The Parish Churches of Norwich north of the River Wensum:

City, Community, Architecture and Antiquarianism

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Abstract

Norwich Ultra Aquam ('over the water') formed a discrete leet or administrative area within the medieval city. At its heart was an Anglo-Scandinavian defensive enclosure, with Coslany lying to the west, and later suburban developments to the north and east. Evidence from topographic, dedicatory, archaeological and inter-parochial relationships, suggests that the pattern of church foundation was both complex and distinctive. Unlike several parishes south of the river, there are no indications that the early phases of Ultra Aquam church foundations were the initiative of senior ecclesiastics, or had specifically royal connections. Rather, they were local projects responding to the manner in which the city was developing. Later in the Middle Ages monastic interest on the north bank increased but several of the churches remained in secular hands. Patronage, whether lay or ecclesiastical, played a key part in their architectural development; St Michael Coslany and St George Colegate in particular received considerable burgess investment. The rich antiquarian tradition in the city provides a record of attitudes to the churches in the post-Reformation period which has to be understood in terms of priorities that changed over time.

Introduction

The research presented here forms part of a three-year project on the medieval parish churches of Norwich funded by the Leverhulme Trust. It brings together physical, documentary and antiquarian written and pictorial evidence to present an account of the development of the city's churches up to the Reformation. Key to our ambition is understanding the contribution of the parishes to the early development of the city and interaction between the parish communities and the art and architecture that they sponsored. This paper exemplifies the approaches and methods we have adopted by presenting material relating to the northern quarter of the city, which is the area most intensively studied so far. As a contained area Ultra Aquam lends itself well for study of a sample of the medieval churches of Norwich (nearly 30% of the total).

The early development of Norwich north of the river

The date of the appellation Ultra Aquam for the leet north of the river Wensum is unknown. The earliest surviving reference is on the first extant leet roll of 1288, although it has been argued that the terminology formalised a late 12th century organisational framework. The slightly dismissive title 'over the water' is likely to postdate the establishment of the castle, French Borough and new market area in the late 1060s and 1070s which inevitably centred administrative attention south of the river. Reorganisation of the city's governance in 1223 created four bailiffs, presumably to oversee the existing four-leet system (Hudson 1892, xv-xvi).

Seventeen parish churches are known to have existed within the Ultra Aquam leet. It is likely that the majority of these pre-date 1066 although some, including St Paul, St George Colegate, St Margaret Newbridge and St Margaret Fybriggate, probably originated in the 12th century (Fig. 1). Although seven of Norwich's medieval churches are recorded by name as existing before 1066 (predominantly but not exclusively in Domesday Book) none, with the possible exception of All Saints, was north of the river. It is impossible to assert conclusively that the reference to All Saints is to the church located south of the river but a strong argument can be made that this was the case.

Topographically, the parish churches of the north bank occupied three areas, separated by tributaries of the River Wensum. In the west lay Coslany, a settlement focused on Oak Street (the line of a Roman road); in the centre, either side of Magdalen Street, was an area bounded by the Muspole and Dalymond streams and encircled by an earthwork enclosure of *c.*900 (Ayers 2009, 31-35); to the east and north lay areas notable in the post-Conquest period for ecclesiastical institutions and interests.

Ultra Aquam was subdivided into two subleets, uneven in terms of numbers of churches but possibly more even in terms of tithings (Hudson 1892, xvii-xviii). This subdivision is of interest for the two groups it creates - one of four churches (St Martin at Oak, St Mary Coslany, St Michael Coslany and St George Colegate) the other with thirteen. As will be seen, of the north bank churches the four in the Coslany subleet attracted most investment in the later medieval period. The subdivision also seems to shed light on the early development of the city.

The churchyard of St Martin at Oak lies immediately south of St Martin's Lane, a now truncated thoroughfare running east from Oak Street which arguably formed an early boundary, defensive or otherwise, within the nascent urban community, isolating Coslany within a bend of the Wensum. The church stands at the angle formed by Oak Street and St Martin's Lane, effectively as a 'gate-guardian' (Stocker 2013, 127-28), a role for which its dedication was well-suited. The northward extension of the parish boundary beyond St Martin's Lane may have been an original arrangement, however the parish narrows dramatically once it leaves the area bounded by the later city wall. From this point it encompasses merely the line of Oak Street and the river margin to its west. The deliberate thin extension eastward simply ensured that the late 13th-century road within the north-western stretch of the city wall is included with the parish.

This particular parochial arrangement hints at administrative concerns and tensions within and beyond the later walled city not evident in the available documentation. Indeed, it can be argued that the four parishes of the Coslany subdivision were particularly important to the citizens of Norwich (as evidenced by later medieval investment), in contrast to the churches to the east. Parishes within the central northern area appear to have focused upon the church of St Clement, several passing two-thirds of their tithes back to this church (Campbell 1975, 4 and n.42). St Clement's parish was certainly extensive, with large parts cut-off from the church by other parishes (Campbell 1975, map 7). The tithe pattern might imply sub-division of an early parish of St Clement as the city grew. However, as it may have been associated with an early manorial site known as Tokethorpe (and thus of less immediate importance to major civic individuals), it could have been an Anglo-Scandinavian imposition upon an emerging urban landscape (Crawford 2008, 99). Either way, St Clement and other churches within the central area seem to have been fostered initially by urban elite intervention rather than by growing population demand or ecclesiastical initiative. Only after 1100 do such interests become clear. The parish church and adjacent hospital of St Paul was established by bishops Herbert and Eborard early in the 12th century and controlled by the cathedral priory.

