward.[719] Recent decades have seen the acknowledgement of the issues with trying to define neighbourhood as a discreet topographical or geographical space. In sociology, George Galster, for example, challenges the assumption of a single, clearly perceived boundary of a neighbourhood. Rather, Galster suggests viewing the neighbourhood as a 'bundle of spatially based attributes', that is, as a social and physical space shaped by the presence of certain features, for example demography, structural characteristics and 'perceived commonality'.[720] This

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[715] Nevola, *Street Life in Renaissance Italy*, 187-225.

[716] Bourdieu, *Theory of Practice*, 90.

[717] Hanawalt, 'Seeking the Flesh and Blood,' 33-45.

[718] Goldberg, 'The Public and Private,' 77-8.

[719] As noted by: Susan McDonough, 'Being a Neighbor: Ideas and Ideals of Neighborliness in the Medieval West,' *History Compass* 15, no.9 (2017): 1, 5; Gareth Dean, 'Urban Neighbourhoods: Spatial and Social Development in York c.600-1600,' (PhD thesis, University of York, 2012), 19; Ayanna Sheree Brown, '"That Peace Shall Always Dwell Among Them and True Love Be Upheld": Charity, The Seven Works of Mercy, and Lay Fellowship in Late Medieval and Early Reformation England,' (PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 2014), 36.

[720] George Galster, 'On the Nature of Neighbourhood,' *Urban Studies* 38, no.12 (2001): 2112.

work informs my understanding of 'neighbourhood'. By accounting for the varied composition of attributes found in neighbourhoods we can allow for their idiosyncratic nature.

Emphasis on the social aspects of neighbourhoods have been recognised by medievalists too. Dale Kent and Francis Kent in their study of local politics in fifteenth-century Florence conducted in the 1980s, for example argue that the neighbourhood, which they equate with the city's *gonfaloni* (wards), was an 'important category of social organisation and experience'.[721] Thus, Kent and Kent see a neighbourhood less as a physical structure or category, but something which was formed through social ties, particularly familial connections.[722] More recently, Rees Jones studies the development of the 'holy neighbourhood' of Micklegate in York related to the cult around Archbishop Richard Scrope of York after his death in 1405. For Rees Jones the neighbourhood of Micklegate was built up from identity and social connections, as well as location. To illustrate, she traces the networks amongst the city elite who were associated with the Scrope family and who lived in the area. These connections were built through marriage, female friendships, and shared devotion to the archbishop.[723] Within Olson's work on neighbourhood formation in Ellington Village, Cambridgeshire, at the end of the thirteenth century to the beginning of the fourteenth, she approaches the village neighbourhood 'both as place and process'.[724] Olson likewise argues for the active role in women's activities and their interpersonal relationships in building the neighbourhood in this context.[725]

Kane and Sandall outline their understanding of neighbourhood too in the introduction to their newly published edited collection on the experience of neighbourhood in pre-modern Europe. For them, neighbourhoods during this period were 'constantly remade at a local level' by demographic shifts and high levels of migration from the second half of the fourteenth century.[726] Thus, Kane and Sandall challenge normative views of neighbourhoods as necessarily cohesive entities. My understanding of neighbourhoods is informed by this scholarship and the understanding of space as socially productive and socially produced. Rather than seeking to delimitate neighbourhoods as geographical spaces, I will approach them as a social, as much as a spatial, construct where their social production involved encounters and social interactions between neighbours.

Before I explore the expectations surrounding such practices of neighbourliness in more detail, it is important to establish the legal context for the nuisance complaints which I study in this chapter and

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[721] Kent and Kent, *Neighbours and Neighbourhood,* 8. See also: Klapisch-Zuber, '"Kin, Friends, and Neighbours",' 97-123; Hughes, 'Kinsmen and Neighbours,' 101-5.
[722] Kent and Kent, *Neighbours and Neighbourhood,* 3-4, 9.
[723] Rees Jones, 'Richard Scrope,' 225.
[724] Olson, 'Women's Place and Women's Space,' 213.
[725] Olson, 'Women's Place and Women's Space,' 211-2.
[726] Kane and Sandall, 'Introduction,' in *The Experience of Neighbourhood*, 3-4.

the legal process through which these disputes took place. Janet Loengard locates the origins of London's nuisance customs to the Assize of Novel Disseisin.[727] Issued in 1166, the Assize of Novel Disseisin was concerned with maintaining freeholders' lawful possession of their property and provided them with recourse to recover land they had been wrongfully ejected from.[728] Cases were initiated through a royal writ to the sheriff. Twelve local men were summoned to view the property in question and the case was dealt with at the next Eyre visitation where these men acted as the jury.[729] Pleas under novel disseisin remained popular throughout the later medieval period, only declining after c.1380 till it fell out of use c.1500.[730] This legislation encompassed nuisances from the beginning, related to interferences with the freeholder's enjoyment of their rights.[731] Nuisances were described in *De legibus* as something that had to cause damage or harm to a neighbour (*vicinus*), and was related to freeholders.[732] Initially actions against nuisances had a broad scope incorporating, for example, obstructions to rights of way, disturbing a franchise such as a market, or, from the 1285 Statute of Westminster, other profits and tolls.[733] From the early thirteenth century this aspect of the Assize was decentralised and some actions of nuisance were removed from the king's court and were left to be heard and determined by sheriffs. These included nuisances related to building a new house, wall, or gate, or the expansion of land such as a garden.[734]

Decentralisation of nuisances under the Assize of Novel Disseisin allowed for the development of borough and civic customs related to sanitary measures, which encompassed regulating nuisances that Rawcliffe has traced throughout England.[735] John Baker outlines the regulation of nuisance from a manorial context dealing with issues such as rights to common pasturage to a concern with property rights.[736] The earliest recorded borough customs relating to nuisances are found in Northampton from 1190. Here bailiffs were empowered to determine disputes between neighbours (*vicini*) relating to buildings, gutters, or walls which were viewed by men from the neighbourhood (*homines de visneto*).[737] From c.1306 residents in Norwich could launch an inquiry into a nuisance undertaken by 'sworn men' which, if found in their favour, would require the person at fault to correct the nuisance

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[727] Janet S. Loengard, 'The Assize of Nuisance: Origins of an Action at Common Law,' *The Cambridge Law Journal* 37, no.1 (1978): 158-9.

[728] Richard Goddard and Janice Musson, 'A Rich Vein? Novel Disseisin and the Trowell Coalmine Case of 1258,' *The English Historical Review* 128, no.531 (2013): 239; Donald W. Sutherland, *The Assize of Novel Disseisin* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 1-11.

[729] Goddard and Musson, 'Novel Disseisin,' 240, 242.

[730] Sutherland, *The Assize of Novel Disseisin*, 176.

[731] Sutherland, *The Assize of Novel Disseisin*, 11-2.

[732] Bracton, *De legibus,* 189-190.

[733] Baker, *Introduction to English Legal History,* 452.

[734] Sutherland, *The Assize of Novel Disseisin*, 63.

[735] Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies*, 41-2. See also: Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* xii.

[736] Baker, *Introduction to English Legal History,* 452.

[737] Mary Bateson, ed. *Borough Customs*, vol.1, Selden Society 18 (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1904), 245.

and pay damages. Rawcliffe argues that civic customs involving the regulation of nuisances became formalised over the course of the later medieval period and are found in some form in most urban settlements by the late fourteenth century.[738]

As in Northampton, civic customs regarding nuisances appear early in London. They are first referenced in the *Lex de Assisa*, a city custumal dated to the twelfth century.[739] The *Lex de Assisa,* as well as other, later custumals, contains extensive regulations for settling disputes relating to boundaries between residents living next to one another.[740] These include rules on gutters, walls, windows, pavements, and latrines. For example, stone-lined cess-pits were to be two and a half feet from a neighbour's land, and three and a half feet if the pit was not lined. In addition to the Assize of Novel Disseisin, London's nuisance customs were influenced by the 1189 Assize of Building (*Assisa de Edificiis*).[741] The development of this Assize in London was likely due to the city's position as a densely populated, commercial capital.[742] The Assize of Building aimed to resolve land-boundary disputes, but also came to encompass regulations on roofing materials and fire prevention after a major conflagration in 1212 across the city.[743] Although urban nuisance customs were implemented elsewhere, the development of the Assize of Nuisance in London provided freeholders with a particularly coherent legal mechanism relating to nuisances. This development was necessary to deal with the specific issues that came with a high population density and the private construction of buildings.

Nuisance suits in London generally observed the following procedure. A bill of complaint was presented to either a husting of twelve jurors or, as with the majority of cases, to a congregation of the mayor and aldermen.[744] The sheriffs summoned the defendant to appear on a particular day, usually the Friday of the following week. On this day the mayor and aldermen, and sometimes the sheriffs, would visit the site to inspect the alleged nuisance. Increasingly through the later fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries professional viewers, such as master masons or carpenters, were used to survey alleged nuisances and sometimes juries were summoned to resolve more specific issues. A jury, for instance, was called to determine whether John de Laufare's newly dug ditch was created with the permission of his neighbours (*vicini*).[745] There were a range of possible outcomes from a

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[738] Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies*, 41-2.
[739] Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* xi.
[740] Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* ix-xi.
[741] Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies*, 42; Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* ix-xi.
[742] See: Vanessa Harding, 'Space, Property, and Propriety in Urban England,' *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32, no.4 (2002): 549-52.
[743] Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* ix-xi; Schofield, *London Houses*, 4.
[744] These bills rarely are recorded in the surviving Assize rolls. Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* xiii.
[745] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.11d. № 109.

complaint. Often it was judged that the defendant should remove within forty days the offending nuisance, be it a ruinous wall or seeping privy. Similarly, plaintiffs could be found in mercy for making a false plaint. Several cases recorded in the rolls do not include a final judgement, which could suggest that the parties settled out of court.

Neighbourly Relations and Expectations

The discussion that follows uses complaints made to the Assize to explore the obligations of neighbours as nearby residents, within a neighbourhood. As demonstrated in chapter two, neighbours were connected to the construction of social knowledge in a legal context, which relied on the memory of local residents. Likewise, James Fentress and Chris Wickham use the term 'social memory' to describe the process of sharing individual memories 'in the context of a social group'.[746] Kane draws on the concept of social memory to explore the agency of local inhabitants to construct landscapes and collective identity in later medieval England. To illustrate, in 1487 a group from Temple Sowerby, within the parish of Kerby Thore, Westmoreland, acted as plaintiffs against the parish rector, Henry Wherton, in a suit brought to the York Consistory court.[747] They argued that a visiting priest was not sufficient to fulfil the sacramental needs of the residents because the two-mile journey from Kerby Thore often was made impassable by the river's winter floods. The plaintiffs recalled memories of occasions where children had died without being baptised, or adults without the last rites. As Kane suggests it is possible the purpose of the suit was to secure the independence of their chapel, further indicated by their request for a chaplain to replace the visiting priest.[748] In their testimonies, the residents of Temple Sowerby identified themselves as separate from the rest of the parish, delineated by both the topography and their experience of parochial ministration.

The expectation that the neighbours of an area would have local memories and knowledge which could be drawn upon to settle disputes is demonstrated further in a complex boundary case which appears as two nuisance suits in London between July and November 1318. The issue brought first to the Assize of Nuisance was a complaint made by Osbert de Bray and his wife, Isabel, that Isabel's nephew William le Neve was withholding rent and refused to agree to a partition of a building comprising a cellar and several shops and solars. William challenged their ownership of a portion of the property.[749] Claims to ownership rested on the reversion of inheritance between three sisters and

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[746] They use the term 'social memory', as opposed to 'collective memory', to emphasise the active role of the individual in the process of remembering. Fentress and Wickham, *Social Memory*, ix-x.

[747] BI CP.F.260.

[748] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 235.

[749] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.29. № 233.

co-heiresses, Maud, Avice, William's mother, and Isabel on the death of their mother Anastasia.[750] Anastasia left in her will dated 6th May 1300:

> to Isabella her daughter shops in Bredstrete [Bread Street]. To William de Parys and Matilda, wife of the same, her daughter, a tenement at the corner of Bredstrete, parish of All Hallows, and to the said Matilda her dwelling-house in Bredstrete; remainder in default of heirs to pious uses.[751]

The case was resolved initially on 17th July when a partition was decided and recorded in the presence of the mayor, aldermen, and sheriff. The roll notes that William 'is in mercy for wrongful impediment,' for initially obstructing the partition of the property.[752]

In October 1318 Hugh de Waltham and his wife Juliana brought a further action against William le Neve. They claimed he had removed a pentice positioned above the solar which they had bought from Osbert and Isabel.[753] Judgement was respited till late November, when a jury comprising of 'eighteen men from the neighbourhood [*visneti*] of Bread Street' were called to describe the location and function of the pentice at the time of the resolution of the first case in July.[754] By the later Middle Ages, as discussed in chapter two, there was a long-established pattern of using local men as jurors often described using *vicin-* root words, based on their familiarity with local knowledge, topography, people, and customs. For example, Berry shows how indictments in London's Wardmote courts were based on jurors' personal knowledge.[755] The jury in this case was able to comment on the fact that there was an order for the pentice to remain from the time the property had been divided, and that they knew it was in place when Hugh and Juliana took over the property.

Although these two related cases concerned the property and inheritance of three women from their mother, the social knowledge which was relied on was drawn specifically from the male residents who stood as jurors. Kane finds gendered patterns of remembrance of locations and boundaries from suits brought to the later medieval Canterbury and York church courts. Where women's testimonies centred more on domestic activities, men's emphasised their experiences with the world including labour activities and seignorial authority.[756] The reliance of the Assize on only male social memory may

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[750] For more on property ownership in medieval London see: Harding, 'Space, Property, and Propriety,' 550-6.
[751] Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Wills Proved and Enrolled in the Court of Husting, London,* Part 1: *1258-1358* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1889), 145.
[752] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.29. № 233.
'Et predictus Willelmis le Neue pro iniusto impedimento sit in misericordia'.
[753] A pentice is a roof extension which covers a porch or walkway. LMA, CLA/040/02/001 f.29d. № 234.
[754] LMA, CLA/040/02/001 f.29d. № 234. '*xviii visneti de Bredstrate*' Elsewhere the jury are referred to as *jurentur*.
[755] Berry, '"To Avoide All Envye,"' 210.
[756] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 230, 238.

privilege certain kinds of local knowledge, whilst obscuring the domestic. For example, the jurors' memory of the details of the partition at the time the solar changed hands may reflect interest in, or the exchange of knowledge about, legal matters and property ownership.

Proofs of Age are another source which draws on shared local knowledge and social memory. The normative accounts provided by jurors to explain and justify how they knew the age of the heir in question. Though the formulaic, repeated, and sometimes fabricated nature of the testimonies has been recognised, they still reflect the sharing of local knowledge between neighbours.[757] Joel Rosenthal and Fiona Harris-Stoertz both argue that behind these testimonies lies a process of repetition and information sharing amongst a broader group of residents. For example, John de Warmwell testified in 1354 that he remembered the birth of John, son of Henry Moigne, because he met John's godmother on her way to the baptism and so accompanied her to the chapel.[758] These recollections were then drawn upon by the inquisitions post-mortem to verify the age of an heir.[759] In his testimony on the age of Robert de la Legh in 1328, Walter de Ludeworth noted it was 'often computed [calculated] among themselves,' implying residents at South Wearmouth, County Durham, frequently recounted past, local events.[760] In this context, it was the social memory of local residents about others in the area which was utilised to verify when an heir had been born, and therefore whether they were old enough to inherit.

The neighbourly exchange of local, social knowledge underpins the role of juries in the London Assize of Nuisance cases. For example, in 1311 John le Triple complained that he had been unable to demolish and repair a ruinous stone wall between his tenement, on which his house was built, and St Stephen's church, Walbrook.[761] Despite John's protestations that the wall had become a danger through its dilapidation, itself a common cause of complaint found in the rolls, he was prevented from rebuilding by thirteen named parishioners.[762] The location of the disputed section of the wall is given as 'the part of the wall [which] is in the southern part of the said church, the length between the altar of the Blessed Virgin in the east and a certain corner in the west in the place [where] John Adrien, formally citizen of London, is said to be buried'.[763] Despite the proliferation of written records in later

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[757] Deller, 'Proofs of Age,' 136-8, 142-4.
[758] A.E. Stamp et al., eds. *Calendar of Inquisitions Post Moretem*, vol.14: *Edward III* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1952), 180, № 166.
[759] Rosenthal, *Telling Tales*, xxiii-xxiv; Harris-Stoertz, 'Remembering Birth,' 54-6.
[760] Sharp and Stamp, *Inquisitions*, vol.7, 138, № 171. South Wearmouth is now called Bishopwearmouth and is part of the city of Sunderland.
[761] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.18d. № 169.
[762] The defendants were: Peter le Blund, the parson of St. Stephen's, William de Hanyton, John Cotun, John de Cornwall, Gilbert atte Herst, Roger de Ely (fishmonger), Elias de Thorp, Geoffrey de Shropshire, Adam de Harewebrewe, Peter de Newcastle, Roger de Netlestede, Robert de la Marche (tailor), and Andrew Brunne.
[763] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.18d. № 169.

medieval England, there was still a reliance on physical features, places, and landscapes and the exchange of information and knowledge about them.[764] The church of St Stephen was located originally west of the Walbrook. In 1429 Robert Chichele gifted land east of the stream to build a new church.[765] The reasoning given for this move, as indicated in the royal licence for this gift, was that the church 'is so narrow that parishioners and others […] cannot get in to hear [Mass] without long waiting, and that there is no place sufficient and near enough for its enlargement and for a cemetery.'[766] It appears that before this the parish did not have a churchyard. John Adrien's burial place, therefore, was likely within the church. The location of the disputed wall would have been south of the church itself, between it and John's tenement.

The description of the wall implies that the name John Adrien was familiar to people living within the parish, probably because he had been a man of substance. A John Adrien (Adrian) is identified by Barron as a draper, who held the position of sheriff intermittently between February 1258 and April 1268 and then twice as mayor, 1269-1270 and 1270-1271.[767] According to his will, John left his 'capital messuage in the parish of St Andrew Hubert [Hubbard] towards the Tower' to his cook Geoffrey de Messendene.[768] His preferred burial location or his place of residence, however, are not given. The will, enrolled in 1285, leaves the remainder of his immovable goods to his wife, Cecily, and son, John, with the condition that they provided for his four daughters Margery, Denise, Alice, and Lucy.[769] Unfortunately, there is no other surviving evidence to link John Adrien and the parish of St Stephen. However, he is listed under Walbrook Ward, which included the parish of St Stephen's, when he served as sheriff.[770] If John lived in this area, his ascendancy to mayor would have made him known, and remembered, in the parish.

Implicit in the record of this dispute is that the location of John Adrian's burial was familiar and perhaps talked about locally. The earliest surviving civilian burial memorials in London date from the

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'pars muri est in australi parte dicte ecclesiae in longitudine inter quodam altare beate virginis in orientem et quodam angulum in occidentem ibi quidem Johannes Adrien quondam Ciuis London' dicitur fuisse inhumantum'.

[764] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender,* 215.

[765] John Schofield, 'Saxon and Medieval Parish Churches in the City of London: A Review,' *London and Middlesex Archaeological Society, Transactions* 45 (1994): 53, 107.

[766] Found in: Sydney Perks, *The History of the Mansion House* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1922), 110-1.

[767] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages,* 317-20. See also: 'Adrien, John (I)', *Medieval Londoners Database*, Fordham University, accessed 1st July 2022, https://mld.ace.fordham.edu/v2/s/mld/person?id=105.

[768] Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, part 1, 70.

[769] John Adrien's son and namesake likewise was a draper and sheriff from 1277 to 1278. Discussed further in: John McEwan, 'The Aldermen of London, c.1200-80: Alfred Beaven Revisited,' *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* 62 (2011): 200, n.85.

[770] For example: Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: B, c.1275-1312* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1900), 266.

end of the thirteenth century. They became more popular and established throughout the later medieval period, though two-dimensional grave covers existed before this.[771] Within this chronology, it is unlikely that John would have had a substantial grave-marker. Indeed, the lack of any obvious structure is indicated in the description of the wall. The extent of the wall is described in terms of where John was 'said to be buried' rather than through a reference to any physical marker.[772] In the absence of a memorial, knowledge about this burial site would have been perpetuated through a local, oral tradition and continued within the area due to John's influential position as mayor. This example supports Kane's argument that 'the build and natural environment' worked as a 'physical repository for the accumulation of social memory'.[773] Recounting figures of local importance, in addition to past events, topography, and property division was a practice of neighbourliness which shaped the way that space within the neighbourhood was understood. Simultaneously this social memory continued through reference to the built environment.

Concern for the safety and welfare of other residents was another aspect of neighbourly behaviour found in the Assize of Nuisance rolls. In 1322, Roger, the parson of All Hallows, Gracechurch Street, and seven named parishioners were summoned to answer a complaint about an obstructed way.[774] Gregory de Norton, common serjeant, representing the city of London complained that these men had built a stone wall with a gate which had blocked a street near the cemetery of All Hallows, south of the high street.[775] Norton claimed that this was customarily a common way. Vanessa Harding notes that whilst high streets were public and common spaces, side streets and alleys were more ambiguous, influenced by the private buildings adjoining them.[776] The defendants claimed that this street belonged to the church. Moreover, when:

> it was asked of the aforementioned Roger, Arnold, Robert, and others if they knew anything else of the said street whereby judgement should be deferred. They said that when the said street was common and unobstructed, evildoers were accustomed to hide

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[771] Nigel Saul, *Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 238. Sally Badham notes in highly populated areas, older intramural memorials were sometimes removed to create more space. Sally Badham, *Seeking Salvation: Commemorating the Dead in the Late-Medieval English Parish* (Donington: Shaun Tyas, 2015), 211.

[772] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.18d. № 169. *'dicitur fuisse inhumantum'.*

[773] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender,* 212.

[774] The parishioners were: Arnold le Chaundeler, Robert le Barber, Richard le Cordewaner, Robert de Stratford, Cambin Fulberd, Peter de Herlyng, taverner, and John Scot.

[775] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.33d. № 260.

[776] Harding, 'Space, Property, and Propriety,' 561.

in that place by night so as to ambush people passing through the street and for this reason they blocked that street.[777]

The argument made by Roger and his parishioners was that the building of the wall and gate was in fact part of an attempt to improve the safety of the area by preventing people from ambushing others as they passed. Whether or not this was their primary motivation, this argument was used to try and persuade the mayor and aldermen that their alterations benefited people living in the neighbourhood. The mayor and aldermen, however, took a different view on the issue of maintaining order in the area in this case.[778] Roger and his parishioners thus were ordered to remove the obstruction.

The involvement of the seven named men who stood as defendants indicates their pre-eminent position in All Hallows parish, possibly as past or serving churchwardens or as parish governors, as identified by Burgess and Forrest.[779] Their claim that they built a wall across a street near the church to prevent 'evildoers' from ambushing passers-by evokes a neighbourly concern for other parishioners and inhabitants. Such behaviour on the part of the parson and a group of leading parishioners resonates with McSheffrey's observation that senior male householders extended their supervision of their households into the surrounding neighbourhood.[780] While McSheffrey discusses this responsibility in terms of the marriage-making and moral behaviour of inhabitants, the broader argument about patriarchal supervision and responsibility within a locality speaks to this example too. The position of the defendants within the institutional framework of the parish, plus their status as male householders, would have shaped the way that they enacted cultural expectations of neighbourliness, plus their ability to take decisive action to protect residents.

The obligation of residents not to cause harm to their neighbours is central to another Nuisance case from 1377. Here the plaintiffs are substantial landlords, John and Petronilla Northampton, acting on behalf of their tenant against an institutional landlord, namely the Friars Minor represented by their guardian, William Newe.[781] John and Petronilla owned seven messuages on Pentecost Lane in the

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[777] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.33d. № 260. *'Et petitus est a prefatis Rogero Arnoldo Roberto et alijs si quid sciebant dicte per quod iudicium inde debuit retardari. qui dicunt quod quando dicta via erat ita communis et non obstructa quod malefactores ibidem latitare noctantes solebant ad insidiand homines per viam transeuntes et quod ob hanc causam illam viam obstruxerunt'.*

[778] Scholarship has pointed to the concern of municipal authorities to maintain the accessibility and cleanliness of city streets. This work usually focuses on the period following the Black Death. In this example, nevertheless, we can see the mayor and aldermen working to ensure perceived sites of common access were maintained, even before the plague. Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street,' 107, 113; Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies*, 3, 7, 11, 27, 39, 134-5, etc.; Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 125, 262.

[779] Burgess, 'Shaping the Parish,' 262, 268-9; Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 165.

[780] McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 252, 266.

[781] There is evidence additionally of a longstanding dispute between John and Petronilla Northampton and the Friars Minor. In 1396 the Franciscans' warden, John Lyes initiated a nuisance suit against John Northampton

parish of St Nicholas Shambles, London. The Franciscan priory had undergone *ad hoc* expansion since acquiring the site in 1225, including into St Nicholas' parish in the first half of the fourteenth century.[782] John and Petronilla claimed the water, which flowed from these houses and the gutters, passed through the garden of the priory to reach Houndsditch located outside the city walls. William Newe, however, had built a stone wall across the lane near the messuages and the Friars' garden which blocked the aperture via an iron grating. The couple argued the blockage was:

> such that the waters […] cannot flow but in times of rain, hail, and snow, it flows back and enters into the said messuages and often appear to rise up and devour and destroy all the inhabitants in the same messuages together with the children of their tenants, their goods and chattels and to make the timber rotten and cause the walls of the same messuages to collapse such that John and Petronilla 'can get no profit from their houses or maintain them in adequate repair' to their great harm.[783]

This unusually detailed complaint is evocative and emphasises the danger faced by the residents of Pentecost Lane. The description works rhetorically to demonstrate the damage caused by the building work and the seriousness of the nuisance. In addition, the complaint portrays the plaintiffs as individuals who were concerned for the safety of their tenants in Pentecost Lane.

John Northampton (d. 1398) was a prominent political figure in late fourteenth-century London serving as alderman (1375), sheriff (1376), and mayor (1381-3).[784] Not only did he serve as mayor during the Peasants' Revolt, John played a key role in the civic factionalism which beset London in the late 1370s and 1380s. John had married Petronilla, his second wife, by 1375 and the couple held extensive property throughout the city. Silvia Thrupp numbers seventy 'items of property' owned by

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concerning his property in St Nicholas' parish. A.H. Thomas, ed. *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls of the City of London*, vol.3: 1381-1412 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 239.

[782] Jens Röhrkasten, *The Mendicant Houses of Medieval London, 1221-1539* (Münster: Lit Verlag, 2004), 43-4, 48-50.

[783] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.40. № 618.
'*ita quod aquae … currere nequeant set in mesuagiis predictis temporibus pluuiosis grandinum et nivium refluunt et ingrediuntur et omnes habitants in eisdem mesuagiis vna cum pueris tenentum eorundem bonis et catallis suis saepius emergere consumer et adnichilare videntur et maerementum et parietes eorundem mesuagiorum suorum predictorum factere non possunt nec ea congrue sustentare ad graue nocumentum.*'
English translation from: my own translation and, quoted, Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance*, 161-2.
The London Coroners' Rolls do not appear to include any deaths from this area related to drowning. Three deaths are recorded from drowning near or in Houndesditch, two in the 1330s and one in the 1370s, but these took place in Portsoken ward located on the other side of the city to the parish of St Nicholas Shambles. These cases are: LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/006 № 19; CLA/041/IQ/01/008, № 4; CLA/041/IQ/01/009, № 3. Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls,* 190, 239, 275.

[784] Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: H*, 16; Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 333-4. See also: 'Northampton, John de (II)', *Medieval Londoners Database*, Fordham University, accessed 1st July 2022, https://mld.ace.fordham.edu/s/mld/person?id=513.

John throughout London.[785] His will references multiple tenements, for example tenements known as 'le hood' in All Hallows the Great, shops in the parish of St Mary le Bow, as well as land and tenements in Hoggeston, Shoreditch, and Iseldon parish.[786] References to tenants living in the messuages on Pentecost Lane make it clear that John and Petronilla did not live there. Nevertheless, as landowners in medieval London they still had responsibility over the building work and repairs of their properties.[787] In a discussion of urban housing during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Rees Jones suggests that the landlord-tenant relationship helped to create a social hierarchy of dependence. Although the patronal aspect to these relationships may have become 'archaic' by c.1300, it is likely that this sense of a landlord's obligations towards their tenants underlies the suit made by John and Petronilla.[788]

It is conceivable that the attempt to evoke neighbourly obligations within the complaint made by John and Petronilla, moreover, were coloured by John's political career and the relationships he developed in this setting.[789] This is suggested by the proceedings of the suit. The record for their complaint notes that, because there was a question of 'fraud and trickery' (*fraus et cautela*) among the parties, a local jury was summoned to help determine the case.[790] This suit was brought to the mayor and aldermen in October 1377, seven months after John's political rival, Nicholas Brembre, had been sworn in as mayor.[791]

John and Nicholas were significant figures in opposing political factions in London. John Northampton, whilst serving as alderman, and his faction were involved in the controversial changes made to London's civic government in 1376.[792] The election of the Common Councillors was changed from a

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[785] Sylvia L. Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London, 1300-1500* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 120.

[786] Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, part 2, 333-5.

[787] Harding, 'Space, Property, and Propriety,' 557.

[788] Rees Jones, 'Building Domesticity,' 77-83, 89.

[789] John Northampton was actively engaged in the complex vying of control of political and economic power within the city but also between London, Parliament and the Crown. He has been characterised by his hostility towards aliens engaged in commerce in London, particularly Italian merchants, as well as the monopolies of wealthy victuallers in civic office, particularly the fishmongers. He was elected mayor of London in 1381, a position which he held until 1383. Whilst mayor he worked to tighten control over price regulation of foodstuffs and instigated a morality campaign in the city. John Northampton's political career did not end successfully. In 1383 he lost support from the Crown and the following year was arrested for sedition. Although initially sentenced to death, this was commuted to imprisonment outside of London. John was pardoned in 1386 but was only restored to his citizenship in 1395. For more detail on the political career of John Northampton see: Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 126-87; Pamela Nightingale, 'Capitalists, Crafts and Constitutional Change in Late Fourteenth Century London,' *Past and Present* 124, no.1 (1989): 3-35; Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: H*, i-vii; Thrupp, *The Merchant Class of Medieval London,* 76-80.

[790] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.40. № 618.

[791] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages,* 333-4.

[792] The catalyst for this was the impeachment of three Londoners, including John Pecche (see page 154), in the Good Parliament. Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 133-4.

selection based on ward to one based on guild affiliation. Furthermore, the consent of the majority of these councillors was required to validate any ordinance made by the mayor and aldermen.[793] In this year, John additionally served as sheriff. By 1377, however, John Northampton's standing in London had waned due to his association with John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. John of Gaunt was regarded with suspicion in London due to fears around his encroachment over the city's legal jurisdiction.[794] Nicholas Brembre, however, won the following mayoral election and the changes made to the Common Council was reversed. In May 1377 John Northampton's political allies were removed from public office by the Common Council.[795] There is no reasoning or detail provided in the Nuisance rolls for why John and Petronilla were suspected of fraud by the mayor and aldermen in their complaint. Nevertheless, this appears consistent with John's rivalry with Nicholas Brembre. Later, in 1384, Nicholas had John arrested on charges of inciting insurrection.[796] We can see, therefore, how John's political relationships impinged upon the obligations he had towards his tenants and landlord and to helping to maintain the safety of a locality.

The Northamptons may have chosen to stand up for their tenants against a powerful neighbour, but a case from the London coroners' rolls suggests that neighbours might also try to protect each other. On 24th March 1325, Walter de Benigtone, a tailor, along with seventeen unknown companions, allegedly entered the brewhouse belonging to Gilbert de Mordone, a stockfishmonger.[797] After these men had spent some time there drinking, it became apparent that they were armed with swords, knives, and 'stones in their hoods' and that their intention was to abduct Gilbert's ward Emma.[798] Walter and his companions refused to leave, when asked by Mabel, Gilbert's wife, and their brewer, Geoffrey, replying that they would stay to spend their money, even if they were unwelcome. Emma

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[793] Nightingale, 'Capitalists, Crafts and Constitutional Change,' 19; Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 134.

[794] Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 136.

[795] Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London:* H, 64; Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 136-7.

[796] Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 140.

[797] Stock-fish was a form of inexpensive, dried cod which fed the high demand for preserved foodstuffs in medieval England. Justyna Wubs-Mrozewicz, 'Fish, Stock and Barrel: Changes in the Stockfish Trade in Northern Europe, c.1360-1560,' in *Beyond the Catch: Fisheries of the North Atlantic, the North Sea and the Baltic, 900-1850*, ed. Louis Sicking and Darlene Abreu-Ferreira (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 187-9; Justin Colson, 'Negotiating Merchant Identities: The Stockfishmongers and London's Companies Merging and Dividing, c.1450-1550,' in *Medieval Merchants and Money: Essays in Honour of James L. Bolton*, eds. Martin Allen and Matthew Davies (London: Institute of Historical Research, 2016), 8.

[798] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/004, № 24. '*cum lapidibus in capucus*'. English translation from: Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls*, 115. This was also not the only wardship Gilbert took on. In May 1314 he became guardian to Johanna the daughter of Thomas le Wodere, along with his wife at the time Leticia, who was also Johanna's mother. Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: E, 1314-1337* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1903), 24.

was a wealthy heiress and by abducting her Walter would have gained control of her marriage and inheritance.[799]

When the intentions of Walter and his companions became clear, Mabel retreated with Emma into her chamber. The men became angry and began to attack Geoffrey and another man, Robert de Mordone, driving them into the high street, presumably Thames Street.[800] The narrative describes Walter as having a knife and a misericorde, a type of dagger, one in each hand with the intent of killing Robert. Robert then raised the hue and cry. 'Benedict de Warde and other neighbours [*alii vicini*] came there in order to calm the dispute,' but when Walter also attacked Benedict, he struck Walter on the head with a staff.[801] Walter must have sustained a serious head injury from this and he was 'carried by Walter de Arderne and Christina his wife into the lane of St Michael aforesaid, where they laid him on the pavement near the well.'[802] The next morning, Walter was found still alive and was taken to 'the house of Geoffrey de Warde' in the parish of St Michael, in Bridge Ward, where he died.[803] The neighbours of Gilbert, including Benedict, went to support Gilbert's household when the hue was raised.[804] No more information is given about Benedict or the 'other neighbours'. The roll simply states that Benedict had no chattels. Their efforts to pacify the conflict which had arisen suggests a willingness of neighbours to look after their own and prevent trouble.

Our initial reading of this case masks the complexity of relationships that actually existed between these neighbours. Indeed, spatial propinquity was not necessarily the key factor that explains the willingness of Benedict de Warde and other neighbours to intervene. Gilbert de Mordone appears to have been a man of some wealth and influence, who was elected sheriff six months later in September

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[799] Caroline Dunn, *Stolen Women in Medieval England: Rape, Abduction, and Adultery, 1100-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 82-89. She would have been around sixteen years old at the time as in 1314 she was described as five-years-old. In that year Emma was left £10 in the will of her father, Robert de Astone. Letter Book E includes a record, also from 1314, of Gilbert's acknowledgement of the receipt of £30 for Emma, as her guardian and executor for Robert. Gilbert was also mentioned in Robert's will, enrolled in the Court of Hustings 1313-1314, being left the remainder after bequests of property and money to his wife and children. Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: E,* 28-9. Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, part 1, 246-7.
For more on the procedure of guardianship over the orphans of London's citizens see: Elaine Clark, 'City Orphans and Custody Laws in Medieval England,' *American Journal of Legal History* 34, no.2 (1990): 170–72; Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London*, 89-108.
[800] Gilbert's will, enrolled in the Court of Hustings in 1327, bequeathed his houses and shops in Thames Street to his wife Mabel. Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, part 1, 326-7.
[801] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/004. № 24. '*Benedictus de Warde et alij vicinj ad contentioni predictam pacificandum ibidem venerunt.*' My own English translation.
[802] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/004. № 24. '*et abinde per Walterum de Arderne et Cristinam vxorem eius deportatus fuit in venellam sancti michis predicti et ibidem super pauimentum iuxta fontem*'. English translation from: Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls*, 115-6.
[803] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/004. № 24. '*in predictam domum Galfridi de Warde*'. My own English translation.
[804] For more on the hue and cry see: Samantha Sagui, 'The Hue and Cry in Medieval English Towns,' *Historical Research* 87, no.236 (2014): 179; Miriam Müller, 'Social Control and the Hue and Cry in Two Fourteenth-Century Villages,' *Journal of Medieval History* 31, no.1 (2005): 31-2; Olson, *A Mute Gospel,* 42.

1325.[805] Gilbert was part of a network of substantial male victuallers who were active in civic life. They included Robert de Mordone, who raised the hue, and also the four nearest neighbours attached to the case, Richard and John Gubbe, Walter de Mordone, and Roger Sterre. The group identified as neighbours and named in the verdict concerning Walter's death can be shown to have been linked through residency, occupation, civic activity, and probably kinship. Although bynames remained unstable during this period, the shared bynames of Gilbert, Walter, and Robert de Mordone, and of Richard and John Gubbe may indicate they were related.[806] Gilbert, Walter, and Robert de Mordone, Richard and John Gubbe, and Roger Sterre are recorded on various occasions acting together as witnesses to leases of tenements or as sureties for guardianship cases which often involved other stockfishmongers.[807] Additionally, Walter de Mordone, a stockfishmonger, is listed alongside Gilbert de Mordone when they both lent 20s. to the Crown in February 1320.[808] In 1338 they were two of eleven chosen from Bridge Street ward as watchmen to help safeguard the city.[809] Walter further went on to hold the positions of sheriff in 1335-6 and alderman in 1345.[810]

It is possible to show more fully in this case how the neighbours who acted together were linked socially, occupationally, and by ties of spatial propinquity. The jurors' verdict identifies that Walter de Mordone was the householder of the house in the parish of St Michael, Bridge Ward where Walter de Benigtone had died. Walter de Mordone was to be a co-witness with John Gubbe in 1347 for the lease to a stockfishmonger of a tenement described as 'near Candlewykestrete, situated near the tenements of John Lovekyn and John Gubbe.'[811] Patterns of residency for London's stockfishmongers can be characterised by occupational zoning. Stockfishmongers appear to have clustered tightly within the parishes of St Michael Crooked Lane and St Magnus the Martyr close to the Fish Wharf by London Bridge.[812] Bridge Street, moreover, was a primary area of trade for fishmongers and

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[805] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages,* 328. In February 1320 he had lent 20s. to the civic authorities to send presents to the royal court after the King returned from York. In 1338 he was one of a dozen men chosen from Bridge Ward to help safeguard the city, which included conducting patrols and, more generally, keeping the king's Peace. Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: E,* 129-30; Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: F, c.1337-1352* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1904), 22.

[806] Emily Steiner, 'Naming and Allegory in Late Medieval England,' *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 106, no.2 (2007): 250-1.

[807] Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: E,* 178, 180-1; Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: F*, 170, 183-4; Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: B*, 232; Reginald R. Sharpe, ed., *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: C, c.1291-1302* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1901), 181.

[808] Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: E,* 129-30.

[809] Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: F,* 22.

[810] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 329; Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: F*, 136.

[811] Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: F*, 183-4. John Lovekyn was another stockfishmonger. A John Lovekyn also served as sheriff in 1342-3, and mayor 1348-9, 1358-9, and January 1366-7. Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 330-2.

[812] Colson, 'London's Forgotten Company?' 31.

stockfishmongers.[813] Evidence from the deeds and wills from the Hustings Court suggests that a large proportion of the tenants and owners of property in the parish of St Michael Crooked Lane were either fishmongers or stockfishmongers.[814] Harding argues that such neighbourhood zoning had the potential to 'effectively exclude other groups or individuals from using streets or lanes'.[815] In the same vein, Wrightson argues that occupational zoning in the early modern period helped build solidarity and 'street communities'.[816] This was a particularly strong factor in the case of London's stockfishmongers. Colson explains this close association as due to the retail of watered stockfish being confined to the area of Stockfishmonger Row on Thames Street. This clustering, Colson identifies, would provide 'access to specialist knowledge, infrastructure, and also to best access their customers.'[817] The close ties which would have existed between the stockfishmongers who lived near to Gilbert through their occupation may have compounded their sense of neighbourly obligation to aid him when the hue was raised.

This section of this chapter has explored expectations held of neighbours predicated on a broad sense of spatial proximity, applying to those living locally, within a neighbourhood. As the examples from the Assize of Nuisance rolls demonstrate, there was a cultural understanding that neighbours would share knowledge about their local topography, including the layout of roads and buildings. As we see with the example of the burial place of John Adrian, and as argued by Kane, important local figures or events may be tied to this topography within the social memory of the neighbourhood.[818] Also linked to the physical space of the neighbourhood, there appears to have been an expectation that neighbours would play an active role in maintaining the built environment, whether it be pavements or walls. This expectation was related to another obligation towards the safety of other residents, and this too applied more generally to providing aid to neighbours in danger. The next section will refine our focus from neighbours generally to the particular expectations incumbent on those who lived next door, or at least very close, to one another.

Living in the Immediate Vicinity

Continuing first with expectations around the welfare and safety of other neighbours, we can see through nuisance complaints how these were applied in a more specific way with obligations between those living next door. The complaints against freeholders brought under the Assize centred around

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[813] Trevor Bringham, Tony Dyson and Bruce Watson, 'Saxo-Norman, Medieval and Post-Medieval Development at Regis House, London EC4,' *Transactions of the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society* 61 (2010): 99.
[814] Bringham, Dyson and Watson, 'Regis House, London,' 99. See also: 99-104.
[815] Harding, 'Space, Property, and Propriety,' 562.
[816] Wrightson, *English Society,* 36.
[817] Colson, 'London's Forgotten Company?' 32-3.
[818] Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 216.

the overarching issue of encroachment onto plaintiffs' property. This is to be expected from the rolls, which deal exclusively in nuisances relating to property. Yet a more in depth consideration of these complaints in relation to neighbours can be illuminating. Cases brought under the Assize show how, rather than, or in addition to, generally contributing to maintaining the built environment of the area, property-owners were to prevent their own building work from physically encroaching onto the space of others. In April 1329 Andrew Aubrey of the parish of All Hallows, Breadstreet, complained that a stone-wall from the adjacent plot of land overhung to such an extent that he was unable to build on his own property.[819] The London mayor and aldermen, together with a group of master masons and carpenters, inspected the site and judged that the wall extended over Andrew's land by 5 to 5¾ inches. The defendants were ordered to rectify this nuisance. Robert de Foleham and his wife Albreda were summoned in 1303 because their stone wall in the parish of St Magnus the Martyr, which Hugh and Margaret Pourte argued was so ruinous that it was 'to the grave nuisance and danger to the life of Hugh and Margaret and also of all the people [*totius populi*] there'.[820] Complaints about hazardous buildings easily fell under the purview of the Assize as in many of these cases the nuisance risked causing damage to both the property and the plaintiff.

Many complaints made against householders related to inappropriate water disposal. As Chew and Kellaway have outlined, it was customary for householders to make their own provisions to ensure rainwater was conveyed onto either their own land or the street.[821] If householders failed to maintain proper means of conducting rainwater from their property it might fall onto that of their neighbours. Schofield attributes 138 out of 547 specific complaints (24%) in the rolls to water disposal.[822] This was actionable under the Assize as, beyond being an inconvenience, rainwater could cause damage such as rot. Christine Tylly and Henry de Denecombe made a complaint against Nicholas de Perndon in November 1322 for obstructing a drain which ran near their houses. They argued:

> it was custom for there to be a stream between the properties to lead water away both
> from the houses of the same Christine and Henry and also from those of the other
> neighbours [*aliorum vicinorum*] and also of the said Nicholas as far as la More
> [Moorfields: London's extramural moor]. This same Nicholas blocked the said stream in

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[819] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.43. № 304.
[820] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.5. № 53.
'*ad grauem nocumentum et periculum vitae ipsorum hugonis et margaretis necnon totius populi ibidem*'.
[821] Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* xxiii.
[822] Schofield, *London Houses*, 59.

front of their properties so that, with rainy weather, the garden of the said Christine and

Henry, with plants growing there, is flooded over to a hight of one foot and a half.[823]

Similarly, in 1348 the Wardens of London Bridge, Alan Gille and John de Hardyngham, brought a case against the rector of St Margaret Moses, Fridaystreet. The wardens claimed that the rector's building work and removal of a 40ft long gutter on the west side of the church meant that the party-walls and foundations of a tenement of the Bridge had become rotten.[824] These suits give the impression that those with property next door to one another were expected to maintain a level of spatial and structural containment. By extension, building-work such as walls or overhangs were not to encroach on an adjoining property. In the same way, householders were to prevent threats, in the form of water of falling materials, from affecting adjoining inhabitants.

