INTRODUCTION

In 1536, John Bolney decided to start work on a new tower for his local church. He faced a stiff organisational and financial challenge. First, he requested an estimate and sold some land that had been in the family for generations in order to build up the necessary capital. He sought out a well-qualified architect with good references from a nearby town and met with the village leadership in order to convince them that the project was worthy of their support. It would, after all, turn the centre of the village into a building site, and, besides, he could not afford the work alone. Whether under pressure from Bolney, who was also their lord, or from enthusiasm for the new project, they agreed to fund the timberwork of the project. Some wealthy, pious men promised to labour for free. John negotiated the contract with the architect and began discussing designs. Meanwhile, the parish authorities started fundraising in earnest, holding parties, taking collections and selling unwanted items. They found and instructed their own contractor. Plans were produced, and stone bought from quarries and transported. Complex pieces were cut in the workshop, while others were finished on site. The architect sent two of his men to oversee the building site and occasionally visited himself, to make sure the project was running smoothly (and, of course, not over budget). John had calculated that he could save money by purchasing much of the materials and labour himself, so he kept his own account books, jotting down every transaction he made to monitor costs and payments. No doubt he met with the architect and authorities every so often to monitor progress, expenditure and the quality of the work. Under his rigorous and time-consuming oversight, it took only a few months for the new tower to top out. By Lent the following year, John could survey the realisation in stone and mortar of his family's worldly success, finished off with his arms over the main entrance, visible whenever the church was entered. The parishioners might have seen it somewhat differently. Nearly half a millennium later, the tower of St Mary

Magdalene, Bolney, in West Sussex remains as witness not only to the craftsmanship of the masons but also to the wealth and managerial talents of John Bolney and the parishioners.[1]

The construction of England's parish churches required great achievements not only in art and engineering but also in organisation and finance. While cathedrals and abbeys could draw on substantial landed wealth for their building projects, parishes had to depend upon more varied and unpredictable resources. Careful management was required to convert the revenues of a multitude of peasant or urban families into a reliable income stream for an often lengthy building project, and to ensure projects were completed quickly and to budget. Such organisation was inflected by social and economic structures, local customs and cultural expectations. The distribution of land and wealth, the availability of employment and money, and the vagaries of weather and plague determined on a short- and long-term basis which parishioners could provide the funds for church building and the length, cost and ambition of their project.

At the heart of this book is a simple but important contention: that the financing of parish church construction was closely tied to the social fabric of medieval parishes, and was run and financed by comparatively wealthy groups of peasants or townsfolk, smaller and more distant in some places, larger and less polarised elsewhere. They carefully chose managerial structures, using special committees or existing institutions, which, contrary to the claims of some historians, acted with flair and competence, to reduce costs, eliminate fraud and speed completion.[2] The parish gentry could and did take on the management of their own projects, but their contributions were often made in collaboration with other wealthy parishioners; indeed building work was often less affordable to them individually than it was for wealthier peasants acting collaboratively.[3] Ecclesiastical institutions and the nobility were occasionally involved in architectural work on parish churches, but when they were, they delegated it to junior officials or local agents.

This book will also set building work in a changing economic context, showing how the proportion of parishioners who could contribute to building work contracted and expanded, affecting the quantity and ambition of church construction, the development of fundraising techniques and the significance of architectural patronage in defining and justifying the position of wealthier peasants and townsfolk during periods of social change.[4] Changes in prices, wages and the availability of money

[1] Chapter 5, section b.ii, pp. 221–26. [2] Chapter 6, section b, pp. 247–49.
[3] Chapter 2, section d, pp. 122–25. [4] Chapter 1, section c.vii, pp. 92–95.

were mediated by cultural and social expectations to determine not only what could be built but also by whom. Participation in the parish, and its cultural patronage, will be shown to be structured and unequal, and used by families and groups to both claim authority and demonstrate their position. These conclusions create a nuanced picture of church construction that is dominated neither by the manor or monastery nor by a monolithic parochial or civic 'community'.

A) THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF CHURCH CONSTRUCTION

In the last three decades, scholarly attention on the social and religious life of the late medieval and Reformation parish has been concerned with demonstrating that it was inclusive, flourishing and highly focused on the parish church. A common premise in this argument has been to note the energy and money expended on church buildings and furnishings, reflecting the devotion of the parishioners and their engagement with the life of the church, and involving, critically, the whole 'community', if strictly ordered by status, and sometimes excluding members of the aristocracy. Clive Burgess, for example, may be taken as representative when he notes the 'vitality' of parish life 'as indicated . . . by the unequivocal, if unquantifiable, physical testimony of medieval church building'.[5] Eamon Duffy makes a related point: 'at its most obvious this continuing and indeed growing commitment to corporate Christianity [in late medieval England] is witnessed by the extraordinary and lavish spate of investment by lay men and women in the fabric and furnishing of their parish church'.[6] Similar conclusions have also been reached by other historians.[7]

Collaboration across the parish has been a centrepiece of these arguments: Colin Richmond argues that 'most [church towers] were constructed co-operatively';[8] Christopher Harper-Bill found that 'this architectural revolution [of the late middle ages] was normally the result of concerted communal effort';[9] Christopher Dyer agrees that 'late

[5] Clive Burgess, 'The Benefactions of Mortality: The Lay Response in the Later Medieval Urban Parish', in *Studies in Clergy and Ministry in Late Medieval England*, ed. D. Smith (York, 1991), 66–67 n. 2.

[6] Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400–c.1580* (New Haven, 1992), 131–32. This is, in many ways, the *locus classicus* of this argument.

[7] E.g. Richard Morris, *Churches in the Landscape* (London, 1989), 373; Christopher Harper-Bill, *The Pre-Reformation Church in England 1400–1530* (London, 1989), 72; Christopher Haigh, *Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire* (Cambridge, 1975), 67.

[8] Colin Richmond, 'The English Gentry and Religion, C. 1500', in *Religious Beliefs and Ecclesiastical Careers in Late Medieval England*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 1991), 133–35.

[9] Harper-Bill, *Pre-Reformation Church*, 72.

medieval church building must be attributed in most cases to … the collective contributions of the community of parishioners';[10] Beat Kümin characterises late medieval church building as 'thousands of collaborative efforts';[11] and Katherine French entitles one chapter 'The Architecture of Community' and writes that 'building and furnishing the parish church bound the parishioners together through shared discussions of expectations, fundraising, work, and building use'.[12] Individual examples are described as a 'community enterprise',[13] 'a genuinely communal achievement',[14] 'a vast communal effort',[15] 'the people's creation',[16] or 'an effort of collective devotion of all sections of the community'[17] or of 'the whole community of the parish', even when evidence exists to the contrary.[18] Popularising works have argued too that the 're-building or enlargement of a Parish Church was testimony to the enthusiasm and generosity of a whole community'.[19]

Many have specifically noted the contributions of poor parishioners: Colin Platt, rather romantically, argues that 'it was not just the wealthy who had been called on [for contributions], but the widow to contribute her mite';[20] Colin Richmond notes the gifts of a 'great multitude of far humbler folk';[21] Norman Pounds writes of 'the small man' who invested in church building because he could not afford land;[22] and Gerald Randall adds that payments were made by 'ordinary members of the congregation including the poor'.[23] Richard Morris notes the contribution of gentry and merchants but also that 'enthusiasm for building seems to have been as strong among poor parishioners as among rich', as it was