As regards the pre-Conquest churches, the methodology recently adopted by David Stocker for churches in Lincoln, characterising churchyard locations morphologically and against more detailed socio-economic data, offers an instructive approach for the Norwich churches (Stocker 2014, 122ff). Stocker's categories cannot be applied uncritically to a Norwich context (his 'strip plot' locations for churches, for instance, are rarely visible within the Norwich urban environment) but his approach, and method of utilising an early pre-industrial map to extract churchyard positions, is useful. For Norwich, the Millard and Manning map of 1830 can be so employed (Frostick 2002, 68-70). As noted above St Martin at Oak can be regarded as a 'gate-guardian' church, so too St Clement, situated adjacent to Fye Bridge, a feature likely to originate in the mid-10th century (Hudson 1898, 217-32;

Ayers 2011, 83). Indeed, it might have been a 'garrison church' (Nightingale 1987; Crawford 2008, 203-204), an idea explored recently with regard to a second Clement church in southern Norwich (Shelley 2015, 87-192). According to this interpretation, access to the defended enclosure via the bridgehead would be 'controlled' by St Clement. Further access into the enclosure might also have entailed passing 'gate-guardian' churches. To the north, All Saints stood where Magdalen Street passed through the earthwork, and St Botolph, a dedication often associated with boundaries (Morris 1989, 217-219), stood within the earthwork on the access route of Botolph Street. To the east, St Edmund Fishergate was immediately east of the outflow of the Dalymond, perhaps next to a small bridge providing access westward into the earthwork enclosure, although the location of the eastern arm of the earthwork remains to be proven archaeologically (Ayers 2011, 77).

St Michael Coslany might also be regarded as a 'gate-guardian'. The parish is one of only two in the city where the boundary crosses the river, implying early transpontine ease of access (the other is the south bank parish of St Martin at Palace). St Michael's churchyard stands adjacent to a major Roman thoroughfare close to the river, with documentary reference to a bridged river crossing of 1186-1210 (Sandred and Lindström 1989, 15). The possibility of a Roman bridge surviving into the early medieval period, facilitating access via an island in the river, cannot be discounted.

Stocker's other categories pertinent to Norwich are the 'property strip' churches and 'corner' churches, the latter occupying areas tentatively identified as former market sites. The principal market of pre-Conquest Norwich, probably originating in the mid-10th century, was Tombland on the south bank (ON tōm 'empty' or 'open' and land). Characterising a market area within Ultra Aquam is more difficult but the widening of Magdalen Street as it approaches its junction (lost since 1974) with Botolph Street suggests a triangular space appropriate for this function. Known as Stump Cross, from the relict cross which stood there in the 18th century, the space was bounded on the east by the 'corner' church of St Saviour and, to the north until the 16th century, by St Botolph's. The exact location of this church and its churchyard remains to be ascertained but Blomefield, writing in the 1740s, stated that 'its churchyard abutted east on the said street [Magdalen Street], and west on St. Buttolph's, commonly called Buttle-street: and is now the White-horse-yard' (Blomefield 1806, 442). On Millard and Manning's map White Horse Yard is marked as linking Magdalen Street and Botolph Street (now mostly St Augustine's Street); the church and its yard would have extended north of this location with apparent triangular market infill to the south (Fig. 2). St Botolph's could have acted as both 'gate-guardian' and corner church, the dual role appropriate to a saint associated with boundaries and gates (e.g. London churches dedicated to St Botolph are located at gates in the city wall at Aldgate, Aldersgate, Bishopgate and Billingsgate, and in Cambridge St Botolph's abutted the King's Ditch and its associated gateway) and also, 'by extension, of travel and trade' (Morris 1989, 219).

A particular characteristic of Norwich's north bank churches is their occupation of 'island' sites, locations where the churchyard is entirely encircled by roads or lanes. The most obvious case is St Mary Coslany, set back from Oak Street with an extensive curtilage of approximately one acre. To the south, St Michael Coslany churchyard occupies a site of similar dimensions, also with encircling access. This characteristic can be identified at several other north bank churches, notably St Clement dominating the bridgehead and the lost church of All Saints, apparently separated from the defended enclosure earthwork by an intramural road but otherwise acting as a 'gate-guardian'. St George Colegate occupies an island site immediately west of the defended enclosure, the church standing north of Colegate where this originally riverine street passed through the defences. A foundation date in the 12th century is perhaps late to categorise the church as a 'gate-guardian' but archaeological and documentary work both suggest that the line of the defences remained a boundary into the 13th century (Atkin 1985, 240).

There has been little archaeological investigation of the Ultra Aquam churches and it is therefore difficult to characterise the lost buildings. The only extensive work was that undertaken in 1987 on the churchyard of St Margaret Fybriggate, otherwise also known as St Margaret in combusto and St Margaret *ubi sepeliunter suspensi* ('where those who have been hanged are buried'). The latter graveyard has yielded considerable evidence of executed individuals being interred here, dating from the 12th to 14th centuries (Stirland 2009). The site of the church was destroyed when large cellars of the early 19th-century institution for blind people were constructed. The suffix 'in combusto' means 'in the burnt area' and was also given to a further lost church in Ultra Aquam, that of St Mary. This church came to be referred to as both 'Brent' ('burnt') and 'Unbrent' ('unburnt') in later medieval documentation. 'Brent' is the earlier form as known from a grant of 1233, with the later version probably the result of a confusion (Blomefield 1806, 449, fn1).