As complaints made against property holders further demonstrate, impinging on neighbours was not restricted to the physical property or its runoff. As Diane Shaw notes, neighbours also might impinge on others in the form of noise and even smell.[825] In one much cited case from 1314, Alice Wade created a nuisance for her neighbours when she connected her privy to the communal gutter which ran under a number of adjacent properties, causing obstructions.[826] As a result, 'the neighbours [*vicini*], under whose house the gutter is, are vilely oppressed by the odour of this excrement'.[827] In another example, Thomas Yonge and Alice, his wife, brought a complaint in 1377 against an adjoining tenement in the parish of St Augustine by St Paul's Gate.[828] Thomas and Alice listed many issues in their suit, but the main cause of complaint appears to be the tenant, Stephen atte Fryth, who was an armourer, practicing his craft in a forge built on the property. According to the couple, the sound of hammers on the anvil was 'keeping Thomas and Alice and their servants from their rest and disturbing [them] day and night'.[829] The tremors resulting from the hammering allegedly damaged their walls and spoiled

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[823] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.34. № 266. *'et quidam riuolus inter dicta tenementa esse solebat ad conducendum aquam tam de domibus ipsorum cristine et Henrici quam aliorum vicinorum ac etiam dicti Nicholi, usque la more, idem Nicholis dictum Riuolum contra tenementa suorum obstruxit, ita quod, tempore pluuioso, gardinum dictorum cristine et Henrici cum herbis inde cressentibus, super undata altitudine unvm pedis et dimidii'.*
[824] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.62d. № 416.
[825] Diane Shaw, 'The Construction of the Private in Medieval London,' *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 26, no.3 (1996): 452-3.
[826] Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London*, 28; Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies*, 187; Piers D. Mitchell, *Sanitation, Latrines and Intestinal Parasites in Past Populations*, (London: Routledge, 2015), 78; Ernest L. Sabine, 'Latrines and Cesspools of Mediaeval London,' *Speculum* 9, no.3 (1934): 312.
[827] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.24. № 214.
'vicini sub quorum domibus guttera existit per feditatem huius ordure viliciter aggrauantem et cetra'.
[828] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.39d. № 617. Geoffrey Chadenesfeld, Walter Selsham, and William Whetele, who had let the property to Stephen, refuted the plaintiffs' claim, arguing that honest men of any craft had the right to work anywhere within the city.
[829] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.39d. № 617. *'necnon eos Thomam et Alicam et seruientes suos de requie sua habendo die ac nocte inquietando et perturbant'*.

the wine and ale in their cellar. Moreover, 'the stench of the smoke coming from the sea coal burning in the same workshop, enters into the hall and chambers of Thomas and Alice.'[830] These cases tell us about how relations between neighbours could turn sour. In doing so, however, they also imply what the norms surrounding good neighbourliness were. Neighbours dwelling next door were expected to have regard for one another in terms of building work, effluence, and noise. That these issues were understood in terms of neighbourliness is suggested when we look at ways the language surrounding the relationship of neighbour was used both in the plaints and the judgements contained within the Assize of Nuisance rolls.

For each case, the rolls include an explanation of the issue brought to the mayor and aldermen and why the plaintiffs believed it constituted a nuisance. Not all suits entered in the rolls record a judgement. Where they are recorded, judgements sometimes include an explanation of why the defendant was to remove the nuisance. In October 1336, William de Iford, on behalf of the city of London complained about a dilapidated wall belonging to Henry and Isabel de Sutton which faced onto a street in the parish of St Mary Aldermary. William argued that 'the said wall being ruinous then collapsed to the terror of all the neighbours [*omnium vicinorum*] living there and the others passing through the same street.'[831] References to neighbours would evoke the underlying connotations the word held. If, as argued, there was a cultural norm that residents would help to maintain its built environment for the safety of those living there, Henry and Isabel had not lived up to this expectation. William drew attention to the neighbours' terror caused by the collapsing wall to emphasise the nuisance and to ensure that it was rectified. Indeed, by way of remedy the mayor and aldermen ordered that the wall be demolished within forty days. In a similar action, Christine Tylly and Henry de Denecombe alleged in 1322 that Nicholas de Perndon had obstructed an open stream.[832] Their complaint described the stream in question as one which carried water 'from the houses of the same Christine and Henry and the other neighbours [*aliorum vicinorum*]'.[833] The actual plaint in this case seems to concern only the property of Christine and Henry. This follows the requirement for a nuisance to have caused damage to the plaintiffs. Their reference to 'the other neighbours', however, implies that the alleged damage affected a larger group of people than just Christine and Henry,

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[830] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.39d. № 617. *'et etiam fetor fumi de carbonibus maris in ea fabrica ardentibus exiens intrat in aulam et cameras eorum Thome et Alicie'.*

[831] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.50. № 334. *'dictum murum ita ruinosum stare periuit tunc in terrorem omnium vicinorum ibidem habitantum et aliorum per eundem vicum transientium'.*

[832] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.34. № 266.

[833] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.34. № 266.
'conducendum aquam tam de domibus ipsorum Cristine et henrici quam aliorum vicinorum'.

compounding the seriousness of the issue. By evoking this relationship, the plaintiffs sought to demonstrate that Nicholas' actions were unneighbourly.

The inclusion of references to the welfare of neighbours within nuisance complaints suggests these arguments became legal strategies. These strategies, however, were not solely employed by litigants but became part of the magisterial discourse of the city governors. The judgements given by the mayor and aldermen recorded in the rolls, also use the noun *vicinus*. William le Mareschal was summoned in 1305 to answer Robert le Barber in respect of various complaints about his property in the parish of All Hallows, Gracechurch Street. The alleged nuisances included a gutter which deposited rainwater at Robert's door, a jetty obstructing the view from his windows, and a dangerous chimney. Robert described the chimney as 'placed so close to his wall at the risk of setting fire to his house'.[834] The order that Robert should rectify these nuisances, however, includes the explanation that he was to rebuild the chimney 'such that the house of the said Robert and of the other neighbours [*aliorum vicinorum*] may not incur danger from fire.'[835] The risk of fire had wider implications than simply Robert and other neighbours. London had a history of significant conflagrations.[836] One serious fire in 1212 prompted fire prevention rules such as the prohibition of straw, reeds, or stubble roofing.[837] Yet the justification here for the judgement by the mayor and aldermen is couched in terms of the safety of William's neighbours. The use of *vicinus* n. in this way reminded William of his duties towards his neighbours and helped support the judgement made. Similarly, in another nuisance case from June 1307, Stephen de Abyndone's ruinous stone gable was described by the mayor and aldermen as being 'to the danger of all the neighbours [*omnium vicinorum*] and others passing.'[838]

Although *vicinus* n. was not used regularly within the legal discourse in the Assize of Nuisance rolls, when it was employed as a legal strategy it would have shaped understandings of how people should relate to their neighbours. Arguments evoking neighbourly behaviour would have influenced how people understood expectations around respecting boundaries and not causing nuisances, but also more intangible and abstract concerns around the welfare and safety of neighbours and the people of the neighbourhood. Rees Jones argues discourses of nuisance and neighbourliness allowed people to 'shape and give meaning in their lived environment,' influencing social relations.[839] The nuisance suits

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[834] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.8. № 77.
'et caminum nimium continentem suum parieti sue in periculum incendii domus sue'.
[835] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.8. № 77. *'et quod caminum suum predictum ita faciat quod domus dicti Roberti nec aliorum vicinorum non incurrant periculum incendii et cetra'*.
[836] Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* ix.
[837] Schofield, *London Houses*, 4, 34. The regulation about roofing was later included in the wardmote articles and cases relating to these date till 1422. Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* xi.
[838] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.12d. № 119. *'Stephano de Abyndone habet quandam gabulam lapideam domus sue ruinosam … ad periclum omnium vicinorum et aliorum ibidem transientium et cetra'*.
[839] Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street,' 120.

studied here date to before the plague. Building on Rees Jones' work, however, I argue they illustrate that a concern with the 'lived environment' was embedded in neighbourly relationships even before 1348.

So far this discussion of neighbourly expectations has centred largely on freeholders as it was this group who were able to bring actions under the Assize of Nuisance. This leaves open the question of how expectations around neighbours living in close proximity were coloured by status and to what extent did they differ between freeholders and tenants. Only freeholders were able to access the Assize which obscures our view of the expectations that came with living alongside neighbours as a tenant. Despite this focus, however, the source can still offer glimpses into neighbourly expectations beyond those who owned property. For example, in 1365, John Pecche and twenty-four other named plaintiffs made a complaint against William de Coloygne for two properties on one site in St Peter upon Cornhill.[840] The plaintiffs claimed that a tenement with an adjoining party-wall had seven windows but no fillet-gutter. As a result, rainwater fell on the land of the plaintiffs, in addition to 'diverse waste and other outrageous things' thrown out the windows by William's tenants.[841] Separately, William also had a house overlooking the plaintiffs' garden. This building had five gutters and twelve windows which caused similar nuisances and allowed William's tenants to see 'the intimate things' (*secreta*) of the plaintiff's tenants.

The large number of named plaintiffs in this case is unusual for the Assize of Nuisance rolls. We can identify John Pecche as probably the fishmonger who was variously Alderman for Walbrook (1349-76), Sheriff (1352-3), and Mayor (1361-2).[842] The remaining plaintiffs likely were his tenants living in his property in St Peter upon Cornhill. All the tenants listed were male and a significant number carry locative bynames, such as Thomas de Essex or Andrew de Cornewayll, which suggests they were migrants to the city. Goldberg uses poll tax returns from 1377 to suggest urban patterns of 'bachelor clustering' in Kingston Upon Hull and Colchester. He also points to attempts to limit this practice in early fifteenth-century London.[843] This pattern also appears to fit here. If these men were tenants of

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[840] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.15. № 525. The other plaintiffs were: John Moy, John Blaunche, William Passeware, Richard de Knoesle, Walter Bacheler, Thomas de Thornton, John de Mytford, Richard de Stokes, Thomas de Same, Robert Box, John de Pakenham, Thomas Fourneux, Hugh le Walssh, Adam Carlel, John de Redyng, John de Levendale, Michael de Cornewayll, Robert de Somersete, John de Kyrkeby, Thomas de Essex, Andrew de Cornewayll, John de Waudene and Adam de Chyppenham.

[841] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.15. № 525. '*per quas fenestras tenentes et seruientes prefati Willelmi de Coloygne diuersas putredines et alia facinora super solum predictorum Johannis Pecche et aliorum … iactant*'.

[842] Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 331-2. John Pecche was deprived of his position as Alderman in 1376 when he was impeached by the Good Parliament for wrongfully obtaining a monopoly to sell sweet wines from which he siphoned private profits. Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: H*, ii-iii. See also: 'Pecche, John (II)', *Medieval Londoners Database*, Fordham University, accessed 1st July 2022, https://mld.ace.fordham.edu/v2/s/mld/person?id=20405.

[843] Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 122-3.

John Pecche, the list of twenty-four names suggests their accommodation was made up of small rents or chambers within the overall tenement.

The appearance of John Pecche as plaintiff can be explained by the obligation of landlords to ensure their properties were habitable. Damage caused by rainwater due to a lack of guttering in the adjacent buildings would have been costly to John in terms of repairs as well as loss of rents. This issue was vocalised in the previously discussed nuisance complaint from the following decade brought by John and Petronilla Northampton who claimed that they could 'get no profit from their houses'.[844] William de Coloygne's failure to ensure the gutters were placed correctly on his property, therefore, was damaging to John Pecche as the landholder of the adjoining tenement. The motivation underlying the complaint against William de Coloygne, then, may have been an attempt by John to protect his profits from the property.

We should also consider the agency of the other plaintiffs. Jayne Rimmer argues that, compared to more prosperous urban tenants, those who lived in smaller and cheaper rents 'had less control over their tenancies'.[845] The large number of tenants listed in the action against William de Coloygne, however, suggests their active involvement in the case. Moreover, the allegations that were made emphasise the nuisances caused in relation to living next door and affected the tenants rather than simply threatening rental income. The condition of William's windows, the plaintiffs explained, meant his own tenants were able to observe the activities of those living opposite. William's tenants, additionally, allegedly dumped excrement and waste onto the adjoining tenement and into the garden. This would have made daily life unpleasant for those living in the property of John Pecche.

It is possible that John's tenants made use of leverage gained with the post-plague decline in the London property market to put pressure on John to take action against William.[846] Horrox argues that notions of 'good lordship' was applied widely in later medieval society, for example as 'good master', and included expectations to maintain the interests of those in their service.[847] This dynamic, within the context of a landlord-tenant relationship, may have been influential in bringing about the case against William. The appearance of John Pecche as plaintiff would have both given weight to the tenants' complaints and satisfied the legal requirement for plaintiffs to be freeholders. As we saw

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[844] LMA, CLA/040/02/002, f.40. № 618. '*et parietes eorundem mesuagiorum suorum predictorum factere non possunt nec ea congrue sustentare ad graue nocumentum.*' English translation from: my own translation and, quoted, Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance*, 161-2.

[845] Jayne Rimmer, 'The Language of Property: Vernacular in the Context of Late Medieval Urban Identities,' in *Vernacularity in England and Wales, c.1300-1550*, eds. Elizabeth Salter and Helen Wicker (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 284.

[846] Harding, 'Space, Property, and Propriety,' 563.

[847] Horrox, 'Service,' 66-8.

earlier, neighbourly concern towards maintaining the safety of a locality for residents remained part of the responsibility of absentee property owners or landlords. Whilst the alleged nuisances would have been a cause for concern for John as a landlord, the complaint may well have originated with his tenants.

The issues raised by the tenants in St Peter upon Cornhill highlight the question of whether there was a difference in how neighbourly behaviour was understood between tenants and more substantial freeholders. Rees Jones suggests that frequent complaints against rents found in London's Wardmote rolls from the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries suggests 'some division between the interests of more permanent or substantial householders, who tended to act as jurors [in the Wardmote court], and more transient or poorer tenants.'[848] The motivations and interests of freeholders and tenants no doubt differed, sometimes considerably. What this case demonstrates, however, is a set of shared expectations regarding neighbourly relations. The complaints made by the tenants reflect their position as residents adversely impacted by their neighbours.

Neighbours who lived in the immediate vicinity were well placed to be informed about people's lives. Nuisance complaints, such as that made against William de Coloygne, exemplify the potential for neighbours to observe the activities of those living next door. The ability of immediate neighbours to gain knowledge about other residents, predicated on their physical proximity, is also evident within marriage suit and defamation depositions found in church court records. With the former, we see neighbours who claim to have observed and overheard couples through windows, doors, or even holes in walls. In a case brought to the Court of York in 1356, Margaret Theker deposed that she had been taken ill whilst her husband was thatching the house of Robert Smith. Margaret, therefore, had laid down in the basement of Robert's house to rest. It was there, she deposed, that she witnessed Robert and Maud Schipyn having sex after contracting marriage in a cowshed, which she 'saw through the door of the said cellar'.[849]

Depositions, additionally, demonstrate the potential for neighbours to overhear conversations that took place within other houses. The London suit Joan Essex c. Agnes Badcock, from 1488 is illustrative of this. Rowland Bell, a deponent for the plaintiff, testified that whilst he was working in the workshop of his house, he 'heard a sound like an argument in the street'. In response, 'he went out into the street, and there he saw and heard Agnes defame Joan.'[850] John Buxton similarly deposed that, before

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[848] Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street,' 113.

[849] BIA, CP.E.70. *'vidit per hostium dicti cellarii'.* My own English translation.

[850] Essex c. Badcock, in McSheffrey, *Consistory.* '*iste juratus laborans in arte sua in opella domus habitacionis sue, audivit sonitum quasi objurgantem in dicta strata et tandem auditurus unde esse ille sonitus exivit in dictam stratam et ibidem vidit et audivit dictam Agnetem'.*

the alleged defamation, he was at home mid-morning when he 'heard John Badcock and Agnes his wife arguing together.'[851] We should be aware that such accounts of witnesses seeing and hearing into houses are always to some degree fictive and designed for the needs of one or other party in a court action. Martin Ingram argues that rather than chance encounters or normal activities, examples in early modern marriage suits of couples being witnessed together were 'carefully planned, legally purposeful' situations. Ingram suggests these occasions of spying were efforts by neighbours or local officials to charge couples who engaged in repeated sexual misbehaviour.[852] For the late medieval period, McSheffrey describes how some conversations involving marriage contracts were constructed to be overheard, for example through an open window.[853]

Whilst testimonies about peepholes could be contrived for cases in the church courts, as Lena Orlin reasons, that does not mean such examples were fictitious.[854] Orlin draws attention to the rise of building partitions and subdivisions in early modern London.[855] These divisions, made due to an increasingly dense population, resulted in residents 'sharing walls, chimney stacks, water supplies, cesspits, and a great deal of personal intelligence.'[856] Later medieval internal partition-walls were often insubstantial too.[857] This is illustrated by a complaint made to London's mayor and aldermen in December 1390. John Prene argued that whilst staying at the inn of Richard Moris in the parish of St Benet, Castle Baynard, two boxes with 100s. of silver and a bond worth the same were stolen from him when men broke through the wall to his room in the inn.[858] The often thin and insubstantial nature of walls enabled witnesses to see and hear between residencies.[859] References to holes within buildings, through which people could see between households, that were made in church court depositions, are reinforced by a complaint made under the Assize of Nuisance in 1333. The mayor and aldermen ordered an aperture made over the cellar of John de Armenters, held by William de Thorneye, to be blocked up. According to the complaint, this aperture was made by Andrew de Aubrey and Joan, his wife, in their room above and through which they could observe the intimacies (*secreta*)

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[851] Essex c. Badcock, in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. *'in dicta domo habitacionis istius jurati inter horas xcem et xi dicti diei audivit et vidit iste juratus dictos Johannem Badcock et Agnetem eius uxorem insimul litigantes'.*

[852] Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 55, 71, 244-5.

[853] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 978.

[854] Lena Cowen Orlin, *Locating Privacy in Tudor London* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 188.

[855] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, 163, 181-3.

[856] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, 6.

[857] Schofield, *London Houses*, 149.

[858] Thomas, *Calendar of Plea and Memoranda Rolls,* vol.3, 172-3.

[859] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space and Situation,' 978.

of William's life.[860] It seems probable that in some instances, individuals had to deal with the reality of their neighbours' ability to see and hear into their household.

Cases found in London's Assize of Nuisance rolls not only demonstrate residents' knowledge of the physical space they inhabited but also about the neighbours who lived close by. When a complaint was lodged under the Assize, the sheriff was tasked with summoning the defendant. In three cases, the rolls record that it was 'testified by the neighbours [*per vicinos*] there, that the same William [son of William de Leyre] was not in town at the time of the summons'.[861] In one case from 1333, when the defendants did not appear, they were summoned again, 'in the presence of Robert de Benstede, William de Wedon, and William atte Herst, neighbours [*vicinorum*].'[862] Nicholas de Clare, likewise, was 'not in town' when the sheriff issued summons relating to a ruinous stone wall in St Mary Woolchurch in 1328, so it was noted that the sheriffs were 'to see that the said Nicholas is warned by these neighbours [*quibus vicinis*] that he should respond here in fifteen days from this day.'[863]

Tensions and Changes to the Nature of Neighbourliness

That people might sometimes have access to intimate details of their neighbours' lives was an inevitable, if contested, corollary of the expectation that residents would be knowledgeable about their neighbours and neighbourhood. We see this, for example in a nuisance case brought by Stephen le Mazerer in 1342 against John Gratefige and his brother Thomas in the parish of St Olave, Coleman Street Ward. Stephen complained the brothers' tenement overhung his land and was missing a gutter. In addition, their property had five windows which enabled John, Thomas, and their servants to see the activities of Stephen and his servants.[864] Complaints about overlooking windows are a common feature of the Nuisance rolls. Through a close study of the language used we can discern a dynamic pattern in how these alleged nuisances were described. In the period c.1300-c.1340, windows and other apertures complained of under the Assize are described as overlooking the plaintiffs' property.[865] For example, in 1312 William de Meleford, Archdeacon of Colchester, brought a complaint

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[860] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.49d. № 325.
[861] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.48d. № 319; see also № 274, 294.
'*testatum est per vicinos ibidem quod idem Willelmus non fuit in villa tempore summonitionis*'.
[862] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.49d. № 329. '*vocati fuerunt in presentia Roberti de Benstede Willelmi de Wedon et Willelmi atte herst vicinorum*'.
[863] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.42. № 299. '*predictus Nicholaus non fuit in villa*'.
'*vicecomites quibus vicinis quod praemunire faciant dictum Nicholaum quod sic hic ab isto die in xv dies responsurum et cetra*'.
[864] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.56d. № 378.
[865] From c.1316 windows facing another property in London were to be built no lower than sixteen feet from the ground. Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* xxv-xxvi. For more on the regulation of windows in London see: Janet S. Loengard, 'Common Law and Custom: Windows, Light, and Privacy in Late Medieval England,' in *Law, Lawyers and Texts: Studies in Medieval Legal History in Honour of Paul Brand*, eds. Christopher Whittick, Jonathan Rose, Susanne Jenks (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 279-98.

against three defendants, arguing 'they have certain apertures, on the earthen walls of their houses, bordering the garden and free tenement' of William.[866] From the early 1340s, until the end of the rolls c.1425, there is a definitive shift in how these complaints are recorded. Almost all state that as a result of the alleged nuisance the defendant, their household, or their tenants, are able to see the *secreta* of the plaintiffs.[867] William Baret complained in 1389 that the tenements of John Serieaunt, Robert Lyndeseye, and John Louthe had seven windows which opened onto William's tenement and garden. As a result, through these windows 'John, Robert, and John, their servants and household and also the lessees and tenants of the same […] see and are able to see the intimacies [*secreta*] of William, his tenants and his servants.'[868]

Historians often describe these later cases in terms of an invasion of privacy.[869] Shaw argues that concerns about neighbours overlooking land help to demonstrate how privacy was defined in relation to the physical boundaries of a property.[870] Shaw's argument has been critiqued by McSheffrey who reasons that medieval notions of privacy were more situational.[871] For example, private moments could be indicated by retiring to a corner of a room or drawing bed-curtains.[872] This idea that privacy aligns more with context, activity, and access, rather than being a spatial designation, is found elsewhere in the historiography.[873] Instead of a 'right to privacy', McSheffrey sees Assize of Nuisance cases as demonstrative of a concern about 'intimate things' (*secreta*) being made visible, that is, the 'personal aspects of domestic life'.[874]

What constitutes a private space is a question which has no easy answer and has prompted much discussion within medieval studies.[875] Rather than considering the complaints of being overlooked by neighbouring windows as a question of public versus private space, however, I argue it is more helpful to frame them as emblematic of the tensions over what aspects of life neighbours should have access

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[866] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.21. № 185. '*quasdam aperturas habent super parietes terreas domorum suarum que sunt contigue gardino et libero tenemento ipsius [Willelmi]*'.

[867] This trend also has been observed by Janet Loengard: Loengard, 'Common Law and Custom', 289.

[868] LMA, CLA/040/02/003, f.5. № 635.
'*per quas prefati Johannes Robertus et Johannes seruientes et familiares sui ac firmarii et tenentes eorundem … vident et videre possunt secreta predicti Willelmi tenentum et seruientum suorum*'.

[869] Schofield, *London Houses*, 105; Loengard, 'Common Law and Custom', 289; Shaw, 'Construction of the Private,' 454; Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* xxv.

[870] Shaw, 'Construction of the Private,' 459.

[871] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space and Situation,' 986.

[872] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, 174.

[873] Phillips, 'Public and Private,' 107, 120; Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space,' 248.

[874] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space and Situation,' 989.

[875] Goldberg, 'The Public and Private,' 76; McSheffrey, 'Place, Space and Situation,' 977, 986; Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, 1-15; Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space,' 248-51; Shaw, 'Construction of the Private,' 449-50. For a comprehensive outline of the discussion see: Phillips, 'Public and Private,' 105-126; McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 190-4.

to. There is little expansion on what *secreta* might refer to in these examples. A significant number of cases specify the offending apertures overlook the plaintiff's garden.[876] William Baret complained in 1389 that the seven windows in the tenements of three tailors in All Hallows Breadstreet, which overlooked his tenement and garden, meant that their household, servants, and tenants were able to see his *secreta* as well as those of his own tenants and servants.[877] During this period, latrines were often built as huts over lined pits in the garden, away from the house.[878] Two of the senses for the Latin adjective *secretus* in the *DMLBS* relate to latrines and genitalia.[879] It may have been this form of mundane, intimate aspects of people's lives which were the cause for concern. The term *secreta* might also refer to conversations which could be overheard. Gardens, especially in wealthier households, could provide a more secluded space to entertain guests, or even to make marriage contracts.[880] In 1356, John de Barton and Beatrice, his wife, argued that a door between their garden and that of the Priory of the Holy Cross meant that the prior's servants could hear as well as see their *secreta*.[881] It seems likely, therefore, that in some of the cases involving windows overlooking gardens, *secreta* referred to conversations and moments of sociability being overheard and overlooked.

The introduction of the term *secreta* into nuisance complaints from the 1340s suggests that the central issue of the nuisance shifted in focus towards a more abstract concern with being observed and overheard. There is a tension, then, between the social and legal expectation of neighbours in later medieval London and the boundaries, literal and metaphorical, that they were required to observe. On the one hand, neighbours were expected to be informed about, and relay information on, those living adjacent to them. The nature of the built environment meant that they often had access to see and overhear aspects of the lives of those living around them. Moreover, the sense that neighbours would be informed about the people and places of their neighbourhood reflected broader cultural norms about neighbours, determined by their relative spatial proximity. On the other hand, from at least the 1340s residents began to articulate the expectation that there were limits on how far neighbours might observe and overhear them going about their daily activities.

Concerns over being observed by neighbours was not something confined to substantial landowners. Several nuisance suits, such as the one brought by John Pecche and his tenants in 1365, indicate that tenants also placed limitations on what was an appropriate level of visibility between neighbouring

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[876] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, ff.21, 54, 66, 66d, 72, № 185, 362, 445, 446, 477; CLA/040/02/002, ff.11, 12, 15, 21d, 33d, 37, № 514, 519, 525, 549, 592, 609; CLA/040/02/003, ff.5, 7, 9, 11, № 635, 642, 648, 653.
[877] LMA, CLA/040/02/003, f.5, № 635.
[878] Anthony Quiney, *Town Houses of Medieval Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 94.
[879] DMLBS, *secretus*, 4e, 5b.
[880] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space and Situation,' 976; McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 124-6.
[881] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.72, № 477.

properties. Isabel, widow of John le Luter, brought a series of separate suits to the Assize in 1341 relating to being overlooked by neighbours.[882] In one of these cases Isabel claimed that John Trappe, a skinner, had four windows which overlooked her garden in the parish of St John Walbrook. Consequently, 'John and his household have a view into the garden of the said Isabel'.[883] Roger Beyvin, Isabel's father, left her several properties in his will, including rents in the parishes of St John Walbrook, to be divided equally with her sister Sabine.[884] By extension, then, it was Isabel's tenants who were overlooked by John and his household in this case. Isabel similarly complained about the windows or apertures (*foraminis*) of three adjoining properties in the parishes of St Stephen Walbrook and of St Antholin, which allowed the residents to overlook her properties and, in one case, let through the odours from their privy.[885] In a more explicit example, the prior of St. Bartholomew Smithfield reasoned that the multiple apertures in the houses belonging to Roger and Margaret Lachebrok constituted a nuisance because the couple and their tenants were able to see the *secreta* of his tenants.[886] The scattered references we find to the intimate business of tenants indicates that they shared ideals around neighbourly behaviour with their wealthier counterparts. Their expectations of their immediate neighbours were coloured, however, by their status as tenants which placed them in a much weaker position to seek legal recourse, unless they were able to solicit the support of their landlords.

What neighbours, living in close proximity, should and should not have access to, and to what extent they were informed about the lives of those living around them continued to cause tensions in the later fifteenth century. John Smyth deposed, in the marriage separation suit William Newport c. Isabel Newport from 1492, that the couple were his neighbours (*vicini*) and he frequently saw and heard them fighting in and around their house.[887] Concerns about being overseen or overheard are observed by McIntosh to have caused anxiety for people. This is seen in the rise in presentments for eavesdropping in town courts in the c.1370s, when her study begins, and the late 1430s.[888] This trend plateaued until the last decade of the fifteenth century, after which presentments began to slowly decline. That these presentments are connected to relationships with neighbours is suggested by

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[882] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, ff.54-54d. № 362-8.
[883] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.54. № 362. *'Johannes et familiares sui habent visum in gardino dicte Isabellae'*.
[884] Roger Beyvin's will was enrolled in 1277. Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, part 1, 29-30.
[885] LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.54d. № 363, 364, 366.
There is evidence that injunctions resulting from Isabel's complaints received some resistance; there is a precept from December, ordering the sheriffs to execute the judgement from the suit against John de Thorp in St Stephen Walbrook. John was to be fined 40s. for contempt. A similar action is recorded for the complaint brought against Joan relict of Simon Corp of the parish of St Antholin. LMA, CLA/040/02/001, f.54d. № 367-8.
[886] CLA/040/02/002, f.16. № 528.
[887] Newport c. Newport, in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
[888] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 57-61.

notes made in the court records which sometimes described these cases as disturbing peace between neighbours.[889]

In addition to those living in adjacent houses or properties, many of London's residents lived in rented, multiple occupancy houses, as is suggested by several of the Nuisance cases already discussed. Rental properties, referred to as rents, varied in size and houses could be divided into chambers and be let out to well over ten different households.[890] Both individual and institutional property-holders, such as parish churches and craft guilds, gained income from rents. During the fifteenth century, London's hospitals and religious houses increasingly built or converted property to rent to lay tenants.[891] Households could also supplement their income by taking in lodgers and tenants could themselves sub-divide and sub-lease properties.[892] What the examples of nuisance complaints involving tenants do not allow us to see are the tensions which might arise between neighbours living in chambers within the same multiple occupancy building. We see a glimpse of these tensions in a London marriage case from 1488. Testimony was given that Alice Parker worried about her suitor Richard Tenwinter staying the night in case he was seen by others who lived within the same property.[893] When Richard asked Alice to stay overnight, she was worried about her neighbour who occupied the adjacent room: 'she responded that she did not dare to do this because of fear of the butcher who was accustomed to rise early in the morning.'[894] Richard Adcock similarly deposed that 'at first she said no and said that she did not dare because of the butchers who were nearby'.[895] Alice's concern was that if they saw that Richard had stayed the night, her neighbours would make inferences about her moral standing and reputation. As discussed, neighbours participated in the creation of social knowledge on, and the dissemination of the *fama* about, an individual. The public perception of a woman's sexual morality and chastity was crucial to ensuring her good reputation.[896] A damaged reputation could have serious,

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[889] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 56-7, 65-6.

[890] Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London,* 26. Some rented accommodation shared communal latrines, and some did not include kitchen facilities. See page 57, n.261.

[891] Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London*, 28.

[892] Hanawalt, *Growing Up in Medieval London*, 26; Harding, 'Space, Property, and Propriety,' 557; Quiney, *Town Houses*, 89.

[893] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 70.

[894] Alice Parker c. Richard Tenwinter, in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*Ipsa respondebat quod non ausa est hoc facere propter metum carnifici qui solebat mane surgere*'. McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 70.

[895] Parker c. Tenwinter, in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'*ipsa primo negavit et dixit quod non ausa fuit propter carnifices prope existentes*'.

[896] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 67, 175. This also is observed in early modern England: Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 253; Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 109; Laura Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult in Early Modern London,' *History Workshop* 35 (1993): 2. See also: Garthine Walker, 'Expanding the Boundaries of Female Honour in Early Modern England,' *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 238-39, 244-45.

real-world implications for individuals, even, for example, leaving them open to be presented in court or making it harder to marry.[897] Underlying this, however, is the sense that it was inevitable that knowledge that Richard had stayed the night would come to circulate among her neighbours.

The tensions within how relationships with neighbours were conducted and understood were not a consistent linear progression. What is visible in our sources are moments of particular concern. These are especially visible in the second half of the fourteenth century with nuisance complaints about overlooking windows and again in marriage and defamation disputes which survive from the later fifteenth century, a time which saw increased social conservatism.[898] Neighbours observing *secreta* becomes a common feature of nuisance complaints which involved overlooking windows from the 1340s. Whilst London was densely inhabited before the Black Death in 1348, the population of the city declined considerably as a result of the plague. It is estimated, for example, that the population of London during the 1370s was half the size it had been c.1300.[899] Harding and Keene trace a decline in the London property market in the years following the Black Death as demand slackened.[900] In 1377 the Aldermen were instructed to make inquiries about empty tenements in their ward whilst they collected information on the value of tenements which were inhabited.[901] Again, it is noted in the Letter Books for 1380-1 that many houses in the city remained unoccupied.[902] It is striking, then, that a time when urban density in London had reached a nadir, that property owners became more concerned with being overlooked.

Keene argues that the period between 1370 and 1420 in London can be characterised as a building boom where residents sought to repair and expand their properties.[903] As traced by French, London's bourgeois property owners began building larger houses, amalgamating plots, and adding additional rooms.[904] Landlords additionally constructed 'rows of small shops and dwellings to meet the requirements of newly prosperous artisans' following the rise in living standards in urban

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[897] Derek Neal, 'Husbands and Priests: Masculinity, Sexuality, and Defamation in Late Medieval England,' in *The Hands of the Tongue: Essays on Deviant Speech,* ed. Edwin D. Craven (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2007), 191-201, 204; McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 261-2; Goldberg, 'Space and Gender,' 228-9; Fenster and Smail, *Fama*, 210.

[898] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 164-89; McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 258-60. See also: Sandy Bardsley, 'Sin, Speech and Scolding in Late Medieval England,' in *Fama,* 145-164.

[899] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 38-9; Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 238-9.

[900] Harding, 'Space, Property, and Propriety,' 563; Derek Keene, 'Landlords, The Property Market and Urban Development in Medieval England,' in *Power, Profit, and Urban Land: Landownership in Medieval and Early Modern Northern European Towns*, eds. Finn-Einar Eliassen and Geir Atle Ersland (Farnham: Ashgate, 1996), 104-9.

[901] Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: H*, 84.

[902] Sharpe, *Letter-Books of the City of London: H*, 162.

[903] Keene, 'Landlords, The Property Market and Urban Development,' 109.

[904] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 76.

immigration.[905] Although actual population numbers were low, the increased building activity conceivably may have provoked concerns about the encroachment of buildings belonging to neighbours. This does not necessarily explain why suits specifically complaining about the visibility of the plaintiff's *secreta* became the norm in the 1340s, but it may provide additional context to why these complaints continued over the later fourteenth century. It is possible, moreover, that the reduced land pressure allowed people the space to push for reduced access from other households in a way that had been impossible with the pre-plague population pressures. This would align with French's argument that the rise in living standards amongst London's merchants and artisans in the later fourteenth century allowed them to develop new domestic habits and behaviours as part of a shared social identity.[906] Priorities held by this group, which were reflected in their use of domestic items, French argues, included private piety and contemplation, order and hierarchy, as well as industry which 'required secrecy or a nascent form of privacy'.[907]

As we saw with the example of Alice Parker from 1488, concerns about neighbours seeing and hearing aspects of daily life were also felt in the later fifteenth century. Historians have outlined what is described often as an increasing desire for privacy by the later fifteenth century. Both Goldberg and Rees Jones have noted the increased use of separate chambers in wealthier bourgeois households.[908] Chambers were intimate spaces and houses which accommodated for separate sleeping arrangements would have helped to reduce access and visibility.[909] Elsewhere, Goldberg points to the decline in church court deponents who claimed to have witnessed couples having sex. These testimonies mostly disappear by the early fifteenth century and this trend is visible in urban cases earlier than rural examples.[910] Goldberg argues this trend is a symptom of an increased use of bed curtains and, again, separate chambers.[911]

Simultaneous to a growth in the desire to remove from view intimate, daily activities, both within and between households, the later fifteenth century saw an increase in the regulation of social behaviour, in line with the growing importance of good governance and reputation. For McSheffrey, this period in London saw heightened civic regulation of the sexual behaviour of residents.[912] As McSheffrey has shown and I have argued here, neighbours were an important part of this process. Civic officials, such

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[905] Keene, 'Landlords, The Property Market and Urban Development,' 109.

[906] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 20, 31.

[907] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 6, 16, 75.

[908] Goldberg, 'The Fashioning of Bourgeois Domesticity,' 136; Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space,' 252.

[909] Goldberg, 'Making the House a Home, 175. See also: Hollie L.S. Morgan, *Beds and Chambers in Late Medieval England: Readings, Representations and Realities* (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2017), 139-70.

[910] Jeremy Goldberg, 'John Skathelock's Dick: Voyeurism and 'Pornography' in Late Medieval England,' in *Medieval Obscenities*, ed. Nicola McDonald (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2006), 114.

[911] Goldberg, 'Making the House a Home,' 175; Goldberg, 'Voyeurism and 'Pornography',' 114-6.

[912] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 191.

as ward moot inquest jurors, often were informed about alleged misbehaviour through neighbours or from *publica fama*.[913] As a good reputation and being considered of good governance was important to successfully participating in later fifteenth-century society, what a person's neighbours knew about them could have serious repercussions. This would have fed into anxieties about what could be seen through the windows of adjoining properties.

For early modern London, Orlin argues that a shift towards increased privacy was challenged by residents, for example by wilfully listening or looking in on their neighbours. Orlin explains that many saw themselves as 'entitled' to knowledge about those living around them as part of a system of communal 'mutual surveillance' and 'social responsibility'.[914] I would argue these sentiments were present too in the later medieval period. As discussed earlier in the chapter, and in chapter two, neighbours were expected to hold social knowledge about those living around them. The production of this social knowledge necessarily required access to information about the people and events within a locality. McSheffrey argues substantial, male householders felt justified in their patriarchal duties to intervene in the relationships between their neighbours.[915] Expectations around appropriate neighbourly behaviour, therefore, should be understood as contested and dynamic over the later medieval period; neighbourly relationships were constantly the subject of negotiation.

Spatial proximity was an important factor shaping expectations about how people related to one another. The connection that neighbours had with the construction of social knowledge within a legal context in later medieval England was based on their access to local information. Likewise, London's Assize of Nuisance rolls show that residents within a neighbourhood were expected to be informed about people, places, and events, and be able to tap into local, social memory. In a more immediate setting, neighbours living next door were better placed to comment on the daily lives of those living around them. The rolls, for instance, record examples of neighbours informing sheriffs of the whereabouts of defendants. In this way, that people would be able to overlook and overhear aspects of their neighbours' lives was a cultural norm. Neighbours, furthermore, had obligations towards maintaining the physical environment around them, ensuring the safety of other residents. The pressures over land use in London, especially before the plague, meant that those in adjacent properties were expected to prevent their property from encroaching on their neighbours, whether it be through crumbling walls, stenches, noise, or overlooking windows. Plaintiffs under the Assize

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[913] McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 255. See also: Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender,* 227; Neal, 'Husbands and Priests,' 187.

[914] Orlin, *Locating Privacy*, 192.

[915] McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 251.

strategically deployed the language of neighbourliness in their nuisance complaints in attempts to shape neighbours' behaviour and the built environment.

The way that neighbourly obligations were practiced, however, was complicated by positionality as well as other, overlapping relationships. John Northampton's involvement within city politics and his relationship with the current mayor, Nicholas Brembre, likely interfered with his attempt to ensure the safety of the inhabitants of Penticostlane, which included his tenants. As the Assize of Nuisance was a legal mechanism for freeholders, it is more difficult to assess how neighbourly expectations were understood amongst those who did not own property. Examples within the rolls that include references to tenants, however, suggest that they held similar ideals around neighbourly behaviour to their wealthier counterparts. The example of John Pecche and his tenants also demonstrates how neighbourly expectations might intersect with expectations held within tenant-landlord relationships. Unlike freeholders, tenants were not able to bring nuisance complaints to the Assize. I argue that, in this instance, John's tenants instead evoked his obligation to uphold their interests as their landlord to pressure him into seeking recourse for the unneighbourly behaviour they experienced from those living next door.

Relationships and how they are understood, moreover, are never static. The cultural norms around acceptable neighbourly behaviour were contestable. Moments of tension around such expectations are visible through the source material studied for this thesis during the period between the 1340s and mid-1420s, and during the last decades of the fifteenth century. Here we see a dissonance between the cultural, and quasi-legal, understanding that neighbours would be informed about the people, places, and events around them, and concerns by London residents about the access that neighbours had to see and hear the intimacies of their daily lives. These tensions become particularly visible during periods of change within the social landscape of medieval London. The second half of the fourteenth century saw a period of rebuilding following the collapse of the population and, for some, reduced population pressure may have enabled them space to demand more distance from their neighbours. Increased social conservatism and the attention given to misbehaviour by civic and ecclesiastical authorities by the end of the fifteenth century would have exacerbated concerns about what neighbours had access to, and the implication this could have for people's reputation.

4: Belonging in Later Medieval England

Studying the boundaries of a group is essential to better understanding the group as a whole and how it functions. As Anthony Cohen explains, the boundary of a 'community' encapsulates that community.[916] Boundaries are active sites of construction for social groups, characterised by social interactions, and require constant negotiation.[917] Thus, social boundaries worked to differentiate those included from those excluded. This chapter, therefore, will study the boundaries of informal social groups visible within the surviving source material for later medieval England. I will explore the construction of boundaries for non-institutional social groupings during this period by examining interactions and practices of inclusion and exclusion. Continuing from the previous two chapters I will also consider to what extent relationships between neighbours were bounded in later medieval England.

The question of social positioning during the pre-modern period is not a new subject within scholarship. In terms of later medieval practices of inclusion, studies tend to focus on formal structures such as guilds and fraternities.[918] Similarly, social exclusion is thought about within scholarship often in terms of systems of differentiation, such as status, or typological identifiers, such as gender or ethnicity, etc.[919] This work is crucial, and these axes undoubtedly feature and influence informal collectivities. The focus of this thesis, however, is groups brought together by social interaction, sociability, and spatial proximity. Difference between actors from this perspective may be less clear cut or tangible and the processes of inclusion or exclusion will be more contextual, related to the interactions between individuals. I will use ideas of 'belonging', a concept I shall develop shortly, as a tool to study the mechanisms which establish social boundaries and positioning. The first section of this chapter will unpack the concept of 'belonging' to lay the groundwork for its application in the rest of the chapter. I will then use a number of case studies in depth to explore the nature of social

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[916] Anthony P. Cohen, *The Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Tavistock, 1985), 12.

[917] Colson and Van Steensel, *Cities and Solidarities,* 4; Woolf and Jones, *Local Identities*, 8.

[918] Rosser, 'Going to the Fraternity Feast,' 430-446; Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity*; French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 195-225. There are exceptions to this, see for example: Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*; Shannon McSheffrey, 'Liberties of London: Social Networks, Sexual Disorder, and Independent Jurisdiction in the Late Medieval English Metropolis,' in *Crossing Boarders: Boundaries and Margins in Medieval and Early Modern Britain*, eds. Sara Butler and K.J. Kesselring (Boston: Brill, 2018), 216-236.

[919] For example: McIntosh, 'Local Change and Community Control,' 219-242; McIntosh, 'Locals, Outsiders, and Identity,' 71-91; Jeremy Goldberg, 'Cherrylips, the Creed Play, and Conflict: York in the Age of Richard III,' *Czech and Slovak Journal of the Humanities* (2017): 29-42; Fleming, 'Identity and Belonging,' 175-193; Bert De Munck and Anne Winter, eds., *Gated Communities? Regulating Migration in Early Modern Cities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 1-22.

boundary formation, first for quotidian, social relationships more generally, and second for the relationships between neighbours.

Belonging as a Conceptual Tool

Social historians have long discussed relationships using the term belonging.[920] It is only more recently, however, that scholars have applied 'belonging' as a conceptual tool, influenced by growing sociological work on the subject. Elspeth Probyn is a pioneer in this development and, influenced by Foucault's explanation of heterotopias, defines belonging as the 'changing configurations of social relations.'[921] Scholars, similarly, have drawn connections between the construction of belonging and theoretical ideas of performance and performativity, as something which is constantly being produced and reproduced.[922] Both concepts deal with actions as continuously constructing social frameworks. More recently, Floya Anthias and Tuuli Lähdesmäki *et al.* similarly propose that belonging is fostered through practice and action.[923] Earlier sociological scholarship on this subject is concerned with marginalised groups and migration which has led also to an emphasis on the spatial aspects of belonging.[924] For Probyn, belonging includes a sense of movement and desire for attachment, something which cannot be captured through 'identity'.[925] Current understanding within sociological scholarship, then, emphasises the importance of actions and practices in fostering belonging. Understanding the concept of belonging in this way allows me to think about how interactions between people, which is the focus of my approach towards the study of quotidian social relationships, contributed to the position of individuals in relation to a group. Belonging as a conceptual tool allows us to think about relationships and their boundaries as constructed, active, and changing.