[10] Christopher Dyer, 'The English Medieval Village Community and Its Decline', *Journal of British Studies* 33, no. 4 (1 October 1994): 413.
[11] Beat A. Kümin, 'The English Parish in a European Perspective', in *The Parish in English Life*, ed. Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat Kümin (Manchester, 1997), 29.
[12] Katherine L. French, *The People of the Parish: Community Life in a Late Medieval English Diocese* (Philadelphia, 2001), Chapter 5; cf. Katherine L. French, 'Parochial Fund-Raising in Late Medieval Somerset', in *The Parish in English Life*, ed. Katherine L. French, Gary G. Gibbs, and Beat Kumin (Manchester, 1997), 117.
[13] T. A. Heslop, 'Swaffham Parish Church', in *Medieval East Anglia*, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 2005), 246, cf. 260–61. Heslop notes that a tenth of the adult population may have contributed to the church rebuilding.
[14] Gervase Rosser, *Medieval Westminster: 1200–1540* (Oxford, 1989), 271.
[15] David Lloyd, Margaret Clark, and Chris F. Potter, *St. Laurence's Church, Ludlow: The Parish Church and People, 1199–2009* (Little Logaston, 2010), 42.
[16] Colin Richmond, *John Hopton: A Fifteenth Century Suffolk Gentleman* (Cambridge, 1981), 179.
[17] Peter Brandon, *Sussex* (London, 2006), 186. [18] Harper-Bill, *Pre-Reformation Church*, 72.
[19] Christopher Steed, *Let the Stones Talk: Glimpses of English History Through the People of the Moor* (Milton Keynes, 2011), 99.
[20] Colin Platt, *The Parish Churches of Medieval England*, 2nd ed. (London, 1995), 47.
[21] Richmond, *John Hopton*, 175.
[22] Norman Pounds, *A History of the English Parish* (Cambridge, 2000), 462.
[23] Gerald Randall, *The English Parish Church* (London, 1988), 46.

'an enterprise from which no one was excluded'.[24] About Louth, Reginald Dudding wrote that 'from the richest to the poorest all seem to have been affected with a like zeal'.[25] Norman Scarfe similarly described the democratic nature of fund raising, writing that 'most people contributed what they could'.[26] Others have been doubtful of the role of the gentry: Richmond argued that 'where the building effort was communal ... I believe it is non-gentry contributions which need to be stressed';[27] and Andrew Brown posits that, although aristocratic patronage could be 'overwhelming' in some churches, it was 'diluted in most', and replaced by 'a much wider group of parishioners' as part of a 'collective initiative'.[28]

Although these arguments have graduated to the centre of recent academic debates, they are not new: in the 1950s, G. H. Cook was willing to claim that 'it were almost as if democracy was claiming the last phase of Gothic architecture as its own'.[29] Earlier historians made similar points: in the 1920s, Sidney Dark mourned 'the fine co-operation in church building that existed in the Middle Ages';[30] a century ago Cardinal Gasquet noted that 'all were eager to have a part in the work of building up their church';[31] and, in the 1870s, J. J. Wilkinson recorded that 'every one seems to have given [to building Bodmin church] according to his means and up to his means'.[32] Referring to the same church in 1913, John Charles Cox wrote of the 'marvellous unanimity' of its reconstruction and doubted it was exceptional.[33] The sentiment can be found in Tudor sources: writing in 1598, John Stow found, at St Andrew Undershaft, London, in 1520–32, 'every man putting to his helping hand, some with their purses, others with their bodies';[34] and Thomas Bentley, commenting on his extracts from the St Andrew, Holborn, churchwardens' accounts in 1584, wrote that the steeple was 'builded by money given of devotion of good people ... in boxes, at ales, shootings, etc ... as by their accounts, yet remaining, may and doth appear' in 1446–68.[35] Parishioners could describe building work like this themselves – John Leland wrote that the church of Mells, Somerset, for

[24] Morris, *Landscape*, 373, 355–56.
[25] Reginald C. Dudding, *The First Churchwardens' Book of Louth, 1500–1524* (Oxford, 1941), xviii.
[26] Norman Scarfe, *Suffolk in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1986), 161.
[27] Richmond, 'Gentry and Religion', 133–35.
[28] Andrew Brown, *Church and Society in England, 1000–1500* (Basingstoke, 2003), 92.
[29] G. H Cook, *The English Mediaeval Parish Church* (London, 1954), 55.
[30] Sidney Dark, *London* (London, 1924), 111.
[31] Francis Aidan Gasquet, *Parish Life in Mediaeval England*, 3rd ed. (London, 1909), 30.
[32] J. J. Wilkinson, *Receipts and Expenses in Building Bodmin Church, 1469–1472* (London, 1874), v.
[33] John Charles Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts from the Fourteenth Century to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1913), 82.
[34] John Stow, *A Survey of London*, ed. Charles Lethbridge Kingsford (Oxford, 1908), 138–50.
[35] Quoted in Cox, *Churchwardens' Accounts*, 81.