An example of Stocker's 'monastic' parish church type is St Paul's, a 12th-century foundation which stood intact until bombing in 1942 and was demolished *c*. 1960. An episcopal foundation, St Paul's church stood close to that of St James, a building from which Romanesque Caen-stone architectural fragments have been recovered (Atkin 1982, 36). Both churches were located east of the defended enclosure and, although the patronage of St James was only acquired by the bishop *c.*1201, the parish extended eastwards beyond the later medieval city wall towards the area of The Lathes, an episcopal grange in the bishop's manor of Thorpe. The parish boundary of St Martin at Palace, an episcopal church on the south bank, crossed the river south of St James. A bridge of probable pre-Conquest origin is documented in 1106 (Ayers and Murphy 1983, 56). St Martin, as a south bank 'gate-guardian' was held by Stigand before 1066, and oversaw access to an area of later episcopal interest outside the northern enclosure. This possible Anglo-Scandinavian elite centre or *haga*, largely became part of the bishop's liberty (Ayers 2011, 88).

Early documentation and architectural form

Documentation for the Ultra Aquam churches begins only in the 12th century – significantly later than for those on the south bank of the Wensum. It reveals details about the ownership of the buildings, which in turn sheds light on their origins. A legal dispute in the 1160s shows that St Michael Coslany was contested by two priests, Wulward of Timsworth and Rainald of Acle (Harper-Bill 1990, no. 153). Although the decision favoured Wulward, in subsequent centuries the right to appoint the priest was associated with the holding of a plot of land known as Gundell's half acre in Acle; so perhaps Rainald did not lose out entirely. St Michael's riverside location was convenient for commerce downstream, at Acle and beyond, and may account for the association and its longevity. Other churches remained in secular hands throughout the Middle Ages. Around 1300, the appointment to St Edmund Fishergate was the prerogative of the owners of the houses west of the church, across the common lane: initially the Knots and then the Clavers (Blomefield 1806, 405). The advowson of St Botolph's was acquired in 1298 by Eustace de Kimberley, clerk, along with two properties immediately west of the churchyard. Eustace himself became the priest but a decade later sold the patronage to Aylmer de Sygate and resigned (Blomefield 1806, 442).

Other north bank churches were in private control only until the 12th and 13th centuries. Two brothers, Wulfhrac and Herbert, who were priests, owned and had perhaps founded St Augustine's. In the 1160s they gave it to the Augustinian Priory of Llanthony by Gloucester, where one of the canons - soon to be made prior - was called Roger of Norwich (Harper-Bill 1990, no.114). The advowson of St Mary Coslany passed to Coxford Priory, also Augustinian, originally founded *c.*1140 at Rudham near Fakenham by William Cheney, who became sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk. St Clement's was given to Mendham, a Cluniac priory in Suffolk created by William de Huntingfield *c.*1150 and dependent on Castle Acre. The latest church to be handed to a religious foundation was

St Mary in combusto which passed to the College of St Mary in the Fields, originally a hospital, founded on the south side of the city *c.*1247 (Rawcliffe and Harper-Bill 2004, 115-18).

Also before 1300, several north bank churches came under the control of the cathedral priory though most of them were poor. St Saviour's was granted to the priory's almoner between 1188 and 1200 at the petition of William Bardolf, Ralph Busing and Robert son of Ulfketel Busing, then the patrons of the church (Harper-Bill 1990, no. 267). Similar gifts no doubt account for others in the priory's portfolio: St Martin at Oak, All Saints and St Margaret Fybriggate, St Olaf and St Margaret Newbridge. The last three of these had been amalgamated with other parishes by 1500, and by the 1530s even All Saints was yielding no income (Cattermole 1985, 41-42, 44, 38). St George Colegate fared best, especially after it subsumed St Olaf, by 1313, and St Margaret Newbridge, by 1430 (Cattermole 1985, 42 and 44).

There is good evidence for the form of the earliest extant stone churches at several of the sites. Excavations at St James's (Atkin 1982, 30-37) revealed a nave about 12m by 7m and a chancel 8.6m by 5.6m. The proportions and size are fairly typical, the chancel being narrow enough just to fit inside the width of the nave, and the length of the nave being that of the chancel multiplied by the square root of 2 (1.4142). The scale is comparable with the likely layout of other churches where the present building sits on an earlier footprint. St Saviour's is a little longer (23m overall) and St Augustine rather smaller (16.6m), but the pattern is similar. At St Augustine's there are traces of three original quoins, the north-west corner of the nave being the best preserved. However, the materials in them are a motley collection of large flints, broken quernstones and assorted types of sedimentary rock. It is probably significant that St Augustine's is the shortest of the extant buildings north of the river: its relative poverty is written in the fabric as well as its scale.

An alternative plan type was represented by St Edmund's, St Paul's and probably St Clement's. Here nave and chancel were of the same width, so there was probably a roof of uniform height covering the length of the church and no intervening chancel arch. Whichever of the two plan types was adopted, the lengths were comparable, in English measure between about 55 and 77 feet internally. More uncertainty surrounds the longest of the extant northern churches: St Michael and St Mary Coslany (Fig. 3). It seems likely that both were extended considerably in the later Middle Ages, their large churchyards providing room for architectural expansion. However, it may be noted that the next longest are their neighbours to the north and east, St Martin at Oak and St George Colegate, so the Coslany churches may always been the biggest.