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[920] Marc Boone, 'The Desired Stranger: Attraction and Expulsion in the Medieval City,' in *Living in the City: Urban Institutions in the Low Countries, 1200-2010*, eds. Leo Lucassen and Wim Willems (New York: Routledge, 2012), 38; Fleming, 'Identity and Belonging,'; Julie Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister* (London: Continuum, 2009), 151; Jessica Knowles, 'Heritage and Symbolism: The Romans and Tanners in Fourteenth-Century York,' in *Fourteenth Century England*, vol. 14, eds. James Bothwell and Gwilym Dodd (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2016), 83.

[921] Elspeth Probyn, *Outside Belongings*, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 6.

[922] Bell, *Performativity and Belonging*.

[923] Floya Anthias, 'Where do I Belong? Narrating Collective Identity and Translocational Positionality,' *Ethnicities*, 2 (2002): 501; Tuuli Lähdesmäki et al. 'Fluidity and Flexibility of "Belonging": Uses of the Concept in Contemporary Research,' *Acta Sociologica* 59, no.3 (2016): 239.

[924] As outlined by: Lähdesmäki et al. 'Fluidity and Flexibility of "Belonging",' 236-7, 240-1. See also: Floya Anthias, 'Thinking Through the Lens of Translocational Positionality: An Intersectionality Frame for Understanding Identity and Belonging,' *Translocations: Migration and Social Change* 4, no.1 (2008): 5-6; Anne-Marie Fortier, 'Re-Membering Places and the Performance of Belonging(s),' in *Performativity and Belonging*, 41-64.

[925] Probyn, *Outside Belongings*, 2.

The movement towards concepts of 'belonging' in scholarship, owes much to a desire to deal with the perceived limitations of 'identity' and its application.[926] Post-modernist criticism of 'identity' as a concept argues that it was essentialist and too static.[927] Sociologists have pointed to the 'fixity' of categories that identity often implies, which also have homogenising tendencies.[928] In contrast, Probyn reasons, 'belonging' allows for the movement of, and between, categories.[929] Anthias notes that 'identity' does not allow for an opposite, in the way that belonging and non-belonging does.[930] That is not to say that the study of 'identity' is without value. Indeed, for Anthias the subject is still one of significant social meaning and relevance.[931] As described by Vivian Vignoles, Seth Schwartz, and Koen Luyckx, 'identity' can be used to answer questions like 'who are you?'[932] Recent historical scholarship, furthermore, has used 'identity' to study, for example, the self-perceptions of urban citizens and authorities as well as migrant groups.[933] What this scholarship has established, however, is the importance of recognising the distinction between the two concepts of 'identity' and 'belonging'.[934] There is a difference between identifying with a group and belonging to that group.[935] Anthias describes belonging as something changeable, a process concerning inclusion and exclusion, whereas identity can be the 'possessive property of individuals'.[936] Understanding social positioning through belonging, rather than identity, helps to avoid characterising a social group as homogenous or made up of individuals who are positioned equally within it. Instead, belonging is not dependant on shared characteristics and can be experienced in different amounts by different people. This is valuable when we want to look at interactions taking place at the boundaries of social groups and their effects on an individual's inclusion or exclusion.

Negotiating Social Boundaries

As demonstrated in the ties between Gilbert de Mordone and the neighbours attached at the death of Walter de Benigtone in 1325, people could relate to one another as members of an occupation,

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[926] Other still see identity as a beneficial concept, see for example: Woolf and Jones, *Local Identities*, 2, 4. Arguments for the use of identity is recognised by Tuuli Lähdesmäki et al. in: Lähdesmäki et al. 'Fluidity and Flexibility of "Belonging",' 234.

[927] Anthias, 'Where do I Belong?' 495.

[928] Probyn, *Outside Belongings*, 5; Anthias, 'Where do I Belong?' 491, 497.

[929] Probyn, *Outside Belongings*, 5.

[930] Anthias, 'Where do I Belong?' 491.

[931] Anthias, 'Where do I Belong?' 493.

[932] Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx and Vivian L. Vignoles, eds., *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research*, vol 1: Structures and Processes (New York: Springer, 2011), 2.

[933] McIntosh, 'Locals, Outsiders, and Identity,' 71-91; Fleming, 'Identity and Belonging,' 175-193.

[934] Anthias, 'The Lens of Translocational Positionality,' 7-9; Lähdesmäki et al. 'Fluidity and Flexibility of "Belonging",'240.

[935] Lähdesmäki et al. 'Fluidity and Flexibility of "Belonging",' 240.

[936] Anthias, 'Where do I Belong?' 495; Anthias, 'The Lens of Translocational Positionality,' 7-9.

parishioners, through networks of kin and guardianship, as well as residents in a neighbourhood. Relating to this, we need to address how practices of belonging fit into this complex social landscape that people experienced. The surviving depositions for the York marriage suit John Wistow c. Elena Cooper provide an illustrative example through which to explore how the various social relationships that an individual possessed existed together and could be evoked through claims and practices of belonging.

The suit, dated 1490-1, was brought by John Wistow, arguing for the enforcement of a marriage contract he allegedly made with Elena Cooper.[937] The ultimate decision of the suit survives for this example and fell in John's favour. Their contract allegedly took place in 1490 in the house of Alice and Thomas Kant in the village of Welton, East Yorkshire. There they exchanged words of present consent and John gave Eleanor a silver-gilt ring.[938] Their contract was witnessed by Alice and Thomas, who also stood as deponents for John along with Robert Santon. While Alice and Thomas testified to the couple's handfasting, Robert deposed that soon after the contract Elena's mother, Margaret Cooper, learned they were betrothed and addressed Elena: 'Thow filth and harlot why art yow handfast with John Wistow.'[939] Margaret allegedly then went on to tell her daughter that her father would beat her when he found out about the marriage contract. Evidently, Elena's parents were not in favour of the match.

Elena was so fearful of her parent's reproach that she stayed at Robert's house overnight. The reason she reportedly gave Robert for this was because 'I darre not tarry my fadre at home.'[940] The next day her father, John Cooper, came to see his daughter but according to Robert, he was only admitted on the condition that he would not harm Elena. Once with Elena however, John disparaged her in a similar manner as his wife had done the previous day. Elena remained resolute about her contract to John Wistow, declaring to her father: 'Sir þat at I have doon I wille performe if þe law will suffer it for I wyll have hym who soere' [whosoever] say nay to it. And I desire no more of your good but yor blessing.'[941] However, when Elena subsequently sent for John Wistow, to plea for a quick solemnisation to their marriage, Robert deposed that he replied: 'we must tarry tyll þe houce be redd [ready]'.[942]

Before we explore in depth the relationships described within this case, it is important to examine the circumstances of the marriage and subsequent legal suit. On the one hand, the lack of obvious

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[937] BIA, CP.F.280.

[938] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 239.

[939] BIA, CP.F.280; MED, ding n.; cheuen v.2.

[940] BIA, CP.F.280.

[941] BIA, CP.F.280; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 247.

[942] BIA, CP.F.280.

argument against John's suit by the defendant may indicate collusion between the two parties.[943] John's deponents presented Elena as willing and consenting to the marriage contract in their narrative, which was necessary for his case as plaintiff. For Donahue the existence of the suit can be explained by the fact John could not provide a home at the time of the marriage. Donahue proposes the couple used the authority of the Church court, which favoured marriage making over marriage breaking, in order to validate their union.[944] This may have been necessary if they had not solemnised their marriage nor established their household physically or socially. This practical issue could have been exploited by Elena's parents in an attempt to dissolve the union. Both McSheffrey and Goldberg argue that cohabitation, or sexual relations, after contracting marriage, but before subsequent solemnisation, was socially unacceptable, at least to the conservative bourgeoisie by the later fifteenth century.[945] It is probable the parties in this suit were wealthy peasantry; after handfasting, John gave Elena a silver-gilt ring.[946] Yet there seems to be an inconsistency between the fact that it was John who attempted to solidify the marriage in court, and his apparent hesitancy in cohabiting with Elena when he claimed the house was not yet ready. In another reading, it seems probable that Elena did have second thoughts after the marriage contract was made. Whether or not this was through her own volition or through pressure from her parents is difficult to determine. The only depositions we have for this case are those for the plaintiff, though we can see clearly that Elena's parents did not approve of the marriage.

The pattern of survival for the cause papers of the marriage suit Wistow c. Cooper, which does not include any deposition from Elena, means that she remains passive to the narrative construction of her alleged marriage to John. The descriptions of the interconnected social ties that she held with others, however, are still illuminating. Centring my analysis around Elena will help to make visible the influences which coloured her relationships with kin, spiritual kin, other Welton residents, and peers. I will examine how practices of belonging reinforced these social connections.

Margaret and John Cooper as Elena's parents represent her ties of kinship to her immediate family. Elena still lived with her parents at the time she exchanged vows with John Wistow. This is indicated

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[943] Whilst in some circumstances a lack of opposition provided by the other party may suggest the suit was used as a form of legal recognition or confirmation, in other cases the reality may have been quite different. Shannon McSheffrey suggests that for the marriage case, Turnaunt c. Turnaunt (1469) from the London Consistory Court, that the plaintiff, Joan Stokton Turnaunt, was not even present. See: McSheffrey, 'Detective Fiction,' 65-78.
[944] Donahue, *Law, Marriage, and Society*, 205.
[945] Whilst McSheffrey sees this view as more generally a fifteenth-century phenomenon, Goldberg ties it more narrowly to later in the century. McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 967-8; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 242.
[946] Donahue describes Elena as 'certainly not poor'. Donahue, *Law, Marriage, and Society*, 205.

by the fact she did not dare provoke her father 'at home'.[947] This, in addition to the fact John had not established his own household, indicates the young age of the couple. The circumstances fit with the marriage pattern Goldberg has identified for rural areas, where it was more likely for young people, especially girls, to remain in their natal home until marriage.[948] This was also true of fifteenth-century urban locations. In McSheffrey's London study, marriage contracts were conducted most often in the house of the women's parents.[949] Whether or not there was a similar pattern in the diocese of York, in this scenario it is very unlikely Elena's parents would have allowed her to make a marriage contract with John at their home.

Elena's belonging within this kinship is reinforced through her parents' attempts to control her marital choices. As Goldberg argues, young rural women, especially those from the wealthier peasantry, were more subject to parental involvement in who they married.[950] As an immediate consequence of her handfasting with John, Elena faced opposition and the threat of violence from her father. Margaret Cooper informed Elena that her father 'wylle dynge [beat] þe and myschew [shun] the.'[951] Descriptions of this episode highlight the power differential within Elena's relationship with her parents. Expectations of behaviour for daughters included obedience towards their father.[952] This would have been particularly true of young daughters living at their parents' home. Elena's father, as *paterfamilias*, held responsibility for ensuring the discipline of those in his household and this included physical chastisement. The position of Elena as a young woman living in her father's household and the authority her parents had over her would have coloured their relationship and interactions. It was by using threats of violence against Elena that John and Margaret tried to reinforce their control over her and evoke her belonging to their household.

Within this marriage suit, there are also present ties of spiritual kinship. The articles that survive for the case include a reference to John receiving papal dispensation for the marriage. The dispensation was on the grounds that, Elena's mother, Margaret Cooper, was John's godmother. Spiritual affinity encompassed the immediate family of the godchild and godparent, thus, Elena and John were close

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[947] BIA, CP.F.280.

[948] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 243. The age of Robert Santon, who gives Elena so much support, is recorded as twenty-four. This suggests they may have been of a more similar age.

[949] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 973.

[950] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 236.

[951] BIA, CP.F.280.

[952] Shannon McSheffrey, "I will never have none ayenst my faers will": Consent and the Making of Marriage in the Late Medieval Diocese of London,' in *Women, Marriage, and Family in Medieval Christendom*, eds. Constance M. Rousseau and Joel T. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1998), 174.

spiritual kin. In canon law, spiritual affinity was an impediment to marriage.[953] This raises questions about the nature of the connection between the families of Elena Cooper and John Wistow.

The relative status of godparents compared to parents has been debated within scholarship on spiritual kinship in medieval England. Some historians contend that godparents occupied a higher social status than the children they sponsored, in line with anthropological studies on baptism.[954] The explanation for this, as Robert Dinn suggests, was that spiritual kinship formed a strategy for parents to increase the socio-economic advantages their child experienced.[955] It is possible that there was an imbalance of social status which existed between John and his godmother, Margaret Cooper. John was unable to fulfil the expectation of providing a household for Elena. A distinction in wealth and status might explain why Elena's parents were opposed to the marriage and would certainly influence the dynamics of the relationships present in this case.

Other studies on medieval godparenthood, however, have found that godparents tended to occupy a similar, or even lower, social standing to their godchildren.[956] As noted above, John was able to give Elena a silver-gilt ring. We should also remember that there are other motivations which influenced the choice of godparents beyond status or potential material gains. Parents likely accounted for the piety of a sponsor, in addition to familiarity and amicability. Rob Lutton suggests that spiritual kinship was employed also as a conduit for the transmission of patrimony within extended kinship.[957] Naming practices further have been cited as a factor influencing the choice of godparents.[958]

It is difficult to draw firm conclusions on the influence of relative status between Margaret Cooper and John Wistow on their spiritual kinship without further evidence. What is clear from the studies dealing with the choice of spiritual kin in later medieval England is the broad range in practice dependant on regional and socio-economic contexts.[959] Moreover, parents may have accounted for a

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[953] BIA, CP.F.280. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation,* 30-1.

[954] See for example, Robert Dinn, 'Baptism, Spiritual Kinship, and Popular Religion in Late Medieval Bury St Edmunds,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 72, no.3 (1990): 98-100. Discussed in: Louis Haas, 'Social Connections Between Parents and Godparents in Late Medieval Yorkshire,' in *Studies on the Personal Name in Later Medieval England and Wales*, eds. David Postles and Joel T. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2006), 166; Rob Lutton, 'Godparenthood, Kinship, and Piety in Tenderden, England 1449-1537,' in *Love, Marriage, and Family Ties in the Later Middle Ages*, eds. Isabel Davis, Miriam Müller, and Sarah Rees Jones (Turnhout: Brepols, 2003), 229-30.

[955] Dinn, 'Baptism, Spiritual Kinship,' 100

[956] Lutton, 'Godparenthood, Kinship, and Piety,' 230; Janette Garrett, 'Spiritual Kinship, Godparenthood and Proofs of Ages of Heirs to Northumberland Estates, 1401-1472,' *Northern History* 49, no.2 (2012): 193. Louis Haas found Yorkshire tenants-in-chief were more likely to choose godparents of an inferior status to their own: Haas, 'Social Connections,' 166-7.

[957] Lutton, 'Godparenthood, Kinship, and Piety,' 227-8.

[958] Haas, 'Social Connections,' 172.

[959] Robert Dinn and Rob Lutton focus on wealthy urban residents, in Bury St Edmunds and Tenderden, Kent, respectively. The use of proofs of age records by Janette Garrett and Louis Haas, on the other hand, provides

variety of motivations in their choice of godparent, not all of which will remain visible to us. Whatever the nature of the connection between these families, John's spiritual kinship with Elena created an impediment on their marriage. The reference made to the papal dispensation John obtained suggests this affinity was used by Elena or her parents to try and prevent the marriage contract being solemnised. If we suspect that the court case was the result of pressure from Elena's parents, we can see how they evoked these ties of spiritual kinship to demonstrate the unsuitability of the couple.

It appears that Elena additionally had a connection with Thomas and Alice Kant who provided their home for Elena and John to handfast. In canon law, 'clandestine' marriages were those which took place outside of ecclesiastical procedure, without solemnisation in church, and/or without witnesses.[960] Yet as present consent of the parties was the only legal necessity, marriages which did not take place at a church, before a priest, or even without witnesses were still legally valid and binding.[961] In the context of late fifteenth century London, McSheffrey demonstrates the potential respectability of domestic settings, such as halls and gardens, for exchanging marital vows.[962] In a marriage suit from York in 1432, Isabel Henryson deposed that she had been present in the hall of Agnes Brignall's house with another woman to witness Agnes exchange vows of present consent with John Herford.[963]

Not all 'clandestine' marriages were considered socially reputable, however. Ideally, a couple would first be betrothed using an exchange of future consent. The marriage would then be publicised locally through the announcement of banns on three occasions. The couple would then exchange words of present consent at the church door and in front of a priest before participating in nuptial mass to solemnise the marriage.[964] The solemnisation of marriage *in facie ecclesie* increasingly was encouraged by church authorities.[965] The practice of solemnising a marriage contract at the church on a separate occasion, after the exchange of vows, Goldberg suggests, only became the social norm in

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insight into practices within a more elite group of tenants-in-chief. Dinn, 'Baptism, Spiritual Kinship,' 95; Lutton, 'Godparenthood, Kinship, and Piety,' 221, 225; Garrett, 'Spiritual Kinship,' 187-8; Haas, 'Social Connections,' 165.

[960] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 241-3. There has been some debate in scholarship over the use of clandestine in historiography. Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, 29; McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 965. See also: Daniel Bornstein, 'Administering the Sacraments,' in *The Routledge History of Medieval Christianity 1050-1500*, ed. R. N. Swanson (London: Routledge, 2015), 138-139.

[961] Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, 29; Donahue, *Law, Marriage, and Society*, 18. For more on the marriage-making process see: Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, 26; McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 960-990; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 203-279.

[962] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 975-6.

[963] Goldberg, *Women in England*, 114.

[964] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 965.

[965] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 235.

the Province of York towards the end of the medieval period, when this marriage suit took place.[966] There is no reference to this occurring in the case of Elena and John. Instead, the couple allegedly exchanged words of present consent in the house. John's words were recorded as: 'here I take þe Elen' to my handfast wiffe. And all oder for to for sake for þe love of the and þerto I plight the my trowth.'[967] The lack of solemnisation appears to have prompted John to initiate the suit.

Without support of Elena's parents, an improperly conducted marriage, between spiritual kin, likely would have damaged the reputation of the new couple. Alice and Thomas Kant, however, enabled them to handfast more respectably. Scholars have recognised the importance of wider social networks, including friends, relatives, employers, and neighbours, in pre-modern marriage making. McSheffrey reminds us that later medieval couples did not exist in 'a social vacuum'.[968] O'Hara further argues we should consider early modern marriage as something 'experienced on both a personal and a collective level'.[969] It is likely Alice and Thomas were more established than the young couple in Welton; the former had their own household, and their ages were given as around thirty and forty, respectively. By providing their house for an open, witnessed exchange of vows, Alice and Thomas helped foster the belonging of the young couple within the wider context of Welton. Their support allowed Elena and John to form a socially valid marriage, or at least as respectable as possible in the circumstances, despite opposition from Elena's parents.

It is probable that Elena's ties with Alice and Thomas centred around her relationship with Alice. In her deposition on the marriage, Alice testified that Elena, whilst at Alice's house, had asked her 'if she [Alice] might approach John Wistowe and lead him to her house' so John and Elena could make oaths together in secret with Alice as a witness.[970] In this narrative, Alice portrays herself as close enough to Elena that she could ask this favour of her and trust to keep the secret of the marriage from her parents. Others could act as intermediaries for a couple courting, by exchanging gifts and messages.[971] These intermediaries were often servants, relatives, or companions. The relationship between Alice and Elena does not appear to have been one of kinship or service. There was an age gap between Alice, a married woman in her thirties, and Elena, a young woman likely in her late teens or early

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[966] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 241-2. Though in her work on London material, Shannon McSheffrey suggests these marriages had a 'liminal status'. McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 966.

[967] BIA, CP.F.280.

[968] McSheffrey, 'Consent and the Making of Marriage,' 158.

[969] O'Hara, '"Ruled by my friends",' 24.

[970] BIA, CP.F.280. '*Elena Cowper … rogauit ista iurata quod adiret Johannem Wistowe et adduceret ipsum ad domum suam*'. My own English translation.

[971] Diana O'Hara 'The Language of Tokens and the Making of Marriage,' *Rural History* 3, no.1 (1992): 11. See for example Ann Frisell's deposition from: Margaret Niter, Agnes Skern c. Piers Curtes in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.

twenties.[972] Their relationship, then, may have been one more of companionship and solidarity between women.

French discusses inter-generational relationships between women in late fifteenth- to early sixteenth-century Westminster. She suggests that older women, active in the parish of St Margaret's, used their position of seniority to provide advice and support to younger women navigating marriage, childbirth, and widowhood.[973] French uses the will of Johanna Moreland as an example to demonstrate this. Johanna is identified as holding a position of leadership amongst other active women in the parish. For French, Johanna's provision of bedding to her godchildren in her will can be interpreted as an effort to help prepare young people to establish their own households.[974] The relationship between Alice Kant and Elena Cooper was shaped too by experience and seniority. Alice's interactions with Elena described in the depositions match up with findings demonstrated by French; Alice works to help a younger woman to navigate a marriage as respectably as possible. It seems likely Alice would have offered advice alongside the use of her home. The relationship between Alice and Elena would have contained elements of a social hierarchy based on Alice's seniority in age but also her status as a married woman. The power dynamic in this instance, however, unlike Elena's relationship with her parents, was not used to control Elena but to provide her with support and aid.

In terms of the construction of Alice's deposition, the presence of such a connection between Alice and Elena is stressed in the narrative for two reasons. Firstly, it shows that Alice was qualified to depose on the matter because she had a close relationship with Elena. Secondly, the narrative emphasises Elena's willingness to marry John and further, her initiation and organisation of their marriage contract. These factors would add weight to John's suit in favour of the marriage. Despite the legal purposes in how this narrative was constructed, the account is still valuable in revealing plausible social practices and relationships between women in an informal setting. The sense of belonging within this relationship was practiced through the reciprocal trust and support described in the narrative.

Finally, and most unusually, within this case there is visible also a relationship between Elena and Robert Santon. Like Alice and Thomas Kant, Robert Santon reportedly provided support to Elena, following her alleged handfasting with John. John's inability to establish a household, something which may have provided Elena some protection from her wrathful father, led Elena to entreaty Robert for

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[972] See: Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 257.

[973] Katherine L. French, 'Well-Behaved Women Can Make History: Women's Friendships in Late Medieval Westminster,' in *Writing Medieval Women's Lives: The New Middle Ages*, eds. C.N. Goldy and A. Livingstone (New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 258.

[974] French, 'Well-Behaved Women,' 260.

advice on the situation: 'I pray yow gyve me yor best covnsell for I darre not tarry my fadre at home.'[975] In response, Robert offered Elena his house to stay the night, apparently to give John Cooper time to recover his temper as Robert replied: 'and by to moroo we shall witt what your fadre wille say.'[976] In arranging somewhere for Elena to stay, Robert provided her with physical shelter from her parents. The day after the handfasting, Elena's father appeared at Robert's house and demanded to speak with her. Robert responded: 'And ye wille promyse me that ye wyll do her noo heret [hurt] ye shail speke with her,' to which John promised 'by þe feith of my body I will not heret her.'[977] His actions are indicative of a close social connection with Elena and their relationship was clearly one that Elena valued, and which included a level of trust.

In a society in which relationships between men and women outside of family and marriage were highly policed, Robert's offer for Elena to stay overnight as his home seems extraordinary. For later fifteenth-century London, McSheffrey argues it was considered disreputable for a woman to socialise in the space of a man who was not close kin, let alone stay there.[978] As we saw in the previous chapter, Alice Parker initially refused to allow Robert Tenwinter to stay the night based on the assumptions that her neighbours would make about the nature of their relationship. It seems probable that these sentiments were felt also in Wistow, a rural context where the opportunity for young women living with their parents to meet young men was more restricted than found in urban locations.[979] It is, therefore, worth discussing the nature of Elena's and Robert's relationship further.

Little to no biographical information is provided for Robert in this suit. A familial connection with Elena might explain why Robert allowed her to stay at his house without apparent concern for any suspicion or disreputability this might cause. Whilst this remains a possibility, there is no indication of this, nor any kinship with John, provided in the depositions. Again, it is possible that Robert was married which would provide another explanation to make the situation socially permissible. Robert's age is given as approximately twenty-four which may indicate, conversely, that he was single.[980] Without further evidence, we can only speculate on Robert's marital status. It could even have been widely recognised in Welton that Robert was betrothed to another, unnamed woman. This information might be crucial to us better understanding his relationship with Elena, but ultimately was irrelevant to the suit about Elena's alleged marriage to John Wistow and therefore would not have been recorded. There are

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[975] BIA, CP.F.280.

[976] BIA, CP.F.280.

[977] BIA, CP.F.280.

[978] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 974. McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 123.

[979] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* 253-7. The relative freedom for young people to meet and court, particularly following the Black Death, is discussed in: Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 132.

[980] P.J.P. Goldberg, 'Life and Death: The Ages of Man,' in *A Social History of England,* 246.

numerous other, unrecorded and therefore speculative, reasons why Robert and Elena felt it appropriate for Elena to stay at Robert's home. Their relationship in particular, then, serves as a demonstration of the limitations of what we can see of non-institutional, quotidian relationships. Most documentary evidence can only provide us with a snapshot of what would otherwise be a dynamic relationship which spanned across time. Whatever information we are missing about their relationship, Robert's deposition evinces his close ties with Elena, demonstrated through his concern with her well-being and provision of protection and emotional support.

Robert and Elena were both young and were likely similar if not the same age. Chapter one discussed how sociability provided young adults the opportunity to meet and spend time together. In an urban context, this was often centred around the alehouse. Young people could also interact through dances and organised festivities. It is possible that a similar situation was found in Wistow. Unfortunately, it is only Robert's deposition which includes a narrative of the events after Elena and John handfast so it is difficult to assess how far his testimony is trustworthy. If, however, Robert through his deposition was constructing himself as a trustworthy and supportive friend, he also provides an example of how a young woman such as Elena might use and rely on social ties that were an alternative to ties of kinship. At a time when Elena found herself ostracised from her parents, Robert fostered a sense of belonging for her by providing her with safety and emotional support in lieu of her parents.

The actions and behaviours of those surrounding the disputed marriage contract evoke Elena's belonging with respect to several different relationships, viz. kinship, spiritual kinship, female companionship, and friendship between peers. There are no surviving depositions given by Elena and so the perspective we are given of her relationships with others is necessarily one-sided, in addition to being legally constructed. Nevertheless, these narratives still provide us with descriptions of relationships which operate in reference to societal norms and customs, and which would have been recognisable to contemporaries. The depositions surviving for Wistow c. Cooper reveal the ways in which an individual might experience competing mechanisms of belonging. As shown with Elena's parents and references to her spiritual kinship with John Wistow, ties of belonging could be something claimed by others to exert power or control within a relationship. Yet conversely, belonging could also be fostered in a way that was supportive and provided aid. Practices of belonging in this way served to demonstrate and reinforce the relationships Elena had with Alice Kant and Robert Santon.

The various social ties described for Elena Cooper illustrate how such connections were evoked and reinforced through claims and practices of belonging. How belonging was expressed and who by was influenced by gender, age, and hierarchy. These social axes could also influence how and when non-belonging was constructed. Although dated earlier than the other case studies in this chapter, the

jurors' verdict on the death of Walter de Elmeleye, chaplain, in 1301 from the London coroners' rolls is a valuable demonstration of this. Furthermore, this example demonstrates the importance of perspective in how the belonging or non-belonging of an individual or group of people was understood.

After Walter de Elmeleye's death was reported on 29th August 1301 to the coroner, Adam de Rokesle, and the sheriffs, 'good men' (*probos homines*) were summoned from Cripplegate ward, where Walter had been found on Wood Street, and the adjacent London wards of Bassingshaw, Farringdon, and Aldersgate.[981] Their verdict, recorded in the rolls, was that Walter had been stabbed by John de Melkesham with a dagger when he, alongside Roger le Skirmisour and another man, provoked John. According to the jury, this dispute began when Alice, the wife of John le Quernbetere and tenant of Elena Hellebole, drunkenly insulted some workmen. The workmen retaliated and, after being told of this, Elena went to berate these men. During this encounter Elena was called a 'whore' by a man passing by and she allegedly 'prayed that they [Walter, Roger, and the other man] might avenge her with regard to the said stranger'.[982]

In a similar way to the support shown to Elena in the depositions from Wistow c. Cooper, the descriptions provided in the jurors' verdict of the actions of Walter de Elmeleye, Alice le Quernbetere, Roger le Skirmisour, and Elena Hellebole suggest a sense of cohesion. From the jurors' verdict, it appears Elena was the landlady to some, if not all, of this group. Alice wife of John le Quernbetere, and Roger le Skirmisour are described as tenants of Elena Hellebole. Roger is described explicitly as her tenant and Elena is described further as Alice's mistress 'from whom she rented her house'.[983] Walter allegedly described Elena as his mistress (*domina*) too when he confronted John de Melkesham.[984]

Elena was willing to engage in a public quarrel in defence of Alice, the result of which she was insulted herself. Moreover, Roger, Walter, and the other unnamed man were willing to put themselves at risk by engaging in physical violence to give Elena, and by association Alice, a sense of retribution. The actions to support the others in this loose group of people, which came with a personal risk, imply a

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[981] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29; Barron, *London in the Later Middle Ages*, 371.

[982] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29. '*orabat ut eam de dicto extraneo vindicasset*'. The English translations for this case-study are my own. For an alternative translation see: Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls,* 28-30.

[983] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29. '*Rogerum le skirmisour tenentem suum*', '*Elena hellebole domina suae … de qua domum suam condixit*'.

[984] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29. Reginald Sharpe evidently considered Walter as a sexual partner of Elena as he linked this case to another where a chaplain stabbed a man he found with his sexual partner. Considering the references to Alice and Roger as tenants of Elena, it is likely that it was in this capacity the description was meant. I was unable to check the Latin in this second case because it has not been digitalised, and I did not have access to the archives during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls,* xxii, 147-8.

sense of belonging and affiliation which speaks to a group more closely tied than simply through tenancy. Supportive interactions like these align with Farmer's identification of networks of companions and friends that poor Parisian women fostered through the provision of support during periods of hardship or crisis.[985] With Walter and his companions, their support for each other would have helped to foster solidarity and a sense of belonging between them.

The verdicts recorded in coroners' rolls are highly fictive narratives and it is important to take into account their production when thinking about the people portrayed within them. It was the jurors' job to provide an explanation for a violent or unexplained death. Following their investigation, the jurors were questioned by the coroner against a set of objectives.[986] These included, for example, who the deceased individual was; the nature of their death, including precise descriptions of any wounds; the chronology of their death; whether there was a perpetrator; and an assessment of the value of any deodand or goods belonging to the perpetrator.[987] The verdict recorded in the coroners' rolls represented a scribal summary of the account given by the jurors, which was shaped to fit legal formula and conventions.[988] Coroners' rolls were compiled when cases were brought to trial to help determine whether the person accused of homicide was culpable in the death or not, and if they were guilty of felony.[989] The narrative in the rolls for each case were also compared with the jurors' oral testimony which was presented in court.[990] Despite the distance created by scribal intervention in the rolls, the way jurors chose to explain an unexpected or suspicious death was very influential to how a case was determined and whether an accused was judged guilty or acquitted.

In the case of Walter de Elmeleye's death, although the verdict recognised that Walter was stabbed by John de Melkesham, the narrative presents a strikingly negative picture of Walter and his companions. These men are presented as violent aggressors towards John. Elena also is described as threatening the stranger who insulted her, 'saying that before night this [matter] should be settled'.[991] Elena then sent for Walter, Roger, and the other man to avenge her. According to the verdict, they armed themselves with sticks and, when they came across John, they confronted him and began to attack him.

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[985] Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 159, 163-4.
[986] Hunnisett, *The Medieval Coroner,* 20-1.
[987] Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 127-8.
[988] Discussed in: Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 75, 113, 175.
[989] Hunnisett, *The Medieval Coroner,* 114.
[990] Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 18-9.
[991] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29. '*dicens quod ante noctem hoc compararet*'.

The women described in the narrative, in addition to inciting violence, engage in and promote disruptive speech.[992] Alice, unprovoked, called some workmen 'tredekeiles' as she passed. This was a derogatory term of abuse which described a man as a 'sexually vigorous bird'.[993] The workmen's response to this, which was that she should work with them treading the ground, takes on sexual connotations. Similarly, Elena went out onto the street, 'calling the workmen ribalds and other outrages'.[994] Calling someone a 'ribald' alluded to their menial status. Elena labelled another man as a thief and, in response, the passer-by called her a 'whore'. These were typical, gendered insults which appear commonly in defamation suits. Here, Elena is demonstrated as publicly participating in damaging and legally actionable speech. These descriptions of the women's behaviour spoke to contemporary tropes of ungoverned and disorderly women.

The characterisation of Walter and those who accompanied him as violent and disorderly speaks to a lack of sympathy the jurors felt towards Walter and their distaste towards the behaviour of his companions. Historians have recognised the use of formulaic language by medieval juries to influence the verdict of felony trials in England.[995] Specific legal terminology was employed to signal how a case should be categorised and whether the jury considered the defendant guilty or not. In this way, we can consider these documents as active and performative.[996] Adjectives including *felonice* (feloniously) or phrases such as *ex malicia precogitate* (out of malice aforethought), described by John Bellamy as 'phrases of afforcement', were used to indicate that the action described amounted to felony.[997] Likewise, Kamali identifies specific language and narrative patterns, employed in felony trials during the early thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, which signal instances of self-defence. Medieval notions of self-defence in relation to homicide included a lack of premeditation as well as the idea that violence was used only when there was no other alternative and the perpetrator feared for their own life.[998]

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[992] See gendered conceptions of disruptive speech: Bardsley, 'Sin, Speech and Scolding,' 145-64; Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*; Neal, 'Husbands and Priests,' 185-208; Susan Phillips, *Transforming Talk: The Problem with Gossip in Late Medieval England* (Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2007).

[993] MED treden v., 6.

[994] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29. '*ad eos per exit vocando eos Ribaldos et alia enermia*'. MED, ribaud(e n.

[995] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 75, 113, 116, 135; Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 101-2; Sara M. Butler, 'Degrees of Culpability: Suicide Verdicts, Mercy, and the Jury in Medieval England,' *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 36, no.2 (2006): 263-4, 276-80; John G. Bellamy, *The Criminal Trial in Later Medieval England: Felony Before the Courts from Edward I to the Sixteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 63, 85; B.W. McLane, 'Juror Attitudes towards Local Disorder: The Evidence of the 1328 Lincolnshire Trailbaston Proceedings,' in *Twelve Good Men and True*, 36-64; Thomas A. Green, 'Societal Concepts of Criminal Liability for Homicide in Medieaval England,' *Speculum* 47, no.4 (1972): 675.

[996] McSheffrey, 'Detective Fiction,' 66, 73.

[997] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 70; Bellamy, *The Criminal Trial*, 29-30.

[998] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 67-8, 157.

Coroners' rolls were brought to court when the relevant cases were tried, and the verdict of the coroner's jury was read out loud. The purpose of this was to check the trial jurors' presentments against the verdicts written in the rolls.[999] When comparing coroners' indictments with trial enrolments for felony in the fourteenth century, Thomas Green notes that the former tended to be 'far less formulistic and represented a more candid response from the jury'.[1000] Although the reports recorded in the coroners' rolls were not formulaic enough to reach the legal requirements necessary for a guilty verdict or a pardon, Green argues, nevertheless, that coroners' juries had the opportunity to shape the perspective of a case during their inquiry and in their verdict.[1001] More recent scholarship, likewise, recognises the ability for these jurors to demonstrate their disapproval of a perpetrator or victim and to deflect blame.[1002] Whilst perhaps not adhering to strict legal formulae, the construction of the verdict of Walter's death does reflect the pattern of self-defence narratives examined by Kamali. These narratives, as Kamali demonstrates, worked to present the victim as the aggressor who was acting feloniously. In contrast the self-defender was portrayed as peaceable, unwilling, and even fearful.[1003] This is certainly the case in the example studied here. Walter and his companions allegedly sought out violence as they armed themselves with sticks. Thus, according to the narrative they acted with deliberation which was culturally required for an action to be considered felonious.[1004] Furthermore, it was only when John de Melkesham was hit on the head and arm that he drew his own dagger. As John fled to the church of St Olave near the Tower immediately after, where he later escaped, the jurors focused more on emphasising the blameworthy character of his aggressors.[1005]

In addition to deliberately attacking John, Walter and his companions were described as 'the aforesaid evildoers' (*malefactores predicti*).[1006] The description aligns with Kamali's finding that self-defence narratives often created the image of the victim as wicked to emphasise their intent to harm the defendant.[1007] Moreover, at the beginning of the narrative, Alice le Quernbetere is described specifically as drunk, a condition which, like anger, was not considered sufficient to excuse a person's actions.[1008] The careful descriptions of Walter and his companions as morally questionable and as the

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[999] Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 18-9; Hunnisett, *The Medieval Coroner,* 98.

[1000] Thomas A. Green, *Verdict According to Conscience: Perspectives on the English Criminal Trial Jury 1200-1800* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 37; Green, 'Societal Concepts of Criminal Liability,' 675-6.

[1001] Green, *Verdict According to Conscience*, 37-46.

[1002] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 75**,** 124, 255; Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 109, 111; Goldberg, 'The Drowned Child,' 9, 23.

[1003] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 119.

[1004] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 25, 70.

[1005] London claimed an exemption from guarding churches where felons had sought sanctuary. Although this privilege was contested, it was common, therefore, for individuals who had killed someone to escape the city. Kellaway, 'The Coroner in Medieval London,' 82.

[1006] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29.

[1007] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 73.

[1008] Kamali, *Felony and the Guilty Mind*, 160.

aggressors, therefore, make use of the legal framework used in self-defence narratives which placed the blame for the death with the victim themselves.

I argue that the negative descriptions of Walter and his companions, and the unsympathetic account of their actions, would have been coloured by the different social positioning of this group and the residents summoned as jurors for the coroner. This supports Green's statement that the decisions made by coroners' juries were influenced by the status and reputation of the parties involved as well as any relationship they might have with members of the jury.[1009] It is probable that there was a significant disparity between the socio-economic status of Walter and his companions and the jurors who constructed a verdict on their actions. There are references within the verdict of the low wealth and status of those involved in the lead up to Walter's death. The jurors reported that Roger had no chattels when he fled. The same was true of the stranger who had insulted Elena. References to Elena suggest she provided some form of accommodation to Walter, Alice, and Roger. During the medieval and into the early modern periods, single and widowed women of modest status often took on lodgers to supplement their income.[1010] It is possible that Elena fits into this category.

It is more difficult to determine the financial stability of Walter de Elmeleye before his death without further evidence. Chaplains in medieval England are often described as the 'clerical proletariat'.[1011] A rise in clergy numbers in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was fuelled by a period of growth in chantry foundations. Yet not all clergy had patrons or titles when they were ordained, and this was especially true of men from poorer backgrounds.[1012] Chaplains, therefore, often maintained chapels under parish rectors or vicars from whom they were dependant for their income. These unbeneficed positions were often poorly paid and unstable. As Hugh Lawrence notes, it was unsurprising that some chaplains 'drifted into crime'.[1013] It is possible, therefore, that Walter also experienced such financial insecurity.

The recorded verdict of this case provides no names of the jurors involved in reporting on Walter's death, as is sometimes the case for later examples. Whilst we cannot trace the fortunes of the jurors individually, the social position of these men would have been significantly greater than Walter and

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[1009] Green, *Verdict According to Conscience*, 45.
[1010] Berry, *The Margins of Late Medieval London,* 22.
[1011] C.H. Lawrence, 'The English Parish and Its Clergy in the Thirteenth Century,' in *The Medieval World*, eds. Peter Linehan, Janet L. Nelson, and Marios Costambeys (London: Routledge, 2001), 754; McSheffrey, 'Whoring Priests and Godly Citizens,' 56.
[1012] Lawrence, 'The English Parish and Its Clergy,' 751-4.
[1013] Lawrence, 'The English Parish and Its Clergy,' 754. For a later period see: P.H. Cullum, 'Clergy, Masculinity and Transgression in Late Medieval England,' in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. Dawn Hadley (London: Routledge, 1998), 194; McSheffrey, 'Whoring Priests and Godly Citizens,' 56.

his companions.[1014] A statute from 1300 outlined that coroner juries should be, local, of sufficient wealth, and trustworthy.[1015] Sara Butler's assessment of the coroners' jurors for York, 1363-1378, found they consisted of middling craftsmen, as opposed to the upper echelons of urban society.[1016] It is probable, then, that the jurors tasked with explaining Walter's death were made up of senior householders who were well respected in the ward and may have held other positions of leadership and authority.

The difference in social status and wealth between the group involved in Walter's death and the jurors reporting on it would have coloured any interactions they may have had as well as how the former was written about by the latter. Forrest discusses later medieval regimes of inequality, in a parochial context, which framed the choice of trustworthy men to act as parish representatives during a visitation. The power of these local elites, Forrest identifies, was based on their 'gender, age, family, and wealth' in addition to their relationships with episcopal authority.[1017] McIntosh examines the presence of social hierarchies and their influence in local courts during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. She argues that, within these courts, 'middling-level' jurors were concerned about, and therefore exerted control over, the social behaviour of their poorer neighbours.[1018] Elsewhere McIntosh studies the local courts of several market towns during the same period to consider how 'dominant families' created and controlled collective identity and membership.[1019] McIntosh concludes that, in this context, town leaders used the court system to 'report and punish people whose behaviour did not conform to local mores.'[1020] Butler suggests, similarly, that the position of coroners' juror was considered 'an opportunity to exert authority over one's community.'[1021]

On the death of Walter de Elmeleye, the jurors present him and those he was connected with in ways which emphasise their violent and disruptive behaviour. These descriptions employ a legal language of felony and self-defence, and tropes based on gender and status, of violent men and ungoverned women, to pass judgement on the undesirability of the group. This speaks to Forrest's observation that, while presentments were 'couched in the language of public order' they may instead have served 'the interests of a narrower group'.[1022] Although Walter, Elena, Roger, and the other unnamed man

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[1014] Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 81.
[1015] Luders, *Statutes of the Realm*, vol.1, 139.
[1016] Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 75.
[1017] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 157.
[1018] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 8, 12-13, 17.
[1019] McIntosh, 'Locals, Outsiders, and Identity,' 71.
[1020] McIntosh, 'Locals, Outsiders, and Identity,' 84.
[1021] Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 77.
[1022] Forrest, *Trustworthy Men*, 190, 194.

may have considered their actions as enacting support and belonging amongst themselves, to the men who made up the coroner's jurors, this behaviour was condemning.

The verdict for Walter de Elemelye's death, however, is not a simple self-defence narrative. Although they clearly saw Walter and his companions as blameworthy for his death, they did not present John de Melkesham as pardonable. It was John who is described as escalating the situation by drawing his dagger when he was attacked with sticks. Moreover, the verdict explicitly uses the term 'felony' (*felonia*) to describe John stabbing Walter. Kamali's work seeks to accomplish more than recognising how jurors used specific legal language to influence how a homicide was explained and dealt with. Her aim also is to gain further insight into the cultural understandings of concepts, such as felony and anger, which influenced jury deliberations. Whilst to some extent the thought processes which went into constructing jury verdicts in coroners' rolls will remain unrecoverable to us, I argue we can tease out more from the case of Walter de Elmeleye. This in turn can help us think about the negotiation of belonging in late medieval England.

The explanation given for Walter's death is an unusually long and complex narrative. The details at times appear highly fictive and almost comical. Elena Hellebole, for instance, is described as the antithesis of contemporary ideals of womanhood. Elena allegedly uses disruptive and defamatory speech in public, she supports her drunken and similarly abusive tenant, she incites others to violence. Yet, in the narrative she exhorts her tenants to avenge a slight on her reputation. Walter, Roger le Skirmisour, and the other unnamed man furnish themselves with sticks and set out to avenge Elena for being called a 'whore'. There is a distinction in the narrative, however, between the man who insulted Elena and John de Melkesham. The former is described as someone whose name was unknown (*cuius nomen ignorant*) and a stranger (*extraneus*) 'who should be found in the house of Agnes de Notingham, ale-wife'.[1023] John and this stranger are also listed separately in the report on where those involved were, following Walter's death. The implication in the narrative is, therefore, that when the three men found John at the house of Agnes de Notingham and confronted him, they had in fact identified the wrong man.