example, was built 'in time of mind … by the whole parish', c. 1540, presumably based on the testimony of those he met.[36]

The parish church takes a rather different, often smaller but still far from infrequent, role in studies of gentry families and culture in the late middle ages.[37] Architectural and artistic evidence has been employed in biographical studies, rather as gentry biographies feature in art historical approaches, often emphasising building work as an expression of a patron's political or social ambitions and loyalties, and religious practice.[38] The seigniorial, martial qualities of towers and battlements, for example, have been associated with the emulation of great lordship.[39] Architectural patronage has been interpreted ambiguously: sometimes as indicating local domination and other times parochial commitment; sometimes worldly concerns and the display of wealth; other times pious devotion or altruistic inclinations.[40] These divisions are often mapped onto the question of the 'privatisation' of gentry religion, split between those who cite the building of private chapels alongside the use of confessors, prayer

[36] John Leland, *The Itinerary of John Leland in or about the Years 1535–1543*, ed. Lucy Toulmin Smith, vol. 5 (London, 1910), 105.

[37] E.g. Peter R. Coss, *The Foundations of Gentry Life: The Multons of Frampton and Their World, 1270–1370* (Oxford, 2010), Chapter 9; Eric Acheson, *A Gentry Community: Leicestershire in the Fifteenth Century, c. 1422–c. 1485* (New York, 1992), 189; Christine Carpenter, *Locality and Polity: A Study of Warwickshire Landed Society, 1401–1499* (Cambridge, 1992), 235–36; Christine Carpenter, 'The Religion of the Gentry of Fifteenth-Century England', in *England in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. D. Williams (Woodbridge, 1987), 66; Malcolm Graham Allan Vale, *Piety, Charity, and Literacy among the Yorkshire Gentry, 1370–1480* (York, 1976), 10–11; K. B McFarlane, *The Nobility of Later Medieval England: The Ford Lectures for 1953 and Related Studies* (Oxford, 1973), 95; Richmond, *John Hopton*, 156–57; Richmond, 'Gentry and Religion', 134. Andrew Brown, *Popular Piety in Late Medieval England: The Diocese of Salisbury, 1250–1550* (Oxford, 1995), 121.

[38] See particularly the work of Nigel Saul: 'Chivalry and Art: The Camoys Family and the Wall Paintings in Trotton Church', in *Soldiers, Nobles and Gentlemen: Essays in Honour of Maurice Keen*, ed. Peter R. Coss and Christopher Tyerman (Woodbridge, 2009); 'Shottesbrooke Church: A Study in Knightly Patronage', in *Windsor: Medieval Archaeology, Art and Architecture of the Thames Valley*, ed. L. Keen and E. Scarff (Norwich, 2002), 264–81; *Scenes from Provincial Life: Knightly Families in Sussex 1280–1400* (Oxford, 1986), Chapter 5; cf. Kate Heard, 'Death and Representation in the Fifteenth Century: The Wilcote Chantry Chapel at North Leigh', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 154, no. 1 (1 January 2001): 134–49; Eamon Duffy, 'The Disenchantment of Space: Salle Church and the Reformation', in *Religion and the Early Modern State: Views from China, Russia, and the West*, ed. James D. Tracy and Marguerite Ragnow (Cambridge, 2004), 325–26. Professor Saul's recent *Lordship and Faith* (Oxford, 2017) arrived too late for inclusion in this book.

[39] See (among his other works): Charles Coulson, 'Hierarchism in Conventual Crenellation: An Essay in the Sociology and Metaphysics of Medieval Fortification', *Medieval Archaeology* 26 (1982): 69–70.