Towers were not an inevitable adjunct to the churches in the earliest phases. The excavations at St James' showed that the original form did not include one. The two earliest known towers, at St Mary Coslany and St Paul, were cylindrical, but the use imported Caen limestone in St Mary's belfry openings (Taylor and Taylor 1965, I, 474) indicates a high status project of the 12th century, contrasting with the lack of ashlar used elsewhere at the same date. At St James', where space was too limited for a full western tower, a short western bay was added in the mid-14th century with an octagonal lantern rising over its centre in diminutive imitation of the polygonal crossing towers of friary churches, such as Norwich Blackfriars (Sutermeister 1977, 21) and the Greyfriars at Lynn (Martin 1937, 103-05). It could also be regarded as a hybrid between the cylindrical form and the square-plan towers common from the 14th century onwards.

There is an absence of evidence for enlargement or modernisation during the 13th century, but clear indications of developments from the early 14th. Drawings and prints suggest that the chancel of St Paul's was given new windows, and there are the remnants of a south chancel chapel of similar date at St Augustine's. Foundations of a south porch uncovered during excavation at St James may also have been of this period (Atkin 1982, 34). The east window of St Clement's dates from around 1350

and was plausibly part of a more comprehensive scheme of renewal; remains of quoins on the west wall of the nave and parts of the tower appear to be contemporary with the east window. More ambitiously the nave of St Michael Coslany was rebuilt with large-scale Decorated tracery windows, to judge from the surviving example at the west end of the south wall. A window of similar design is extant, but blocked up, in the chancel of St Mary Coslany. The large central quatrefoil of both these is found in the chancel of the Great Hospital in Norwich *c.*1386, and another pattern from the same source appears in the nave of St Mary's, which may therefore also be late 14th century. It is very likely that there was more activity than this account suggests, for example the north aisle at St George Colegate, but detailed evidence for it was lost during remodelling in the 15th century, which was the outstanding period of refurbishment and enlargement.

The Community and Patronage

Substantial documentation evinces the relationship between patrons, parishioners and churches in the 15th and early-16th centuries. An early example is the chancel of St Saviour's, rebuilt by the cathedral almoner in the mid-1420s at a recorded cost of £28 15*s.* 5*d.* (Cattermole 1985, 34). The account names the two masons and specifies their roles: John Spynk was responsible for the walling and no doubt the buttresses, but the window tracery was cut by John Wespnade, perhaps therefore a specialist in this craft. The roof carpentry was probably the work of Ralph Byltham. Judging by the window tracery the nave was remade at the same time, presumably paid for by parishioners, but there is no indication that the church was enlarged. Similar circumstances prevailed at St Martin at Oak. There the chancel and probably the nave had been renewed by 1440, when the cathedral's infirmarer made a retrospective contribution of 12 shillings, equivalent to one year's income from the church (Cattermole 1985, 28). That can only have been a small fraction of the cost of the chancel, which overall will have been similar to St Saviour's. The huge shortfall (perhaps as much as 98%) was paid by the parishioners (Ibid.). As was to become ever more apparent, the control of revenues and appointments was a decreasing part of a larger picture of community interest.

The architectural scale and form of several churches after 1400 implies considerable disposable wealth directed towards church improvement and a mentality and skill-set committed to producing high quality art and architecture. The planning and achieving of these works can, in several cases, be attributed to an individual patron or 'parish elder'. From the testamentary record it becomes clearer that a pattern of behaviour was shared between parishes. As parochial lay elders (including mayors and aldermen) became increasingly galvanised to enhance the liturgical provision and artistic splendour of their church, they looked to their peers and neighbours for models to emulate. The temporal coincidences of, on the one hand, civic elites, craftsmen and priests and, on the other, churches of above-average architectural and artistic ambition is telling; the most prominent examples are St Mary Coslany, St Michael Coslany and St George Colegate. Whilst cause and effect are difficult to disentangle, the right people coming together in the right place at the right time is hugely significant to the mechanisms of artistic and architectural production.

St Mary Coslany is the first north bank church where significant renovation and enlargement coincide with the career of a leading citizen in the 15th century. The first north-bank resident appointed Mayor of Norwich was Gregory Draper, initially in 1449 and again in 1455 (Cozens-Hardy and Kent 1938, 25). Draper died in 1464 and was buried in the new chapel (*nova capella*) on the south side (*ex parte austr'*) of St Mary Coslany, i.e. in the south transept (NCC Betyns 90/91). Plausibly the building of the chapel began in the years between his two mayoral terms. William Norwich, at St George Colegate, was the next important contributor to the mid-century fashion adopted by men seeking or celebrating civic success - founding a Lady chapel at his parish church to increase divine celebration and serve as the family's mortuary. This was a new departure, for William Norwich's father (also William) desired burial alongside family members in the Carmelite

friary in Norwich, where his body was to lie next to Walter Norwich, his father, and his late wife Agnes (*nuper uxoris mee*). William senior's will, proved on 8 October 1460, records payment of neglected tithes and obligations to the high altar of St Saviour's, and a request that prayers for his soul be said there - no mention is made of St George Colegate (NCC Brosyard 210). By contrast William junior associated himself firmly with his parish church. According to the text of their joint memorial brass (cf. Fig. 10), William and his wife Alice established and were interred in the north chancel chapel, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and All Saints. As well as building a relationship with his parish church, William junior situated himself amongst persons of a particular status in the city, of whom Gregory Draper was a recent and proximate example. This conscious positioning is illustrative of elite patronage of parish church architecture in the mid-century but, as presented below, it also coincides with other architectural work at the church which, circumstantially, can be associated with one of Norwich's leading mid-15th-century masons, James Woderofe.