The comic construction of Walter and his companions goes further than representing their actions as the antithesis of culturally acceptable behaviour. Several of the names recorded for these individuals involved in the conflict echo their reported violent inclinations. Elena's byname, 'Hellebole' means literally hell-fire, the blazing 'infernal milieu'.[1024] The name may also have evoked cultural resonances

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[1023] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29.
'*qui inueniri debeat in domo Agnetis de Notingham pandoxatortis* [*pandoxatrix*]'.
[1024] MED, helle n. 2c; bale n. (2). It is hard not to think of Elena acting in this narrative as in the place of the devil, inciting these men to violence and evil.

with long-held anger and the sin of ire, as found in the early fourteenth-century devotional verse *Handlyng Synne*: 'The touþer synne men callë yre [ire]/ þe deuylys doghetyr [devil's daughter] of hellë fyre.'[1025] Likewise, 'le Skirmisour', is a byname based off the Middle-French *'escremissour'* or Anglo-Latin *'skirmissarius'*, both describing someone skilled at, or employed in, fighting.[1026] At the time of this case-study, at the very beginning of the fourteenth century, naming practices were still unstable.[1027] David Postles warns us that formal naming practices in written records might not have been necessarily in line with quotidian, verbal forms of identification.[1028] Emily Steiner further argues for the importance of the documentary context and the discretion of clerks in recorded names. Steiner emphasises that 'what mattered to clerks was fixing description within a specific context,' thus 'clerks invented contexts in which names and identities could be provisionally fixed.'[1029] I would suggest, therefore, that it is possible the jurors, or clerks, assigned these names as they constructed their verdict.

A second reference to Roger le Skirmisour is found in the London Letter Books. In 1311:

> Master Roger le Skirmisour [was] attached because indicted for holding a school for fencing [*de skirmeria*] and drawing young men together, sons of respectable parents, to the wasting of their property and injury of their own characters.[1030]

Roger le Skirmisour was found guilty and imprisoned. Historians have noted the presence of early 'schools in arms' in later medieval England which provided weapons training to middling status urban men.[1031] Those leading instruction in these skills, such as Roger, were referred to as 'masters of fence'. The presence of these 'schools' in London is indicated by the prohibition of schools for fencing or buckler (*escolle deskirime ou bokeller*) within the city, incorporated in the *Liber Albus* from a statute

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[1025] Frederick J. Furnivall, ed., *Robert of Brunne's Handlyng Synne*. Early English Text Society Original Series 119 (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., 1901), 127, lines 3703-4.

[1026] Dictionnaire du Moyen Français (DMF), *escremissour*; DMLBS, *skirmissarius*. The MED describes a skirmesour an entertainer, and this may reflect the employment of a fencer. MED, skirmesŏur n. What is important here is the undertones of violence and conflict. It is possible that Alice, wife of John le Quernbetere was also a name which held sexual innuendo.

[1027] Richard McKinley, *A History of British Surnames* (London: Longman, 1990), 32.

[1028] David Postles, *The North Through its Names: A Phenomenology of Medieval and Early Modern Northern England* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), 28.

[1029] Steiner, 'Naming and Allegory,' 252, 254.

[1030] Reginald R. Sharpe, ed. *Calendar of Letter-Books of the City of London: D, 1309-1314* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1902), 266.

[1031] Egerton Castle, *Schools and Masters of Fence: From the Middle Ages to the End of the Eighteenth Century* (London: George Bell and Sons, 1892), 19-24; J.D. Aylward, 'The Medieval Master of Fence,' *Notes and Queries* 198 (1953): 230-4; Jay P. Anglin, 'The Schools of Defense in Elizabethan London,' *Renaissance Quarterly* 37, no.3 (1984): 395.

dating to 1286.[1032] As this reference indicates, in Roger's case, it is likely 'Skirmisour' was a more established byname, resulting from his profession. Nevertheless, it is possible that, in a different context, the individuals recorded in the jurors' verdict were known by other names.

The verdict uses tropes of violent men and disorderly women as well as descriptive bynames to situate the group in opposition to expectations of orderly and appropriate behaviour. The fictive nature and comical elements of this narrative, however, do not mean we need to conclude the whole case was completely fictional. The record of Walter de Elmeleye's death is located unremarkably within the surviving coroners' rolls and there is no indication that this case was unusual in that way (Fig.2). I argue instead, the events leading to Walter's death were reworked into a narrative by the jurors with the aim of humiliating and excluding this group. We should remember that coroners' inquests were very public events. In theory, all men over twelve years of age were to attend.[1033] The jurors' verdict would have been read aloud in this setting, thus deriding and humiliating Elena, Alice, and Roger. Within the verdict, jurors used legal terminology to assign culpability to this group and derisory, comic elements to demonstrate Walter and his companions did not belong to respectable society.

Within this example we can see how belonging and non-belonging could operate on different levels simultaneously. Actions which might be perceived by some as supportive and inclusionary, as demonstrated by the group's defence of Elena, to others might signify their non-belonging. Walter, Roger, and their other accomplice, performed their belonging through their actions supporting Elena and this is true also of Elena's support of Alice. This everyday ephemeral grouping, however, came into tension with the non-belonging constructed of them by the jurors of Cripplegate and the surrounding wards. These men framed Walter and his companions not only as culpable for Walter's death but formulated a humiliating account of their behaviour. The group's actions are portrayed as disruptive, going against cultural norms, and thus establishing their non-belonging in respectable society. They did not belong in the ward of Cripplegate and the city more broadly. The jurors, therefore, used their position of institutional authority and socio-economic status to demonstrate and reinforce this group's exclusion.

[1032] Aylward, 'Master of Fence,' 232; H.T. Riley, ed. *Munimenta Gildallae Londoniensis: Liber Albus, Liber Custumarum, et Liber Horn*, vol.1 (London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, 1859), 274. A buckler was a small round shield. MED, bokeler n. 1a, b.

[1033] Butler, *Forensic Medicine*, 85.
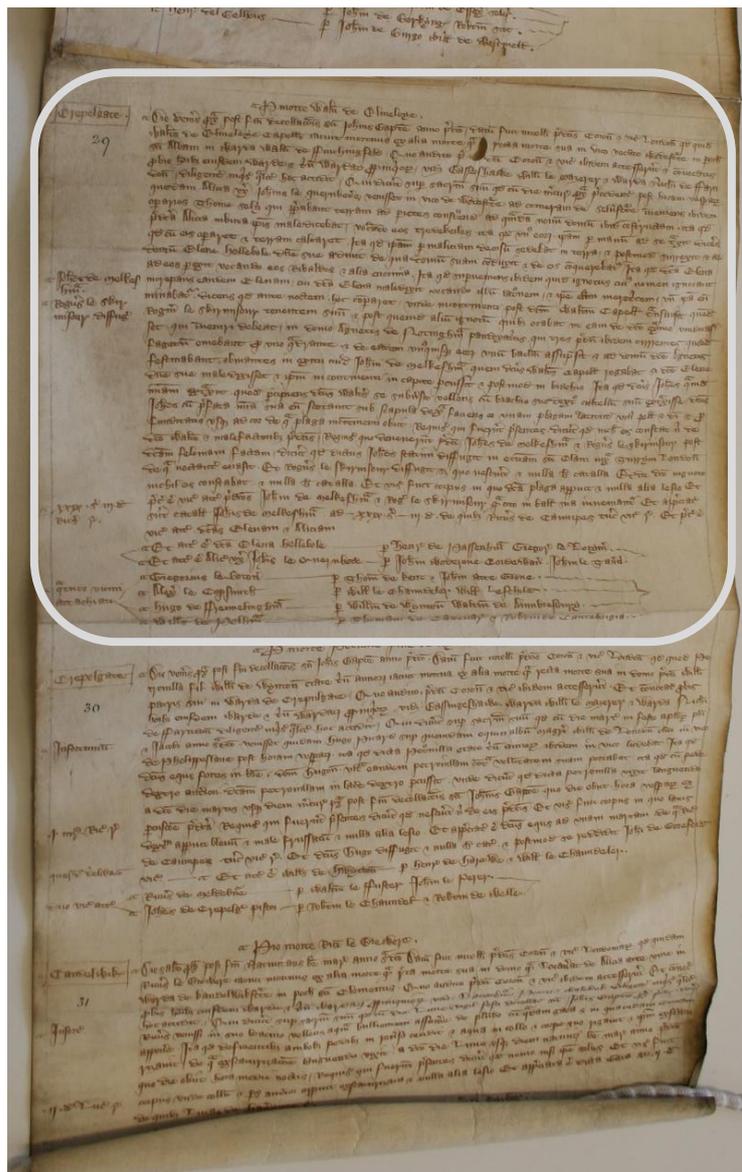
Figure 2: Image showing the jurors' verdict for the death of Walter de Elmeleye. This record appears unremarkably in the London coroners' rolls: LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 29. City of London©

In understanding medieval interactions and relationships through the concept of belonging, we need to be aware also that this did not exist as a binary, belonging/non-belonging. Experiences of belonging that individuals had in relation to social groupings they were connected to were more complex than simply being either completely included or completely excluded. We can find a demonstration of this by turning to a later example found in the fifteenth-century churchwarden's accounts from St Mary at Hill. This case-study deviates from other sources used in this thesis as it focuses on parishioners within accounting records rather than social ties from narrative testimonies. I have found, however, records of payments to a resident 'poor man', William Paris, revealing about the practices of belonging in later medieval England. Previous studies have used this material to discuss parishioners or parish groups.

French, for instance, uses these accounts as a rich resource for the study of Hocktide.[1034] Colson suggests parish building projects in the 1490s and 1500s demonstrate the organisation of the parish as a 'community'.[1035] For example, between 1499-1500 churchwardens contributed £26 towards the new steeple.[1036] Beyond the more apparent examples of collectivity and inclusion, these accounts also provide an illustrative example of how social boundaries could be negotiated for an individual.

The name William Paris is scattered throughout the churchwardens' accounts for St Mary-at-Hill between the late-1470s to mid-1490s. In his edition of the accounts, Littlehales provides index entries for three separate men with the byname Paris.[1037] He distinguishes two Williams as a joiner and an almsman, and a John Paris as a labourer. The delineations made by Littlehales between these men, however, seem to be made arbitrarily. Littlehales does collate explicit references to 'William paris, ioynner' in the index together. Similarly, under almsman, there are many references to 'Wylliam pares' as one of the the 'iij powre men of thys paryshe' being given alms as part of a chantry.[1038] The churchwardens' accounts indicate that 'William Pares, Joynour' rented a chamber from the parish which was listed under the rents for John Nasyng's Chantry.[1039] Only two references to this rent are indexed under the joiner, however, and the rest appear indexed under the almsman. Likewise, there is no clear reasoning for the distinction made in the index between payments made to a 'parys' for undertaking work for the parish that are listed under William Paris, joiner, or almsman. The reference to a payment of 10d. to William Paris in 1477-9 for the cost of nails and for mending the church pews is indexed under almsman, despite the task arguably coming under the purview of joinery.[1040] This work seems similar to 'settyng vpe of þe frame owyr þe porch on palmesan eve' accounted for in 1493-4, but which is indexed under William Paris, joiner.[1041]

There are only two references to 'Iohn paryse' in the churchwardens' accounts, both from 1479-81. On one occasion he was paid 4d. 'for swepyng of þe churche, & ledynge away of the duste, and mendyng of the wyndowse of the churche, and kepyng clene of the church hawse with othyr diuerse thynges'.[1042] He was also referenced among other labourers paid for their work repairing the steeple.[1043] As will be discussed below, these tasks fit alongside work assigned to William Paris and it is possible that these references, too, describe William Paris; incorrect forenames do appear as scribal

[1034] French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 166-171.
[1035] Colson, 'Local Communities,' 209.
[1036] Byng, *Church Building and Society*, 157.
[1037] Littlehales, *Records of a London City Church,* lxxvi-xcv.
[1038] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.91v.
[1039] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, ff.72, 116v.
[1040] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.18.
[1041] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.108.
[1042] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.32.
[1043] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.34.

errors within medieval records.[1044] It seems likely, therefore, that references to William Paris, 'parys', and possibly even John Paris, refer to one man, an almsman related to the craft of joinery. It is this individual with whom I am concerned in this study.

William Paris was one of the poorer members of the parish of St Mary at Hill. He appears regularly as one of the three poor men who were supported by the legacy of John Bedham's chantry. The chantry appears in the churchwardens' accounts from 1479-81 where £5 4s. was 'payd sondayly [every Sunday] to iij poore almysmen to pray for the sowle of Iohn Bedham'.[1045] This reflects the direction in John's will, for weekly payments to three poor people of the parish:

> I woll that the said wardeyns of the said chirch of saynt mary … shall pay to iij poure
> people most nedefull men or women and specially to iij poure men yf it may be dwelling
> in the said parish of seynt Mary atte hill ervery Sonday weekly euery yere foreuer more[1046]

The three recipients are only named in the accounts from the 1487-8 onwards until the last entry for this payment in the accounts in 1493-4.[1047] The named recipients are exclusively men. During this time William Paris is consistently listed. A man called Reginald Bull also appears in all but the earliest payments.[1048] During at least five years, then, William and Reginald were considered poor men in need of financial assistance.

The provision of charity was a crucial part of parish life. The ideal of charitable provision, as discussed in chapter two, was a demonstration of love and support in line with scriptural notions of loving one's neighbour. The practice of allocating a section of parish income to alms dates back to the eleventh century.[1049] Various thirteenth-century ecclesiastical councils and synods included stipulations for parish provision for poor relief.[1050] Parishioners additionally provided charity within the context of the parish through fraternities and testamentary bequests. Social gatherings and entertainments, such as ales and plays, were effective fundraising activities.[1051]

[1044] See page 199, for example, where Alice is written instead of Isabel in Newport c. Newport.

[1045] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.38v.

[1046] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/002, ff.16-20. John Bedham's will is copied into a book of miscellany accompanying the churchwardens' accounts of St Mary at Hill. See also: Littlehales, *Records of a London City Church,* 17; Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, part 2, 570.

[1047] The obit for John Bedham was noted in the accounts for 1517-18 which included the dirige and bread and drink for 'prestes, clerkes, powre people', but there was no mention of the three poor men.

[1048] In 1487-8 the three poor men are given as William Wylcockes, Hugh Jackson, and William Paris. The former two are not mentioned again. The poor-men listed in 1489-90 are William Paris, Reginald Bull, and Richard Sylke. Richard Sylke is replaced by John Toplady between 1489-90 and 1490-1.

[1049] Rubin, *Charity and Community*, 237-8.

[1050] Rubin, *Charity and Community*, 238-42.

[1051] French, 'Parochial Fund-Raising,' 126; Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity,' 19-41. See also: French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 157-179.

Any sense of belonging engendered from giving alms to William, however, would have been mediated by status and the power dynamics between donor and recipient. The parish of St Mary at Hill was an affluent London parish and was occupied by a group of wealthy residents, in contrast to the socio-economic position of William. As argued by Burgess, these wealthy parishioners appear to have been very conscious of hierarchy.[1052] Burgess examines a pyramidal depiction of the parish hierarchy found in a book of miscellany accompanying the churchwardens' accounts (Fig.3).[1053] The diagram, dating to 1486, includes the names of fifty-seven parishioners arranged in groups. Those listed appear to be those more actively involved in the parish, contributing financially and through service.[1054] The ordering of these names was gradated according to wealth and seniority, with those identified by Burgess as the wealthiest elite located at the top of the pyramid.[1055] Burgess demonstrates further how these elite parishioners had an important and active role in parish activities: contributing donations, auditing the churchwardens' accounts and coordinating with clergy. Robert Rivell and John Smart, listed at the apex of the pyramid, contributed 14d. to the clerks' wages in 1483-4. This is in contrast to Reginald Bull and John Toplady, who were described as 'poor men', who made contributions of 1d. and nil, respectively.[1056] William Paris' name is listed at the very bottom of the diagram and Reginald Bull is listed one lozenge above (Fig.3). The social position of the wealthy parishioners at the top of the diagram is placed in relief by the names of these poorer parishioners written at the bottom.

Almsgiving, moreover, was considered a form of penance, and mortuary provisions for alms commonly included an expectation that intercessory prayers would be said by recipients for the soul of the dead donor.[1057] Giving money to poor parishioners in exchange for their prayers aligns with a strategy of intercession found in John Bedham's will. John additionally made provision for a chanty priest in the parish of St Mary at Hill to sing Mass daily for his soul as well as for the souls of his wife Beatrix, and others.[1058] In this way, the alms given to William Paris as part of John's chantry supports the point made by Katherine French and Gary Gibbs that the participation of poor parishioners often revolved around their prayers and 'as recipients of the charity of the more affluent'.[1059] William's position as a recipient of alms would not only have benefited John Bedham as the charitable donor but parishioners

[1052] French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 166.
[1053] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/002. The diagram appears upside-down in the endpapers of the book of miscellany and is reproduced in: Burgess, 'Shaping the Parish,' 254-5. See also: Burgess, 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts,' 325.
[1054] Burgess, 'Shaping the Parish,' 257, 264-6.
[1055] Burgess, 'Shaping the Parish,' 257, 260, 268-9.
[1056] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.52.
[1057] Rubin, *Charity and Community*, 64; Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars*, 362-3, 266.
[1058] Littlehales, *Records of a London City Church,* 17; Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, part 2, 570.
[1059] French and Gibbs, 'The Poor, The Pious, and The Privileged,' 395.

of St Mary at Hill more generally too as this repeated almsgiving contributed to the parish's programme of charitable giving. Whilst William's belonging within the parish would have been fostered through his receipt of alms, this was shaped by his lower socio-economic status which facilitated the charitable benefaction of wealthier parishioners.

Figure 3: Image showing the pyramidal depiction of the parish hierarchy of St Mary at Hill, London. William Paris' name appears on the right lozenge at the bottom of the diagram. LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/002. City of London©

Recorded in the church wardens' accounts throughout the late 1470s and 1490s there are also frequent payments made to William Paris for small manual jobs around the church of St Mary at Hill. In the 1477-9 accounts, 4d. was 'paid to William paris, for beryng of the grete boke to Sir William palmers Chamber, to write another boke by that'.[1060] Between 1483 and 1485 William Paris was paid

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[1060] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.19v.

for sweeping the church plus for 'his labour for a basket to bear in dust'.[1061] Taking these odd payments to William together, it appears that between 1477 and 1495 the various churchwardens made a conscious effort to employ him in work relating to the parish church. It is probable that it was the churchwardens of St Mary at Hill who were responsible for organising the payments and work for William Paris as part of their responsibilities over church maintenance and finances.[1062] The churchwardens' assistance was perhaps more readily felt by William Paris than other poor men such as Reginald, who appears in only two entries outside the chantry payments. In 1489-90 there is even a record that simply reads 'Item to William paris, ijd.'[1063] Whilst there are payments for odd jobs to other named persons recorded across the accounts they are not as numerous. This consistent, extra employment was not extended to other recipients of the chantry dole.

In a similar way to the provision of odd jobs to Maud Katersouth, such as fetching water, by her neighbours in York, it is possible that the ad hoc jobs given to William Paris were considered part of the almsgiving of St Mary at Hill, London. I argue that providing William with a form of income served to foster an element of belonging for him within the parish. This practice of belonging, however, likewise served to reinforce the hierarchy between William and the churchwardens. The wardens who served after 1486 were drawn from the group of men who occupied the middle of the pyramidal diagram. Moreover, those listed at the top had previously served as churchwardens during the 1470s and 1480s.[1064] These middling-status but aspirational wardens, like the wealthy parishioners they represented, would have been substantially higher in socio-economic status than William Paris.

The tasks and ad hoc employment assigned to William were informed further by the institutional framework of the parish and the responsibilities of the churchwardens who facilitated his inclusion. The level of authority churchwardens held in later medieval England has been debated within scholarship.[1065] There is, nevertheless, a consensus that their role centred around the management of the laity's responsibility for the nave, tower, and yard of the church and liturgical furnishings. Wardens

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[1061] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.55.

[1062] John Badham directed in his will that the churchwardens were to find and pay the almsmen for his chantry. *'Item, I woll that the said wardeyns … pay to iij poure people'.* LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/002, f.17.

[1063] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.66.

[1064] Burgess, 'Shaping the Parish,' 260.

[1065] Beat Kümin and Robert Swanson assign significance to the leadership and organisation of wardens in the parish. In contrast, Clive Burgess maintains that churchwardens should not be mistaken for 'chief executives' in the parish but rather be characterised as caretakers who answered to elite parishioners. For French, regionality is a key factor in assessing the relative 'strength' of warden's authority and thus she understands the role, and therefore it's place in parish hierarchy, as a range. Beat A. Kümin, *The Shaping of a Community: The Rise and Reformation of the English Parish c.1400–1560* (London: Routledge, 1996), 101; R.N. Swanson, *Church and Society in Late Medieval England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 217; Burgess, 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts,' 312; French, *The People of the Parish*, 81-3.

administered the property of the parish and accounted for the income and expenditure during their office.[1066] The jobs that William was paid for fit under the scope of these responsibilities as he variously was tasked with mending pews, sweeping the churchyard, or carrying building materials.[1067] These jobs can be seen as inclusionary for William as they enabled him to participate in parish life and in maintaining the church of St Mary's. William was chosen repeatedly for these tasks which would have helped to build up a sense of belonging and familiarity over time. Yet his work also allowed the wardens to fulfil their responsibilities, materially through the upkeep of the church, and spiritually by supporting a poorer member of the parish.

The provision of charity in later medieval England, through the parish and from chantry bequests, moreover, was conditional. As discussed in the previous chapters, by the time of this example in the later fifteenth century, practices of charitable giving had become more discriminating and localised. There was a growing concern amongst the wealthier classes about the unworthy idle poor. Simultaneously, patterns of almsgiving often focused on preventing respectable individuals, or the 'shamefaced poor', from becoming impoverished.[1068] McRee argues that guild and parish fraternity almsgiving demonstrated a fear of sudden change in circumstance, by injury, disease, aging, or loss of property.[1069] Recipients of stipends were characterised as a 'prosperous, hardworking individual[s] brought low by circumstance' beyond their own control.[1070] Moreover, Rexroth emphasises that almshouses established by guilds often accommodated members who had become unable to work and aimed to maintain the status of the inmates through the provision of private fireplaces, privies, and locks.[1071]

William's receipt of weekly alms and ad hoc employment is suggestive of the fact that he was considered adequately respectable by leading parishioners. The purpose of the churchwardens' accounts was primarily financial which means we do not find further descriptions or additional background information on William. If we accept that descriptors of 'joynour' refer to the same individual as the almsman, these references indicate that he had at one time been employed in this craft. Consistent payments to William as an almsman, in addition to the nature of the tasks he did around St Mary's, suggests that William may have been unable to take on more substantial or strenuous activities during the late 1480s and 1490s, whether due to age, ailment, or disability.

[1066] French, *The People of the Parish*, 72; Burgess, 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts,' 307-8, 312.
[1067] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, ff.18, 98, 108, 55, 58.
[1068] Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 228.
[1069] McRee, 'Charity and Guild Solidarity,' 204-5.
[1070] McRee, 'Charity and Guild Solidarity,' 209.
[1071] Rexroth, *Deviance and Power*, 231, 252-3, 263.

That the churchwardens and active parishioners perceived William Paris as respectable is supported by another set of tasks William was paid for over the last decades of the fifteenth century. In the years 1477-8 he was given 16d. for 'wacchyng in the Churche in tyme of making of the Vestry' over sixteen nights.[1072] In 1491-2 William was paid 8s. for 'kepyng and wachyng of the cherche the space of x wekes'.[1073] That this job was given to William is significant. The churchwardens and parishioners trusted William Paris to look after the church whilst building work was taking place. This accords with a scholarly understanding that medieval employment and economic engagement was built on trust.[1074] As Horrox explains, the position of being in service 'both recognised and enhanced the importance of the servant.'[1075] William's perceived respectability would have helped him to gain employment from the churchwardens. Further this work would have helped to enhance his good reputation and increase his belonging within the parish, which seems to have been greater than that experienced by other almsmen. Nevertheless, William's inclusion remained dependent on his maintenance of a good and honest reputation.

A comparison between the case of William Paris and the example of Maud Katersouth examined in chapter two reveals how gender was an influential factor too in shaping the experience of belonging for William in St Mary at Hill. The ad hoc employment given to William Paris by the churchwardens echoes the jobs Maud Katersouth undertook for her neighbours, as narrated in Bradeley c. Walkington.[1076] In both cases, I argue, this work helped to construct an element of conditional belonging for Maud and William amongst their neighbours and fellow parishioners, respectively. Yet, whilst the churchwardens of St Mary's organised the employment of William, the male householders who gave depositions in Bradeley c. Walkington criticised similar provision given to Maud. There will have been many invisible factors influencing the different attitudes in these examples, which took place at different times and in different contexts. We should note that while John Bedham's will directed the weekly charitable payments he provisioned for three poor people should be given to 'people most needful men or women' he also indicated a preference for poor men 'specially to iij poure men'.[1077] This preference appears to have been upheld by the churchwardens. What this comparison does highlight, however, is that the work given to William was organised and regulated within the framework of the parish. The provisions given to Maud by her neighbours (*vicini*) on the

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[1072] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.19v.
[1073] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.88.
[1074] Rosser, 'Crafts, Guilds and the Negotiation of Work,' 11.
[1075] Horrox, 'Service,' 67.
[1076] See chapter two.
[1077] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/002, ff.16-20. John Bedham's will is copied into a book of miscellany accompanying the churchwardens' accounts of St Mary at Hill. See also: Littlehales, *Records of a London City Church,* 17; Sharpe, *Calendar of Wills*, part 2, 570.

other hand were ad hoc, and this may serve as one explanation for the different attitudes towards the charitable employment of Maud and William. As discussed in chapter two, it is likely that the neighbours giving Maud work to do in exchange for goods were women. These women were providing for another woman, operating outside of an institutional system regulated by men. This comparison, therefore, indicates the ways that factors such as gender could influence how an individual's belonging was perceived and negotiated by others. The position of William as a poor but respectable man enabled him to find charitable assistance within the framework of the parish, which fostered his belonging to a greater extent than might be the case for those with less social standing or poor women in the parish.

The case study of William Paris, so far, has enabled me to demonstrate how belonging or non-belonging was not an absolute. Rather, the extent to which an individual experienced belonging within a group was complex, influenced by factors including socio-economic status and gender. How their belonging was fostered, and to what degree, also was highly contextual. William's belonging to the parish of St Mary at Hill was encouraged through the provision of ad hoc employment and his repeated selection as one of the poor men who benefited from John Bedham's chantry dole. Furthermore, William was trusted to keep watch over the church at night during building work. Yet William did not belong to the group of wealthy parishioners and churchwardens who provided him with material aid. His lower status and their benefaction instead served to highlight their own power and authority in the parish.

Although William Paris' belonging within St Mary's was conditional and reinforced social hierarchies amongst parishioners, that is not to say that the sense of inclusion that William experienced was necessarily superficial. By considering an additional role frequently assigned to William, we can add more depth to our understanding of his position in the parish of St Mary at Hill. Between 1479 and 1494 William was paid for watching the Easter Sepulchre for at least six different years.[1078] The inclusion of Reginald Bull alongside William for this task in 1493-4 demonstrates the role was not considered 'beyond' poor parishioners.[1079] On other occasions William was paid alongside the parish clerk. The accounts for 1479-81 record 23d. given to 'the Clerke and [William] paris for mete and drynke for wechynge of the Sepulchre with othir bysynes done in the Church'.[1080] Most often, however, William is the only recipient of this payment. Some years there is no recipient listed with the payment for watching the sepulchre. It is possible, then, that William undertook this role more often

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[1078] Sepulchres were symbolic tombs used for the re-enactment of Jesus' death and burial. These could be temporary or permanent structures, located near the chancel. On Good Friday, the *deposito* service included the 'burial' of a cross or Host. These items were then brought out again at Easter.
[1079] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.108.
[1080] LMA, P69/MRY4/B/005/MS01239/001/001, f.32.

than the records make visible. The repeated allocation of this role to William Paris suggests it may have been associated with him by parishioners.

Watching the Sepulchre symbolised the soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb and took place from his burial on Good Friday, until Mass at Easter which represented the Resurrection.[1081] Opening the sepulchre was a central part of the celebration on Easter Sunday. Phythian-Adams describes how this unveiling 'dramatised' the Easter celebrations.[1082] The significance surrounding the sepulchre at Easter is attested to by the provision by wealthy parishioners for their burial monuments to be made as the basis for a sepulchre.[1083] The 1496 will of John Pympe from Nettlestead, Kent, for example, directed that John was to be buried:

> before the image of oure blessed lady in the place where as the sepulture of Oure lorde
> is wounte to stonde at the Fest of Ester and to be leyde there in a tombe of stone, made
> under such fourme as the blessed sacramente and the holy crosse may be leide upon the
> stone of the said tombe in the manner of sepulture at the Feest abovesaide.[1084]

On the one hand, there may have been a symbolic element to the role of guarding the Sepulchre being assigned to a poor member of the parish. In this case, William's participation would have reinforced his conditional and partial belonging within the parish. Easter, however, was the most important celebration in the medieval Christian calendar. Hutton argues that in many parish churches opening the sepulchre was the first ceremony conducted on Easter Sunday.[1085] This would make it a highly charged moment of celebration following the Lenten fast, one that William was an integral part of. On the other hand, then, we can interpret William's involvement in the Easter celebrations as reflective of a sense of real belonging and participation beyond simple tokensim.

The churchwarden's accounts serve to demonstrate how belonging within a group was mediated based on socio-economic status, gender, and institutional authority. William Paris's participation in parish life through manual labour and as an almsman included him amongst active parishioners to the extent that he was listed in the pyramidal diagram from 1486. The relationship William had with the churchwardens and as an almsman created his conditional belonging. William remained positioned below wealthier parishioners and the churchwardens in the parish's social hierarchy, as visually represented in the diagram. The warden's accounts, however, can offer only a partial view into William

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[1081] Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*, 24.
[1082] Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and The Citizen,' 255.
[1083] Badham, *Seeking Salvation,* 213-3.
[1084] Joan Evans and Norman Cook, 'A Statue of Christ from the Ruins of Mercers' Hall,' (London: Royal Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, 1955), 175; Badham, *Seeking Salvation*, 212-3.
[1085] Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England*, 25.

Paris' experiences at St Mary's. These records do not present a complete picture of activities in later medieval parishes.[1086] Churchwarden's accounts were practical documents to record the financial management of the parish undertaken by the wardens. They did not include descriptions of contributions or activities which fell outside the wardenship of the parish.[1087] We cannot see, for example, details about relationships that William may have formed with other parishioners outside of his engagement with the wardens. William's participation in guarding the church and Sepulchre at Easter, however, may hint at a meaningful sense of belonging beyond his position as an object of charity as an active and valued, if low-status, parishioner.

Negotiating Boundaries in Relationships Between Neighbours

In the first section of this chapter, we have considered the negotiation of social boundaries through moments of inclusion and exclusion. The examples of Walter de Elmeleye and William Paris have shown that belonging, amongst parishioners or those living in a ward, could be configured in terms of social status and wealth as well as gender. In the following section of this chapter, I will deal more closely with the question of whether relationships between neighbours in the later medieval period can be considered bounded. As above, this will be done through the study of moments of inclusion and exclusion within relationships between neighbours. A sense of cohesion within relationships with neighbours has been noticed already, for example with the account of the miraculous recovery of William Hill and John Raynold from a well, where local residents worked together for each other's welfare. I will use two Consistory court cases from London and York respectively to argue that relationships between neighbours did have social boundaries. Through these examples I will identify practices of belonging and non-belonging and assess the nature of these boundaries for groups of neighbours.

The marital separation *a mensa et thoro* suit William Newport c. Isabel Newport, brought to the London Consistory between January and July 1492, was an unusual case. As Richard Helmholz outlines, marital separation cases were relatively rare within the church courts.[1088] Nevertheless, this suit includes the comparatively detailed and varied testimonies of eleven male witnesses for the plaintiff.[1089] Grounds for separation of this kind, whereby the marriage bond remained intact but the couple could live separately, included either spiritual deviance such as heresy or apostasy, adultery, or cruelty of the offending party.[1090] The plaintiff's suit in this example focused on the latter two

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[1086] Gibbs, 'London Parish Records,' 84.
[1087] Burgess, 'Pre-Reformation Churchwardens' Accounts,' 312; Byng, *Church Building and* Society, 156.
[1088] Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, 100.
[1089] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
[1090] For further information on medieval divorce in England see: Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, 74-111.

reasons. Several depositions for the plaintiff alleged that Isabel was an adulterous wife and described her as a 'common whore' (*communa meretrix*) who was reputed for inciting men to sleep with her.[1091] In terms of violence, the depositions emphasise Isabel was responsible for the couple's fights and describe how Isabel had rushed William with a pin in an attempt to stab him, put a knife in his bed, and even pushed him into the Houndsditch, the ditch circling London's city walls.[1092]

The plaintiff's depositions were constructed to persuade the bishop's Official to allow William to separate from Isabel. This would mean William would be exonerated from the obligation of supporting Isabel, who was described in one deposition as 'a waster and ruiner of William's goods'.[1093] As part of this purpose, the plaintiff's depositions also present Isabel as transgressing social norms, and consequently as a social outsider amongst her neighbours. Their narratives surrounding the Newports' marriage argue that Isabel was not only an adulterous, violent, and disobedient wife but also 'is named publicly as a woman of evil disposition' who brings disruption to residents in the parish of St Botolph Bishopsgate.[1094] These more generalised accusations support Helmholz's remark that, whilst they were not enough to be sufficient evidence for a successful judgement, such allegations were included to persuade the Official of the bad character of the defendant.[1095] Whilst the veracity of their claims cannot be substantiated, how the deponents saw and presented Isabel's actions as alienating her from her neighbours provides us with insight into some of the mechanisms which were used to construct non-belonging amongst neighbours. Moreover, by considering how Isabel's exclusion was constructed can help us appreciate the bounded nature of relationships with neighbours.

The deponents' attempts to demonstrate Isabel was cruel towards her husband include references to the fights the couple had. John Smyth deposed that Isabel and William:

> argued, quarrelled, and fought most of the time, to the great weariness and nuisance of their neighbours [*vicinorum*] and those living around them, and as the common opinion and fame had it and still has it there, the said Alice [*sic*, Isabel] was at fault and gave him cause many times.[1096]

[1091] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. Here I am using Ruth Mazo Karras' translation and definition of *meretrix*. Ruth Mazo Karras, C*ommon Women: Prostitution and Sexuality in Medieval England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 11-12.

[1092] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. There are cases in the Coroners' Rolls of deaths by drowning in this ditch. See for incidence № 19: Sharpe, *Coroners Rolls,* 190.

[1093] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*prodiga et divastatrix bonorum dicti Willelmi ut dicit*'.

[1094] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'*in eadem parrochia publice nominator Isabella pro muliere male disposicionis*'.

[1095] Helmholz, *Marriage Litigation*, 105.

[1096] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.

The end of this extract is a blatant attempt to shift the blame for the couple's fights solely onto Isabel, thus, to build up the case that she was violent and cruel to William. That Isabel's behaviour 'gave him cause' worked to justify William's participation in their fights. Husbands were legally and culturally permitted to use a measure of violence to chastise their wives as part of their control over their household.[1097] Isabel did not live up to the cultural norm that wives were to be obedient to, and governed by, their husbands.[1098] We can see this additionally with John's description of a fight that occurred several years before when, he deposed, 'Isabel acted very obstinately and basely with her husband'.[1099] Here the deposition attempts to place blame for these arguments onto Isabel. John's comment, however, that 'this witness and the other neighbours living around were very worried and disturbed about what they did and said to one another,' betrays the fact that the larger issue was the behaviour of the couple together.[1100] John's testimony culminates in a narrative of Isabel's attempt to stab William with a brooch pin. Whereas a level of violence may have been tolerated when committed by husbands, as Butler explains, wives who were violent against their husbands upset social and gender hierarchies.[1101] A similar framing is found in John Mader's deposition where he claimed 'many times this witness saw William and Isabel fighting in the public street and for the greater part it was entirely Isabel who fought.'[1102] According to the depositions, Isabel's actions transgressed cultural understandings of male authority within marriage.

The depositions provided by John Smyth are detailed in the information they provide on Isabel and William. His authority to comment on the couple's marriage, and Isabel's behaviour and reputation is implied through his positioning as their neighbour. The narrative locates John amongst the couple's neighbours when describing how 'this witness and the other neighbours [*vicini*] living around' were concerned about the fights the couple were having. More explicitly, John deposed that 'for the whole time during which William and Isabel lived together as husband and wife in the parish of St Botulph and were the neighbours [*vicini*] of this witness'.[1103] This amounted to around five to six years. The identification of John as a neighbour to the couple lends weight to his claims that those living next to

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'prefatus Willelmus et Isabella pro maiori parte erant adinvicem rixantes, objurgantes, et pugnantes in magnum tedium et nocumentum eis vicinorum et circum commorancium, et ut communis habebatur et adhuc ibidem habetur opinio et fama, dicta Alicia [sic] fuit in culpa et dedit eidem occasiones nonnullis vicibus'.
[1097] Butler, *The Language of Abuse*, 258.
[1098] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 141.
[1099] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. *'dicit quod prefata Isabella in jeme contingente huic ad ii vel iii annos elapsos valde obstinate et prone egit cum dicto viro suo'.*
[1100] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'iste juratus et alii vicini circummanentes ex factis et dictis eorum multum erant inquietati et soliciti adpro'.
[1101] Butler, *Language of Abuse,* 86-8.
[1102] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. *'iste juratus vidit dictum Willelmum et Isabellam pugnantes in publica strata et omnino pro maiori parte p[ugna]bat dicta Isabella'.*
[1103] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. *'per totum tempus quo dictus Willelmus et Isabella adinvicem morabantur ut vir et uxor infra parrochiam sancti Botulphi et erant vicini huic jurato'.*

them were concerned or wearied by their constant fighting. As a neighbour, John was able to provide information about the *fama* of Isabel, as the cause of the quarrels. Moreover, he deposed how Isabel had called her husband a cuckold 'in this witness's hearing,' and that John even 'saw Isabel in her dwelling house' when she attempted to stab William with a pin.[1104] These descriptions evoke the idea that neighbours had access to the lives of their neighbours through their ability to see and hear into their household and therefore were able to comment on their married lives.

Although the primary reason for recounting the couple's fights was to construct Isabel as a bad wife, John Smyth's deposition also frames the negative impact of these fights in the context of the couple's neighbours. John deposed that their quarrels took place not just in their own house but also in their doorway and in the street. Isabel's violence, therefore, was not contained spatially, but disrupted residents outside of her marriage. He claimed that these arguments 'were to the great weariness and nuisance of their neighbours [*vicini*] and those living around them,' and that 'this witness and the other neighbours [*vicinorum*] living around were very worried and disturbed'.[1105] John used the term nuisance (*nocumentum*) to describe the couple's actions from the perspective of the neighbours, a phrase also used when residents were presented either to the Assize of Nuisance or the Wardmote courts when they caused damage to property through hazardous walls or leaking gutters.[1106] This term, then, evokes a sense of damage to the neighbours because of the couple's arguments. Indeed, noise pollution was a serious concern during this period, especially at night, as it was considered detrimental to health.[1107] Isabel's violence was unacceptable as, not only did her behaviour upset social, gendered norms around marital relationships, the quarrels she allegedly initiated also disrupted her neighbours.

The effects of Isabel's adultery and sexual misbehaviour, too, were constructed implicitly as disruptive not just to her own marriage but in the neighbourhood more broadly. Both John Smyth and John Mader testified that Isabel was well known as a 'whore' (*meretrix*) and 'strumpet' (*sturpra*) and that she herself had declared her husband a cuckold, a man whose wife was adulterous.[1108] These claims spoke to the legal requirement that the defendant was adulterous. This narrative also ties into

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[1104] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
[1105] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'iste juratus et alii vicini circummanentes ex factis et dictis eorum multum erant inquietati et soliciti'.
'prefatus Willelmus et Isabella pro maiori parte erant adinvicem rixantes, objurgantes, et pugnantes in magnum tedium et nocumentum eis vicinorum et circum commorancium, et ut communis habebatur et adhuc ibidem habetur opinio et fama, dicta Alicia [sic] fuit in culpa et dedit eidem occasiones nonnullis vicibus'.
[1106] For an overview of the Assize of Nuisance records see: Chew and Kellaway, *London Assize of Nuisance,* ix-xxxiv.
[1107] Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies*, 164.
[1108] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. For more on sexuality and marriage see: Karras, *Common Women*, 84-101.

concerns about sexual deviance disrupting, and occurring within, a local area. We have already seen the connection between neighbours and reporting illicit sex, for instance found in late medieval and early modern church court testimonies.[1109] The threat posed by Isabel to the wider neighbourhood is implied by the accusation that John heard Isabel often say to many men 'Come on and dight [have sex with] me,' and 'invited diverse men to know her'.[1110] Isabel, therefore, posed a threat to the sexual morality of other households.

It appears, from the depositions, that at least some of the witnesses for the plaintiff were also neighbours of Isabel and William Newport, in addition to John Smyth. A couple of depositions recount an occasion, around September 1490, when Isabel attempted to recover various items from the house whilst William was away. As recorded in John Smyth's second deposition for this case:

> this witness, standing in a certain garden next to this witness's dwelling house and near the dwelling house in which William [Newport] then lived, saw Isabel entering William's garden and breaking a wall next to the door of the house. Through the hole in the wall she took out a certain iron rod, in English a spit, with which the door of the house was closed and fastened from the inside, and, having removed the rod, Isabel lifted the door and entered into the house. After a short time, Isabel [came out], carrying in her apron a latten candlestick, dishes and platters of pewter, and linen clothes (what sorts of clothes or how many he does not know and did not know then).[1111]

This instance was described in the testimonies of Richard Stanley and Thomas Millener too. At this time Isabel, evidently, was not cohabiting with William. The position of these men as neighbours to the couple enabled them to see Isabel breaking into the house through the garden. John Smyth described his house as being 'near the dwelling house in which William [Newport] then lived'.[1112]

[1109] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 986-7, 969; Goldberg, 'Cherrylips,' 29-42; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 99; McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 64.

[1110] MED, dighten, v. 7(b). Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'*diversis invitavit ad cognoscendum eandem*'.

[1111] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'*iste juratus, stans in quodam gardino domui habitacionis huius jurati contiguo ac domui habitacionis eiusdem Willelmi propinquo, in qua domo dictus Willelmus adtunc morabatur, vidit dictam Isabellam intrantem ortum dicti Willelmi et frangentem murum juxta ostium dicte domus et per illud foramen extrahentem quoddam veru ferreum, anglice a spyt, cum quo ostium dicte domus intrincice claudebatur et firmabatur quo sic extracto dicta Isabella sustulit dictum ostium et intravit eandem domum et per aliquantulum tempus dicta Isabella habens in gremio suo unum candelabrum de laton, discos que parapsides de pewetr, et alias vestes lintheas quales fuerunt huiusmodi vestes aut quot ignorat prout adtunc ignoravit iste juratus.*'

[1112] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*ac domui habitacionis eiusdem Willelmi propinquo*'.

Richard also deposed that Isabel reached William's house by having first 'entered this witness's garden through a certain alley next to this witness's dwelling house'.[1113]

After leaving the house with various items, the deponents claimed Isabel tried to enlist Richard Stanley to help her, but he refused. Richard deposed that:

> and after entering the house, Isabel took and carried away platters and other utensils belonging to William, who was absent at that time. And this witness knows this because Isabel, carrying those utensils in her apron, wanted to leave the utensils with this witness to keep, but this witness refused to do that, saying, "Naye, y wyl not dele with them, but that wey that thow cammyst, that wey go."[1114]

A third deposition given by Thomas Millener corroborate these accounts explaining that Isabel 'wished to leave the dishes and pewter platters and other household utensils belonging to William with Richard Stanley, for him to keep for Isabel`s use, as Richard Stanley told this witness.'[1115] After Richard's refusal 'Isabel offered this witness [Thomas] a number of utensils to keep for Isabel`s use, but this witness refused to receive those utensils.'[1116] Although there is no detail on where Thomas lived, it is probable he was also a neighbour to Isabel, as she asked him to help her too.

The value of household goods, including plate and linens, increased following the Black Death and throughout the fifteenth century, in part resulting from the shortage of bullion.[1117] Isabel's retrieval of these items equated to a removal of the financial resources of her marital home with William. It is possible that these items were brought to the marriage by Isabel. When the couple were no longer co-habiting, Isabel may have wanted to take back what she considered as her belongings. Legally, however, these household items belonged to William, as her husband, on marriage.[1118] The witnesses, thus, used this example to demonstrate how Isabel wasted and damaged her husband's property.