[40] Gabriel Byng, 'Patrons and Their Commissions: The Uses of Biography in Understanding the Construction of the Nave of Holy Trinity, Bottisham', in *Writing the Lives of People and Things, AD 500–1700: A Multi-Disciplinary Future for Biography*, ed. R. F. W. Smith and G. L. Watson (Farnham, 2016), 227–43.

books and family pews,[41] and those who emphasise its parochial, if hierarchical, nature, occasionally using church construction as evidence.[42] These options are not mutually exclusive – Nigel Saul describes the fruits of the Walsh family's patronage at Wanlip, Leicestershire, as 'a communal witness to an act of charity' and 'a showcase for lordly power'.[43]

Although this is the first systematic study of the administration, management and financing of parish church construction, these are not wholly uncharted waters. The scholar who has given the most attention to the effect of economic change on regional church building is John James. His research into correlations between patterns of church construction in the Paris basin and the contemporary climate of economics and politics is the most wide-ranging of its kind.[44] The most comparable works in England are by Richard Morris, whose much-repeated graph of great church building has, for example, been set next to John Hatcher's of English demography.[45] Chapter 2 of Morris's *Churches in the Landscape* remains the most thoroughgoing analysis of the organisation of parish church building in the later middle ages.[46] The most thorough survey of the organisation and financing of major church construction in Europe is by W. H. Vroom, who has built on the work of many earlier scholars, including the well-known historians and editors of English cathedral and royal building accounts.[47] The work of Knoop and Jones on the

[41] John Bossy, 'The Mass as a Social Institution 1200–1700', *Past & Present*, no. 100 (1 August 1983): 29–61; Colin Richmond, 'Religion and the Fifteenth Century English Gentleman', in *The Church, Politics, and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century*, ed. Barrie Dobson (Gloucester, 1984), 193–208; C. Pamela Graves, 'Social Space in the English Medieval Parish Church', *Economy and Society* 18, no. 3 (1989): 317.

[42] Christine Carpenter, 'Religion', in *Gentry Culture in Late Medieval England*, ed. Raluca Radulescu and Alison Truelove (Manchester, 2005), 134–50; Carpenter, 'Religion of the Gentry'; Duffy, *Stripping*, 121–23; Saul, *Provincial Life*, 156–58; Nigel Saul, 'The Religious Sympathies of the Gentry in Gloucestershire, 1200–1500', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society* 98 (1980): 103–04.

[43] When describing, respectively, their brass and the building: Nigel Saul, 'Language, Lordship, and Architecture: The Brass of Sir Thomas and Lady Walsh at Wanlip, Leicestershire, and Its Context', *Midland History* 37, no. 1 (1 March 2012): 9.

[44] John James, 'Impact of Climate Change on Building Construction: AD 1050 to 1250', *AVISTA Forum Journal* 20, no. 1/2 (Fall 2010): 43–49; John James, 'How Many Built All the Churches?', *AVISTA Forum Journal* 13, no. 2 (2003): 23–24; John James, 'Funding the Early Gothic Churches of the Paris Basin', *Parergon* 15 (1997): 41–82; John James, 'An Investigation into the Uneven Distribution of Early Gothic Churches in the Paris Basin, 1140–1240', *The Art Bulletin* 66, no. 1 (March 1984): 15–46; John James, *The Pioneers of the Gothic Movement: Interim Report* (Wyong, N.S. W, 1980).

[45] Richard Morris, *Cathedrals and Abbeys of England and Wales: The Building Church, 600–1540* (London, 1979), Figures 7 and 8; John Hatcher and Mark Bailey, *Modelling the Middle Ages: The History and Theory of England's Economic Development* (Oxford, 2001), 29.

[46] Morris, *Landscape*.

[47] W. H. Vroom, *Financing Cathedral Building in the Middle Ages: The Generosity of the Faithful*, trans. Elizabeth Manton (Amsterdam, 2010).

administration of building work, sadly largely overlooking parochial projects, is one of the two pillars on which all later study of masonry rests, the other being the research of L. F. Salzman.[48] Both conducted most of their work in the interwar period but published later. A more qualitative approach, encompassing the parish church, has combined social history and archaeology, particularly in works by Colin Platt.[49] Norman Pounds similarly includes an account of architectural development, and patronage, in his history of the parish.[50] Heather Swanson has perhaps done the most to set medieval workmen in their urban environment.[51] Few art historians have taken economic change as a central aspect of their study of medieval church building, and of these, Paul Binski is the most important recent example.[52] However, particular periods of building work in some regions have been associated by architectural historians with new wealth – expressed in phrases such as 'wool Gothic' – and popular histories of the parish church have long shown awareness of the broad contours of cultural and economic change.[53] Some such interpretations when applied to parish churches are, in fact, erroneous or overly simplistic, and tend to paint patrons as passive victims of economic change. This point will be discussed further in the section[54] 'Church Building and the Economy' in this chapter.