The instances presented so far are examples of in-life activity. However, preparations set in motion in wills were, of necessity, seen through *post-mortem* by others. Around thirty years after Norwich's chapel had been completed at St George's, a similar project was undertaken at St Martin Coslany. Thomas Wilkyns' will of 1491 records his desire to be buried in the churchyard between the buttresses on the south side and instructs that 'my executors do build a chapel on my grave honourably in worship of God' (PROB11/9/82). Wilkyns placed his trust in Katherine his wife and Ralf his son as executors, with Robert Rose and John Jewell as supervisors. The importance of carefully chosen executors and supervisors is not to be underestimated when a significant element of the testators' wishes were of architectural character. The work was coming to completion in 1503 when John Reynolds, citizen and mason, bequeathed 40*s* towards leading the roof (NCC Popy 396).

At St Michael Coslany a new phase of architectural modernisation was undertaken around the turn of the 16th century, probably commencing with the chantry chapel of Robert and Agnes Thorpe. This south chancel chapel was apparently architecturally complete by 1501 when Robert requested burial therein (PROB11/12/385) and it was furnished according to the terms of Agnes' will of 1503 (PROB11/13/578). The resulting chapel is the most dramatic application of flint flushwork known to have been made in medieval Norwich. Moves to modernise and enlarge the rest of the church came at much the same time and coincided with the mayoral terms of William Ramsey (mayor in 1502 and 1508) and Gregory Clerke II (mayor in 1505 and 1514). After Gregory I's death (post-1477, the year in which he was sheriff) his wife Agnes married Robert Thorpe. Thus Gregory Clerke II became Thorpe's stepson. He was named as executor for both his stepfather and his mother. It is reasonable to suppose Gregory Clerke's involvement in the planning and realisation of the Thorpe chapel.

Gregory Clerke II died in 1517 and requested burial 'within the church of Saint Michael of Coslany in Norwich in the south aisle of the same church by Elizabeth sometime my wife under the same stone that lyeth before the image of Saint Barbara the virgin standing upon the pillar in the said aisle and to have twin images with a superscription upon the said stone of the date of our obit.' (PROB 11/18/461). Although buried in the south aisle, westward of the Thorpe chantry chapel, Clerke was committed to the new work on the north side of the church, bequeathing 'to the reparation of the same church £4 13*s*. 4*d*. therewith to be bought lead for the reparation of the north side of the body of the same church.' This work had been under way for some time under the authority of another elite citizen. William Ramsey (mayor in 1502 and 1508) was the instigator and benefactor of a chantry chapel dedicated to St William of Norwich flanking the north side of the chancel, thus complementing the Thorpe chantry on the south. Although still 'in the building' in 1509 when Ramsey wrote his will, he requested burial in its 'middes' (probate is incomplete so his date of death is uncertain). He was a man of considerable means, and his will makes clear the extent of his contribution and that his executors (Robert Barker and William Roone) were to keep the project on track: 'Item I will that myn executors after my decease provide and see that all the work of the said

chapel be performed and made up in mason's work carpenters gravours work leading and glazing with my goods' (PROB11/17/390). The similarities with Thomas Wilkyns' burial beyond the church walls at St Martin Coslany are apparent, the difference being the degree of specification given in each testament.

St Michael's is an exceptional case of twin chancel chapels patronised by elite parishioners. More commonly the model was for a single chapel at the east end of an aisle. In such cases it was usually dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and chiefly patronised by a high ranking couple. Seven of the nine extant churches north of the river follow this pattern. Important amongst this group is St Edmund Fishergate, where in 1463 Robert Furbishour, dyer, alderman, and sheriff in 1448, was buried in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin on the south side (NCC Brosyard 313). It appears that in patronising this chapel Robert and his wife Margaret were not far behind the action, close on the heels of William and Alice Norwich at Colegate.

The pattern presented thus far is one of the elite, related by trade, profession, civic service and marriage, with wealth sufficient to make an individual mark on the fabric of their parish church. For this stratum of society engagement with the practicalities of building works was part of their social role; they collectively developed and shared the necessary skills and learnt from mutual experiences. Similar patterns of patronage are more difficult to discern for the smaller, less architecturally ambitious churches north of the river. These parishes could not boast persons of such status amongst their number, or only occasionally so. The coincidence of parishes without members of the city's ruling classes and less ambitious church modernisation projects is marked. Whilst benefaction directed towards parish churches, whether money or goods, was ubiquitous in late medieval Norwich, the responsibility taken by parish elders for achieving successful renewal programmes sets them apart. They had both a vested interest in raising the standard of their church and the facilities necessary to mobilise the project.

Yet these lay elders did not act in isolation. In addition to collecting small gifts to the fabric funds from parishioners, it was in the parishes where craftsmen are known to have lived and where priests were part of the community that architectural ambition thrived. Craftsmen, principally masons and glaziers, were also patrons of parish church rebuilding north of the Wensum. The combination of being businessmen, holders of administrative city offices, and skilled artist-craftsmen made them vital to their community's efforts; they are also likely to have shaped the character of the finished building.

Evidence relating to the glaziers is particularly informative. The property interests of John Harrowe (alias John Wighton, renowned Norwich glazier) were in Coslany, specifically the parishes of St Martin and St Mary (King 2006, 137-38). Harrowe requested burial in the porch at St Mary's, where the transepts and nave had recently been built and fenestrated on a notably ambitious scale (NCC Brosyard 84). After Wighton's death the presence of glaziers in the northern part of Norwich was continued by William Mundeford (a Flemish alien, d.1478), his first wife Helen (English and the only woman to be named as a glazier in medieval Norwich, d.1458). Husband and wife both requested burial in the churchyard of St Mary Coslany and made token bequests to the church – there is nothing to indicate their involvement in the church renewal which, given their death dates, is perhaps unsurprising.