[1113] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'Isabella per quandam le aley juxta domum habitacionis huius jurati ortum sive gardinum istius jurati intravit'.
[1114] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'Et postmodum eandem domum prefata Isabella intrans, perapsides ac cetera utensilia eiusdem Willelmi, adtunc absentis, abduxit et asportavit. Et hoc se dicit scire quia dicta Isabella habens huiusmodi utensilia in gremio suo, eadem utensilia cum isto jurato dimittere voluisset custodienda, sed iste juratus sic facere recusavit, dicendo, "Naye, y wyl not dele with them, but that wey that thow cammyst, that wey go."'
[1115] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. *'dicta Isabella voluisset dimittere discos et perapsides de pewtr ac cetera utensilia domus eiusdem Willelmi cum Ricardo Stanley custodiendos ad usum et utilitatem dicte Isabelle prout dictus Ricardus Stanley huic jurato retulit.'*
[1116] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. *'dicta Isabella obtulit huic jurato diversa utensilia ad usum eiusdem Isabelle custodienda, iste tamen juratus huiusmodi utensilia recipere recusavit.'*
[1117] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 32, 43, 46-7.
[1118] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 29; Janet S. Loengard, ''Which may said to be her own': Widows and Goods in Late-Medieval England,' in *Medieval Domesticity*, 164-5.

Thomas testified that 'often before that day Isabel told this witness that she wished to make merry with William's goods'.[1119]

Throughout the thesis we have seen how practices within relationships between neighbours included the provision of support and efforts to ensure the safety of other neighbours. Isabel had clearly expected, or at least hoped, that Richard and Thomas might help her. Within the depositions which survive for this suit there is no testimony or response provided by Isabel. It is thus impossible to determine her own perspective on her marital relationship, for example to what extent she was at risk from William. Both Butler and McSheffrey identify the role of regulating potential and existing marriages as the particular responsibility of 'senior men' in an urban context, as 'the patriarchs of the community'.[1120] By asking her neighbours to help her recover goods, Isabel may have been appealing to such expectations of patriarchal, neighbourly responsibility.

Both Richard Stanley and Thomas Millener explained that, when asked to take the various household items for Isabel, they refused to assist her. By rejecting Isabel in this way, these men failed to provide neighbourly assistance. Rejecting Isabel also served the witnesses themselves by demonstrating they were not party to Isabel's behaviour. In denying support to her in this way, these men rejected the neighbourly connection they had with Isabel. Thus, they rejected her position as a neighbour. In part, the deponents' enactment of Isabel's non-belonging through their refusal to help her may have been shaped by their decision to support William. If Richard and Thomas had received Isabel after she took goods from the house, they would have been condoning her behaviour and thus undermining the authority of her husband. Their choice to act as witnesses for William's suit, therefore, could be read as an effort to condemn Isabel's subversion of the patriarchal ideals which reinforced their authority, and that of William, as householders.

The depositions provided by the witnesses for the plaintiff additionally suggest they supported William in their capacity as neighbours, and therefore constructed his belonging in this regard. Butler argues for the cultural importance of neighbours, in addition to friends and relatives, in actively intervening in a marriage which they perceived to be out of control or involving unacceptable levels of violence.[1121] Whilst the majority of recorded cases involve a husband's violence towards his wife, in Newport c. Newport neighbours intervened when the reverse was true. John Twemlow's deposition includes a second-hand account of a violent dispute between William and Isabel. John Foster, another deponent,

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[1119] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. *'quamsepe ante dictum diem dicta Isabella retulit huic jurato quod vellet jocundari cum bonis eiusdem Willelmi'.*

[1120] Butler, *Language of Abuse,* 199; McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 250-1. See also: Goldberg, *Communal Discord,* 147-157.

[1121] Butler, *Language of Abuse,* 185-6, 198.

told John Twemlow that, around three years previously, the couple had been physically fighting. According to the narrative, 'Isabel would have killed William with a knife that she held in her hands, or at least would have mutilated one of his limbs, if Thomas Taryson had not helped William and separated them.'[1122] Culturally, as Butler describes, 'husband abuse broke all the rules'.[1123] Not only was the use of weapons in domestic violence deemed excessive, more generally the use of physical force by a woman was culturally unacceptable. A wife killing her husband was an act of petty treason in medieval England.[1124]

Isabel had not managed to injure William due to the fact people from the vicinity stepped in to stop her. On another occasion, however, John Twemlow deposed that Isabel had thrown William into Houndsditch. These may have been some of the situations John Smyth was referring to when he noted that the couple's neighbours were 'worried and disturbed'. Further concern for the safety of William is presented in the depositions of William Roger and John Madder. These deponents believed that 'William cannot live safely with her [Isabel] because of fear of death, and this witness [William Roger] says that if she were his wife he would not dare live with her.'[1125] These comments might help to explain William's absence when Isabel broke into their home. Taking in mind the fact that these descriptions were necessary for William Newport's suit, they nevertheless portray a group of male householders, at least some of whom were neighbours, showing active concern for William's wellbeing. We can see the intervention by Thomas Taryson, as well as the deponents agreeing to testify in the suit, as performances of William's belonging as a neighbour to them.

William's neighbours supported him by standing as witnesses in his suit and through their descriptions of Isabel's behaviour as unacceptable. Nevertheless, their narratives simultaneously show how William was unable to support her, and by extension his household, according to masculine ideals. The fact that Isabel is described as resorting to breaking into the house to retrieve dishes and utensils 'to keep for Isabel's use' indicates that she was not being supported practically by William. William also failed in his responsibility to govern Isabel as his wife. Several witnesses for the plaintiff described how Isabel spoke disparagingly about William. Recounting a conversation that Thomas Goodeale allegedly had with Isabel, he deposed Isabel had said '"Calle not me Isabell Newport but calle me Isabelle Horseley, for y had lever [rather] the balde hooreson Cokkoold [cuckold] wer hangyd than he

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[1122] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*quod dicta Isabella cum cultello quem adtunc in manibus suis tenuit eundem Willelmum occidisset, seu saltem aliquod membrorum suorum mutilasset, nisi quod Thomas Haryson qui adtunc adiuvabat dictum Willelmum et separabat eos*'.

[1123] Butler, *Language of Abuse,* 223.

[1124] Butler, *Language of Abuse,* 211-3.

[1125] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*iste juratus credit in consciencia sua quod ipse Willelmus secure non potest cohabitare cum eadem propter metum mortis et iste juratus dicit quod si ipsa fuisset uxor sua non auderet cum eadem cohabitare*.'

shuld be my husband"'.[1126] A similar conversation is described in the deposition of John Twemlowe where Isabel reportedly said '"Nay, he is not my husband"'.[1127] These conversations show Isabel denying her marriage to William, and by extension, his authority. As McSheffrey argues, a significant part of secular masculine respectability was the idea of good governance, the ability of male householders to control themselves, their household, and other dependants.[1128] More explicitly, when describing the danger William faced because of his marriage to Isabel, John Mader deposed it was because 'he [William] cannot rule and govern her.'[1129] A woman's good name was connected to her governance by her male authority, therefore Isabel's transgressive behaviour reflected badly on William.[1130]

Deponents, in addition to Thomas Goodeale, alleged that Isabel herself had publicly claimed William was a cuckold. John Mader deposed he 'often heard her [call]ing William cuckold'.[1131] Cuckoldry was associated with the loss of control, feebleness, and humiliation.[1132] Being a cuckold signified the man in question was incapable of managing his wife or the sexual behaviour of his household. Where good governance and sexual virility and prowess were important factors in later medieval secular masculinity, cuckoldry represented an antithesis. In later medieval, and early modern, England where the conjugal relationship was at the centre of the ideal household, cuckoldry was considered a risk of damage to that household.[1133] Goldberg identifies the comic element to the portrayal of the cuckoldry of John de Bilby in a borough court case from Nottingham in 1387. Part of what was so unacceptable about John's position in this case was the fact it was a year before he took action against the man his wife committed adultery with.[1134] We find a similar portrayal of John Newport in the depositions which make it clear that Isabel's adulterous behaviour was a recurrent and established pattern. As Derek Neal suggests, both covering up a wife's infidelity or suing for separation were preferable to inaction.[1135] Although the case itself is demonstrative of William's action against Isabel's behaviour, this was by no means immediate. Cuckoldry and sexual misbehaviour upset gender hierarchies and

[1126] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*; MED, lef adj. and adv. 5a, 5b.
[1127] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
[1128] McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 258; McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 138, 141-2.
[1129] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*eadem quam regere et gubernare non potest*'.
[1130] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 175, 141.
[1131] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.
'*iste juratus sepius audivit eam [vocan]tem dictum Willelmum ninerum*'.
[1132] See for example: McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 142-3; Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, 194; Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult,' 16.
[1133] Gowing, 'Gender and Language,' 16; Goldberg, 'The Priest of Nottingham,' 68.
[1134] Goldberg, 'The Priest of Nottingham,' 68-9.
[1135] Neal, 'Husbands and Priests,' 76.

social ethics around sex, and, therefore, had negative implications for the neighbourhood in which the household was located.[1136]

William's apparent passivity to Isabel's infidelity is indicated in a more extreme way when John Foster testified that 'he heard William Newport often saying that many times when he happened to be out of town and came home again, he found Isabel in bed with a certain man […] living in the county of Kent, whom Isabel named as her blood relative.'[1137] Not only was William incapable of preventing Isabel from having sex outside their marriage, but he failed to stop her from repeatedly committing incest. This situation would have been shocking within the context of contemporary anxieties around sexual ethics, which McSheffrey identifies as particularly characteristic of later fifteenth century London.[1138] Whilst supporting William in his suit to legally separate from Isabel, the deponents also emphasised his own bad governance which was disruptive and damaging to his neighbours.

From a detailed analysis of this suit for marital separation *a mensa et thoro,* we can identify the bounded nature of the relationships between neighbours. This is visible in the way that the deponents' support for William contrasts with their exclusionary portrayal of Isabel and her behaviour. The details of William's connections with his deponents are not detailed further but it seems probable that William would have had more opportunities, as a male householder, to interact and make connections with these neighbours than Isabel. As we saw in chapter three, for example, Gilbert de Mordone lived in close proximity to other wealthy stockfishmongers with whom he held ties of officeholding, occupation, guardianship, and possibly kinship. Connections of a similar kind may also have applied to William Newport and his neighbours. It is likely William, too, came into contact with the deponents when attending Mass at the parish of St Botolph Bishopsgate and the annual wardmote for Bishopsgate ward, the latter being an exclusively male event.[1139] The existence of additional connections between William and his deponents in contexts beyond neighbourliness would have allowed for the cultivation of a greater level of familiarity. Yet, as shown, this does not equate with unconditional inclusion or even necessarily amicability. William's neighbours supported him against the reported violence of his wife as deponents for his separation suit, and the undermining of male-householder authority that her behaviour represented. At the same time their narratives worked to restrict his belonging based on his inability to govern his household and deal with marital infidelity.

[1136] Gowing, 'Gender and Language,' 16; McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 174.

[1137] Newport c. Newport in McSheffrey, *Consistory*. '*dicit quod audivit dictum Willelmum Newport sepius dicentem quod diversis temporibus quibus contegisset se devillare et ad reverti idem Willelmus invenit dictam Isabellam in lecto una cum quodam viro adtunc et ut credit commorante in Comitatu Kancie, quem virum ipsa Isabella nominavit consanguineum suum*'.

[1138] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 174.

[1139] Berry, '"To Avoide All Envye,"' 202. See also: Caroline M. Barron, 'Lay Solidarities: The Wards of Medieval London,' in *Law, Laity and Solidarities*, 218-33.

The negotiation of belonging amongst these neighbours, with respect to both Isabel and William Newport, was shaped by the extent they failed to live up to gendered behavioural standards and caused disruption to their neighbours.

Turning to the second church court case which I use to consider the boundaries of relationships with neighbours, we can explore further how the belonging of an individual might not exist uniformly amongst their neighbours. In July 1422 Emma, wife of John Lylle, was brought to answer a defamation suit in the York Consistory court brought by Agnes, wife of Robert Popilton. According to Agnes' four deponents, the defamation took place in the churchyard of Holy Trinity, King's Court, York. Emma allegedly called Agnes an 'ald munkhore and ald frerehor' as well as an 'ald rank tayntydthefe' when the churchyard was busy with parishioners leaving Sunday Vespers.[1140] This crowd included Agnes who was returning to her house in Colliergate, a street adjacent to the churchyard. Three deponents stated that Emma additionally attempted to hit Agnes with a stick and was prevented only by Agnes reaching her own house. In the fallout of this defamation, according to the depositions, not only was Agnes' reputation damaged but her neighbours refused to associate with her or to trade with her. More seriously her husband 'would have expelled Agnes if not for the entreaty, pressure, and intervention of the neighbours [*vicinorum*]'.[1141]

One requirement for an alleged defamation to be actionable in the church courts was that the words uttered caused unjust harm to the plaintiff and damaged their reputation.[1142] This legal condition explains why Ralph Almcotes, the chaplain of Holy Trinity Church who stood as a witness for Agnes, deposed that 'Agnes' character was besmirched and her standing, esteem, and reputation gravely and abusively defamed and injured.'[1143] Moreover, as a result, Ralph testified that 'Agnes' neighbours [*vicini*] refused to talk with, sell to, and buy from the same Agnes as they used to.'[1144] The damage to Agnes, her inability to sell or buy and her injured reputation, is framed in terms of neighbourly relationships. This aligns with the connection between neighbours and the production of social knowledge about people and events in a locality. The value of this example here is the fact the damage is framed in terms of neighbourly relationships. Elsewhere, deponents described the bystanders present to the alleged defamation in broader terms as parishioners. William Baker deposed that Emma

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[1140] BIA, CP.F.153.

[1141] BIA, CP.F.153. '*quad maritus … sua voluit eiecisse nisi deprecationes et instancia vicinorum suorum et hac partes non interueiussent*'. My own English translation.

[1142] R.H. Helmholz, ed., *Select Cases of Defamation to 1600* (London: Seldon Society, 1985), xix, xxi, xxxviii.

[1143] BIA, CP.F.153. '*morem eiusdem Agnet(is) inmensum suggillantem statum que opinio et fama ipsius Agnet(is) grauiter leduntur denigrantur (et) peiorantur.*' English translation from: Goldberg, *Women in England*, 230.

[1144] BIA, CP.F.153. '*quandam vicini ipsus Agnetes cum ipsa Agnete recusant communicare vendere et Emere ut solebant*'. English translation from: Goldberg, *Women in England*, 230.

defamed Agnes in the churchyard at the 'time when together many parishioners [*parochianum*] of the same church left the parish church after the said Vespers.'[1145] This was, moreover, in front of 'other men and women of other parishes and places' who were there.[1146] The social damage and exclusion that deponents claimed Agnes felt, however, was described within a more focused group, in relation to neighbours.

Within the depositions for this suit, we can see how the social position of Agnes, as a result of Emma's alleged defamation, was enacted differently by various groups of Agnes' neighbours. The defamatory words spoken allegedly by Emma were targeted at undermining Agnes' reputation both as a trader and a woman. Accusations of theft recorded in defamation cases more commonly were levelled at men. Garthine Walker stresses that, for the early modern period, women's reputation encompassed their morality, deeds, and skill, as well as sexual conduct.[1147] This appears to have been the case in this example too with the use of 'tayntydthefe', or 'guilty thief'.[1148] The reputation for theft could have serious consequences where good *fama* and personal networks were an important factor in economic participation in society.[1149] The decision of some of Agnes' neighbours to cease trading with her was used to demonstrate this damage. Their refusal to talk to Agnes, moreover, would have encouraged her social isolation and affected her standing in local society. These exclusionary actions allegedly undertaken by Agnes' neighbours would have signalled her non-belonging.

Emma further attacked Agnes' reputation as a respectable woman by questioning her sexual morality. Historians have noted the centrality of sexual misbehaviour in defamation aimed at women.[1150] Emma's accusation that Agnes was a 'munkhore' and 'frerehor' was especially pointed as it implies Agnes had not just had an extra-marital affair but was a sex-worker. The claim that Agnes was involved in this work was worse than accusations of adultery because monks and friars were men in religious orders who had taken vows of chastity.

In a similar way to the example of Newport c. Newport, claims about infidelity additionally had implications for Agnes' husband, Robert Popilton. In this case Emma's words imply that Robert was

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[1145] BIA, CP.F.153. '*tempore quo magna parit(er) parochianum predictes ecclesie parochie a dictes vesperis et eccleisam parochiam exierunt.*' My own English translation.

[1146] BIA, CP.F.153. '*aliorum virorum et mulierum de aliis parochiis et locis*'. My own English translation.

[1147] Walker, 'Expanding the Boundaries,' 238-39, 244-45.

[1148] MED, teinten v.(1), 1a.

[1149] Richard Britnell, 'The Economy of British Towns 1300-1540,' in *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, ed. D. Palliser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 324; Goldberg, 'Space and Gender,' 228-9.

[1150] See for example: L.R. Poos, 'Sex, Lies, and the Church Courts of Pre-Reformation England,' *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25, no.4 (1995): 586; Gowing, 'Gender and the Language of Insult,' 109; J.A. Sharpe, 'Defamation and Sexual Slander in Early Modern England: The Church Courts at York,' *Borthwick Papers* 58 (York: The Borthwick Institute of Historical Research, 1980), 28; Capp, *When Gossips Meet,* 253; Walker, 'Expanding the Boundaries,' 238-39, 244-45.

either a cuckold, like William Newport, or was involved in pimping Agnes. Isabel Cook deposed that, as a result of the defamation, Robert wanted to expel Agnes from their home.[1151] This claim is included in Isabel's testimony to demonstrate how the alleged defamation had caused Agnes harm. However, Agnes was not ostracised by Robert in the end. Three of the four depositions record how Robert Popilton would have rejected Agnes 'if it was not for the request and insistence of his neighbours [*vicinorum*],' or 'for the special request and entreaty of his neighbours [*vicinorum*]'.[1152]

The testimonies speak to the real vulnerability of married women whose sexual fidelity had been placed under question. Emphasis on how Agnes was permitted to stay in her home only because of external entreaties by neighbours, worked to demonstrate the precarity of Agnes' situation resulting from Emma's words. The uniformity between the phrasing in the depositions may have been the result of clerical mediation, condensing the oral accounts given by the witnesses for the record. Additionally, the witnesses themselves may have been prepped in what to say in answer to the questions asked, resulting in similar depositions being created.[1153] We could interpret the neighbours' actions described here as supportive of Agnes. This would align with studies showing the intervention of neighbours, amongst others, to mediate or resolve conflict within a marriage. I think this supportive behaviour is what the depositions sought to emphasise, that without this support Agnes would have been expelled from her home.

Underlying this, however, it is possible that the neighbours were more concerned with the social position of Robert Popilton. Their efforts to persuade Robert not to expel Agnes may have been motivated by attempts to preserve Robert's own reputation in the face of accusations of his wife's adultery. If Robert had ostracised Agnes, it would have been tantamount to recognising the veracity of Emma's claims. As we have seen in the example of William Newport, public knowledge of a wife's extra-marital sexual misbehaviour could also be damaging to her husband. If this was the case, their efforts were aimed less directly at maintaining Agnes' belonging than that of her husband.

Lastly, we should take note of the fact that some of the deponents themselves may have been neighbours to Agnes. William Baker remarked that his house was on Colliergate, near both the church and Agnes' home.[1154] He claimed that he witnessed the defamation as he was approaching his own house after leaving the church. All the deponents are recorded as being part of the parish of Holy Trinity. The parish was relatively small and so it is possible that the other deponents, Ralph Almcotes,

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[1151] BIA, CP.F.153.

[1152] BIA, CP.F.153. '*nisi vicinorum suorum speciales rogatus et instancia non fuisset*'. English translation from: Goldberg, *Women in England*, 230.
'*si vicinorum suorum rogatus et instantia non fuisset*'. My own English translation.

[1153] For an example of this see: Goldberg, *Communal Discord,* 35, 41-4.

[1154] BIA, CP.F.153.

Isabel Cooke, and Alice, wife of John Rode, lived nearby too. William at least, if not the other deponents, played a crucial role as neighbours in supporting Agnes by agreeing to stand as witnesses for her suit.

The narratives provided in the depositions for Popilton c. Lylle describe contrasting accounts of the response of Agnes' neighbours as a result of the alleged defamation. Whilst some neighbours reportedly stopped socialising and trading with her as a result of Emma's words others chose to support her suit against Emma in the church courts. The neighbours who persuaded Robert not to exclude Agnes acted more ambivalently. They took action to mitigate the possibility of her ostracization, yet this may have been motivated more by her husband's reputation than a strong sense of her belonging amongst these neighbours. I argue the depositions within this suit reveal the process of negotiation of an individual's belonging amongst their neighbours. The neighbours of Agnes and Robert did not act as a homogenous, unified group but enacted their perception of Agnes' belonging through their responses to Emma's allegations. This defamation suit deals with one moment, where Emma's words were sufficiently actionable to be taken to court. In reality, I argue, the boundaries of these neighbourly groups and the social positioning of *vicini* within them would have been repeatedly negotiated and reassessed.

Through an in-depth analysis of the case studies presented in this chapter we can see the value of using the concept of belonging when approaching the subject of social boundaries in later medieval England. Using belonging allows us to consider the implications of social interactions, recorded in the source material, on the position of an individual or group, and thus how the boundaries of this group were established. The belonging of an individual was constructed through repeated social encounters and existed across the various social connections they had with others. Furthermore, how someone's belonging was negotiated was dependent on cultural norms, including around gender and status. By studying the practices of belonging and non-belonging within relationships between neighbours, we can see how boundaries were constructed for groups of neighbours. The various social connections that an individual's belonging, or non-belonging, related to interacted simultaneously to form the broader social experiences of that person, and their position within society. This is indicated through the example of Elena Cooper, where her social belonging was evoked by others in an attempt to control her actions or was reinforced by support given to her. Part of the issue with studying social interactions and the negotiation of belonging is the static view we get from much of the source material. This issue will be addressed further in chapter five.

5: Sociability and Belonging in Bardney Abbey: A Monastic Case-Study

In the last chapter of this thesis, I take a step away from the study of mundane social interactions and groupings amongst the ordinary lay population in later medieval England. Here I will instead use the case study of the religious at Bardney Abbey during the mid-fifteenth century as a way to approach social interactions beyond the static moments visible in the sources studied in this thesis thus far. The detailed episcopal visitation records of Lincoln include the *detecta* provided by monks at Bardney Abbey over a number of years during the 1430s and 1440s, and which offer narrative descriptions of the social interactions between them. The context of this group is very different to that of the social collectivities studied so far in this thesis. Nevertheless, the study of these records offers an example of how social interactions exist less as a series of vignettes but on a larger scale as part of dynamic relationships which were formed and changed over time. This expansive view, furthermore, allows us to see more clearly a chronological dynamic to a person's belonging and how this was negotiated within a group. Within this chapter, I will outline first the process of episcopal visitation to religious houses and the documents which were produced as a result. I will then provide context for the study of Bardney Abbey during the mid-fifteenth century and outline how the brethren were organised within the convent there. Finally, I will examine the sociability and negotiation of belonging that the monks engaged in, in particular, through their attempts at excluding one of their brethren, Thomas Bartone.

Episcopal Visitation

A visitation was the inspection of an ecclesiastical institution or area to determine the state of the place in question in terms of financial and administrative functions and adherence to the Rule of the Order, plus to correct any wrongdoing.[1155] The evidence used in this chapter to study the social interactions of the monks at Bardney Abbey are the recorded depositions, called *detecta,* of the monks who gave testimony during visitations to the Abbey. These visitations were undertaken by the Bishop of Lincoln, whose jurisdiction the abbey fell under. The Lincoln monastic visitation records that survive for the first half of the fifteenth century cover the episcopates of Richard Flemming (1419-1431), William Gray (1431-1436) and William Alnwick (1436-1449). It is the latter two episcopates, especially that of William Alnwick, that I focus on here.

[1155] Rasmussen, 'Small Monastic Houses,' 11; Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, ix-xxxi.

Episcopal visitations were manifestations of their authority of supervision over religious houses in the bishop's diocese, alongside the confirmation of elections of abbots and priors and church consecrations.[1156] Though records relating to visitations were not always very prominent in bishops' registers, they were an important part of their responsibilities. On the surface, episcopal visitations were a way to maintain standards and ensure the efficient running of religious houses in the diocese, bishops also used them to consolidate their authority or push for particular policies to be put in place.[1157] Visitations, thus, worked as a mechanism within the power relationships between the bishops and the religious houses under their jurisdiction.

Before turning to the case-study of Bardney in more detail, it is worth briefly tracing the process of episcopal visitation to religious houses. In principle the bishop, after sending visiting mandates, attended either High Mass or Vespers on arrival at the religious house in question. The whole convent was summoned to their chapter house where a sermon would be read by one of the visiting party. The head of the house, the abbot in the case of Bardney, then presented the bishop with documents including their receipt of summons for visitation, their certificate for election, proof of their confirmation and installation, as well as the financial accounts for the house.[1158] Members of the convent were questioned privately about the state and governance of the house. Sometimes, in larger houses especially, examination was delegated to clerks who undertook this simultaneously with the bishop to save time.

This inquisition process generated three similar, but very separate, forms of document. First the individual testimonies were written up as *detecta*, or matters disclosed to the bishop.[1159] Although typically much shorter, the *detecta* bare similarities to church court depositions in their narrative form. Numerous detailed *detecta* survive for Bardney Abbey. Second, summarised lists of the issues, known as *comperta*, were compiled from the information in the *detecta*. The emphasis of these articles was what had been discovered by the bishop and were issued to the whole convent once questioning was complete.[1160] Significant cases which had arisen during the visitation were dealt with. Any accusations were read to the accused who were, depending on their plea, assigned either penance or time to find compurgators to clear them. Recorded in the 1438 visitation of Bardney Abbey, for example, we find: 'Thomas Bartone to clear himself with two monks touching the defamation of John Hole [Hale] [of

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[1156] C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (New York: Longman, 1984; London: Routledge, 2013), 132.

[1157] For a discussion on this see: James Richardson, 'A Bishop and His Diocese: Politics, Government, and Careers in Hereford and Winchester Dioceses, 1282-1317,' (PhD Thesis, University of York, 2016).

[1158] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, x.

[1159] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, xi.

[1160] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, xi.

adultery] with the wife of the washerman of the monastery, cleared himself with William Burghe and William Croylande.'[1161] Responses to the accusations often were noted after its mention in the *detecta*. After William Yorke's claim that 'brother John Bracy was defamed with Ellen Coke, a married woman, now of Tumby,' there is a note that 'he [John] denies the article: he has a term after nones for clearing himself with three [monks].'[1162] Lastly, injunctions, or lists of issues to be dealt with by the head of the house and convent, were given verbally and the visitation was subsequently dissolved. The bishop's commissaries often were tasked with concluding affairs and written injunctions, the third form of documentation, were sent to the house. Records of these injunctions also were written up within the episcopal registers.

In theory, circuits of monastic visitations were meant to occur triennially, however in practice they were a lot less frequent and consistent.[1163] Alexander Hamilton Thompson has partially reconstructed Bishop Alnwick's activities and travels, including visitation circuits from 1436 till his death 5th December 1449.[1164] This list gives the impression that Alnwick maintained a busy schedule, leading Thompson to conclude 'the constant attention which Alnwick showed to his diocesan work' distinguished him from prelates preoccupied with court positioning.[1165] In terms of monastic visitation, Thompson argues that the 'series of visitation records affords abundant proof that Alnwick was painstaking and thorough in his work.'[1166] As Rosemary Hayes has since noted, current historical scholarship views episcopal business during the fifteenth century in a more positive light, 'and Alnwick is no longer regarded as unusually devoted'.[1167] Nevertheless, Hayes suggests Bishop Alnwick was particularly interested in maintaining standards in the religious houses under his jurisdiction, demonstrated by the visitation documentation. Linda Rasmussen notes that references to intention within episcopal registers for Lincoln indicate the possibility of more visitations having taken place than what now remains on record.[1168]

Whilst visitation proceedings generated large quantities of documentation, only a fraction of this survives. For Bardney Abbey there remains one set of undated injunctions from the episcopate of

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[1161] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 23.

[1162] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22. '*Item frater Johannes Bracy diffamatus erat cum Elena Coke coniugata, nunc de Tumby. Negat articulum: habet terminum post nonam ad purgandum se cum iij [monachis].*' Unless otherwise stated, the English translations for this case-study are from: Thompson, *Visitations,* vols. 1-2.

[1163] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, xxv.

[1164] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, xxxii-xliii.

[1165] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, xliv.

[1166] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, xx.

[1167] Rosemary C.E. Hayes, 'William Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich (1426-1437) and Lincoln (1437-1449),' (PhD Thesis, University of Bristol, 1989), 2-3.

[1168] Rasmussen, 'Small Monastic Houses,' 10.

Bishop Gray which exist as a neat, formal copy in Gray's register.[1169] Under Bishop Alnwick there remains: a record of visitation from January-March 1438 including *detecta*, a shorter record for March 1439 with a set of injunctions from April 1440, and another two visitation records with *detecta* from October 1440 and May 1444. Whilst the 1440 injunctions similarly survive in Alnwick's register, the additional documents are rough drafts recorded in no particular order in a manuscript of seventeen originally unbound folio quires.[1170] Thompson explains that the manuscript appears 'to have lain for many years with other diocesan papers in the Alnwick tower in the Old Palace in Lincoln, and have suffered considerably by damp and decay.'[1171]

The primary concerns of the bishop undertaking the visitation would have shaped both what was recorded as *detecta* and what was included in the injunctions. The *detecta* present the religious' testimonies as a series of statements given by the individual, but do not provide much indication of how the examination took place. Thompson asserts that during the examination process 'complaints were freely elicited' with questions being asked based on the rule and constitutions of the Order.[1172] Rasmussen on the other hand challenges the idea that *detecta* had a 'voluntary character' where information was 'imparted by the religious to the visitor in a meeting resembling a friendly conversation.'[1173] Rather she argues that the format of Bishop Alnwick's visitation records, with their summary introductions, implies direction on the part of the examiner. Certain questions, for example, could be posed to the members of the community to focus the inquiry around specific topics. The summary nature of the *detecta,* however, makes it difficult to discern what questions the monks were responding to and how much freedom they had to discuss the issues of the house. A memorandum at the end of the 1437 visitation to Bardney Abbey provides an indication of this process. The text includes the monks' responses to a specific inquiry into potentially seditious words spoken by brother Thomas Bartone. This topic was unmentioned in the *detecta* given for the monks. That they were asked specifically is revealed by the following:

> Brother John Bracy, having been sworn to speak the truth concerning the inquiries made
> of him [and] being interrogated whether he ever knew or heard Bartone say that lord
> Cromwell would sweep the floor or that his head would be cut off says yes.[1174]

[1169] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, 1-4.
[1170] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, l, ix; LA, DIOC/V/j/1. Past conservation efforts have also rendered much of the text almost illegible. For this reason, I will be using Thompson's transcription and translation of the manuscript.
[1171] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, ix.
[1172] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, xlvii.
[1173] Rasmussen, 'Small Monastic Houses,' 10.
[1174] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 24.

Sets of questions from the York diocese which survive from the episcopate of John Thoresby (1352-1373) additionally give some indication of the visitors' concerns. A prominent issue found in the questions involved administration, as well as religious direction and moral character.[1175] Surviving *detecta* in the manuscript also reflect this and demonstrate a focus on the religious house following the rules of their Order, founding charters and previous injunctions, as well as the financial stability and management of the house. These foci link to the bishops' role as mediator and legislator.

The bishop was not the only authority that the religious had to answer to during visitation proceedings. Evidence from many visitations demonstrate the head of the house could also put considerable pressure on the convent to provide a positive picture of the house in question. Monks or nuns could withhold issues out of loyalty to, or even fear of, the head of the house.[1176] When Bishop Alnwick visited Catesby Priory in 1442, Sister Juliane Wolfe testified that 'the prioress did threaten that, if the nuns disclosed aught in the visitation, they should pay for it in prison.'[1177] This pressure has been used to question the seemingly contented houses where all *detecta* responses were recorded as 'all is well.'[1178] This does not seem to have been a particular fear for the monks at Bardney. Abbot John Waynflete was described as 'of no great account' and 'wholly ruled by brother Thomas Bartone' in John Hale's *detecta.*[1179]

There is a danger in assuming the monks would have exercised only a passive voice in the inquiry process. Johnson's warning to take seriously witness-agency in creating discourse applies here.[1180] Internal politics and factionalism could influence who and what individuals brought up during a visitation.[1181] Along the same lines, visitation inquiries may have also enabled nuns and monks to pursue personal vendettas. The layers of motivation behind the production of the visitation documents, then, poses difficulties. These documents were by no means straight forward, as implied in Thompson's argument that injunctions primarily 'deal with observed facts […] [that] may be taken as historical records'.[1182] Indeed, Christian Knudsen argues there has been a tendency within previous scholarship to take the information from *detecta* at face value.[1183] When studying the relationships

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[1175] Rasmussen, 'Small Monastic Houses,' 11.
[1176] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 128-9.
[1177] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 47.
'*Item dicit quod priorissa comminabatur quod si quid moniales detegerint in visitacione luerent in carceribus*.'
[1178] For example: 27 of the 32 religious at Peterborough Abbey in 1442 stated that all was well (*dicit omnia bene* or *dicit omnia bene et sana*). Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 283-5.
[1179] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18.
[1180] Johnson, 'The Preconstruction of the Witness Testimony,' 144.
[1181] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 128-9; Christian D. Knudsen, 'Promiscuous Monks and Naughty Nuns: Poverty, Sex, and Apostasy in Later Medieval England,' in *Poverty and Prosperity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* eds. Cynthia Kosso and Anne Scott (Turnout: Brepols, 2012), 89.
[1182] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, xii.
[1183] Knudsen, 'Promiscuous Monks and Naughty Nuns,' 89.

and social dynamics within the convent of Bardney, I will approach the *detecta* as fictive narratives. These narratives were shaped by the process of questioning but also the motivations of the religious house, and individual monks who were questioned.

Fifteenth-Century Context

To allow us to fully appreciate the experiences and practices of sociability and belonging within Bardney Abbey, the next section of this chapter will provide context for the abbey in the mid-fifteenth century. The religious house at Bardney was established on the site of an earlier foundation in 1087 by Gilbert of Ghent, a nephew of William I, dedicated to Saints Peter, Paul, and Oswald. The house was made into an abbey in 1115.[1184] Throughout its history, the abbey suffered periodically from economic issues as well as internal conflict and factionalism. A combination of mismanagement and a build-up of loans during the late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries led to financial difficulties.[1185] In addition, references to debt and mismanagement are found throughout the records of Bishop William Alnwick's visitations to Bardney during the 1430s and 1440s. At the first visitation studied here in 1438 Abbot John Waynflete's *detecta* notes that 'he says that the monastery is many ways in debt, as is apparent in the roll delivered to my lord [the bishop].' [1186] Similarly, both John Bracy and William Croylande, though citing different values, complained that the monastery expenditure was 200 marks more than its debts.[1187] John claimed that whilst money was put aside to pay debts and expenses, this was wasted.[1188] Henry Lincolne, additionally complained that 'the house is in debt in heavy sums, and this [is] by reason of the imprudent governance of the officers in former times'.[1189]

We should remember, however, the picture of poverty painted by the religious at Bardney was relative. The lifestyle which could be expected within a Benedictine monastery was equivalent to that of secular gentry.[1190] The relative nature of their perceived economic issues is perhaps illustrated by William York's request for a guardian to be appointed to clean 'the wooden vessels which belong to

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[1184] Harold Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey,' *Archaeological Journal* 79 (1922): 2. See also: William Page, ed., *The Victoria County History of the County of Lincoln*, vol.2. (London: Archibald Constable and co., 1906), 97; Charles E. Laing, *Some Notes on Bardney Abbey* (Lincoln: Morton and Sons, 1909), 5.

[1185] Alison K. McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal, 1303-18,' in *Fourteenth Century England VII*, ed. W. Mark Ormrod (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 33; Page, *Victoria County History of Lincoln*, 98.

[1186] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14.
'*Item dicit quod monasterium est multipliciter indebitatum, prout patet in rotulo domino ministrato*.'

[1187] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 15, 18.

[1188] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 15.

[1189] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18. '*dicit quod domus indebitatur in grauibus summis, et hoc per improuidam gubernacionem officiorum qui antea fuerant.*'

[1190] Barbara Harvey, *Living and Dying in England, 1100-1540: The Monastic Experience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 36.

the frater' because 'it is unseemly that a monk should be busied about the washing of such vessels.'[1191] The monks similarly complained about the decrease in quantity of fish and other foodstuffs they were given to eat.[1192] The visitation provided religious an opportunity to express their personal grievances and encourage the bishop to make changes. We can see this in the *detecta* of John Bracy which includes the request that each monk is given an individual allowance to determine whether the abbey's debts were the result of 'the excessive expenses of the convent or of the incompetent governance of its presidents.'[1193] John likewise claimed that if the bishop did not intervene 'the monastery in a little while will be in danger of final extinction.'[1194] Thus, there is an element of self interest in what complaints were made.

In the century following the Black Death, many religious houses suffered financially as landowners. The reduction in labour available but the increase in wages meant decreased profits from demesnes. For example, where the demesnes leased by Westminster Abbey had been valued at £12 a year in 1410, by the mid-fifteenth century they had fallen to £4 a year.[1195] The drop in grain prices during the late 1370s also resulted in a collapse of mill revenues for many religious houses.[1196] Paul Hargreaves identifies the issue of increased costs of maintenance for property which, in the case of Worcester Priory, suffered dilapidation because of the inability to replace tenants.[1197] The costs of servants and households for many religious by the fifteenth century often was considerable.[1198] Colin Platt notes that ecclesiastical institutions were more restricted than their secular counterparts in methods of restoring incomes. They could not for instance gain through marriage or inheritance.[1199] Furthermore, as shown in chapter two, from the mid-fourteenth century onwards, there was a general shift away from the patronage of religious houses, in favour of localised forms of charity.[1200] Britnell emphasises the importance of regional variation when considering the profitability of agriculture in later medieval

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[1191] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21-2. '*custodia vasorum ligneorum pertinencium refectorio*', '*Inhonestum etenim est vt monachus circa locionem huiusmodi vasorum occupetur*.'

[1192] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16, 18-9.

[1193] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16. '*et tunc videbitur an monasterium indebitatur propter sumptus excessiuos conuentus vel propter ineptum regimen presidencium*'.

[1194] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16. '*monasterium in breui incurret finale exterminium*'.

[1195] Adam Lucas, *Ecclesiastical Lordship, Seigneurial Power and the Commercialisation of Milling in Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 2016), 42.

[1196] Lucas, *Ecclesiastical Lordship*, 41.

[1197] Paul V. Hargreaves, 'Seignorial Reaction and Peasant Responses: Worcester Priory and its Peasants after the Black Death,' *Midland History* 24, no.1 (1999): 67.

[1198] Colin Platt, *King Death: The Black Death and Its Aftermath in Late-Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 1997), 86. See also: Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 146-78.

[1199] Platt, *King Death,* 88.

[1200] Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital*, 29-35.

England.[1201] Britnell argues the period c.1350 to c.1450 should not be characterised by continued economic decline, but as a period which experienced many fluctuations.[1202] Management within individual religious houses, and how they responded to financial difficulties, also had a significant influence on their financial situation. Alex Brown, for example, identifies Durham Priory's success in recovering from economic decline during the fifteenth century. Brown argues this recovery was influenced by the adoption of a more flexible approach to rent collection, allowing for ad hoc payments and encouraging the syndication of tenancies.[1203]

Bardney Abbey was a house of regional importance in Lincolnshire and had substantial landholdings scattered in the area.[1204] Bardney was evaluated highly, at £12, for the taxation assessment of Pope Nicholas IV in 1291.[1205] Dorothy Owen argues that the principle commercial enterprise of Lincolnshire monastic houses was the wool trade and suggests these houses, including Bardney, sold wool internationally during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries.[1206] The abbey was further involved in salt-making, and is described by Ian Simmons as dominating the local industry along the Lincolnshire coast near Wainfleet.[1207] Nevertheless, in Lincolnshire, Platt argues, landowners experienced an economic downturn from the second half of the fourteenth century which was exacerbated by the Black Death.[1208] Ernest Jones suggests that by at least the 1470s Lincolnshire was experiencing labour emigration.[1209] Crowland Abbey and Spalding Priory, for instance, saw decreased profits from rents and agricultural produce during the mid-fifteenth century.[1210]

Although the monks at Bardney remained relatively privileged in terms of their lifestyle and wealth, it is evident that the abbey was experiencing economic difficulties. In addition to complaint about debt and mismanagement, the visitation records include numerous descriptions of the disrepair of

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[1201] Richard Britnell, 'English Agricultural Output and Prices, 1350-1450: National Trends and Regional Divergences,' in *Agriculture and Rural Society after the Black Death: Common Themes and Regional Variations*, eds. Ben Dodds and Richard Britnell (Hatfield: University of Hertfordshire Press, 2008), 20.

[1202] Britnell, 'English Agricultural Output and Prices,' 38.

[1203] Brown, 'Surviving the Mid-Fifteenth-Century Recession,' 220-1.

[1204] Page, *Victoria County History of Lincoln*, 97-104; Dorothy M. Owen, *Church and Society in Medieval Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincolnshire Local History Society, 1971), 56-7; George Beech, 'Aquitanians and Flemings in the Refoundation of Bardney Abbey (Lincolnshire) in the Later Eleventh Century,' in *The Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History,* vol.1, ed. Robert Patterson (London: The Hambledon Press, 1989), 88; I.G. Simmons, 'Monasteries and Coastal Evolution in South-East Lincolnshire, AD. 1100-1500,' *Midland History* 43, no.2 (2018): 161, 171-3; Rob Atkins and Elizabeth Popescu, 'Excavations at the Hospital of St Mary Magdalen, Partney, Lincolnshire, 2003,' *Medieval Archaeology* 54, no.1 (2010): 209-212.

[1205] Francis Hill, *Medieval Lincoln* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 152.

[1206] Owen, *Church and Society*, 68.

[1207] Simmons, 'Monasteries and Coastal Evolution,' 162.

[1208] Platt, *King Death,* 152, 170.

[1209] E.D. Jones, 'Spalding Priory and Its Serfs in the Fifteenth Century,' *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 35 (2000): 66-7.

[1210] Jones, 'Spalding Priory,' 64-7; H.E. Hallam, 'The Agrarian Economy of South Lincolnshire in the Mid-Fifteenth Century,' *Nottingham Mediaeval Studies* 11 (1967): 89-90.

Bardney's property. In 1438 John Bracy and William Langtofte deposed that many of the abbey buildings were dilapidated, including the cloister, the dorter, and the frater, where the monks slept and ate.[1211] John emphasised these buildings were in such poor condition that they leaked when it rained. Moreover, the quire in the abbey church needed repairs as 'the quire is almost ready to fall'.[1212] Such was the extent of decay that the visitation record contains an order from the bishop to pull down the quire vault the next summer.[1213] Property decay appears to have been a longer-term issue. In 1434 the abbey made a request to the bishop that they could destroy and rebuild the parish church at Bardney because it was in such bad condition that the parishioners were too scared to worship there.[1214]

It seems likely that the financial difficulties at Bardney were in part brought on by the heightened cost of labour and declining agricultural incomes during the period.[1215] The population, in Lincolnshire, as well as England more broadly, was not large enough to provide a workforce to sustain the economic growth of the earlier fifteenth century, which helped contribute to a mid-fifteenth century recession.[1216] The reduced population in the area meant a decreased demand for arable produce which led to a drop in prices and market surplus.[1217] The *detecta* show evidence of the abbey selling land, which may fit into a pattern of responses to the declining profitability of leases by landlords during the fifteenth century, who increasingly let out demesnes for cash rents or sold tenures for a fixed rate.[1218] John Rose deposed that a coppice known as Hosley had been sold by the abbot without consultation with the convent.[1219] This went against Bishop William Gray's instruction not to sell or cut down old copses without the consent from the rest of the convent or licence from the bishop.[1220] A decline in population would also have created issues for the abbey's landholdings. There are references to dilapidated barns and granges in 1438, 1440, and again in 1444. Abbot John Waynflete's *detecta* from 1438 includes how 'the churches, manors, granges and tenements belonging to the monastery are much dilapidated and stand in need of large repairs.'[1221] According to John Bracy the same year, the lack of repairs to grain barns owned by Bardney meant the grain mostly was

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[1211] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16-7.

[1212] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 15. '*chorus quasi in proxima casura*'.

[1213] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16.

[1214] Thompson, *Visitations*, vol.1, 5-7.

[1215] Bailey, 'Rural Society,' 153; Brown, 'Surviving the Mid-Fifteenth-Century Recession,' 209.

[1216] Goldberg, 'Introduction,' 9.

[1217] Platts, *History of Lincolnshire*, 180.

[1218] Hargreaves, 'Seignorial Reaction and Peasant Responses,' 55; Dyer, 'England's Economy,' 211; M.H. Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages: A Political History* (London: Methuen, 1973; London: Routledge, 2004), 152.