One important, and still far from resolved, scholarly debate has been over the effects of church building on the contemporary economy, largely focusing on towns in continental Europe, and is split between the 'optimists' – von Simson, Owen and Saltow[55] – and the 'pessimists' – Lopez and Williams.[56] Barbara Abou-El-Haj has described medieval

[48] Douglas Knoop and G. P. Jones, *The Mediaeval Mason*, 3rd ed. (Manchester, 1967), Chapter 2; L. F. Salzman, *Building in England down to 1540: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1967).

[49] Colin Platt, *Medieval England: A Social History and Archaeology from the Conquest to A.D. 1600* (London, 1978); Colin Platt, *The Architecture of Medieval Britain: A Social History* (New Haven, 1990); Platt, *Parish Churches*; Gladys May Durant, *Landscape with Churches* (London, 1965).

[50] Pounds, *English Parish*, 408–12.

[51] Heather Swanson, *Medieval Artisans: An Urban Class in Late Medieval England* (Oxford, 1989); Heather Swanson, 'Artisans in the Urban Economy: The Documentary Evidence from York', in *Work in Towns*, ed. P. Corfield and D. Keene (Leicester, 1990), 42–56; Heather Swanson, *Building Craftsmen in Late Medieval York* (York, 1983).

[52] Paul Binski, *Gothic Wonder: Art, Artifice and the Decorated Style 1290–1350* (New Haven, 2014), 87–90; see also Henry Kraus, *Gold Was the Mortar: The Economics of Cathedral Building* (London, 1979).

[53] A good early example is J. Charles Cox and Charles Bradley Ford, *The Parish Churches of England* (London, 1935), Chapter 1.

[54] See pp. 33–45.

[55] Otto G. von Simson, *The Gothic Cathedral* (London, 1956); Virginia Lee Owen, 'Gothic Cathedral Building as Public Works', in *Essays in Economic and Business History*, edited by James H. Soltow (East Lancing, 1979); Virginia Lee Owen, 'The Economic Legacy of Gothic Cathedral Building: France and England Compared', *Journal of Cultural Economics* 13, no. 1 (1989): 89–100.

[56] Robert S. Lopez, 'Economie et Architecture Medievales, Cela Aurait Il Tue Ceci?', *Annales; Economies, Societes, Civilisations* 7 (1952): 433–38; Jane Welch Williams, *Bread, Wine & Money: The*

church building, for example, as a 'history of social burden and dislocation in towns with limited resources', likening it to exploitation by contemporary landlords.[57] There is also a group of less well-known writers that could reasonably be described as 'neutrals': Pacey, Johnson and Berecea et al.[58] This book will touch upon this debate, finding evidence in English towns and counties that church building acted as a stimulus to economic growth rather than a drain on local finances.[59]

A distinctive challenge for all these authors, and for this book, is defining the financial, political and social boundaries of the parish when it comes to church construction. Collections for building work stretched over neighbouring parishes, so accounts include money collected as 'devotion gathered at diverse churches'[60] or donations from other parishes' churchwardens,[61] while churchwardens attended one another's ales, donating sums in the name of their parish.[62] Testators often left money to churches outside their parish, usually where they were born or held property, with a concomitant loss to the potential income of their home parish, although it might also benefit from the gifts of non-resident donors.[63] Wealthier testators, even below the gentry, often left money to multiple churches – a tendency possibly mirrored in life.[64] Others had a career in court or trade but built up estates in a rural parish or returned to a childhood home for burial.[65] Meanwhile, rural parishioners often maintained links to their nearest town, where they bought and sold goods, even becoming members of urban guilds.[66] The transference of certain rites to chapels could mark a loss of income as well as of other resources, even though parochial

Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral (Chicago, 1993); cf. Coulson, 'Crenellation', 79; Vroom, *Cathedral Building*, 134–39.