After a short and perhaps unsuccessful period in which John Wighton II took on his father's firm, he died intestate at a date after 1502-03 and William Stalon became the principal city glazier based north of the river (King 2006, 141-42). Stalon and fellow glazier Nicholas Peyntor are examples of craftsmen who were also members of their parish community, serving as executors and providing for the fabric of their church. Stalon and Peyntor were named as executors by Matilde Gobbett, widow,

in 1499 (NCC Sayve 37). She instructed that a new window of St Christopher be made at St George Colegate and it is probable that Stalon and/or Peyntor carried out this work.

As for the glaziers themselves, on 4 November 1504 Nicholas Peyntor asked 'to be buried within the church or churchyard of St George Colegate in Norwich before my new windows' (NCC Ryxe 47). On 9 August 1513 William Stalon requested burial 'within the new aisle in the church of St George Colegate of Norwich before the image of St Peter' and left 40 shillings 'to the glazing of the clerestory windows of the same church when they be made and set up' (NCC Coppinger 77). Peyntor and Stalon were thus both benefactors and craftsmen.

Similar instances are identifiable for other crafts. For example, in 1464 Robert Wode, citizen and carpenter, bequeathed 20 shillings to the cross-aisle at St Mary Coslany and requested burial in the southern chapel, which was dedicated to the Virgin and contained a Pieta image (NCC Betyns 164). Is it purely happenstance that St Mary Coslany boasts an ambitiously accomplished crossing roof? Wode's chosen place of burial was the same chapel where Gregory Draper was interred in the same year – an elision of craftsman and lay patron.

The third sort of person in this mix are the clergy. Several priests or chaplains acted as executors to late medieval Norwich testators and using an educated and reliable person in this role is common sense. Yet it also implies a closeness between the laity and the clergy who served at their altars and in their chapels and in some instances priests were also engaged with the changes being made to their parish church. St Michael Coslany is a particular case in point. Clergy of various kinds requested burial in the chancel of St Michael Coslany in 1387, 1420, 1421, 1426, and 1501, and in the churchyard in 1422 and 1441. Every one of these men bequeathed money and/or goods to their church. The tenor of these ecclesiastical bequests echoes those made by lay parishioners but perhaps the most insightful example is Richard Hert and William Ramsey. In 1504 Hert asked to be buried 'within the holy sanctuary upon the north side of the church of Saint Michael of Coslany in Norwich within the precinct of the new aisle there to be edified.' (NCC Ryxe 84). Seemingly Hert was buried within the defined curtilage of Ramsey's planned chapel.

Amongst the players contributing to the renewal and enlargement of the parish churches north of the river during the 15th and 16th centuries, four (overlapping) groups of people can thus be identified: parish lay elders, craftsmen, clerics and other parishioners, important in that order. There is a correlation of occurrence between the number and status of parishioners engaged in city governance and the larger and more architecturally ambitious churches. Four Norwich mayors were parishioners of St George Colegate between 1461 (William Norwich, d.1470) and 1537 (William Layer, d.1540). Five mayors can be associated with St Michael Coslany, the first being Richard Ferrour (mayor five times between 1473 and 1498). It seems almost certain that Ferrour was a key player in the late-15th century project at St Michael Coslany which so many other parishioners contributed to in major ways. The only other north bank parish that can boast a mayor amongst its parishioners was St Botolph, where John Butte was buried 'in cancello' in 1475. Butte, made free as a thaxter in 1422-23, held mayoral office in 1462 and in 1471. He left 20 shillings to the high altar, and 40 shillings to the church (NCC Gelour 106). Perhaps significantly, glazier Hugh Deye is known to have held property in the parish c.1475. Unfortunately, nothing is known of the church building, it having been destroyed in 1548, but the coincidence of these people makes likely some degree of refurbishment in the second half of the 15th century.

Architecture

Seven of the nine churches that survive and the lost church of St Paul were extended between the mid-15th century and the mid-16th. At St Paul's an aisle was added on the north side, at St Martin's,

St James' and St Edmund's they were built to the south of the nave. St Martin's was the most ambitious of them, boasting an arcade of carefully moulded, cut stone, whereas the others relied largely on plastered brick piers and arches, with minimal elaboration. There was however no significant heightening of these churches nor a major enlarging of the existing windows, both factors implying that increasing the ground area was primarily for the creation of chapels for altars and for burials. The fenestration of the new aisles was, of course, in keeping with current trends for larger windows, and the associated display of figurative and heraldic stained glass.

More ambitiously, the north and south transepts built *c.*1460 at St Mary Coslany were each provided with large, Perpendicular traceried windows. Their size far transcends that of contemporary projects at St Michael at Plea and St Peter Hungate south of the Wensum, though not (of course) St Peter Mancroft. With a plethora of vertical mouldings, creating numerous sub-rectangular tracery lights, the design is ideal for housing rows of standing figures as produced in quantity by the glazier John Harrowe or Wighton, who was buried in St Mary's porch in 1457 but whose workshop remained in business for years to come (King 2006, 138-39, 142-43). These priorities are highlighted by the decision to retain the old round tower so as to focus expenditure on windows, glass, and the fine roof at the crossing with bosses showing the Assumption of the Virgin, perhaps funded by the carpenter Robert Wode (see above).