[1219] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21.

[1220] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, 4.

[1221] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14. '*Item dicit quod ecclesia, maneria, grangie et tenementa pertinencia monasterio sunt multum ruinosa et egent magna reparacione.*'

destroyed.[1222] This could be symptomatic of unoccupied tenancies due to a decreased population. This is an issue that Hargreaves identifies for Worcester Priory.[1223]

As with many hospitals and religious houses during the period, Bardney additionally appears to have been burdened with the cost of corrodies. Abbot Waynflete made reference to the large corrodies held by several servants, viz. 'the baker, the brewer, the porter, the smith, and the lime-burner'.[1224] There is also a complaint that the daughter of someone called Papilwyk 'has too much access to the lodging of her said father within the monastery,' which likely referred to a corrodian.[1225] Whilst corrodies provided religious institutions with funding in the short term, often corrodians outlived their initial payment and became a financial burden on the house. Again, that this issue was not new is evidenced by a direction in the injunctions from Bishop Gray's episcopate during the first half of the 1430s not to grant any new corrodies.[1226]

The inability of the abbot and monks holding various offices in the monastery to profitably manage Bardney abbey is a complaint repeated throughout the *detecta* for 1438. Abbot John Waynflete was described in 1444 as 'powerless because of his infirmities'.[1227] More directly, brother John Bracy, when 'interrogated further concerning the abbot's governance' deposed that, although he considered the abbot a good priest, he was 'not wary in temporal matters, nor will the monastery prosper under his governance' because of the decay of the granges and manors.[1228] We can only view the abbot's leadership through the *detecta* given by his monks, yet the purpose for Bishop Alnwick's 1439 visitation to Bardney Abbey was to appoint the abbot a coadjutor. A coadjutor was someone appointed to assist the prelate in the administration of the abbey. The appointment was explained as due to the abbot's inability to govern spiritual and temporal matters.[1229] The abbot could not act

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[1222] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 17.
[1223] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14, 17, 20, 30, 33.
[1224] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 15. '*pistor, pandoxator, janitor, faber et vstrinator'.*
[1225] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 19, n.3.
'*dicit quod filia Papilwyk habet nimium accessum ad cameram dicti patris sui infra monasterium*'.
Brakspear describes the grave-slab, found during excavations of the abbey site, of Matilda, wife of William Papylwyke, who died in 1433. Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey,' 69.
[1226] Thompson, *Visitations*, vol.1, 4.
[1227] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18, 32.
'*abbas non est multum circumspectus*', '*abbas adeo impotens propter infirmitates*'.
[1228] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 30. '*sed tamen non est circumspectus in temporalibus, nec prosperabitur monasterium sub eius regimine'.* John Bracy, in fact, was initially elected as abbot following John Waynflete's death in 1447. This was overruled as unsuitable, however, by the Bishop of Lincoln who instead appointed Gilbert of Multon, from Crowland Abbey. David M. Smith, *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales,* vol.3: *1377-1540* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 16. Noted in: Martin Heale, '"Not a Thing for A Stranger to Enter Upon": The Selection of Monastic Superiors in Late Medieval and Early Tudor England,' in *Monasteries and Society in the British Isles in the Later Middle Ages,* eds. Janet Burton and Karen Stöber (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2008), 55.
[1229] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 25.

without the knowledge and consent of the coadjutor. Alan Kyrketone, the current prior, was appointed this role.[1230]

Beyond the ineffective governance of their abbot, the monks argued that the offices at Bardney were managed badly. Both Henry Lincolne and John Hale claimed that the debts the monastery accumulated were because of officers' ill governance.[1231] Thomas Bartone deposed that as sacrist, William Langtofte sold the seven brown loafs of bread he received annually for his clerk.[1232] These complaints reflect the monks' personal opinions and motivations, but they speak to some patterns observed elsewhere. Clifford Lawrence, for instance, notes that the increasing delegation of offices and independent administration of property and incomes to particular offices could increase debts.[1233] Malpractice may also be behind the failure at Bardney to enclose woodland, Holmewode, between 1438 and 1440, leading to the coppiced trees being destroyed.[1234] Whilst recognising the motivations for emphasising the economic troubles faced by the abbey, which would lead to episcopal assistance, it seems apparent that Bardney was not being efficiently managed during the mid-fifteenth century. We should consider the records of visitations during this time, then, within the context of a regionally important, royal foundation which was weakened not only by the changing economic climate resulting from the Black Death, but also exacerbated by the absence of abbatial authority, and financial mismanagement.

Social Organisation within the Cloister

The detailed and numerous *detecta* surviving for Bardney Abbey in the mid-fifteenth century provides a window to consider the social dynamics of this convent. The Rule of St Benedict provided a practical, if idealised, guide for a group of religious to live collectively and in harmony. Collective living was stressed, for instance, in chapter twenty-two which stipulated the monks should sleep together in one room.[1235] Emphasis on the communal life in the monastery, however, in theory did not involve sociability or social ties between particular religious. The Rule stressed the existence of hierarchy based on time of entry into the monastery, as well as humility and obedience to superiors.[1236] Chapter

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[1230] Alan Kyrketone was originally at Spalding Priory, see: A. Hamilton Thompson, ed. *Visitations of Religious Houses in the Diocese of Lincoln,* vol.3*: Records of Visitations Held by William Alnwick Bishop of Lincoln A.D. 1436-1449*, part 2 (Oxford: The Canterbury and York Society 33, 1927), 330, 335-5, 338, 341.

[1231] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18, 21.

[1232] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 23. Thomas Bartone is similarly accused of taking money held by the office of pittancer. Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 20.

[1233] Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 119-20.

[1234] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 19, 33.

[1235] Bruce L. Venarde, ed. and trans., *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011), 97.

[1236] Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 39, 49, 125, 203.

five on obedience stressed religious were to immediately carry out the superiors' order without thought to their own will or concerns.[1237] In his work on the development of monastic sign language, Scott Bruce traces the pursuit of silence over the twelfth century into the thirteenth within medieval monasticism.[1238] Although strict emphasis on not speaking in the cloister was felt more within the newer monastic orders, for instance, the Cistercians and Augustinians, the Rule of St Benedict also instructed that religious should be silent particularly during meals and at night. Whilst silence characterised appropriate behaviour in most spaces within the cloister, this was more relaxed in the infirmary, parlour, and calefactory. A calefactory, or warming room, was an area where monks could meet and talk round a fireplace during winter.[1239] Whilst there were opportunities for some social interactions within the cloister, and Benedictine monasticism emphasised communal living, idealised life in the cloister left little room for undirected sociability.

The importance of 'community' in medieval monasticism is recognised within scholarship. Julie Kerr, for example, notes how monastic life was made up predominantly of 'group activities' such as communal work and meals which, she argues, could help develop as sense of common purpose.[1240] Nevertheless, for the earlier medieval period Catherine Cubitt points out monasteries did not reflect the harmonious and homogenous portrayal found in monastic rules.[1241] Scholarship on the later medieval period has also emphasised the deviance of daily life from this ideal. Surviving monastic documents including visitation records and episcopal registers speak to internal divisions that arose within religious houses. James Clark argues that by the later medieval period the 'symbolic significance' of 'community' was only retained on the surface and in liturgy, not reflected in daily life.[1242] There has been numerous studies into the conflict and division that religious experienced within and between religious houses.[1243] Donald Logan suggests one of the reasons for apostasy, or runaway religious, during this period could have been a desire for personal identity and expression.[1244]

[1237] Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 38-41.

[1238] Scott G. Bruce, *Silence and Sign Language in Medieval Monasticism: The Cluniac Tradition c.900-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 147.

[1239] Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 114; Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture*, 112. Brakspear locates this space at Bardney as one of the rooms under the dorter which featured a stone bench against the north wall. Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey,' 37-8.

[1240] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 155, 157, 159.

[1241] Catherine Cubitt, 'Monastic Memory and Identity in Early Anglo-Saxon England,' in *Social Identity in Early Medieval Britain*, eds. William O. Frazer and Andrew Tyrrell (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 256.

[1242] James G. Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2011), 314.

[1243] For political factionalism in religious houses see: Laura Mellinger, 'Politics in the Convent: The Election of a Fifteenth-Century Abbess,' *Church History* 63, no.1 (1994): 529-540; Christopher Harper-Bill, 'Monastic Apostasy in Late Medieval England,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32, no.1 (1981): 11-13; Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 162-3; McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal, ' 31-45.

[1244] F. Donald Logan, *Runaway Religious in Medieval England c.1240-1540* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 78.

Much of the discussion about monastic social experience tends to emphasise either 'community' or division. This dichotomy leaves little room to consider the complexities of religious' experiences. Cubitt reminds us that monasteries were not 'monolithic institutions' but rather 'they consisted of a number of groups which could be in conflict with one another'.[1245] By studying in depth the social interactions and relationships within Bardney Abbey, this chapter will offer a more nuanced consideration of the social dynamics and groupings within the monastery.

The ideals set out by the Rule of St Benedict would have shaped the ways religious interacted with one another, even if these ideals were not met in practice. The organisation of the brethren and daily life within the cloister was also influential on their social interactions and relationships. I have included, for reference, a table of the brethren recorded for Bardney Abbey during the period studied here, 1438-1444 (Table 1). The later medieval period saw the development of living arrangements which moved away from the ideals of communal living stipulated in the Rule. The emergence of *familiarum*, or households, is identified as particularly prevalent in nunneries.[1246] Roberta Gilchrist explains these *familias* as a desire to reflect wealthy or aristocratic secular households.[1247] At Elstow Abbey, to illustrate, visitation documents from 1442-3 reveal the nuns occupied five households (*familiae*) within the abbey. The first four of these were organised under the abbess, the prioress, the sub-prioress, and the sacrist. The fifth, however, was described as 'of dame Margaret Aylesbury' which might suggest the influence of social hierarchy.[1248] At Elstow, the *familiae* represented sub-groupings of the nuns. Five nuns occupied that of the abbess, whilst two nuns joined Margaret Aylesbury.

Separate households was something also practiced by male religious houses during the later medieval period and references to *familiis* are referenced in injunctions and *detecta* for monasteries too.[1249] Often, however, households were manifest differently for male religious. In major monasteries the increasing absence of the abbot, for business, and their role in entertaining guests led to their separation from the daily routine and life of the cloister.[1250] This often led to the creation of a separate household, occupied by clerks and servants. As Barbara Harvey suggests higher ranking monastic servants were usually part of the prelate's household.[1251] The responsibilities of monastic officers, or obedientiaries, also increased over this period. Such responsibilities often included the administration

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[1245] Cubitt, 'Monastic Memory and Identity,' 256.

[1246] Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture,* 123; Linda Rasmussen, 'Luxury in Poverty: Expressions of Status at Langley Priory,' *American Benedictine Review* 55, no.2 (2004): 205, 216.

[1247] Gilchrist, *Gender and Material Culture,* 127, 168.

[1248] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 89. '*et quinta domine Margarete Aylesbury*'.

[1249] James G. Clark, 'Monasteries and Secular Education in Late Medieval England,' in *Monasteries and Society*, 161; Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 281; Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 152.

[1250] Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 117.

[1251] Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 148-9.

and management of land, as the property of the monastic house was allocated to particular offices.[1252] The delegation of these managerial or supervisory roles to subordinate officers or even secular clerks meant that in some cases obedientiaries developed their own households too.[1253]

First Appearance in Records	Name of Brethren	Office-Holding[1]	Possible Byname Origin
1438	John Waynflete	Abbot	Wainfleet, Lincolns.
	William Burghe	Sub-prior	Burgh le Marsh, Lincolns.
	John Bracy	Prior, sacrist. 1440: kitchener	Braceby, Lincolns.
	William Langtofte	1438-9: precentor	Langtoft, Lincolns.
	William Croylande	Infirmary warden	Croyland, Lincolns.
	Henry Lincolne	Guest-house warden; fraterer	Lincoln, Lincolns.
	John Hale	(Previously pittancer) 1444: almoner	Great Hale, Lincolns.
	Richard Parteney	(Previously sub-sacrist)	Partney, Lincolns.
	Thomas Elkyngton	Cellarer	Elkington, Lincolns.
	John Rose	n/a	n/a
	John Hawtone	n/a	Hawton, Lincolns.
	William Yorke	(Previously sub-cellarer) 1444: sacrist	York, Yorks.
	John Sallowe		Sawley, Derbys.[2]
	William Waynflete	(Previously prior) 1439: sub-prior	Wainfleet, Lincolns.
	Thomas Bartone	Sub-cellarer; almoner; pittancer; (previously sacrist)	Bartone upon Humber, Lincolns.
	William Bekeryng	n/a	Beckering, Lincolns.
1439	Alan Kyrketone	1439: prior, made abbot's coadjutor.	Kirklington, Lincolns.
1444	Thomas Suthewelle	n/a	Southwell, Lincolns.
	Richard Anderby	n/a	Anderby, Lincolns.

[1] The offices that the monks at Bardney Abbey held are not always consistently recorded. In 1440 both Alan Kyrketone and William Burghe are labelled as prior and William Waynflete as sub-prior.
[2] As suggested by Thompson, *Visitations*, vol.2, 10, n.8.

Table 1: Table of the monks mentioned in the visitation records for Bardney Abbey 1438-1444.

By the mid-fifteenth century at Bardney the abbot had his own lodging which was located adjacent to the cloister on the west-side. The abbot's residence included a large hall, a great chamber, and its own kitchens.[1254] Clark argues that the later medieval movement away from the Rule's provision for communal living within the cloister 'introduced a new level of dissension and division.'[1255] The existence of tensions developing from these arrangements is suggested by *detecta* which reference a

[1252] Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 119.
[1253] Clark, 'Monasteries and Secular Education,' 119.
[1254] Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey,' 5, 46, 51.
[1255] Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 314.

dispute between the brethren and a servant of the abbot. John Sallowe deposed that: 'two youths that dwell with the abbot, one Barkeworthe and the other Taylboys, do scold the younger monks [and Taylboys] drew his knife to strike brother John Rose'.[1256] John Rose similarly stated:

> a certain young layman dwelling with the abbot, refuted and criticised that deponent [John] in the most vulgar way, and it is known that this youth, named Taylboys, is supported by the abbot against the young monks.[1257]

In Abbot Waynflete's description of events, it was William Yorke who challenged one of his serving-men to a fight 'saying "Come outside the gate",' and later William chastised the abbot for rousing 'the serving-man to strike him,' refusing to be obedient.[1258]

Taylboys, in this case, is identified by Roger Virgoe as William Tailboys, the nephew of Sir Walter Tailboys.[1259] The Tailboys were a wealthy and well-established family involved in local governance in Lincolnshire.[1260] Walter Tailboys had been sheriff in 1423 and was in the service of Lord Ralph Cromwell, Treasurer of England (1433-1443), acting as feoffee to his estates at Tattershall.[1261] It is possible that the presence of William Tailboys in Abbot Waynflete's household exemplifies Clark's statement that sons of benefactors or founders of religious houses sometimes were admitted into the households of superiors for clerical and/or domestic instruction.[1262] This may explain why the abbot supported William Tailboys and stressed the provocation of William York.

In her work on late medieval sanctuaries, McSheffrey outlines how one of the outcomes of the longstanding relationship between St John's Abbey, Colchester, and their benefactors the gentry

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[1256] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22.
'*duo iuuenes manentes cum abbate, vnus Barkeworthe et alius Taylboys, reprehendunt monachos iuniores, [et Taylboys] traxit cultellum suum ad percuciendum fratrem Johannem Roos*'.
[1257] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 20. '*secularis quidam iuuenis manens cum abbate vilissimo modo redarguebat et reprehendebat istum deponentem, et notiuum est ille iuuenis, nomine Taylboys, supportatur per abbatem contra iuuenes monachos*'. My own English translation.
[1258] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14.
'*fratres Willelmus York prouocauit quendam seruientem abbatis ad conflictum, dicens "Veni foras portas", et tandem [venit] ad abbatem, improperans eidem quod animauit seruientem sum ad eum verberandum*'.
[1259] William Tailboys rose in status and influence in subsequent years. By 1441, William Tailboys was a squire in the king's household. In 1445 he was a shire knight and during that decade he also served as Justice of the Peace at Lindsey and Kesteven. By the end of the 1440s, however, William's career had taken a more violent turn and he faced multiple charges of murder, assault, and robbery. This led to the development of a feud with Ralph Cromwell. See page 246, n.1398. Roger Virgoe, 'William Tailboys and Lord Cromwell: Crime and Politics in Lancastrian England,' *Bulletin of The John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 55 (1973): 452; Johnathan S. Mackman, 'The Lincolnshire Gentry and The Wars of The Roses,' (PhD thesis, University of York, 1999), 120, 121.
[1260] Virgoe, 'William Tailboys and Lord Cromwell,' 460-2.
[1261] Rhoda L. Friedrichs, 'Ralph, Lord Cromwell and the Politics of the Fifteenth Century England,' *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 32 (1988): 220; Virgoe, 'William Tailboys and Lord Cromwell,' 460.
[1262] Clark, 'Monasteries and Secular Education,' 160.

family of Raynsford from Essex, was the use of the abbey as an asylum for members of the family and their retainers who were accused of felony. McSheffrey suggests that this relationship 'must have been difficult for the abbot, the monastic community, and the abbey's staff,' who would have found it hard to control the laymen living there temporarily.[1263] This would have been especially true in 1512 when John Raynsford and his servant Maurice Gryffyn were accused of murdering Michal Brasebridge during a dispute which turned violent in the precincts of St John's. All three laymen were seeking sanctuary in the abbey at the time escaping charges of homicide.[1264] The presence of William Tailboys at Bardney may be reflective of this situation at St John's. If identified correctly, although William Tailboys was living in the abbey as part of the abbot's household, he was part of a locally powerful family whose benefaction may have been important to the abbot and abbey. It is likely that the lack of control over the secular youths admitted into Bardney would have helped cause the tensions described with the monks. Thus, we can additionally see what the influence of elite lay families might have on the social dynamics within the convent.

Further evidence of sub-divisions around living arrangements at Bardney Abbey by the mid-fifteenth century is found in the 1438 *detecta* of Abbot John Waynflete: 'also he says that there are three establishments [*familie*] in the monastery, to wit, the abbot's hall, the infirmary and the frater'.[1265] This seems to refer to where members of the convent took their meals rather than groupings of religious like those found at Wistow. The abbot's *detecta* continues that 'sometimes the monks that do stay in the infirmary take their meals not together but separately.'[1266] Monastic infirmaries often had different arrangements around meals where the regulations were relaxed to accommodate monks who were ill. The frater (*refectorium*) was where the convent ate communal meals and was located around the cloister, along with the dorter. It seems likely that the *familias* referred to by the abbot also involved sleeping arrangements. Whereas most of the convent slept in the dorter, some monks would have resided in the infirmary during infirmity, or more permanently in their old age. During the 1438 visitation, William Waynflete was examined by John Depyng, the bishop's chancellor, in the infirmary because he was 'grievously ill'.[1267]

These *familiae* were the most structured way the religious were organised within the abbey, and would have been influential in the interactions and relationships the monks engaged in. Mealtimes

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[1263] Shannon McSheffrey, *Seeking Sanctuary: Crime, Mercy, and Politics in English Courts, 1400-1550* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 186.

[1264] McSheffrey, *Seeking Sanctuary,* 185.

[1265] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14.
'*Item dicit quod sunt tres familie in monasterio, videlicet aula abbatis, infirmaria et refectorium*'.

[1266] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14. '*et aliquociens monachi stantes in infirmaria non simul sed separatim*'.

[1267] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 11. '*fratrem Willelmum Waynflete grauiter infirmatum*'.

were a significant and highly valued part of life within the cloister.[1268] Daily association within a *familia* around the organisation of eating and sleeping arrangements had the potential to foster closer ties between religious. Evidence for sociability amongst the religious in the cloister is found in the form of complaints. In the 1438 visitation, Abbot Waynflete deposed that: 'all day long they [the monks] sit in the frater drinking and spending their time in messes and drinkings, as though it were a public tavern'.[1269] He also complained that beer from the frater was drunk in the infirmary throughout the night.[1270]

If the *familiae* referred to by the abbot described the living arrangements at Bardney, this may have overlapped to some extent with the abbot's household which featured a chamber and kitchen facilities. There is also some ambiguity with the reference to the *familiam* of the infirmary. Four monks complained in their *detecta* that Thomas Bartone kept his own chamber in the infirmary rather than sleeping in the dorter with the rest of the convent. Henry Lincolne deposed that Thomas Bartone 'albeit he is not weak in body but well and strong enough, does not lie by night in the dorter but in a chamber in the infirmary'.[1271] Like households, private chambers and rooms for obedientiaries became increasingly common in monastic houses over the course of the later Middle Ages.[1272] In 1438, Thomas appears to have held an important position within the monastery, holding several offices. Elsewhere Thomas was referenced as eating separately and having his own servants.[1273] Thomas' living arrangements, therefore, fit into broader trends relating to households and private chambers in later medieval English monasticism. As I will discuss in more detail below, this organisation additionally contributed to the hostility in the monastery between Thomas Bartone and the other monks.

In addition to the organisation of Bardney around living arrangements, another social dynamic which influenced the way the brethren at Bardney interacted with one another was that of seniority. According to the Rule of St Benedict, status within a religious house was to be based on when an individual entered the cloister. Logan stresses the importance of seniority for life within the medieval cloister, particularly for houses with a smaller number of religious.[1274] By the later medieval period, monastic candidates were usually aged between their mid-to-late teens and their early twenties. Child oblation was no longer practiced. References to *juvenes* scattered throughout the *detecta* for Bardney,

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[1268] For more on the eating habits of monks see: Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 34-71.

[1269] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14. *'dicit quod tota die sedent in refectorio bibentes et vacantes commesacionibus et potacionibus, quasi esset publica taberna'.*

[1270] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14.

[1271] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18. '*Thomas Bartone subcellerarius, cum non sit infirmus sed satis sanus et fortis, non iacet de nocte in dormitorio sed in camera quadam in camera quadam in infirmaria'.*

[1272] Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 152.

[1273] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16-7.

[1274] Logan, *Runaway Religious*, 147.

thus, described a monk who was new to the habit or less experienced, rather than correlating directly to their age, as the translation of 'young' might suggest. Similarly, the term *senes* would have denoted seniority. At Bardney, however, there is some indication that monks described as *senes* were also elderly. In 1444 William Burghe deposed that part of the reason the regular observances were not kept in the abbey was because he was so old (*adeo senex*).[1275]

It seems probable that references to young monks at Bardney described John Rose, John Hawtone, John Sallowe, and William Bekeryng. The preamble to the 1438 visitation referenced a previous inquiry, noting that these men had not completed their profession into monastic life. Rather, they had resided unprofessed at Bardney for a period of seven years. Elsewhere in the *detecta* there are references to the 'four younger monks' (*quatuor iuniores*) who are described as deacons.[1276] The position of deacon was one of the major religious orders, under a priest. Deacons were able to administer some of the sacraments, such as marriage and baptism, but they could not undertake mass.[1277] These men, therefore, were junior in terms of their experience and level of profession within the religious life, compared to the rest of the convent.

Like the *familias,* the seniority of monks would have influenced the activities they took part in day-to-day and who they interacted with. Chapter 37 of the Rule stipulated that both young and old should be provided for, in consideration of their respective weaknesses.[1278] John Bracy complained in 1438 that 'the old monks are set alike with the young to tasks in the quire and frater,' so that 'the old are spared no more than the young.'[1279] While John's complaint implies that the day-to-day activities of the monks were not being distinguished by seniority as they should, the repeated references to the young monks in the *detecta* imply this was a social framework that was recognised within the abbey. John Sallow, for example, deposed that 'the young monks have none to shave them but one another'.[1280] Scholars have made note of the mentor-mentee relationship that may have existed between junior and senior monks.[1281] Rifts based on seniority, however, were also possible.[1282] Social

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[1275] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 32.

[1276] For example: Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 23.

[1277] P H. Cullum, 'Boy/Man into Clerk/Priest: The Making of the Late Medieval Clergy,' in *Rites of Passage: Cultures of Transition in the Fourteenth Century*, eds. Nicola F. McDonald, W. M. Ormrod (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2004), 51-64.

[1278] Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 132-3; Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 162-3.

[1279] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16. '*Item dicit quod senes sicut iuuenes eque ponuntur ad onera in choro et refectorio legend et cantando, et non maius parcitur in [hoc] senibus quam iuuenibus.*'

[1280] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22.
'*Item dicit quod iuuenes monachi non habent qui eos radent nisi seinuicem*'.

[1281] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister*, 160-1

[1282] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister*, 162.

tensions relating to seniority is implied in John Bracy's complaint that 'the young monks are somewhat rebellious and impudent in their answers to seniors.'[1283]

The lack of full profession for the four junior monks affected their participation in convent life. In 1438 John Sallowe complained that the Abbot Waynflete sold a corrody and the coppice of Horsley to John Brown, without first consulting the four young monks.[1284] John Rose similarly deposed that additionally the abbot did not summon, as witnesses, the four young monks when he freed Robert Hervysone, a villein (*natiuus*) living at the monastery's manor at Southrey.[1285] Thompson suggests these complaints indicate that 'junior representatives of the convent should check the action of their elders' which would have caused tension within the convent.[1286] However, the *detecta* imply that this practice was not carried out at Bardney. The junior monks' lack of influence is indicated further when, during the 1438 visitation, Bishop Alnwick found that John Rose had sufficiently fulfilled his profession. The bishop, therefore, 'reinstated him [John] in his former liberty and restored him to all chapter [acts and] to his voice and vote in chapter.'[1287] By implication the unprofessed at Bardney were less able to participate in the convent decision making than the rest of the religious. They also received fewer privileges. Bishop Alnwick ruled that John Hawtone, John Sallowe, and William Bekeryng should only be given one type of fish and one type of meat to eat until they fulfilled their profession. The distinctions between these men and the other monks may have fostered a sense of division along these lines and a sense of commonality between the four.

Sociability and Patterns of Cohesion

The organisational and administrative divisions at Bardney would have had an impact on who the religious interacted with daily and felt particular ties towards. As Kerr notes, monks were 'almost always surrounded by others and […] engaged in group activities.'[1288] It is also important to acknowledge, however, the opportunities for more informal sociability and relationships. As I argued in chapter one, sociability is an important part of the performance of social relationships outside formal or organised structures in later medieval England. Studying the references to sociability across the visitation records which survive for Bardney Abbey allows us to begin to draw out particular connections between monks within the monastery.

[1283] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16. '*iuuenes monachi sunt quodammodo rebelles et proterui in responsionibus suis penes seniors.*' Here I have substituted Thompson's translation of *proterui* as 'saucy' for 'impudent'.
[1284] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 23.
[1285] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21.
[1286] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21, n.3.
[1287] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 12.
'*ipsum reddidit pristine libertati sue et ad omnes ~~actus est~~ capitulares ad voces et vota in capitulo restituit*'.
[1288] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 159.

Much of the sociability referenced in the *detecta* centred around drinking and playing games together. These moments were included within the records because they were technically disallowed in the Rule. In 1438 John Hale deposed that William Croylande and Henry Lincolne drank in the frater after Compline 'almost until morning'.[1289] John Sallow's *detecta* corroborates this, claiming that their late nights drinking meant that 'they are so oppressed with sleep that they hinder all who are singing psalms in quire.'[1290] Henry Lincolne and Richard Parteney were accused of staying up late playing dice and so not participating in Matins.[1291] Some games, such as chess, were considered appropriate within a monastic context. Games assemblages have been found at monastic and ecclesiastical sites.[1292] The distinction, as Jörg Sonntag explains, was whether the game was one of knowledge, and therefore permitted, or of chance.[1293] The implication within the *detecta* for Bardney was that Henry and Richard were not only neglecting their devotional responsibilities, but also gambling. Despite the negative tone of the *detecta*, the visitation records portray the religious at Bardney frequently taking part in practices of sociability with each other in the cloister.

The monks did not confine themselves to drinking and chatting in the frater and infirmary. Abbot Wainflete described in 1438 how the monks often make trips to the taverns at Bardney and Thomas Bartone complained that, although prohibited, 'especially brothers William Burghe and William Langtofte go out of the monastery to the town and do drink and eat there.'[1294] In the later visitation of 1444 William York and John Hale were cited as eating and drinking in Bardney town, the village of Osgodby.[1295] Complaints about the religious at Bardney eating, drinking, and playing games worked to demonstrate to Bishop Alnwick the need for reforms. They showed members of the abbey behaving against the Rule of their Order and in need of correction. Whilst the records surviving of visitations to Bardney paint these moments of sociability in a negative light, they also suggest the monks there took part in rich and varied social activities both within and outside the cloister. The importance of eating and drinking in fostering relationships has been well attested to within scholarship.[1296] With the

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[1289] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 20. '*Item dicit quod frater Willelmus Croyland et frater Henricus Lincolne post completorium intendunt potacionibus diutinis in refectorio quasi vsque medias noctes.*'

[1290] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22. '*fratres Henricus Lincolne et Willelmus Croylande … venerint ad matutinas adeo sompno grauantur quod impediunt omnes in choro pasallentes*'.

[1291] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22.

[1292] Hall, 'Jeux Sans Frontières,' 191, 193.

[1293] Jörg Sonntag, 'The Medieval Religious Life as a Generator and Mediator of Entertainment Games in Medieval Society: Tension between Norm and Deviance,' *Monastic Research Bulletin* 15 (2009): 27.

[1294] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 14, 23. '*presertim fratres Willelmus Burghe et Willelmus Langtofte exeunt monasterium ad villam ac bibunt et comedunt ibidem*'.

[1295] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 32.

[1296] For example: Carlin and Rosenthal, *Food and Eating*, xi; Woolgar, 'Gifts of Food,' 8.

complaints in the *detecta* we can see how the monks at Bardney cultivated informal relationships with each other by eating and drinking together.

A study of the social interactions experienced by the monks at Bardney provide us with a view focused on male homosociality. This is not, however, exclusively the case as we catch glimpses of interactions between Bardney's religious and local women scattered in short references throughout the *detecta*. Women participated in sociability at taverns and alehouses, as discussed in chapter one. It is probable that the monks who left the cloister to drink and eat in the drinking houses at Bardney and Osgodby met and interacted with women there. In 1438 John Hale and John Bracy were accused of committing adultery with married women, Jane Raven and Ellen Coke respectively.[1297] Later in 1444 John Bracy accused John Hale of eating with an unnamed, but married, woman while he was meant to be out collecting reeds.[1298] Whilst the woman in this case remained unnamed in the records, it may be this was again Jane Raven. Accusations made by the monks may not necessarily reflect the truth, as they may have been influenced by social tensions between monks in addition to speculation or rumour. Yet, they indicate that spending time with women socially is something the monks were assumed to engage in.

The monks at Bardney did not only interact with women outside the abbey's grounds. The *detecta* of William Yorke explained that an unmarried woman called Agnes Busshe was renting a room at the abbey's manor in Southrey.[1299] References to this manor within the visitation documents explain that Southrey was where the monks went to recover from periodic bloodletting, as proscribed in the Rule, which would have provided an opportunity to come into contact with Agnes.[1300] Closer to home, John Hale complained of the frequent access that the corrodian Papilwyk's daughter had to her father lodging in the Abbey.[1301] While these references to women evidence the potential the monks had to interact with women, the *detecta* made by Abbot John Waynflete in 1438 explicitly notes sociability between women in the cloister and the religious. The abbot complained that women had 'free and often access to the cloister precincts' including the infirmary, where there was 'eating, drinking, and chattering between the monks and the same women'.[1302] He also noted that the monks talked to these women during Mass. Taken together these complaints indicate that the religious at Bardney engaged

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[1297] Both Johns were later cleared of this accusation. Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22, 23-4.
[1298] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 32.
[1299] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21.
[1300] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21, 23; Owen, *Church and Society*, 78.
[1301] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 19.
[1302] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 15.
'*Item dicit quod mulieres habent nimium accessum et frequentem in loca claustralia et otissime in infirmariam, v[bi sunt] comesaciones, potaciones ac confbulaciones inter monachos et ipsas mulieres'.*

in somewhat frequent sociability with women, despite the ideals of monastic living. This was not just when they left the abbey, but also within the cloister.

Sociability at Bardney Abbey is more animated than the picture we can build up of social relationships in the other sources studied in the thesis as these visitations span a number of years. By considering what evidence is present over the period 1438-44 we can begin to see a glimpse into the social dynamics between the religious at Bardney. There appears to be, for example, particular ties between William Langtofte, Richard Parteney, Henry Lincolne, and to a lesser degree, John Hale, and William Yorke.[1303] As described above, Henry, Richard, and William Langtofte are listed in 1438 amongst those who regularly drank and played games together in the abbey at night or in Bardney town. Abbot Waynflete complained the next year that William Langtofte, William Yorke, and Richard, with two of the younger monks, ate several meals together in the almonry outside the cloister.[1304] William Yorke and John Hale were reported in 1444 for drinking outside the cloister together. This allegedly was so regular that it was 'almost of custom.'[1305] The references to these religious interacting with one another stand out in contrast to the absence of ties between other members of the monastery visible through references to sociability or other interactions. The *detecta* indicate, therefore, these monks were a particular group who socialised together over a period of roughly six years.

These monks also appear together at the end of the 1438 visitation when they were asked to clear themselves of various accusations via compurgators.[1306] Richard Parteney was cleared of acquiring private goods through William Yorke and William Langtofte. John Hale similarly used William Langtofte, Richard Parteney, and Thomas Elkingtone as compurgators against the accusations of adultery and failure to attend Mass. Standing as a compurgator for a religious accused of a misdemeanour, which they denied, meant attesting to the bishop's visitation party to the good character of the person accused. Agreeing to do this, therefore, indicates some level of support or at least familiarity. Having found compurgators, Bishop William Alnwick 'announced them to be lawfully cleared and restored them to their good fame.'[1307]

Monastic friendship is a recognised subject of inquiry within medieval scholarship. Most often work on this topic centres on the period of monastic reform and revival during the eleventh and twelfth

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[1303] Richard Parteney, Henry Lincolne, and John Hole [Hale] were made deacons together, with Thomas Elkington, by Bishop Richard Fleming in 1426. William Yorke and William Waynflete at the same time were ordained as priests. N.H. Bennett, ed., *The Register of Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln 1420-1431,* vol.2. Canterbury and York Society 99 (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009), 127-8.
[1304] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 26.
[1305] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 32. '*quasi ex consuetudine*'.
[1306] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 23.
[1307] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 12.
'*Et deinde dominus declarauit eos pro legitime purgatis et restituit eos bone fame sue'.*

centuries. Julian Haseldine, for instance, points to the importance of considering the particularities of monastic friendship, which was understood within a spiritual and communal framework. Haseldine concludes that these friendships, like those in other contexts, were concerned with ties and obligations.[1308] Yet it has also been recognised these relationships were inextricably linked to monastic notions of 'community', plus understood as part of Divine Love, as a way towards salvation.[1309] Aelred of Rievaulx (d.1167), for example, considered human friendship as part of a 'progression to Christ'.[1310] The use of evidence in sermons, treaties, and especially letter collections additionally has resulted in much of the discussion of monastic friendship centring on prominent religious figures such as Aelred, Bernard of Clairvaux, Peter the Vulnerable, and Anslem of Bec.[1311] The evidence provided of the particular ties between these monks at Bardney is not sufficient to support identification of their relationships as friendships. I will therefore avoid using this term. That is not to argue that friendships did not exist at Bardney. As scholars have shown, friendships were something that medieval religious engaged in. Whilst not enough to assume friendship, the references to William Langtofte, Richard Parteney, Henry Lincolne, John Hale, and William Yorke together in the *detecta* over six years does suggest a level of familiarity and social cohesion.

A sense of collectivity between this group of monks is indicated further in the records for a special tribunal (*tribunal*) Bishop Alnwick initiated in Bardney in October 1440. The reason for this tribunal was to investigate claims that several monks at Bardney had used the Abbey's common seal without the consent of the abbot or convent. As summarised in a note under the previous visitation in March 1439, the names of William Langtofte, William Waynflete, Henry Lincolne, and John Hale are listed with the note that they held a small meeting (*conventiculum*) after matins in the chapter house and sealed blank parchments.[1312] As argued by Thompson, it is probable that this summary was written either shortly before, or following the October 1440 inquiry, for which numerous *detecta* were recorded.[1313] William Waynflete deposed that Henry obtained the keys to the seal from William Langtofte and the abbot.[1314] William Waynflete held the third key himself. After the four monks held a discussion in the chapter house, Henry Lincolne and John Hale took the common seal from the treasury. According to John Bracy, Henry and John Hale then gathered up candle-ends for wax in the

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[1308] Haseldine, 'The Monastic Culture of Friendship,' 202, 182.

[1309] McGuire, *Friendship and Community,* xxxvi; Haseldine, 'Friendship and Rivalry,' 393.

[1310] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 159.

[1311] See for example: Haseldine, 'The Monastic Culture of Friendship,' 177-202; Haseldine, 'Friendship and Rivalry,' 390-414; McGuire, *Friendship and Community*; Fortin, 'Friendship in the Rule of St Benedict,' 49-63.

[1312] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 27.

[1313] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 27, n.5.

[1314] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 30. Injunctions for the Abbey written by Bishop William Gray of Lincoln stipulated keys for the common seal were to be held by the abbot, prior, and sacrist. Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, 3.

church and went to the sacristy. John Bracy further deposed that, looking through a hole in the door, he was able to see 'Hole [Hale] and Lincolne seal a blank parchment or empty sheet with the common seal.'[1315]

According to the *dectecta* of William Waynflete and Thomas Bartone, 'because there was no-one in the monastery who knew how to write a proxy [*procuratorium*]' Henry Lincolne had taken the blank, sealed sheet to Lincoln.[1316] It appears that the monks had aimed to create a procuracy in anticipation of a visit from Bishop William Alnwick. This could refer simply to a document empowering someone to act as a representative for the monastery.[1317] Thompson interprets the document in this way, and notes the proxy would enable a proctor to 'conduct business in the name of the abbot and convent' and suggests this centred around monetary transactions.[1318] Likewise, William could have been referring to a payment, made by religious houses, in place of hosting an ecclesiastical authority, such as a bishop.[1319] The latter is suggested by the testimony of Alan Kyrketone who placed the blame of these events on Thomas Bartone. Alan claimed he had previously heard Thomas say: 'the bishop has no such jurisdiction in the monastery that he can dispose of the monies of the monastery: rather we will lay out all that we have in the monastery to defend ourselves against him.'[1320] The aim of using the seal appears to have been an attempt to protect the finances of the abbey from a perceived infringement of episcopal jurisdiction.

As a result of the words allegedly spoken by Thomas Bartone, Alan blamed Thomas as the 'chief instigator'.[1321] This is despite the obvious lack of involvement Thomas had in discussing the plan, acquiring the seal, collecting the wax, sealing the documents, or taking the documents to Lincoln. William Langtofte, William Waynflete, Henry Lincolne, and John Hale undertook these actions together. I think the blame of Thomas Bartone reflects the opinion and exclusion of Thomas from the rest of the convent, a subject I will deal with in more detail later, rather than his actual involvement in these events. Rather, it is this same group of four monks who appear from the *detecta* to have organised this attempt.

[1315] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 30. '*vidit iste per vnam rimam dictos Hole et Lincolne sigillare vnam albam cartam siue scedulam vacuam cum sigillo communi*'.

[1316] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 30. '*quia nullus erat in monasterio qui sciebat scriber procuratorium*'.

[1317] OED, procuracy, n. 3.

[1318] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 29, n.3.

[1319] OED, procuracy, n. 1.

[1320] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 29.
'*dixit palam quod episcopus non habet talem iurisdiccionem in monasterio vt disponat de pecuniis monasterij; pocius exponemus omnia que habemus in monasterio in defensionem contra eum*'.

[1321] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 29. '*Bartone est principalis auctor*'.

As shown by these events, the ties between this group of monks by 1439-1440 appear to have taken on a politicised element. They had tried to circumvent the abbot and the rest of the convent to direct the governance of the abbey. It is possible the group could be described as an internal faction. Historians have recognised politicised and factious aspects to life within the cloister.[1322] Laura Mellinger, for example, studies the contentions that arose from the election proceedings for a new abbess in Saint-Georges de Rennes, Breton, in 1434. Mellinger argues that a complex election process was chosen by the convent in an attempt to reduce internal conflict between the group currently governing the abbey and the rest of the convent.[1323] We cannot construct a complete picture of the internal, political dynamics within the abbey at Bardney without more detail. Nevertheless, what the record of the tribunal does indicate, is the presence of a group of monks who variously supported and socialised together during the middle decades of the fifteenth century. The nature of these relationships shifted, too, over the period, possibly becoming more politicised at the end of the 1430s.

Non-Belonging at Bardney Abbey: Thomas Bartone

It is difficult to say with more certainty, but it is possible that this grouping was in part a reaction against the influence that Thomas Bartone had acquired within the abbey at this time. It is apparent from the 1438 visitations that Thomas had accumulated a significant amount of authority. John Bracy named Thomas as simultaneously almoner, sub-cellarer, and pittancer. John alleged that when the convent received the mandate for the bishop's visitation, Thomas convinced the abbot to make William Croylande pittancer instead.[1324] Additionally, Richard Parteney noted that Thomas had previously been the sacrist, which suggests a history of office holding within the abbey.[1325] More generally the monks complained of Thomas' control over Abbot John Waynflete. Both John Bracy and John Hale deposed that the abbot was 'wholly ruled by brother Thomas Bartone'.[1326] Not only had Thomas allegedly controlled the appointment of pittancer, but William Langtofte also blamed him for the removal of William Waynflete as prior.[1327] The influence that Thomas Bartone had in the abbey clearly was resented by the other brethren. Abbot John Waynflete also deposed that 'there is sore division and discord amongst almost all of the convent, who are confederate together and in conspiracy one with another against brother Thomas Bartone.'[1328]

[1322] For example: Mellinger, 'Politics in the Convent,' 529-540; Harper-Bill, 'Monastic Apostasy in Late Medieval England,' 11-13; Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 162-3; McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal,' 31-45.

[1323] Mellinger, 'Politics in the Convent,' 259, 538.

[1324] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16.

[1325] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 20.

[1326] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18. '*totaliter regitur idem abbas per fratrem Thomam Bartone'.*

[1327] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 17.

[1328] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 15. '*Item dicit quod est magna diuisio et scisma inter quasi omnes de conuentu simul confederatos et adinuicem contra fratrem Thomam Bartone conspirantes.'*

The sequence of visitation records that survive for Bardney illustrate that there were attempts made by the monks there to exclude Thomas in various ways over the course of a number of years. The following section of this chapter will examine these attempts as practices of belonging to shed light onto the performative element of the social relationships within the abbey, as built up through interaction and behaviours over time. We can see in their *detecta* from 1438 how, at first, the monks went to great lengths to demonstrate to the bishop how Thomas was to blame for the issues the monastery faced. Eleven of the fifteen monks that are recorded as giving testimony made complaints against Thomas in some capacity. The *detecta* of some are almost entirely taken up with the subject. The monks' testimonies give the impression that Thomas is the main source of conflict visible at Bardney Abbey. Amongst other transgressions, Thomas was accused of being the source of bickering and waste having consumed and distributed the monastery's victuals, he was disobedient, he spoke against the abbot, he entertained layfolk at the cost of the brethren, and he withheld their annual portions.

Some of the complaints made against Thomas Bartone directly related to his management of the offices he held. The primary responsibility of his role as almoner was to dispense food and alms to the poor on behalf of the monastery.[1329] It was customary to distribute leftover dishes from the convent's meals as alms and so it was the norm to ensure there were leftovers to give.[1330] John Rose and William Langtofte both described how there was too little provision of dishes for there to be enough to give in alms 'in Bartone's default'. When there were good dishes left, Barton distributed them to kin (*amici*).[1331] This went against injunctions for Bardney Abbey set by Bishop William Gray. The injunctions stipulated that the alms from the hall or table of the abbot were not to be eaten by laymen and the monks were not to give leftovers away as they chose but that they were to be collected by the almoner for the distribution to the poor.[1332] The provision of leftovers to lay servants is something that Harvey has also found, as a legitimate practice, at Westminster Abbey in the first half of the fifteenth century.[1333] She argues that some lay servants were dependant on these provisions.[1334] In Bardney, however, this practice appears to have been less accepted, for Thomas Bartone at least. William Langtofte deposed that Thomas gave the abbot's and monks' obits 'to his serving-folk contrary

[1329] Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 118.
[1330] Harvey, *Living and Dying,* 68, 70.
[1331] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21, 17. '*in defectu Bartone*'.
[1332] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, 2.
'*quod elemosina mense abbatis et in aula eius nullatinus decetero per laicos consumatur*'.
[1333] Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 154.
[1334] Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 67-8.

to the pious intentions of the founders.'[1335] Thomas' alleged failure to correctly carry out the tasks of the almoner was a serious issue and went against the Rule of the order as well as episcopal instruction.