[57] Barbara Abou-El-Haj, 'The Urban Setting for Late Medieval Church Building: Reims and Its Cathedral between 1210 and 1240', *Art History* 11, no. 1 (1 March 1988): 17.

[58] Arnold Pacey, *The Maze of Ingenuity: Ideas and Idealism in the Development of Technology* (Cambridge, 1992); T. Thomas Johnson, 'Cathedral Building and the Medieval Economy', *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* 4 (1967): 191–211; T. Thomas Johnson, 'The Economic Effects of Cathedral Building in Medieval England: A Rejoinder', *Explorations in Entrepreneurial History* 6 (Winter 1969): 170–74; Brighita Bercea, Robert B. Ekelund, and Robert D. Tollison, 'Cathedral Building as an Entry-Deterring Device', *Kyklos* 58, no. 4 (2005): 453–65.

[59] See Chapter 6, section c.iii, pp. 262–64.

[60] Charles Welch, *The Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of Allhallows, London Wall, in the City of London* (London, 1912), 57.

[61] E.g. at Swaffham: NRO PD 52/71, f. 42.

[62] Edmund Hobhouse, *Church-Wardens' Accounts of Croscombe, Pilton, Yatton, Tintinhull, Morebath, and St. Michael's, Bath: Ranging from A.D. 1349 to 1560* (London, 1890), 80.

[63] A. K. McHardy, 'Some Late-Medieval Eton College Wills', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 28, no. 4 (1977): 391.

[64] J. J. Scarisbrick, *The Reformation and the English People* (Oxford, 1984), 4.

[65] See, for example, the case of Elias de Beckingham in Byng, 'Patrons and Their Commissions'.

[66] Gervase Rosser, 'Communities of Parish and Guild in the Late Middle Ages', in *Parish, Church and People. Local Studies in Lay Religion 1350–1750*, ed. S. J. Wright (London, 1988), 33.

building projects could call on parishioners dwelling in chapelries for contributions.[67] Local churches also had to compete with shrines, cathedrals, monasteries, friaries, charities and hospitals for their parishioners' expendable income, although funding could flow in the opposite direction when ecclesiastical institutions donated to parochial building work.

These trends do not point to a single effect: one tends to balance another or, perhaps, to redistribute resources from wealthier to poorer parishes. Examples of sums explicitly donated from or to other villages or towns are, in fact, typically modest. Nevertheless, there are two important conclusions that must be stated: first, that many recent scholars have emphasised the parish as a source of group identity and religious commitment; but, secondly, that its boundaries were porous and its forms varied. There was the parish as a territory, with regularly beaten bounds; as an economic unit, imposing demands for tithes, rates or collections; as part of the institutional church and subject to oversight by archdeacon and bishop; as a set of institutions, interacting, occasionally, with crown or manor; and as a place of religious practice, although often with a number of centres. It is useful to think of these as different but overlapping parishes, in which only those with the greatest wealth and status participated fully. One man or woman might be part of the economic and geographic parish but excluded from the political parish; another might participate in the latter, through guild membership, say, and attend church occasionally but not be a resident or pay tithes; yet another might be too poor to contribute to collections, while still owing tithes to the rectory and attending an outlying chapel. Cultural, commercial and political bonds outside the parish have also been a focus of recent research.[68] The 'parish', then, played different parts in different identities. Indeed, in this book, 'parochial' architecture will figure most often as a symbol not of parochial but of group identity.

b) Economic and Social Change in England, c. 1300–1500

This section provides a short introduction to those aspects of late medieval social and economic change that most profoundly affected the ability of parishes to fund and organise church construction.

[67] Emma Mason, 'The Role of the English Parishioner, 1100–1500', *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27, no. 1 (1976): 19; Nicholas Orme, 'Church and Chapel in Medieval England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1 January 1996): 92–93.

[68] E.g. Phillipp R. Schofield, 'England: The Family and the Village Community', in *A Companion to Britain in the Later Middle Ages*, ed. S. H. Rigby (Oxford, 2003), 26–28.