The decisions taken at St Mary's are the more striking as impressive new west towers were built at two neighbouring churches. St Michael's is of four stages, with large and elaborate tracery around the upper two, as well as a fine west door and large window above it (Fig. 4). The project was well under way by 1420 when money was left by John Prince to glaze the west window with the nine orders of angels (Blomefield 1806, 492-93). The work had perhaps been initiated by the brothers John and Walter Daniel – both early mayors of Norwich – who had acquired Gundell's half acre in Acle in 1414 and with it the patronage of St Michael's (Ibid., 492). If there was an intention to rebuild the remainder of the church at this stage it stalled, perhaps because of the brothers' deaths. Less ambitious in scale, but still carefully detailed, the contemporary west tower of St George Colegate was largely complete by 1459, when John Howys gave £4 for a bell (Cattermole and Cotton 1983, 257). The design of the tower, at least in its lower reaches, has been attributed on the grounds of its moulding profiles to the leading cathedral mason of the period, James Woderofe (Fawcett 1975, 328). He died in 1450/1 though his business was apparently continued by his associate, John Jekkys (Trend 2015, 365). Woderofe is also known to have been a sculptor commissioned to make vault bosses for Norwich cathedral cloister (Harvey 1987, 343). He may well have carved the wonderfully preserved spandrels of the south porch at St George's, showing the arming of George by angels (Fig. 5) and the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, and the now sadly decayed spandrels of the west door. A parishioner of St George's, he was buried inside the church where his wife, Alice, was laid beside him (Blomefield 1806, 472).

There were major transformations of three of the Ultra Aquam churches during the 15th and early 16th centuries. The least well documented is at St Augustine's, where aisles were added throughout and a nave clearstorey, leading to bequests for roofing from 1525 to 1538. Overall, however, the dimensions remained modest and so too the materials; the arcades though subtly detailed were of plastered brick. The work at St Michael's and St George's was much more expensive. St George's already had a north aisle when William Norwich added the Lady chapel at its east end (see above). In 1499 the north aisle was receiving new windows, the tracery design of which was based on the windows of William Norwich's chapel, built some 40 years earlier. Clearly the aim was to create a unity of style as the same pattern was subsequently used both in the new south aisle and the clearstorey *c.*1513. The harmony of the overall aesthetic relies on the strong horizontal emphases in the arcades, upper walls and clearstory, united by a very low-pitched roof (Fig. 8).

Substantial rebuilding of St Michael Coslany was also begun in the 1490s, but on the south side it remains unfinished. As at St George's the ambition was for a harmonious and unified interior effect. Here however, the scheme involved adding aisles almost as tall as the nave and covering the whole church with a continuous steeply pitched roof (Fig. 7). Unlike St George's, there was to be no clearstorey; the concept was for a wide hall church: St Michael's is 3m wider than St George's, the arcades were taller (over 7m as against 5.3m) and the bays 0.8m wider, all increases in the region of 30%. The means of their construction is evident at the unfinished western end on the south side. The piers of the arcade were built in gaps cut through the old nave wall, and the arches likewise inserted, stone by stone, in spaces cut below the wall plate (Woodman 2015, 279-80). The technique meant that the roof could remain in place to keep the building relatively weatherproof. The result inside is very spacious and the advantage externally is that there is no upper storey to compromise the prominence of the tower.

Not surprisingly, the combination of expenditure, vision and pragmatism is most evident in Coslany where wealthy citizens and leading practitioners were co-parishioners. Such factors as the sizes of churchyards, proximity to the river and builders', carpenters' and glaziers' workshops, enabled the creation of monuments to parochial piety and taste. By contrast, the density of occupation around Magdalen Street and relative poverty resulted in constrained churchyard plots and simpler and cheaper architectural projects.

Antiquarian Illustrations 1700-1850

While ten of the north bank churches survived into the post-Reformation period (St Augustine, St Edmund Fishergate, St Clement Colegate, St George Colegate, St James, St Martin at Oak, St Mary Coslany, St Michael Coslany, St Paul, St Saviour), the lost churches maintained a presence in the consciousness of Norwich citizens because their histories continued to be told in antiquarian and topographical accounts of the city and indeed they still are. For example, Francis Blomefield depicted them in his map of the city, as if they still existed, giving them fictive characters and to some extent locations, for he cannot have known of their appearance nor in some cases their exact position as they were torn down before or at the Reformation. Unfortunately, no earlier, more reliable depictions of these churches have yet been identified. However, for the ten that survived (St Paul's was bombed in 1942) the visual record is extensive, although fragmentary in its coverage of the church buildings, their fixtures and fittings. The most notable lacuna is that few general views of the interiors of Norwich churches appear to have been made before the second half of the 19th century (in contrast with the considerable number that exist for London and Bristol, for example). Instead, Norwich churches were largely recorded by general views of the exterior and closely-focused depictions of medieval architectural details and fittings. These will be treated separately as they have different visual properties.