As pittancer Thomas was responsible for doling out the personal allowances given to the monks out of the common funds. At Bardney the role of almoner also included some distribution of provisions for the monks themselves. William Langtofte, Henry Lincolne, and William Yorke deposed that Thomas failed to pay the dues owed to the convent, namely 20d. five times a year as pittancer, and 12d. for a pair of knives and 12d. for spices yearly as almoner, for each monk.[1336] These items made up part of a small personal allowance for monks which may also have included petty cash or clothing.[1337] Henry and Richard Parteney further claimed that Thomas took from the payments due to the convent from the offices he held.[1338] The allowance of private property or cash allowances had become increasingly common in religious houses in the later medieval period. Lawrence points out, 'it was not only that the individual slept, ate, and moved about in the constant company of others; even such humdrum personal activities as shaving and taking baths were closely supervised communal exercises.'[1339] Within this context these small provisions for each monk would have been highly valued. The non-payment of these items at Bardney, therefore, may have been considered as a personal affront to the monks.

There are also specific complaints found in the *detecta* for Bardney concerning the responsibilities of Thomas Bartone as sub-cellarer. In this role he was involved in the supply of food and dishes that the monks would have received on a daily basis. John Bracy and John Hale deposed that, Thomas failed in his responsibility to receive and refresh guests when the abbot was absent.[1340] Furthermore, according to John Rose, 'Bartone the sub-cellarer everyday gives to one Graystoke of Bardney victuals out of the goods of the monastery, in great abundance daily, albeit the same Graystoke is not in receipt of a corrody nor is a household servant of the monastery.'[1341] This behaviour was antithetical to the Rule's emphasis on receiving guests with 'every humility' and that the office of cellarer should be held by someone who is not unjust, wasteful, nor gluttonous.[1342]

[1335] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 17. '*Aliquando ceruisiam, aliquando panem, aliquando coquina subtraxit et seruientibus suis tribuit contra piam intencionem fundatorum*'.
[1336] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 17.
[1337] Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 153.
[1338] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18, 20.
[1339] Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 115.
[1340] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 19.
[1341] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21.
'*Item dicit Bartone subcellerarius omni die tribuit cuidam Graystoke de Bardney cibaria de bonis monasterij in magna habundancia quotidie, cum idem Graystoke nec sit corrodiarius nec seruiens familiaris monasterij.*'
[1342] Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 173, 117.

Overall, the monks claimed, Thomas Bartone's mismanagement was leading to their financial ruin. William Langtofte deposed that 'this Bartone is a man of such governance that never did any office prosper in his hand.'[1343] Beyond neglecting the offices he held, Thomas was considered responsible for a variety of issues in the monastery. William Bekerying deposed, without further explanation, that 'sometimes the chapter mass is not said in Bartone's default.'[1344] John Hale, in addition to William Langtofte, claimed 'Bartone is the cause of all the bickerings in the convent and will be the ruin of the monastery.'[1345] Even more dramatically, John Hale recounted how:

> 'the abbot who was the last to die [Geoffrey de Hemingby (1413-1436)] said to the same Bartone on the very day whereon the said abbot deceased, 'You have never been faithful in any office wherein you have stood; nay I, had I done as you, would have left to-day in this monastery no monk wither young or old.'[1346]

This exchange was corroborated in William Bekeryng's *detecta* which additionally included how Thomas 'in evil-speaking blackens the fame of his brethren.'[1347] By emphasising Thomas' departure from the ideals stipulated in the Rule, the monks sought to ensure their complaints against him were given weight in the visitation.

Taking the complaints about Thomas Bartone made by the monks in 1438 together, we can see additionally how they construct the idea that Thomas was operating separately to the rest of the convent. Rather than a means for reflection and repentance, however, this separation went against the ideals of Benedictine communal living. When Thomas left the convent, to Boston or Lincoln, presumably on business relating to his offices, he allegedly disparaged the abbot and brethren openly 'to the great scandal of them and of the monastery'.[1348] Several *detecta* mentioned his separate sleeping arrangements. These are exemplified by John Hale's claim that 'the same Bartone, albeit strong and well, lies every night not in the dorter but in the infirmary.'[1349] The Rule states that all monks were to sleep in the same place, or at least in groups of ten in larger houses, under the

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[1343] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 17.
'*iste Bartone est talis regiminis quod nunquam prosperabatur officium aliquod in manu sua.*'
[1344] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 23.
'*Item dicit quod missa de capitulo non dicitur aliquociens in defectu Bartone.*'
[1345] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 17-8.
'*et dicit quod ipse Bartone est causa omnium dissensionum in conuentu et erit destruccio monasterij.*'
[1346] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 19. '*Item dicit abbas iam vltimo defunctus dixit dicto Bartone ipso die quo dectus abbas decessit, 'Tu nunquam fuisti fidelis in aliquot officio quo stetisti, sed si secundum te fecissem non dimisissem isto die in isto monasterio nec iuuenem nec senem'.*' Smith, *Heads of Religious Houses*, 16.
[1347] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 23. '*Item idem Bartone in turpiloquio dehonestat fratres suos.*'
[1348] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 20. '*in magnum corum et monasterij scandalum.*'
[1349] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 20.
'*Item dicit quod idem Bartone non in dormitorio sed in infrimaria, cum satis fortis et sanus, iacet omni nocte.*'

supervision of a senior monk.[1350] Numerous Benedictine General Chapters prohibited the use of private accommodation.[1351] During Bishop Gray's episcopate, furthermore, injunctions for Bardney Abbey specifically ruled against private chambers. The monks were instructed to 'take their night's rest in the dorter and in no wise, as has been the custom, in private lodgings.'[1352] Whilst the injunctions imply that separate lodgings may have been a widespread practice within the abbey at one time, by the time of the visitation in 1438, the *detecta* indicate that Thomas was alone in this practice.

Thomas Bartone's chamber in the infirmary was where he ate luxury food (*lautiorus cibus*) whilst leaving the monastery's guests with the ordinary (*mediocribus*) food.[1353] Henry Lincolne further deposed that almost daily 'he [Thomas] entertains one Graystoke in his chamber in the infirmary, and this upon the more dainty food in the kitchen'.[1354] This was also noted in John Hale's *detecta* which described how 'one Graystoke of Bardney and his wife […] have nothing to do there [Thomas Bartone's chamber in the infirmary] to the profit of the monastery, but in order to consume food'.[1355] These complaints create an image of Thomas' non-belonging to the everyday living and workings of the convent and the monastic vocation. Spending time in the infirmary was also a physical separation as it was located outside the main cloister buildings.[1356] It is possible that Thomas simply sought additional comfort, liberties, and personal space. Restrictions around silence, for example, were more relaxed in the infirmary.[1357] Kerr suggests that the lack of privacy within a religious house, whilst facilitating a sense of solidarity, could also result in friction and rivalries.[1358] Tensions with the other brethren may have led to Thomas distancing himself from the convent too.

Thomas Bartone's separation from the rest of the other monks may also have reflected an attempt by Thomas to construct an elite or superior way of life. Aspirations towards secular, elite lifestyles within later medieval monastic institutions has been recognised within scholarship.[1359] Harvey demonstrates that the lifestyle of the convent at Westminster Abbey during the later medieval period was equivalent

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[1350] Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 97.

[1351] Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 152.

[1352] Thompson, *Visitations*, vol.1, 2. '*in dormitorio, et nullatinus in priuatis cameris vt solito, de nocte quiescant'*, 'et in dormitorio, et nullatinus in priuatis cameris vt solito, de nocte quiescant'.

[1353] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 19.

[1354] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18. '*et quasi omni die conuiuat quendam Graystok in camera sua in firmaria* [sic]*, et hoc de laucioribus cibis in coquina'*.

[1355] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 19. '*quidam Graystoke de Bardeney et eius vxor habeant nimium accessum ad cameram fratris Thome Bartone in infirmaria, expectando ibidem tota die, cum nichil habeant ibi facere ad comodum monasterij, sed vt cibos consumant'.*

[1356] Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey,' 56-7.

[1357] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister,* 160; Christopher Brooke, *The Age of the Cloister: The Story of Monastic Life in the Middle Ages* (New York: Paulist Press, 2001), 280.

[1358] Kerr, *Life in the Medieval Cloister*, 151.

[1359] Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 126; Rasmussen, 'Luxury in Poverty,' 195-7, 214-5; Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 287-8.

to the secular gentry, whilst the abbot, living separately, was equated more with a noble lifestyle.[1360] Separate arrangements for sleeping, private dining, and luxury foods were all characteristics of later medieval aristocratic conspicuous consumption.[1361] The repeated condemnation of separate chambers speaks to their increasing application, for example by office holders, within Benedictine houses. Benedictine infirmaries, moreover, were places where rules on food consumption was less stringent. This included meat which was a food type often associated with high social status.[1362]

Over the course of the later medieval period senior monks and prelates increasingly established their own households. It is possible this is something that Thomas attempted to construct. Harold Brakspear notes the infirmary at Bardney had a *camerae* adjacent which was built in c.1317 to house Abbot Robert de Waynflete.[1363] It is possible this was where Thomas had his chamber. Many of these households featured private servants.[1364] John Rose claimed that Graystoke was not a servant at the monastery.[1365] Yet John Bracy's *detecta* described him as Thomas' servant (*seruiens suus*).[1366] Later medieval monastic servants often were paid in part through board or leftovers from the monks' meals.[1367] We could interpret Thomas' provision of food to Graystoke along these lines.

Even if Thomas' distribution of food did not represent direct payments to servants, gifts of food were also culturally important in elite patronage and as a sign of status.[1368] John Hale deposed that:

> at one time they were wont to have in the stewponds that belong to the monastery 300 or 400 pike, and all these Bartone has almost brought to nothing by squandering them, giving to one man or two, saying 'Take them to your wife,' and so to many others.[1369]

[1360] Harvey, *Living and Dying,* 1-2, 36.

[1361] B.F. Harvey, 'Monastic Pittances in the Middle Ages,' in *Food in Medieval England: Diet and Nutrition*, eds. C.M. Woolgar, D. Serjeantson and T. Waldron (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 248; Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 287-8, 314.

[1362] Clark, *The Benedictines in the Middle Ages*, 293; Miriam Müller, 'Food, Hierarchy, and Class Conflict,' in *Survival and Discord*, 233.

[1363] Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey,' 57.

[1364] Harvey, *Living and Dying,* 152.

[1365] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 21.

[1366] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16.

[1367] Whilst most servants would have lived 'in-house', other servants lived outside the monastic precincts, which Harvey interprets as indicative of their status as married individuals. See: Harvey, *Living and Dying,* 163, 166-7, 174.

[1368] Dave Postles, 'The Regular Canons and the Use of Food, c.1200-1350,' in *The Regular Canons in the Medieval British Isles,* eds. Karen Stöber and Janet E. Burton (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 243; Woolgar, 'Gifts of Food,' 12-3.

[1369] Thompson, ed. *Visitations,* vol.2, 19. '*Item dicit quod dudum consueuerunt habere in stagnis pertinentibus monasterio ccc vel cccc dentrices pro instauro monasterii, quos omnes Bartone quasi dissipando consumpsit, dans vni vnum vel duos, dicens 'Fer vxori,' et sic ceteris*'.

Pike, and fresh fish more generally, was a high value food item.[1370] This was because fresh fish was highly perishable and difficult to obtain.[1371] Müller describes how private fishponds too were a symbol of lordship.[1372] Although not owned by Thomas Bartone, this complaint suggests that he appropriated the fresh pike to signify his authority and high status. Müller argues that by the early fifteenth century, conspicuous consumption became a 'cultural delineator between the social classes'.[1373] It seems likely that through his separate sleeping arrangements, consumption of luxury foods, employment of servants, and gift giving, Thomas was attempting to distance himself as higher in status than the other brethren. Thomas' separation, in turn, was emphasised by the monks during episcopal visitation to demonstrate his non-belonging and to encourage the bishop to impose corrections. In his *detecta*, William Bekeryng claimed that 'Bartone would have all obey him, while he himself will obey nobody.'[1374]

The purpose of episcopal visitation was not to record the positive actions of members of a religious house but to ensure the Rule was being followed and correct any behaviour which departed from this. The evidence that survives for Bardney, then, necessarily focuses on the negative characteristics of Thomas Bartone's presence within the abbey. The Rule of Saint Benedict stressed immediate obedience to superiors without complaint.[1375] For many religious, the visitation offered the opportunity to petition a higher authority concerning grievances about heads of houses. If Thomas controlled the abbot, then Bishop Alnwick's visitation in 1438 may have been seen as the only form of redress open to the brethren. I argue the vast array of complaints the monks made against Thomas were a concerted effort to demonstrate how Thomas did not live up to the expectations of the Rule and was damaging Bardney Abbey through his actions. The focus on Thomas' non-compliance with the Rule, statutes, and injunctions would have helped to ensure the intervention of the bishop. The lack of injunctions surviving for Bishop Alnwick's 1438 visitation means it is impossible to know whether any stipulations were made regarding Thomas' behaviour specifically.

In theory, if successful, the complaints made against Thomas Bartone would have resulted in his punishment and likely removal from office. Kerr identifies how separation and exclusion were increasingly used instead of corporal punishment in later medieval monasteries.[1376] Chapter 24 of the Rule explained how for lesser faults, the erroneous monk should be 'deprived of the common table,'

[1370] Woolgar, 'Gifts of Food,' 11; Postles, 'Regular Canons,' 242; Wubs-Mrozewicz, 'Fish, Stock and Barrel,' 188.
[1371] Postles, 'Regular Canons,' 240.
[1372] Müller, 'Food, Hierarchy, and Class Conflict,' 243.
[1373] Müller, 'Food, Hierarchy, and Class Conflict,' 248.
[1374] Thompson, ed. *Visitations,* vol.2, 23.
'*Item dicit quod Bartone vellet omnes sibi obedire et ipse nulli vult obedire.*'
[1375] Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 39.
[1376] Kerr, *Life in the Cloister*, 123.

eating their meals alone.[1377] For more serious faults, outlined in the following chapter, they should be banned from both the common table and oratory and 'none of the brothers should associate with him in company or speech'.[1378] For Katherine Smith, such isolating punishments helped to define monastic 'community' in encouraging obedience, 'collective responsibility and compassion', as well as maintaining hierarchy. It is interesting to note that these punishments at first appear to replicate the separation that, according to the *detecta*, Thomas Bartone was cultivating for himself; eating separately and not associating with the monks. However, whilst Thomas worked to replicate an elite lifestyle, eating better food and entertaining in his private chambers, the separation enforced as part of monastic punishments was degrading. Exclusionary forms of discipline, Smith argues, was about humiliation, repentance, and readmittance.[1379] Kerr suggests that even once reconciled, offending monks could continue to be stigmatised by the rest of the monastery.[1380] Moreover, if monks were found mismanaging the offices they held, they could be removed from these positions following visitation. Again, the surviving visitation documents do not detail how the offices at Bardney were allocated or reallocated after 1438, though it is evident that Thomas had been replaced as almoner by at least 1444 when John Hale held the office.[1381] In that year John complained that Thomas withheld the accounts for 'the various offices of the monastery which Thomas Bartone has held'.[1382] The perfect form of the Latin verb *occupo*, to hold or occupy, is used here which indicates that Thomas was no longer involved in any of these offices. This form of punishment would have stripped Thomas of a significant amount of authority he held in the abbey, which was seen as especially problematic by the rest of the convent. Through the complaints made in the monks' *detecta* we can see how members of the community emphasised how Thomas' behaviour was deserving of correction. A motivation for providing these *detecta*, therefore, may have been to reduce the hierarchy and status that Thomas enjoyed, to the point where he was excluded, to a lower position, from a significant proportion of participation in the convent.

The *detecta* from the 1438 episcopal visitation to Bardney Abbey are the most detailed, but the *detecta* and injunctions for subsequent visitations are also valuable to study how the convent's practices of exclusion towards Thomas Bartone continued and changed over time. Any injunctions made following the 1438 visitation do not survive. These may have been more illuminating on how

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[1377] Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 100-1.

[1378] Venarde, *The Rule of Saint Benedict*, 102-3.

[1379] Katherine Allen Smith, 'Discipline, Compassion and Monastic Ideals of Community, c.950-1250,' *Journal of Medieval History* 35, no.4 (2009): 326, 330.

[1380] Kerr, *Life in the Cloister*, 124.

[1381] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 33.

[1382] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 33.
'diuersa offica monasterij que Thomas Bartone occupauit multum deteriorantur'.

the complaints made about Thomas were dealt with by the bishop. It appears, however, that the religious at Bardney were not satisfied with the result. The record for Bishop Alnwick's next visitation to Bardney, in March 1439, notes that Thomas Bartone was not present for the arrival of the bishop. As outlined in Abbot John Waynflete's *detecta*, Thomas had been physically expelled from the abbey on two separate occasions. On the first occasion the bishop had written to the abbot, directing him to allow Thomas to return because he had been 'wrongfully expelled' (*iniuste expulsum*).[1383] Logan argues that bishops' letters were significant in facilitating reconciliation between religious houses and those who had runaway.[1384] Bishop Alnwick made a similar attempt at ensuring Thomas was able to re-enter Bardney Abbey after he had been forced out. In serious cases of disobedience within a religious house, the bishop might organise for the individual to be temporarily, or permanently, sent to another house.[1385] Religious could not simply be expelled by the convent on their own accord.

Bishop Alnwick's letter, however, had been ignored. The abbot deposed that William Langtofte and William Yorke had approached him 'in the name of all their brethren, saying once and for all that he [Thomas] ought not to be admitted.'[1386] This reasoning was further clarified by William Yorke who deposed that they wanted to avoid causing damage to the monastery because Thomas 'had been defamed of high treason and of coining money'.[1387] We find context for William's reference to treason in the record of a special inquiry held following the end of the 1438 visitation in March. During this inquiry, some of the brethren were asked if they knew if Thomas Bartone had coined money (*fecisse monetam*).[1388] All the monks who were asked claimed they did not know anything about any coining and the responses for William Langtofte and William Yorke do not provide any detail on the matter. Only William Croylande deposed additionally that he had heard defamation (*diffamatum*) on this subject from servants.[1389]

Counterfeit coining was a treasonous offence and was the subject of governmental concern particularly in the 1410s and 1420s, a period straddled by the Europe-wide bullion famines.[1390] Any

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[1383] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 27.

[1384] Logan, *Runaway Religious*, 139.

[1385] Logan, *Runaway Religious*, 149.

[1386] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 27. '*dicit quod Lanto[fte et] Yorke venerunt ad ipsum abbatem nominee omnium confratrum, dicentes penitus quod non admitteretur.*'

[1387] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 27.

[1388] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 24.

[1389] These were possibly Thomas Bartone's own servants, although damage to the manuscript has made the text here illegible. Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 24, n.5.

[1390] Hannes Kleineke, 'The Prosecution of Counterfeiting in Lancastrian England,' in *Medieval Merchants and Money*, 217; Nightingale, 'England and the European Depression,' 631-56; Bolton, *Money in the Medieval English Economy*, 232-3. For more on ecclesiastical involvement in minting see: Martin Allen, 'The English Crown and the Coinage, 1399-1485,' in *The Fifteenth Century XIII: Exploring the Evidence: Commemoration, Administration and the Economy*, ed. Linda Clark (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 183-199.

involvement in illicit coining, therefore, would have been a serious cause for concern at Bardney Abbey. There doesn't appear to have been much substance behind these accusations, however, as coining is not mentioned again. Minting coins required substantial facilities, equipment, and labour. London's royal mint, for example, employed twenty-one moneyers in 1433 and its refurbishment in 1450 involved the installation of double-thickness doors.[1391] If Thomas Bartone had been engaging in counterfeit coining, it would have been difficult to keep this from his brethren.[1392] It seems likely, therefore, that the claims against Thomas were used and exaggerated by William Langtofte and William Yorke in an attempt to keep Thomas from returning to the abbey. The severity of the accusation, however, meant that the monks were not willing to stick to these claims under episcopal scrutiny. At the end of William Croyland's deposition there is a partially legible note that someone, possibly William or the servants he claimed spread the rumour, 'asked pardon of the same Bartone'.[1393] This note substantiates the theory that even the brethren recognised these claims lacked foundation. The fact that Bishop Alnwick ordered Thomas' return after he was expelled implies that there was not enough evidence to substantiate the accusation of coining and the issue was dropped.

The primary concern of the special inquiry, where monks were asked to comment on their knowledge of counterfeit coining, was words against Lord Ralph Cromwell allegedly spoken by Thomas Bartone. Ralph Cromwell was a local baron who rose to prominence during the wars in France; he helped to negotiate the treaty of Troyes in 1420. He also served on the royal council during Henry VI's minority and in 1433 was made Treasurer of England. Whilst in royal service, Ralph worked to amass his personal fortune. By 1446-8 he received income from over 140 manorial estates and had accumulated a large amount of land in Lincolnshire.[1394] In 1434, for example, Ralph began the major re-building and expansion of his main residence at Tattershall Castle, Lincolnshire.

The record for the inquiry, at the end of the March 1438 visitation, into what Thomas Barton said about Ralph included the *detecta* of eleven monks. The religious were asked if Thomas had said 'that Cromwell would sweep the floor or that his head would be cut off'.[1395] All eleven agreed they had heard Thomas speak these words, either in the calefactory that winter or during meals throughout the year. Ralph had been involved in the political factionalism between Humphrey Duke of Gloucester,

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[1391] Martin Allen, *Mints and Money in Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 94, 104.

[1392] For more on legitimate ecclesiastical involvement in minting see: Allen, *Mints and Money*, 96-102.

[1393] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 24. '*peciit ab eodem Bartone veniam*'.

[1394] James Wright, 'Tattershall Castle and the Newly-Built Personality of Ralph Lord Cromwell,' *The Antiquaries Journal* 101 (2021): 308.

[1395] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 24.
'"*Cromwelle nunc thesaurarius scopabit pauimentum sicut ceteri qui in eodem officio fecerunt.*"'

John Duke of Bedford, and Henry Beaufort, Bishop of Winchester, throughout Henry VI's minority.[1396] This minority ended in 1437 and marked the beginning of Ralph's decline in power and influence in government. Similarly, Virgoe sees the 1440s as a period when Ralph lost authority in Lincolnshire.[1397] It is possible that it was this power shift that Thomas Bartone was referring to. Later, during the 1440s and into the 1450s Ralph faced further opposition from William de la Pole, Duke of Suffolk, who became the king's favourite.[1398]

Speaking against Ralph Cromwell may have been a particular cause for concern at Bardney Abbey. There were already possible connections between Ralph and the abbey through the presence of William Tailboys in the abbot's household and the fact that the abbey, like other religious houses in the area, acquired bricks from the kilns built for the work on Tattershall Castle.[1399] Hayes suggests further that Bishop William Alnwick, who conducted the visitation inquiry, had close ties with Lord Cromwell. Both acted as royal councillors for Henry V.[1400] In 1424, William Alnwick was a feoffee for Tattershall Castle, alongside Walter Tailboys, and he coordinated with Ralph to establish Tattershall College in 1440.[1401] The alleged words spoken by Thomas Bartone would have been cause for considerable embarrassment for the bishop and therefore had the potential to have serious consequences for the abbey. It is likely that Ralph would not have taken lightly to any political commentary against him. Ralph, for example, had been ruthless in his pursuit of land and wealth, demonstrated when he kidnapped Elizabeth Swillingon, forcing her to hand over four manors in the East Midlands to him.[1402] The accusations against Thomas Bartone on his conversation about Ralph Cromwell provide an illustration of how every-day social relationships, experienced by the religious at Bardney, could be shaped externally by those in positions of governmental and institutional authority. The record of this special inquiry suggests that it was undertaken on the instigation of Bishop Alnwick,

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[1396] For more about the career of Ralph Cromwell see: S.J. Payling, 'The 'Grete Laboure and the Long and Troublous Tyme': The Execution of the Will of Ralph, Lord Cromwell, and the Foundation of Tattershall College,' in *The Fifteenth Century XIII*, 2-10; Wright, 'Tattershall Castle,' 306-12.

[1397] Virgoe, 'William Tailboys and Lord Cromwell,' 463.

[1398] Friedrichs, 'Ralph, Lord Cromwell,' 220; Wright, 'Tattershall Castle,' 305-10. Interestingly the Duke of Suffolk was likely behind the attack on Ralph Cromwell by William Tailboys, now Baron Kyme, in 1449. William was imprisoned as a result but in the following years still managed to organise attempts to kidnap and murder Ralph as well as organise a smear campaign against him. In 1452 Ralph was accused of treason, through his alleged involvement with the Yorkist rebellion, by a priest named Robert Collinson. Virgoe, 'William Tailboys and Lord Cromwell,' 463-71; Wright, 'Tattershall Castle,' 309.

[1399] Owen, *Church and Society,* 83.

[1400] Hayes, 'William Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich and Lincoln,' 298.

[1401] Later, in 1447, William and Ralph were also involved together in the foundation of the guild of St Christopher in the parish of Thame. Hayes, 'William Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich and Lincoln,' 300, 321-2.

[1402] Elizabeth lost an eye from the conditions of her imprisonment after she was kidnapped. Wright, 'Tattershall Castle,' 308.

rather than the religious at Bardney. Nevertheless, it provided the monks further ammunition to use against Thomas and acted as a catalyst to their expulsion of him from the abbey.

The second time Thomas Bartone was expelled from Bardney, Abbot John Waynflete deposed that 'some of his brethren broke open the same Bartone's chamber in the infirmary; and he says that [Richard] Parteney might have done this'.[1403] Initially the monks at Bardney had made efforts to instigate episcopal correction against Thomas through their *detecta*. The next year they took a more extreme form of exclusion, by physically removing him from the cloister. A note at the end of the 1439 visitation records gives us an insight into where Thomas went during his expulsion. Bishop Alnwick instructed the abbot to renumerate Thomas 'of fourteen pence for every week wherein he abode by his [the bishop's] command at Belvoir.'[1404] It seems likely this was a reference to the Benedictine Priory of Belvoir in Lincolnshire. It is possible that Thomas had contacted Bishop Alnwick who had helped arrange for him to stay there before he was re-admitted.[1405] The fact that initially the brethren resisted episcopal instruction to readmit Thomas speaks to their determination to exclude him.

Thomas Bartone must have been re-admitted at some point before the bishop's return to the abbey in March 1439. During this visitation it transpired that his non-appearance was because the abbot had imprisoned him for calling the abbot a thief. Imprisonment of religious was considered a legitimate form of punishment where warranted.[1406] This was provided for both in the Rule of St Benedict and in injunctions to Bardney Abbey. Bishop William Gray's injunctions to the abbey laid out a system for confinement if a monk was convicted of transgressing against another, by six religious in the convent who were impartial (*indifferentes*).[1407] To illustrate, the first offence would result in two months confinement, whereas the fourth offence meant confinement at the abbot's discretion. Brakspear identifies the prison at Bardney as a chamber located on the ground level of the dorter range.[1408]

Bishop Alnwick reminded the abbot that religious should not be imprisoned without a proper conviction and Thomas was released. Ultimately, then, the attempts by the convent, and later also the abbot, of enforcing Thomas Barton's non-belonging within the Abbey failed. Although, having made a submission to the abbot for forgiveness, Bishop Alnwick directed Thomas to take his meals in the

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[1403] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 27.
'*quidam de confratribus fregerunt cameram ipsius Bartone [in] infirmaria; et dicit quod Parteney hoc fescisset.*'
[1404] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 27. '*Dominus monuit abbatem quod satisfaciat Bartone pro qualibet septimana qua stetit de suo mandato apud Belue[rum], xiiijd.*'
[1405] The prior of Belvoir at this time was also called William Alnwick. Despite the common name, there does not appear to have been any visible connection between the prior and the bishop. Page, *Victoria County History of Lincoln*, 124-7; Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, xviii; Rosemary C.E. Hayes, 'The Pre-episcopal Career of William Alnwick, Bishop of Norwich and Lincoln,' in *People, Politics and Community*, 91.
[1406] Smith, 'Discipline, Compassion and Monastic Ideals of Community,' 117-8.
[1407] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, 3.
[1408] Brakspear, 'Bardney Abbey,' 37.

infirmary with William Burghe.[1409] The implication of this was that this, at least, would be separate from the rest of the convent in the frater. Thomas also was instructed by the bishop to avoid being involved within any monastery governance and maintain peace and concord with the brethren 'under pain of perpetual expulsion from the monastery in case that he be lawfully convicted.'[1410] Injunctions which survive for April 1440 suggest that Thomas did not keep to these instructions. The *detecta* for the visitation associated with this injunction unfortunately do not survive, but the injunction reminded Thomas of his previous imprisonment and instructed him to be content with his situation.[1411] Thomas was ordered to act as the bishop directed or risk being imprisoned again indefinitely.

The *detecta* for the last recorded visitation in 1444 are less detailed than those for the 1438 visitation. Four of the nine monks that provided depositions, nevertheless, mentioned Thomas. Both Thomas Suthewelle and Richard Anderby described how 'Bartone is past bearing among the brethren'.[1412] Thomas Suthewelle complained that Thomas reproached him for 'making the cloister garden' and Richard claimed that Thomas sang the psalms too quickly during services.[1413] John Bracy, who was now almoner, deposed that there were financial issues with the offices that Thomas Bartone had previously held because he kept his own accounts which he did not let others see. John's complaint is followed by the note that Thomas was 'warned under pain of excommunication to deliver all such accounts to the treasury.'[1414] From these *detecta* it seems likely that by 1444 Thomas held much less influence and authority within Bardney Abbey. There is no mention that he held any obedientiaries. The monks' complaints imply, however, that Thomas lived in an uneasy cohabitation with the rest of the convent. Richard Anderby additionally deposed that 'all that he [Thomas] has he wastes in meat and drink and presents, that he may win to himself for his support the influence of lay-folk.'[1415] This echoes Thomas' reported behaviour from 1438.

Reflecting on the example of Thomas Bartone raises the question: to what extent was his lack of sociability and non-belonging with the rest of his convent influenced by his personality. As Melissa Julian-Jones, Chris Dennis, and Angelo Silvestri have discussed, historic personalities are hard to

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[1409] In the 1444 visitation record William Burghe testified that, as he was elderly, he was unable to maintain regular observances in the monastery. It seems likely, therefore, that because of his age he was eating, and possibly residing, in the infirmary. Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 32.

[1410] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 26.
'*sub pena expulsionis perpetue a monasterio in casu quo inatea legitime conuincatur*'.

[1411] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 28.

[1412] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 33. '*Item idem Bartone est intolerabilis inter fratres*'.

[1413] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 33. '*Bartone … improperat isti pro factura gardini claustri*'.

[1414] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 33.
'*Monitus est sub pena excommunicacionis quod omnes huiusmodi compotos liberet in thesaurariam.*'

[1415] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 33. '*omnia que habet consumit in esculentis et poculentis et donis, vt attrahat sibi potestatem secularem ad ipsum manutenendum.*'

delineate from charisma or persona and even harder to glimpse in surviving historical records.[1416] This is especially the case when we consider individuals who were not high-profile or elite. There are snippets of dialogue scattered through the *detecta*, from which we could use to reflect on a possible personality for Thomas.[1417] To illustrate, when John Bracy complained that Thomas did not serve the abbey's guests sufficiently but treated Graystoke preferentially, he claimed that if the monks questioned this 'they have nothing in answer but abuse' from Thomas.[1418] Henry Lincolne similarly testified that if the monks critiqued the fact that Thomas served Graystoke the better food, Thomas 'says with reviling that it shall be so in spite of them'.[1419] It is possible that these encounters were coloured by his persona from the offices he held. In 1444, when Thomas Bartone had lost his positions of authority within the abbey, Thomas Suthewelle complained that 'Bartone is past bearing among the brethren and chides this deponent for making the cloister garden'.[1420]

The monks providing testimony on Thomas Bartone present his personality as argumentative, spiteful, and antisocial. Any conclusions on his personality, however, can only be made very tentatively. Thomas elsewhere is reported socialising more positively and being generous to layfolk outside the monastery. As Goldberg reminds us, in the context of medieval church court cases, the inclusion of first-hand testimony within witness depositions creates a sense of immediacy within the narrative.[1421] However, the inclusion of reported speech did not reflect what an individual said exactly at the time, but what the lawyer for the litigant 'considered effective rhetoric'.[1422] This is also true of the religious' *detecta* which were constructed with the aim of discrediting Thomas and which paint him in as negative a light as possible for the visitation. Whilst it remains difficult to outline Thomas' personality with the surviving source material, we can note that it is likely that this had an impact on the negotiation of his belonging within Bardney Abbey during the 1430s and 1440s. Indeed, an abrasive personality may have helped influence the choice of punishments allocated to Thomas by Bishop Alnwick, which distanced him from the rest of the convent.

[1416] Here, I consider personality along the lines offered by Julian-Jones, Dennis, and Silvestri. For them, personality is a natural character trait which is, nevertheless, possible to adapt. Persona, on the other hand, is someone's stage presence, which is performed in association with a role, for example a position of authority. Someone's charisma encompasses both their personality and persona. Melissa Julian-Jones, Chris Dennis, and Angelo Silvestri, 'Introduction,' in *Episcopal Power and Personality in Medieval Europe, c.900-c.1480*, eds. Peter Coss, Chris Dennis, and Melissa Julian-Jones (Turnhout, Brepols, 2020), 1-17.

[1417] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16, 18-9, 20.

[1418] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 16. '*et nichil habent in responso nisi opprobria*'.

[1419] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 18. '*et si quis frater suus de hoc conquerantur cum ipsi non ita bene p[ascuntur], improperando dicit quod ita fiet ipsis inuitis.*'

[1420] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 33.
'*dicit quod Bartone est intolerabilis inter fratres et improperat isti pro facture gardini claustri.*'

[1421] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 218.

[1422] Goldberg, 'The Priest of Nottingham,' 65.

Over the six years visible within the visitation records for Bardney Abbey, we can see the development of the relationship Thomas Bartone had with the rest of the convent during a period when tensions evidently peaked. It appears that before 1438 Thomas had tried to construct his own separation from the other brethren through practices reflecting aristocratic living. Thomas collected multiple offices within the abbey, he slept in separate quarters to the brethren, and provided himself with higher quality food. Additionally, he used the abbey's goods to patronise layfolk. In 1438 the brethren used the opportunity provided by the episcopal visitation to demonstrate Thomas' non-belonging through his behaviour. The aim of this would have been to reduce his authority within the cloister and may have led to punishment which would have excluded him from the other brethren, this time through his lack of status. When this failed, the convent encouraged the abbot to expel Thomas on two occasions, risking episcopal censure. On Thomas' enforced return to Bardney, the abbot again physically excluded Thomas from the convent by imprisoning him. At the core of Benedictine monastic life, however, was communal living and the brethren at Bardney were forced to reconcile living with Thomas. The evidence that Thomas was still causing issues into the 1440s, it seems likely that he was never fully re-integrated according to the ideals set out by the Rule.

Social Dynamics Within a Wider Context

At the end of this chapter, I turn to consider how the social tensions, visible within Bardney Abbey during the late 1430s and 1440s, can be placed within a wider local context. Monasteries in this period were very much tied into the local landscape. Historians studying medieval religious houses, especially nunneries, within the British Isles have stressed the interconnected nature of houses with the surrounding landscape and society.[1423] Karen Stöber argues monasteries in Wales were linked inextricably to wider society through relationships with rulers, patrons, business partners, and benefactors.[1424] Janet Burton illustrates how Yorkshire Cistercian nunneries provided pastoral care to the lay population through their appropriated churches.[1425] Clark further reminds us that religious shared socio-spiritual experiences with 'extra-claustral' lay brothers and clerks.[1426] The interactions

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[1423] Karen Stöber, 'Social Networks of Late Medieval Welsh Monasteries,' in *Monasteries and Society*, 11; Tracy Collins, 'Space and Place: Archaeologies of Female Monasticism in Later Medieval Ireland,' in *Gender in Medieval Places, Spaces and Thresholds*, eds. Victoria Blud, Diane Heath and Einat Klafter (London: University of London Press, 2018), 32, 41; Janet Burton, 'The Convent and the Community: Cause Papers as a Source for Monastic History,' in *The Foundations of Medieval Ecclesiastical History: Presented to David Smith*, eds. Philippa Hoskin, Christopher Brooke and Barrie Dobson (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2005), 63-4; Emilia Jamroziak, 'Making and Breaking the Bonds: Yorkshire Cistercians and their Neighbours,' in *Perspectives for an Architecture of Solitude: Essays on Cistercians, Art and Architecture in Honour of Peter Fergusson*, ed. Terryl Kinder (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 63.

[1424] Stöber, 'Social Networks,' 11.

[1425] Burton, 'Convent and Community,' 74

[1426] James G. Clark, 'Why Men Became Monks in Late Medieval England,' in *Religious Men and Masculine Identity in the Middle Ages,* eds. P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 163.

that the brethren at Bardney had with the lay population would have been facilitated through the presence of laity working in the abbey, as well as through trade and management of estates, even if the latter became less direct following the Black Death. Throughout the *detecta* there are references to lay employees of the abbey, for example a baker and a smith.[1427]

Bardney Abbey held parcels of land throughout the region. A study of Lincolnshire testamentary bequests suggests there was still a significant local dimension to the patronage of monasteries at the start of the sixteenth century, before the Dissolution.[1428] On entry to the cloister, religious were meant to sever the ties of their secular lives. Monks usually took another second name, a 'monastic byname', as part of this process.[1429] These bynames were typically toponymic, and within scholarship it is thought that they likely referred to the monks' place of origin.[1430]

Almost all the total nineteen brethren, named in the visitation documents, have bynames which may refer to identifiable places (Table 1). All of these, with the exception of William Yorke, are found in the Diocese of Lincoln (Fig.4).[1431] There are several points of overlap between the bynames of brethren and the land ownership of the abbey. The cartulary for Bardney Abbey, for example, includes charters for lands in Bartone upon Humber, Partney, Anderby, and Hale. Thompson argues that Bartone upon Humber and Great Hale were both 'intimately connected with the monastery'.[1432] The abbey also held a number of churches including at Bardney and Wainfleet.[1433] This pattern suggests a link between the monastery and these localities which influenced where men chose to live as religious. Taking their bynames as an indicator of place of origin, the brethren of Bardney Abbey, then, represented a microcosm of the Lincolnshire diocese with reference to the abbey's landholding.

[1427] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 15.

[1428] Brian Wilfrid Hodgkinson, 'Withering on The Vine: The Connectivity Between The People of Lincolnshire and Their Monastic Houses, 1500 to 1540,' (PhD Thesis, University of Nottingham, 2013), 287.

[1429] David Knowles, *The Religious Orders in England*, vol.2: *The End of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 231; David E. Thornton, 'How Useful are Episcopal Ordination Lists as A Source for Medieval English Monastic History,' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 69, no.3 (2018): 499.

[1430] Knowles, *Religious Orders in England*, 231; Thornton, 'How Useful are Episcopal Ordination Lists,' 499; Harvey, *Living and Dying*, 75-6.

[1431] Lincoln was the biggest diocese in medieval England, stretching south to the Thames Valley, beyond the scope of the map shown in figure 4.

[1432] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 10, n.8.

[1433] Page, *Victoria County History of Lincoln*, 97-104; British Library (BL), Cotton MS. Vespasian E XX.
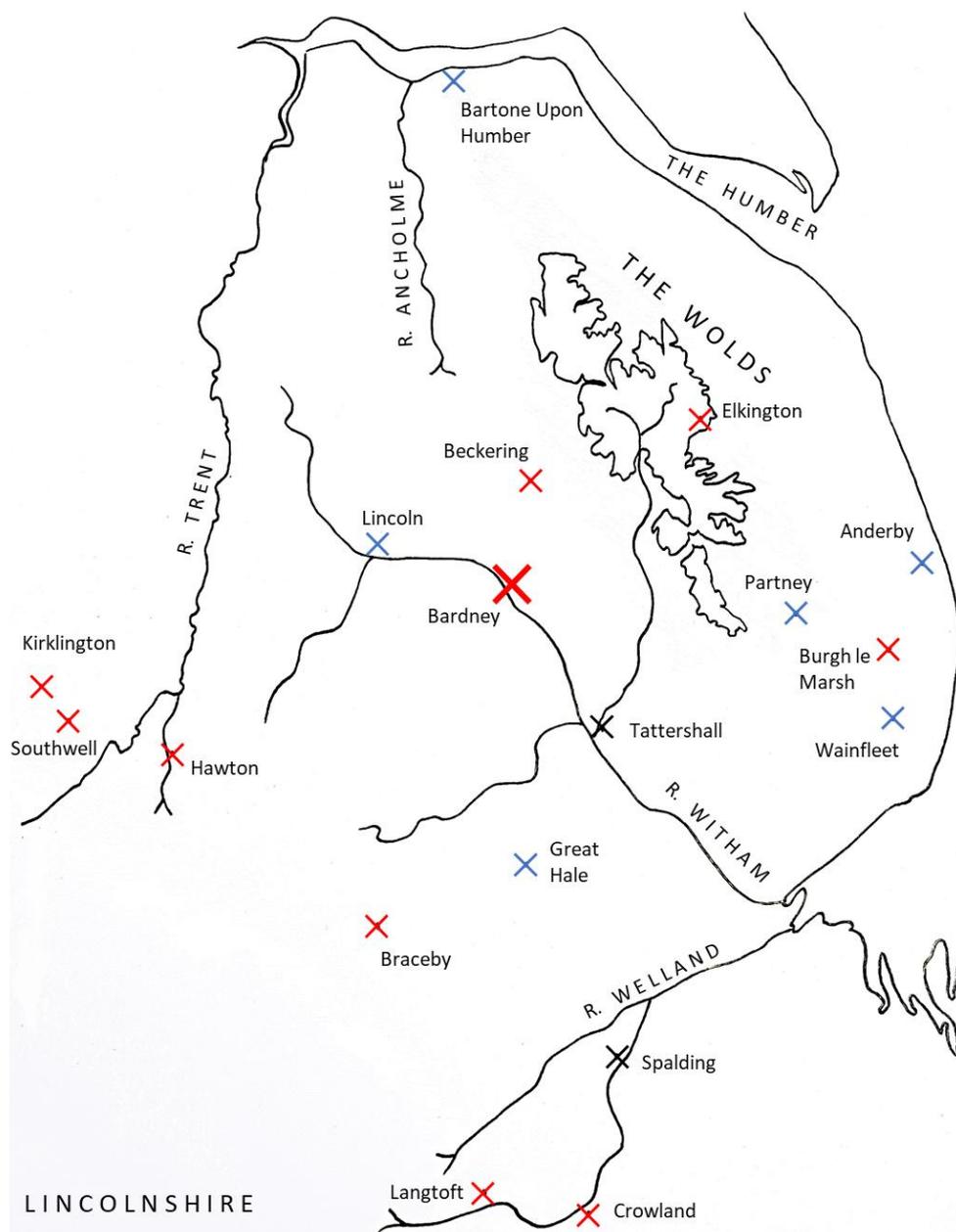
Figure 4: Illustrative map of the Lincolnshire region. Adapted from: Graham Platts, *History of Lincolnshire*, vol. 4: *Land and People in Medieval Lincolnshire* (Lincoln: History of Lincolnshire Committee, 1985), 2, fig.1 and Francis Hill, *Medieval Lincoln* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 406, fig.24.
The red crosses show the locations of the monks' bynames in Lincolnshire, 1430s-1440s. The blue crosses indicate an overlap with locations mentioned in the Bardney Abbey Cartulary: BL, Cotton MS. Vespasian E XX. The black crosses indicate other referenced locations.

We can see, through their *detecta,* how the monks interacted with what Burton terms the 'social fabric' of the surrounding area.[1434] Both in 1438 and 1444 several brethren are described as regularly eating and drinking in Bardney town. It is likely that whilst outside the cloister the monks interacted with the lay population. This is supported by the several accusations of adultery with married women

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[1434] Burton, 'Convent and Community,' 64.

from Bardney found in the visitation records.[1435] Laity also allegedly were invited into the precincts. The 1434 letter to Bishop William Gray, detailing the dilapidation of the parish church at Bardney, described how the parishioners had attended the abbey's church instead of the parish church, out of fear the latter would collapse.[1436] In 1438 the abbot deposed that the monks talked to women during services but also that women frequented the infirmary where 'eating, drinking, and chatting [took place] between the monks and the same women.'[1437] Thomas Bartone was accused of regularly entertaining Graystoke and his wife at the abbey. In this way, the monks at Bardney during the mid-fifteenth century would have had a social connection with the wider locality.

In addition to cultivating ties with the laity living near the abbey and in connection with the abbey's lands elsewhere, the visitation records indicate that the monks at Bardney maintained pre-existing social ties outside the cloister. This was despite the ideals of an enclosed monastic community. During the 1438 visitation, William Yorke requested that 'when the monks' kin [*amici*] come down to visit them' the monks could use the guest house to entertain them.[1438] The record notes the bishop's response that 'provision shall be made concerning this.'[1439] In a similar vein, when Bishop Alnwick visited Bardney in 1440, the preamble notes that brother William Bekeryng was not present because he was visiting his parents (*parentes suum*).[1440] The monks at Bardney evidently still held connections outside the Abbey, within the wider Lincolnshire landscape.

I argue that, considering these external links, the social dynamics present at Bardney during the 1430s and 1440s can be placed within a broader chronological and geographical context. There is a pattern of bynames across the internal conflict recorded for Bardney Abbey during the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries. In addition to the social tensions discussed in this chapter from the 1430s and 1440s, there was internal conflict at Bardney involving the abbacy of Peter Bartone (1267-1280) and Robert de Waynflete (1280-1318). This has already been discussed in detail by Alison McHardy.[1441] The abbey was described as in disarray during Archbishop Robert Kilwardby of Canterbury's visitation in Lincoln during the late 1270s and Abbot Peter Bartone requested via papal petition in c.1278 that the brethren could be dispersed while significant debts were paid off.[1442] During the late 1270s Peter Bartone, who had been removed from office by Bishop Richard Graves of Lincoln, was reinstated by Archbishop

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[1435] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22.

[1436] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, 6.

[1437] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 15.
'v[bi sunt] comesaciones, potaciones ac confabulaciones inter monachos et ipsas mulieres'.

[1438] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22. '*Item petit vt cum amici monachorum ad Ipsos visendos*'. Here I have substituted Thompson's translation of *amici* as 'friends' for kin.

[1439] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 22. '*De hoc prouidebitur.*'

[1440] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 29.

[1441] McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal,' 31-45.

[1442] McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal,' 31; Page, *Victoria County History of Lincoln,* 98.

Robert Kilwardby of Canterbury during his visitation into Lincolnshire. The archbishop also ordered the removal of four monks blamed as troublemakers, including Robert de Waynflete.[1443] After Peter Bartone retired as abbot in 1280, Robert de Waynflete was elected as his successor.

A serious dispute arose during the abbacy of Robert de Waynflete on the assent of the new bishop, John Dalderby (1300-1320), from the beginning of the new century and the abbot was accused of alienating property and causing dilapidation.[1444] The dispute with Bishop Dalderby first comes to light in the records when the bishop described, in a letter to Edward I, how he had deposed Robert from his abbacy on the grounds of mismanagement and vice.[1445] Abbot Robert de Waynflete, however, had powerful connections and the dispute became international, involving appeals to the Papal Curia in addition to the Court of Canterbury and the King. Concurrently there was also discord within the abbey itself. In 1304 Robert de Waynflete named several monks as apostate, viz. Richard de Hainton, John de Lysours, William de Barton, Richard Fotheringhay, and Simon de Hanworth, the last of whom was imprisoned by Robert at Bardney.[1446] Richard de Hainton previously had been excluded from the abbey alongside Robert in the 1270s. The dispute between Bishop Dalderby and Robert de Waynflete was settled only in 1317 when the Crown encouraged the now-ailing bishop to accept Richard's resignation. In what was essentially an out-of-court settlement, the conditions of this resignation included Richard being granted Steeping church and manor, Firsby town, the tithes from Partney and Lusby worth £61 a year, an extensive household, support from the abbey if this income dropped below 100 marks a year, and special new rooms next to the abbey's infirmary.[1447]

Within these disputes, many of the monks and abbots involved held the bynames Waynflete or Bartone. This continued with the tensions discussed here in the 1440s, when it was Abbot John Waynflete who ultimately attempted to remove Thomas Bartone from the abbey. In her discussion of the internal conflict at Bardney Abbey during Robert de Waynflete's abbacy, McHardy suggests the factionalism which occurred may have been influenced by the geographical origins of the monks there. The bynames of two of abbot Robert de Waynflete's allies, John Waynflete and Richard Spalding, were also locations in the south Lincolnshire fenland. McHardy further suggests William de Bartone possibly was connected to Abbot Peter Bartone.[1448] Whilst we cannot suggest that these conflicts continued within the abbey over the hundred and sixty years we see here, it seems likely that they were, at least, remembered. Bishop Gray's injunctions for the abbey make note of the discovery that 'there arose in

[1443] McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal,' 31.
[1444] Page, *Victoria County History of Lincoln*, 98.
[1445] McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal,' 33.
[1446] Logan, *Runaway Religious*, 186.
[1447] McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal,' 43.
[1448] McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal,' 33.

the same monastery many years back certain unruly altercations and disputes, and these were so prolonged and deeply rooted that they could hardly be torn up or weeded out'.[1449] It is difficult to tell what particular social divisions this injunction refers to without the survival of additional *detecta* or injunctions. In part, this evocation may have been used rhetorically to demonstrate such disputes would not be tolerated during his episcopacy. Bishop Gray's commissary was tasked with removing all discord and re-establishing brotherly love. However, due to the extensive chronology and disruption of the conflict surrounding Abbot Robert de Waynflete throughout his appointment, it is possible that Gray's injunction, which would date during his episcopate between 1431 and 1436, referenced this dispute in particular. If this is indeed the case, then it is reasonable to suggest that these divisions would have continued to be remembered a few years later at the time of Bishop Alnwick's visitations.

Building from McHardy's suggestion, it is possible that the pattern of divisions between brethren from Bartone and Waynflete, therefore, was influenced by a sense of localism. Matthew Holford stresses the importance of medieval notions of locality in England which held a sense of obligation, belonging, and loyalty.[1450] Both Bartone upon Humber and Wainflete were seigneurial boroughs which had prospered before the Black Death due to their position along local trade routes.[1451] Bardney Abbey, moreover, held property in both these settlements. Whilst Wainflete was located near the southern fenland, Bartone upon Humber was relatively far north, especially compared to the other settlements represented by bynames amongst the monks at Bardney during the mid-fifteenth century (Fig.4). Graham Platts argues that 'Lincolnshire was not a unified region by the fourteenth century and it is clear that variations in dialect and disparities of wealth north and south of the Witham reflect real differences.'[1452] It is possible that what we see here are glimpses of a broader discourse between monastery and localities around antagonisms which were shaped by a sense of regional identity. If the monks at Bardney, as suggested, maintained connections with the areas they came from, it is possible to suggest that these localities may have helped to maintain oral traditions about the conflicts which monks from those places were involved in.

The fragmented nature of the records may hide other aspects of these disputes beyond simply a geographical influence. The social dynamics at Bardney were likely also shaped by patterns of local

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[1449] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.1, 3.
'in ipso monasterio a pluribus retro annis nonnulle cediciose dissenciones et contenciones orte sunt, et ita continuate et radicate quod vix euelli poterant aut extirpari'.
[1450] Holford, 'Pro patriotis,' 48-9.
[1451] The status of Bartone upon Humber in the area declined during the fifteenth century due to competition from the developing Kingston upon Hull. Similarly, Wainflete saw a more gradual decline through the rise of Boston. Warwick Rodwell and Caroline Atkins, *St Peter's, Barton-Upon-Humber, Lincolnshire: A Parish Church and its Community*, vol.1 (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2011), 5-6; Platts, *History of Lincolnshire*, 185-299.
[1452] Platts, *History of Lincolnshire*, 293.

landholding and patronage. It is possible that we see a glimpse of this in the hostility recorded between Thomas Bartone and Richard Parteney. In 1438 Richard complained that Thomas had defamed him for breaking open a chest in the sacrist's office and taking goods.[1453] In 1439 Abbot John Waynflete stated that Richard may have broken into Thomas' infirmary chamber, although he denied this.[1454] One of the conditions of Robert de Waynflete's resignation as abbot in 1318 was the tithes for Partney and Lusby.[1455] Without overshadowing the importance of individual character in these disputes, which were no doubt magnified within a small, confined group of brethren, we could entertain the possibility that the conflict between Richard Parteney and Thomas Bartone within the monastery reveals factionalism based on regional dynamics and a sense of localism found outside the abbey.

The case-study of Bardney Abbey provides us with an opportunity to study how social ties, in this case which were experienced by the monks there, existed beyond static moments visible to us in the narrative sources studied within this thesis. Despite the Benedictine ideals of communal harmony and seclusion from the secular world, it is evident the monks experienced a range of social ties and dynamics both inside and outside the cloister and which were not confined solely to male homosociality. The examination of Bardney Abbey has shown how social relationships might change in nature over a period of years. The 1430s and 1440s at Bardney represents a period where the relationships between Thomas Bartone and the rest of the brethren escalated and the ties between a sub-group of monks, previously visible through practices of sociability, took on a politicised element. Moreover, the belonging or non-belonging of an individual was performative; formed through a constant process of negotiation. During this time the monks at Bardney worked to exclude Thomas Bartone as an active, participating member of the cloister using a variety of approaches including physically expelling him from the abbey. While Thomas in 1438 had held multiple positions of office in the abbey and allegedly even controlled the abbot, by 1444 he had lost all tangible authority amongst the brethren. Furthermore, through the evidence which survives for the abbey, we can situate individual relationships the monks experienced within the broader historic dynamics of the abbey. These relationships can be further contextualised through possible wider regional identities, which incorporated the social memory of the abbey and its past disputes.

[1453] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 20.
[1454] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 27.
[1455] McHardy, 'The Great Bardney Abbey Scandal,' 43.

Conclusion

At the end of this thesis, I want to reflect back on the story of Joan le Schirreve's miraculous recovery from drowning. It was this particular miracle narrative which prompted me to think about the questions raised in this research. The testimonies collected for the canonisation of Thomas Cantilupe were chosen to demonstrate the sanctity of the late bishop. In passing they also detail a myriad of different social interactions and relationships between the inhabitants of the parish of Marden, near Hereford, more broadly. The men who initially found Joan's body in the pond were taking part in a dance, together with other young people, whilst her parents chatted over ale with their neighbours. Before she fell into the pond, Joan and several other small children played together in the garden by the alehouse. It was Joan Wase, as the little girl's godmother, who felt compelled to retrieve her from the pond at her own personal risk. All those present at the alehouse provided Joan's parents with practical support and spiritual succour. Yet when Joan originally was mistaken as the child of Christina, a known poor woman, no attempt was made to recover her body from the pond. These testimonies only provide a snapshot of the interactions and relationships within the parish. Yet they also allude to a more everyday village life and raise the question of how the residents of Marden negotiated the various relationships between them.

Through narrative sources, including miracle narratives and court records, this thesis has sought to understand the social experiences of ordinary people in later medieval England. In line with this, the thesis posed two broad research questions. The first question asked how people interacted socially outside institutions such as civic bodies, and organised groups such as craft guilds and religious fraternities. This question developed out of the realisation that a large part of social history for the period focuses only on relationships which fall into these more definable groupings. The second question asks how people conceptualised relationships described using the modern 'neighbour' in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century England. Relationships between neighbours were important and are quotidian ties which hitherto have not seen direct and holistic study for later medieval England.[1456]

I began my research by addressing how best to understand and approach the study of everyday, mundane social relationships in later medieval England. There are two pitfalls which I wanted to avoid in this work surrounding the use of 'community', a term which is both ambiguous and amorphous. The first is the continuing use of this term to describe almost any social grouping. The second was the danger in imposing artificial categories through 'community' onto the relationships visible between medieval people. Within the thesis I focused on social interactions and how they helped to construct

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[1456] McDonough, 'Being a Neighbor,' 1.

and maintain social groupings. This approach helped to overcome these issues by avoiding the creation of an artificial starting point. My understanding of these interactions is informed by the concept of performativity. Social constructs, such as gender, or in this case relationships and connections, are created through the accumulation of repeated social interactions. These acts are collective and reference cultural norms. Whilst individual interactions provide us with only a snapshot of people's social ties and experiences, it is only through repeated interactions that social relationships are made or unmade.

The concept of sociability offers us direction for the study of social interactions amongst ordinary people. Sociability can be understood as intentional or unintentional practices of social interaction, for example the exchange of news whilst passing in the street or participation in shared leisure activities. A picture of sociability in later medieval England can be built up through the study of individual encounters, looking at when and where they took place as well as the cultural expectations surrounding them. By observing repeated moments of social interaction within the source material, we can begin to discern larger patterns of sociability in later medieval England. We find, for example, people playing board games in drinking houses, spectating or engaging in sports, or eating together. These activities reflect intentional practices of sociability but people also interacted through incidental encounters, such as meeting in the street or whilst attending church.

How people engaged with others was influenced by social norms around gender, status, age, and so on. Historical scholarship has pointed to the significance of women's networks during the Middle Ages.[1457] For McIntosh, the informal networks between women were vital in building social capital where they may not have had access to more formal organisations or institutions.[1458] Anecdotal evidence within the sources used in this thesis affirms this view, suggesting the importance of socialising among women in later medieval England in a variety of settings. Descriptions given by deponents intimate that before Agnes Popilton was defamed she had undertaken business and socialised with her neighbours. The significant engagement of women in trading activities makes it conceivable that the deponents were referring to a group of female neighbours.[1459] It is possible that sociability for women may often have occurred simultaneously with work activities, yet we also find women socialising in drinking establishments. When Maud was killed by a stray arrow at Goldington, it was likely that she was spectating the archery practice taking place on the green. As this case

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[1457] Farmer, *Surviving Poverty*, 136-64; Olson, 'Women's Place and Women's Space,' 209-25 Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle*, 300, 305-323; French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 119, 142, 149, 155; McIntosh, 'The Diversity of Social Capital,' 468-9.

[1458] McIntosh, 'The Diversity of Social Capital,' 468.

[1459] Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street,' 101; Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* 333-6; Gowing, '"Freedom in the Streets",' 138, 141.

suggests, women would have been present at other sporting events or games. These instances represent an incomplete view of women's social landscapes which they experienced day-to-day.

Within the sources, moreover, practices of male homosociality appear particularly prevalent. Young men appear throughout the period to have been associated with active leisure pursuits such as wrestling, football, and board games.[1460] In 1301, for example, Peter de Huntingdon broke his leg whilst he and Andrew Prille had been drinking and wrestling at the house of Walter Vigerous.[1461] Such depictions of men socialising together likely reflect cultural norms but also may, in part, be an optical illusion created by the male-centric nature of much of the documentation. Groups of men and women, other than close family, eating and talking together are noticed too in the records throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Thomas Dod, testifying in a 1491 defamation case, deposed that he had gone to the house of John Patryk to drink with John and his wife, another couple, and an unnamed widow.[1462]

In other contexts, it appears that factors such as age and status were greater influences on what sort of social activity people engaged in and with whom. Adam le Schirreve's account of socialising in the village alehouse indicates that sociability was arranged more around age than gender or even status. Whilst the young people (*iuniores*) took part in the dance, the older patrons of the alehouse (*prouecti et senes*) remained inside drinking and chatting. On the other hand, the five-year-old Joan of Marden took part in play with other children outside, separate from their parents and the young dancers. There remains the question to what extent the patterns of sociability found in the Marden example are particular to its rural setting. This question merits additional research, beyond the scope of this thesis. I have already argued that sociability was shaped by gender, status, locality. Comparing rural and urban evidence would provide additional insight into the nature of later medieval sociability.

The period studied in this thesis, spanning the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, moreover, is one which saw significant social change in England. The arrival of the plague in 1348 led to the death of what is thought to be up to one half of the population in England. The following century saw periods of economic uncertainty and reoccurring plague outbreaks but also a general rise in living standards. We cannot assume, therefore, that practices of, and cultural norms around, sociability would remain static. Indeed, as shown in chapter one many of those moving into towns and cities in the decades following the Black Death would have faced the risk of social isolation without access to established networks. Scholars have noted how joining fraternities or guilds would have helped to alleviate

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[1460] Goldberg, 'Desperately Seeking,' 125; Goldberg and Martin, 'Work and Leisure,' 174.

[1461] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/001, № 21.

[1462] Woode c. Patryk in McSheffrey, *Consistory*.

this.[1463] Simultaneously, however, the independence that migration brought would have allowed young men and women the freedom to socialise in less formal settings too and engage in courtship away from the influence of their families.

In the aftermath of the Black Death, sociability such as this which the ordinary population engaged in was perceived increasingly negatively by local and governing elites. Labourers and servants playing games and sports became a source of elite post-plague anxiety around idleness and the wasting of resources through gambling. A similar concern with practices of sociability is visible towards the end of the fifteenth century, following the mid-century recession and a rise in social conservatism. Legislation banning servants from playing certain games, implemented in the years after 1348, were repeated in the 1480s and 1490s. This was accompanied by the characterisation of alehouses, which accommodated lower-status patrons, as sites of disruptive and disorderly sociability within moralising discourse. Furthermore, by-laws and presentments were implemented in an attempt to restrict behaviour in alehouses.

In contrast, the rising living standards across the period enabled the wealthier urban bourgeoisie to improve the comfort of their home as a place to engage in commensality and networking. Likewise, taverns were considered respectable places for mercantile and wealthier artisanal households to frequent. This respectability was bolstered with the use of taverns by the end of the fifteenth century to complete legal and financial transactions. Moreover, as McSheffrey has shown, taverns functioned as socially acceptable sites for couples of a more modest social status to exchange marriage vows.[1464] The social conservatism of the later fifteenth century may also have led to homosociality becoming a more prominent cultural norm. This would align with patterns of gender segregation elsewhere such as in the employment of servants, and participation in single-sex parish groups.[1465]

While sociability can help us to think about the various ties that connected medieval people with those around them, I have used the concept of belonging to approach the boundaries of these connections and the relationships they create. It is often moments of conflict or tension which result in these relationships being recorded. These were encounters where the inclusion or exclusion of an individual was negotiated. The insults directed at Elena Hellbole when she tried to defend Alice le Quernbetere caused her to invoke the help of her tenants who chose to support her in their attempt to avenge her. In this way, I have considered belonging as a connection of an individual with a social collectivity; one

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[1463] Rosser, 'Solidarités et Changement Social,' 1129; Rosser, 'Crafts, Guilds and the Negotiation of Work,' 9; Rosser, *The Art of Solidarity*, 114; Colson, 'Alien Communities and Alien Fraternities,' 111-43; Rees Jones, 'English Towns in the Later Middle Ages,' 285.
[1464] McSheffrey, 'Place, Space, and Situation,' 982-4.
[1465] Goldberg, 'What Was a Servant?' 18-20; French, *The Good Women of the Parish*, 118-156.

which is fostered through action. Belonging was not an absolute but could be conditional or by degree. William Paris was adopted into the life of the parish by a circle of those most active in the life of the parish of St Mary at Hill, London, through his participation in Easter festivities. However, this inclusion was always in his capacity as the parish's resident poor man. The varied tasks that William was employed to perform, such as sweeping and cleaning the church, served to construct his belonging. Simultaneously, the very nature of these tasks prevented his belonging from extending to the wealthier parishioners and churchwardens who chose to support him.

An individual would have been tied to many different social groupings and relationships throughout their lives. The marriage suit Wistow c. Cooper illustrates how these ties might serve to create a sense of belonging and how these connections could be felt simultaneously. Various depositions make reference to relationships that Elena had with family, spiritual kin, male peers, and female residents. Furthermore, there would have existed several overlapping connections within one relationship. The associations visible between Gilbert de Mordone and the four nearest neighbours attached to the case, on the death of Walter de Benigtone, in the London coroners' rolls provides a good example of this.[1466] Gilbert de Mordone could relate to the men recorded in the jurors' verdict variously as neighbours, fellow stockfishmongers, parishioners, kinsmen, men with civic responsibilities, and possibly as fictive kin through a network of guardianship. When Benedict de Warde and others came to the aid of Gilbert de Mordone's household, to help pacify the conflict with Walter de Benigtone, it was as neighbours. On different occasions Benedict may have interacted with these men as fellow parishioners or as a patron to the brewhouse.

I argue that the connectivity between people who interacted within a locality on a regular basis was built up through the development of belonging and associations on numbers of different levels. In this way, we can see how the relationships that Gilbert had with his neighbours was shaped and strengthened by their institutional ties as fellow stockfishmongers. The example of Gilbert de Mordone provides a very male-orientated set of interconnecting relationships. These associations would have overlapped and would in some cases be impossible to disentangle. The collection of evidence of ties between non-elite women suggests how these relationships could be mutually reaffirming too. Both Alice le Quernbetere and Elena Cooper drew on their relationships with other women to help them. Alice, turned to her landlady to defend her against the assaults of workmen, whereas Elena entreated Alice Kant to help arrange her marriage contract with John Wistow. We cannot know, for instance, in what capacity Elena Hellbole came to Alice le Quernbetere's aid, as her landlady, or companion, or even as her neighbour.

[1466] LMA, CLA/041/IQ/01/004, № 24.

It is also important to note that, as the supportive relationship between Elena Cooper and Robert Santon illustrates, we should not fall into the trap of always assuming social relationships fell along the lines of gender. Like patterns of sociability, there is a gap between cultural norms and everyday practice. What is clear from the sources studied here is that individual social interactions must be understood contextually and that a particular connection or set of connections may shape the nature of any given encounter. It is the constant repetition of these encounters which served to build up relationships and a sense of belonging. This research thus helps to put into perspective patterns of social interaction studied elsewhere. Understanding informal connections, can help to throw new light on those which took place in more formalised settings. Ties between members of a fraternity, for example, would have been coloured by the interactions and connections between members which existed in a different capacity.

One of the issues encountered in this study of sociability and belonging is that much of the available source material provides us not with a dynamic picture of multiple encounters, but only snapshot views of moments in time. This is usually in the context of dispute or crisis as when an alleged marriage is contested, a dispute results in fatality, or an accident results in the need for miraculous intervention. A key aspect to the concept of performativity is that it is through the repetition of acts that the social entity in question is shaped. The moments used here are still valuable windows, but we need to recognise the volume of what is not shown in the surviving source material. It is clear that Elena Cooper and Robert Santon had a close relationship, for example.[1467] We have no recorded detail, however, about how this relationship was constructed through repeated interactions, since we only see it at a single moment in time. Chapter five addresses this problem. The unusually full visitation records for Bardney Abbey in Lincolnshire provide insight into the practices of sociability and belonging within an enclosed, artificial collectivity which is situated within the geographical and temporal scope of this thesis. The sequence of these records, which span almost a decade, provides a rare source for the study of the dynamic nature of these social practices.

It is difficult to generalise about medieval social relations from this monastic study. We should remember, however, that the religious at Bardney were socialised within later medieval lay society, only joining the monastic life as young adults. As chapter five demonstrated, moreover, these religious patently were still active in their engagement with the laity. The monks frequently visited local taverns, talked to women during services, and even invited them to eat and drink in the abbey. As noted in the records for the 1440 visitation, William Bekeryng was absent because he was visiting his parents.[1468]

[1467] BIA, CP.F.280.
[1468] Thompson, *Visitations,* vol.2, 29.

Outside of what is visible in the *detecta*, the monks would have engaged with lay servants and those employed by the monastery. Obedientiaries, furthermore, would have been in contact with the abbey's tenants and lay officials. In this way, there are some resonances visible in the social practices recorded in the *detecta* for Bardney Abbey with what has been studied in the rest of this thesis. How the monks socialised together, playing games, drinking, and frequenting taverns, reflects lay practices of male sociability. The social ostracising of Thomas Bartone, performed by members of the convent, was very particular to their monastic context, namely Thomas' physical expulsion from the abbey and later imprisonment. Ostracising or distancing, as a method of non-belonging, nevertheless, is employed too within the case studies examined in the rest of the thesis. When Agnes Popilton was defamed by Emma Lylle in 1422, her deponents reported that 'Agnes' neighbours [*vicini*] refused to talk with, sell to, and buy from the same Agnes as they used to.'[1469]

The similarities which can be drawn between the sociability and belonging evident at Bardney Abbey and within a secular context is limited. Yet the value of this monastic study is in prompting us to think about the performativity of medieval social practices, and therefore how we understand social experiences. We can trace how both the nature of the social groupings that existed between monks changed and how the monks' attempts at ostracism escalated over time. The *detecta* for Bardney Abbey begin to make visible the informal connections, and tensions, that might fluctuate and endure beyond the snapshot moments we are permitted to see in other source material. While the details of the relationship between Robert and Elena remain unclear to us, it is important to recognise that, like the sociability of the monks at Bardney, their relationship would have built up and been reinforced through regular interactions and shared sociability.

Having established a framework for engaging with informal relationships between people in later medieval England, the second overlapping strand of this thesis explores neighbours and neighbourliness as a more specific category of social connection. I employed a lexicographical examination of the Latin and Middle English words akin to the modern 'neighbour', a methodology pioneered by Shultz. This enabled me to study the underlying associations and resonances which accompanied the terms and, therefore, unpack the cultural meanings around this relationship.

An analysis of the terms used in medieval Latin writing identifies a distinction between the nouns *proximus* and *vicinus*. *Proximus* adj. is used in a variety of ways which give a sense of closeness or immediacy. This adjective could denote something close in space, condition, time, or even kinship. *Proximus* is used throughout the Vulgate Bible and, as a noun denoting 'neighbour', is found almost

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[1469] BIA, CP.F.153. '*quandam vicini ipsus Agnetes cum ipsa Agnete recusant communicare vendere et Emere ut solebant*'. English translation from: Goldberg, *Women in England*, 230.

exclusively in devotional or theological texts. In response to the question '*quis est proximus meus* [who is my neighbour]?', Christ relates the parable of the Good Samaritan. The noun p*roximus* then is used in devotional discourse to signify one's fellows to whom it is a Christian duty to show love and charity. The resonances found with the use of *vicinus* are much more spatially focused and when used nominally, *vicinus* describes a neighbour in the sense of someone living nearby. The illustrative examples which use *vicinus* n. in this way are taken from predominantly legal or administrative material. In a legal context, the noun *vicinus* was used too as a term for a juror, due to the role's requirement for men drawn from the locality of the case in question. The relative closeness in this application was quite flexible.

In Latin, therefore, the two primary words for neighbour, *proximus* n. and *vicinus* n., referred to the two primary meanings of neighbour in the modern sense, as the recipient of love and charity and as someone who lives nearby, respectively. By the later Middle Ages, however, the noun *proximus* appears to have been displaced by *vicinus* in this usage, as sources for *proximus* n. in the DMLBS are not found after the thirteenth century. The Wycliffite Bible, dating to c.1380s, renders *proximus* as the Middle English 'neighebor', the same word used to translate *vicinus*. By subsuming the Gospel understanding of 'neighbour' under the noun *vicinus*, with its connection to spatial proximity, the scriptural meaning inevitably came to carry resonances of locality. An examination of the illustrative quotations for 'neighebor' n. in the MED demonstrates that this term was applied to both meanings under the modern sense of the word. The dual application of 'neighebor' leads to instances where these were conflated. The passage, 'sith [if] þou art neghtbur myne, I wil my nedis do and thyne' from *King Edward and the Shepard* demonstrates an evocation of scriptural notions of neighbourliness which is simultaneously understood in terms of spatial proximity.[1470]

Chapters two and three, used the findings from this lexicographical study to inform my reading of how the two primary notions of neighbour were understood and practiced amongst the ordinary population in later medieval England. Chapter two revealed how Gospel notions of neighbour were enacted through the provision of both charity and practical and spiritual support during times of crisis. The neighbours of Cecilia and Adam made attempts to revive their daughter Joan when she had drowned. They offered advice when they believed Cecilia's health to be at risk, and they provided spiritual succour both during the crisis and afterwards, in celebration of Joan's miraculous recovery. Maud Katersouth's neighbours supplied her with necessities and ad hoc employment as a form of charity to help support Maud and her son Robert. Although these examples evoked scriptural understandings of neighbour, and the records were from an ecclesiastical context, *vicinus* n. was used.

[1470] MED, neighebor, n. 1a. Furrow, 'King Edward and the Shepherd, 150.

Moreover, those who demonstrated neighbourliness in a Gospel sense, were simultaneously identified as people who lived in relative proximity.

Chapter three explored further how relationships between neighbours, as nearby residents, were understood in the context of later medieval London. Here, I understood neighbourhoods as social, as well as physical, spaces which were constructed through the interactions and relationships between neighbours. Within the understanding of neighbours as nearby residents, due to their proximity, there was an assumption that they would have access to social knowledge. In terms of residents within a neighbourhood, this included present and past information about the people and places within the area. Examples in the Assize of Nuisance rolls show how local men were asked to provide information on building history and past ownership of properties in disputes. Neighbours who lived in more immediate proximity were expected to be more directly informed about the people living around them, based off the premise that they would be able to see and hear aspects of the lives of their neighbours.

There was, additionally an expectation that neighbours would contribute to the maintenance of a locality for the safety of residents. The explanation that parishioners of All Hallows, Gracechurch, London, gave to the Assize of Nuisance for blocking a side street speaks to this concern. They argued that they sought to protect local inhabitants from being attacked there at night. For those with adjoining properties, this meant and obligation to ensure their building work, and associated rainwater, effluence, and noise etc., was not to impinge upon nor endanger the neighbours surrounding them. These neighbourly expectations apply especially to the urban environment of later medieval London. Before the Black Death, London was densely inhabited. After 1348, the population density was reduced significantly, however, this was followed by a period of building expansion and repair to cater for a rise in living standards amongst property owners and for migrants travelling to London. The pre-plague density of adjoining residents, and the post-plague increase in building works, would have led to disputes between neighbours around encroaching or problematic property, shaping how appropriate neighbourly behaviour was understood. Further, comparative research would be valuable in identifying to what extent this understanding of neighbourly behaviour applied in other contexts too. The precautions made by the parishioners of All Hallows, Gracechurch are echoed in a bylaw from Great Horwood, Buckinghamshire, from 1319 which states that residents 'shall have openings of all their tenements towards the fields in such a state of repair that wrongdoers cannot enter a field in any part of town except by the king's highways or the common roads.'[1471]

[1471] '*Et quod unuscumque ipsorum reparare faciat omnes aperturas omnium tenementium suorum versus campos ita quod malefactors in campo alicubi ville intraracionem possunt nisi per regias et communes vias.*'

How these expectations were practiced was coloured by the intersection of other relationships and social dynamics. As we saw with the example involving Gilbert of Mordone, interlocking social ties would have reinforced the relationships between the men identified as neighbours and likely compounded their sense of obligation to help ensure the safety of residents. Practices of neighbourliness were also complicated by tenant-landlord relationships. Tenants in London did not have legal recourse to address unneighbourly behaviour and, therefore, had to rely on their landlords. It is likely that the tenants in the complaint brought against William de Coloygne put pressure on John Pecche as their landlord to hold William to account. We see, therefore, how expectations within tenant-landlord and neighbourly relationships, regarding the maintenance of property as well as good lordship and protecting the welfare of residents, could intersect. The complaints brought against William, moreover, indicate that there were similarities in expectations held of neighbours by tenants, who were often of modest socio-economic status, and wealthier property owners. Like freeholders who brought complaints to the Assize, John's tenants were concerned with those living next door depositing hazardous domestic waste on the property as well as their ability to observe them and their intimacies (*secreta*).

Chapter four demonstrated how relationships between neighbours were bounded, where individuals could be included and excluded by their neighbours. This process, too, was influenced by power dynamics related to gender and status. Throughout the thesis we see examples of middling status men taking key roles in negotiating the 'belonging' of others within a locality. The inquest jurors on the death of Walter de Elmeleye used their verdict to demonstrate how Walter and his companions fell outside respectable society in Cripplegate Ward. The male deponents in the marriage separation suit Newport c. Newport socially excluded Isabel Newport whilst constructing a degree of belonging for her husband William. Three deponents, who were neighbours, refused to help Isabel take goods from her home without William's permission. Isabel's behaviour undermined her husband's authority and control of his household. Thus, this refusal enacted their solidarity with William as a male householder. The regulation of residents by men in positions of local authority has been identified too by other scholars of the later medieval period.[1472] McSheffrey argues that in fifteenth-century London patriarchal masculinity shaped the governance of social and sexual relationships within the household as well as extending to those who lived nearby.[1473] I argue this aspect of masculinity was intertwined with how neighbourliness was understood for these substantial male householders during this period.

Ault, *Open-Field Husbandry and the Village Community*, 59. English translation from: Ault, *Open-Field Farming,* 89.

[1472] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehaviour*, 7-8, 13, 17; Goldberg, 'Cherrylips,' 31.

[1473] McSheffrey, 'Men and Masculinity,' 266.

Where recorded, we also see women active in the construction of neighbourly belonging. Women as neighbours provide charity and support, such as those who provided ad hoc employment to Maud Katersouth. Scholars have elsewhere emphasised the importance of women in the formation of 'community' or as brokers of reputation.[1474] In the London Assize of Nuisance rolls, women appear as plaintiffs in complaints. Christine Tylly, together with Henry de Dencombe, brought a complaint against Nicholas de Perndon for the nuisance caused by his obstructed drain. From the wording of the complaint it appears that Christine and Henry came separately as owners of properties adjoining that of Nicholas. Here, Christine places herself as a neighbour of Nicholas to demonstrate how he failed to live up to his obligations implicit in this relationship. My findings here align with the view that women were active in negotiating the relationships they encountered on a daily basis in their neighbourhood, even if this is something which is less visible in the source material. Usually, women litigants making nuisance complaints appear alongside husbands, or as widows. Isabel, the widow of John le Luter, for instance, made a series of complaints to hold those living adjacent to the properties she owned in several parishes to account for what she considered unneighbourly behaviour against her tenants. This indicates marital status and position as householder may have been more influential than gender in participation in policing neighbourly behaviour and belonging.

The source material studied for this thesis also makes visible how gender affected the thresholds of neighbourly belonging. The coroner's jurors for the death of Walter de Elmeleye cultivated the non-belonging of Alice le Quernbetere and Elena Hellebole within respectable society through comic descriptions of how they did not live up to norms for women's behaviour in public. According to their verdict, Agnes was drunk and abusive and Elena incited violence. In the marital separation suit, Newport c. Newport, the belonging constructed for William Newport by his male deponents was mediated by his failure to fulfil the cultural expectations around male householders and neighbourliness. He was unable to sufficiently govern his household, and this disrupted those living near him. His belonging as a neighbour, therefore, was by degree. A gendered distinction to how the position of individuals amongst their neighbours was negotiated is additionally visible when we compare the situations of Maud Katersouth and William Paris. The descriptions, given by male deponents, of Maud's receipt of work and provisions from neighbours portray this support negatively. According to Robert de Harwod, Maud obtained food from her neighbours, who were likely women,

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[1474] Olson, 'Women's Place and Women's Space,' 211, 215; Gowing, *Domestic Dangers*, 123; Bardsley, *Venomous Tongues*, 11, 75, 77; Kane, *Popular Memory and Gender*, 22, 218, 229, 242. In a medieval French context: McDonough, *Witnesses, Neighbours, and Community*, 2.

using 'flattering words'.[1475] The jobs given to William Paris, in contrast, were given legitimacy through their organisation by churchwardens.

Within this thesis, I worked to establish a sense of how the cultural expectations associated with being a neighbour changed over time. Social constructions, formed through repeated social interactions, are subject to change. As Butler explains, the repetitive acts which shape gender, or in this case the relationships between neighbours, are 'renewed, revised, and consolidated through time.'[1476] As these acts can never be replicated perfectly, the construction of neighbourliness is liable to change. We cannot assume, therefore, that medieval understandings and norms around relationships between neighbours remained static throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The use of *vicinus* n. to denote both applications of neighbour by the later medieval period reflects, and to some extent may have influenced, the increased overlap in these meanings. This trend was reinforced by the use of the Middle English 'neighebor' n. for both meanings too. Although 'neighebor' is found throughout the Middle Ages, the term and its cognates became more widespread from the mid-fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Christ's use of the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Vulgate Bible was to emphasise the universal identity of neighbour, as the recipient of love and charity. By the end of the period studied here, however, devotional understandings of neighbour came to be spatially constrained and to focus on those in a specific locality.

Shifts in the understanding of what it is to be a neighbour are most visible in the long-term changes in practices of charity. After the first half of the thirteenth century, there was a gradual shift in practice away from the foundation and patronage of large institutions, such as monasteries and hospitals, which catered for strangers, pilgrims, and itinerant poor.[1477] Instead, from the mid-fourteenth century onwards, those providing charity, often of middling status, turned towards localised provision for almshouses or for identified poor persons. Changes to charitable practices were interconnected with concerns about idle poor and wandering strangers. These fears peaked amongst the bourgeoisie immediately following the Black Death, a period which saw a spike in demand for workers, and again towards the end of the fifteenth century, as there was a downturn in the economy at the same time as the beginnings of population growth.[1478] These attitudes are present in the way the churchwardens of St Mary at Hill provided ad hoc jobs for William Paris, a poor parishioner. As I argued in chapter four, William was known and trusted in the parish. By employing him in this way, the churchwardens worked to demonstrate their piety and provision of charity to the (deserving) poor. Providing for one's

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[1475] BIA, CP.E.82.
[1476] Butler, 'Performative Acts,' 274.
[1477] For a discussion on this see chapter two.
[1478] Goldberg, 'Introduction,' 5; Keen, *England in the Later Middle Ages,* 139. Britnell, 'English Agricultural Output and Prices,' 35.

neighbour, in the Gospel sense, became providing for neighbours in the sense of those who lived locally.

There are further changes to expectations held within relationships between neighbours, in the sense of those living nearby, visible in complaints made under the Assize of Nuisance in London. Rees Jones observes the application of a language of neighbourliness in civic regulation in later fifteenth century London.[1479] Building on this work, I show in chapter three how such obligations surrounded relationships with neighbours from an earlier date. Nuisance complaints indicate that householders were expected to help maintain the physical environment in the locality and ensure the safety of other inhabitants. The language of neighbourliness was evoked by both plaintiffs and civic officials in the Assize of Nuisance from the first half of the fourteenth century to demonstrate the severity of a nuisance or justify orders for its removal. Like Rees Jones, Rawcliffe has demonstrated a growing concern with sanitation and safety within civic governance following the Black Death and into the fifteenth century.[1480] It is possible to see a connection between this rise in attempts to regulate against disruptive and repulsive nuisances, and observations that substantial householders sought to regulate the moral behaviours of neighbours. Concern with giving charity to those who were known and considered deserving, paired with anxieties over moral and physical contamination, may have led householders to attempt to reconstitute the neighbourly belonging in their locality.

The unique position of neighbours as people who lived in the immediate vicinity of each other meant that they were well placed to be informed about many aspects of their lives and characters. This expectation was reinforced by its quasi-legal application in various courts, where neighbours were connected to the production of social knowledge. Examples from church court depositions include accounts of neighbours hearing marriage contracts or defamatory speech through windows and walls, as well as witnessing illicit sexual encounters. These situations were used as legal strategies to fulfil the requirement for witnesses to the alleged contract or defamation. That does not mean, however, that they did not represent plausible realities. The norms around neighbours being informed may have fed into moves by more substantial householders to regulate those living around them. Yet, at least in London, this also existed in tension with what was considered appropriate for neighbours to have access to. From the 1340s there is an apparent shift in the language used for these nuisances with the introduction of the term *secreta* to detail the alleged damage that overlooking windows from neighbouring properties caused. This may represent a shift in what the nuisance constituted, from a tangible issue to a more abstract concern with being watched.

[1479] Rees Jones, 'The Word on the Street,' 107.
[1480] For example: Rawcliffe, *Urban Bodies*, 8.

By the end of the fifteenth century, English society appears to have become more socially conservative and hierarchical with a growing concern over social behaviour, reputation, and deference.[1481] The policing of sexual relationships by civic and ecclesiastical authorities was something found especially in later fifteenth century London, as identified by McSheffrey.[1482] What neighbours knew about the daily lives of individuals was significant, therefore, and concerns about being overlooked or overheard appear to have become even more acute. When Alice Parker first refused Robert Tenwinter's attempts to stay the night in 1488, her reasoning betrayed a fear that her neighbours, who were butchers, would find out. Historians have traced what is described often as an increasing desire for privacy in the later fifteenth century.[1483] This pattern can be read as a move towards a form of social distancing on the part of people from slightly more substantial backgrounds from their neighbours.

Throughout this thesis I have tried to make sense of the complexities of the quotidian social landscape experienced by ordinary people in later medieval England. Sociability and belonging were negotiated continuously through everyday, mundane interactions. Thinking about informal social connections, or antagonisms, in this way can help us to appreciate the different ties people had with others outside of institutional or more easily definable connections. Moreover, an appreciation of the performative aspects to these relationships can help us to recognise changes to the way they were configured and understood over time. This is exemplified by the study of neighbours. The social and cultural expectations and norms around relationships with neighbours were impacted by the advent of increasingly conservative and hierarchical social values over the fifteenth century. Who were considered neighbours, as recipients of charity and support, became more narrowly defined to those living locally. This was in part a product of bourgeois anxieties around strangers and the 'idle poor'. With increased emphasis on *fama* and reputation, the physical proximity of neighbours created tensions over what aspects of life it was acceptable for them to have access to. This was particularly true with the growing trend throughout the period studied in this thesis towards keeping intimate aspects of daily life unobserved.

This thesis has privileged the use of legal and narrative materials for the study of informal social connections and relationships with neighbours. My use of the miracle testimony relating to Joan le Schirreve and the church court case Wistow c. Cooper has demonstrated the rich potential of rural evidence. Nevertheless, though I have tried to maintain a broad scope, there is an urban, and indeed metropolitan, emphasis to the sources I have used in this thesis. Further research privileging rural

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[1481] Goldberg, *Women, Work, and Life Cycle,* 201; Coss, 'An Age of Deference,' 75; Crane, *The Performance of Self*, 11; McIntosh, 'Local Change and Community Control,' 222, 230-2.

[1482] McSheffrey, *Marriage, Sex, and Civic Culture*, 191.

[1483] French, *Household Goods and Good Households,* 6, 16, 75; Goldberg, 'The Fashioning of Bourgeois Domesticity,' 136; Rees Jones, 'Public and Private Space,' 252; Goldberg, 'Voyeurism and 'Pornography',' 114.

source material, such as manor court rolls or rural exempla of the source types used in my thesis, would serve to test the wider applicability of both my methodology and findings. Studies that use alternative source materials would add to the work done here. For example, literary sources, including romance, may help illuminate social relationships, neighbours, and sociability. Pursuing an interdisciplinary approach in another way, engaging with the field of scholarship on the material culture of sociability, I believe, could also be of value.[1484] The findings of this thesis reveal the uses of neighbourly discourse particularly amongst the middling sort in England. This reflects in part the distorted representations within the source material. Nevertheless, it has still been possible to explore the social landscape of a broader range of individuals too. As evidenced in the narrative of Walter de Elmeleye's death in the verdict from the coroner's jury, people could experience different modes of belonging, dependant on status. Additional work which has more of a focus on other levels of society will similarly be valuable.

Finally, within the confines of this research project, although issues of gender were integral to my analysis, I did not directly engage with how practices of neighbourliness were influenced by, or influence, factors such as ethnicity or immigration.[1485] Connecting the work done here with these important and burgeoning subject areas will be valuable in better understanding and reflecting the social experiences of all those living in later medieval England. The ambition of this thesis is to encourage further research into expressions of informal relationships and allow for cross-cultural comparisons.

Quotidian social relationships, including those between neighbours, were a vital part of everyday life in later medieval England. I hope future research will build upon some of the findings here. How these social connections were perceived and experienced were shaped by broader social, cultural, and economic movements is something which needs to be appreciated if we are to build a more nuanced picture of daily life in the medieval past. Belonging within social groupings was not a given but was both conditional and complicated by positionality. Thinking about informal relationships and how they functioned is at least as urgent today with the rise of partisanship and as we emerge from the social isolation experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[1484] For example: Jervis, Broderick, and Grau-Sologestoa, *Objects, Environment, and Everyday Life*; Hall, '"Merely Players"?' 39-56; Ben Jervis, 'Cuisine and Urban Identities in Medieval England: Objects, Foodstuffs and Urban Life in Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century Hampshire,' *Archaeological Journal*, 169, no.1 (2012): 453-479.

[1485] Ormrod, Lambert, and Mackman, *Immigrant England*; Fleming, 'Identity and Belonging,' 175-193; McSheffrey, 'Liberties of London,' 216-236; Colson, 'Alien Communities and Alien Fraternities,' 111-43.

Abbreviations

BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
BIA	Borthwick Institute for Archives
BL	British Library
DMLBS	Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources
DMF	Dictionnaire du Moyen Français
GIS	Geographic Information System
LA	Lincolnshire Archives
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
MED	Middle English Dictionary
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
TNA	The National Archives

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