The earliest depictions of Norwich church exteriors (other than on maps) seem to be those made by the antiquarian John Kirkpatrick in the first quarter of the 18th century. His drawings vary from the quickest of ink sketches of a detail of the tower at St Edmund Fishergate (NWHCM: 1894.76.1686) to much more detailed pen, ink and wash drawings, for example of St Augustine's (NWHCM: 1894.76.1739). Some of these may well have been made in connection with the fine north-east prospect of the city that was published in 1723 under the name of his brother Thomas. This is suggested by the fact that a disproportionate number show the north side of the church, whereas churches were more commonly depicted from the south or south east. Fortunately, Kirkpatrick made two drawings of St Michael Coslany, one of the north side, the other of the south (NWCHM: 1894.76.1729 & 1894.76.1707). The latter drawing is especially valuable as a record of the porch and revealing that the south wall of the Thorpe Chapel terminated quite differently before its restoration, perhaps in the 1740s, when the porch was demolished. Despite the economy of his

approach, Kirkpatrick had a keen eye for pattern, the textures of different materials and significant architectural detail.

It was however not until the 1810s that the recording of Norwich's churches really began to burgeon, probably encouraged by the publication of the new edition of Blomefield's *An Essay towards a Topographical History of Norfolk* in 1805-10. Three sets of drawings of the city's churches made by members of the close knit group of Norwich artists, James Sillett and the much younger John Berney Crome and Joseph Stannard, form a significant record of the church exteriors in the 1810s. Whilst at first glance they are very similar objects, substantial differences are to be found between them. Crome's pen, ink and wash sketches of the churches (BL, Add MSS 23039-40) are broadly depicted and detail is suppressed to privilege a softness of outline and an emphasis of the play of light upon the building. Sillett and Stannard chose a sharper line, delineating materials and edges much more crisply. On comparing their depictions attentively it becomes clear they are not always reliable treatments of architectural detail, perspective or of relative proportion (Fig. 8). This is extremely frustrating for the architectural historian but it does beg the question: what were these artists aiming to do?

In a letter to the Committee of the Norfolk and Norwich Museum in 1832, accompanying the gift of a set of the lithographs that he had made from his drawings, Sillett wrote:

> I make no claim to any merit in the process except that of correctness, it being my intention from the first to endeavor [sic] to convey the objects precisely as they stood & appear'd at the period, seeing as I did the many alterations, patchings up, delapidations [sic], & still worse, ill-judged clumsy repairs, silently, yet continually, going on…. (NWHCM: James Sillett MS letter to the Museum 01/02/1832)

Sillett's claim to 'correctness' could be dismissed as self-delusion but in fact he was defending the manner or style of his depictions, not their accuracy per se. He had made the choice to eschew any of the usual picturesque formulae of side-screens, washes and marked contrasts of light and dark, of the kind that John Berney Crome had used, in order to present each building in an even light, quite close to the picture plane and without any impediment to the view. This decision, he knew, opened him up to criticism as Picturesque of the kind deployed by Crome was certainly the dominant mode of depicting churches among Norwich artists. It was a decision he justified implicitly by declaring later in the same letter that 'by far the greater portion of the subjects…were such as to be unsusceptible of any degree of Picturesque beauty'. Sillett surely recognised, in addressing the Committee, how different his depictions were from those produced in the circle of the leading antiquarian Dawson Turner, who was closely associated with the Museum (and for whom John Berney Crome appears to have made his drawings).

The work of the artist closest to Dawson Turner, who dominated the production of antiquarian imagery in Norfolk at this time, John Sell Cotman, shows how different the artists' enterprises were. Cotman's etching of the Thorpe Chapel at St Michael Coslany (Fig. 9) is a highly skilled study in the Piranesian mode of the Picturesque (Hemingway, 1980-82). Through the strong contrast of the dark, rough foreground and the sunlit ornament of the south wall, Cotman proposed a dramatic, sublime reading of the chapel's architecture, which reaches towards narrative, even metaphor. By detaching that wall from the rest of the church and throwing it into the light, Cotman asked his viewers to admire its ornament and the culture which produced it, as he placed them, the viewers, in a position where they were surrounded by dirt, decay and corruption. Putting the different levels of skill aside (it is worth noting, however, that Cotman's rendition of the Thorpe Chapel is very accurate) there was a significant difference in ambition. Whereas Cotman focused on the medieval, isolating it and presenting it in the poetic of the Picturesque, Sillett aimed to give a more thorough account of the

contemporary appearance of each church, 'patchings up' and all. Thus artists approached the exteriors of the Ultra Aquam churches in different ways with the divisible but not mutually exclusive aims of identification, recording, stimulating the imagination and producing affect. These were not necessarily antithetical projects as Cotman's depiction of St Michael Coslany demonstrates but in turning to depictions of architectural details and fittings it will be seen that they were often at odds, as fidelity to the object could be sacrificed for pictorial effect.

Of the dozens of drawings of architectural details, ornament and fittings of the Ultra Aquam churches that remain from the period before 1850, most were produced in Dawson Turner's circle for his great extra-illustrated Blomefield by Cotman, Turner's daughters (particularly Harriet Gunn), Henry Ninham and C J W Winter, whose distinctively detailed and highly-coloured work has been very little studied. Others are to be found among the collection of Rev. James Bulwer, which was similarly planned to extra-illustrate Blomefield's text and involved Ninham and Winter too. Something in each of the ten churches was thought worth recording, although the three churches identified above as the most ambitious in architectural and artistic terms certainly dominate the record. The effort that went into compiling these collections is extraordinary and while it was a common practice to extra-illustrate antiquarian and topographical works in this period, very few were collected by commissioning original drawings and visiting the churches on the scale that Turner and to a lesser extent Bulwer undertook. The possibility that the danger of imminent loss was a spur to at least some of this work is suggested by Dawson Turner's catalogue of his collection. Published in 1841, the catalogue bears the epigram "Pereunt, Periere, Peribunt" (literally they do perish, they have perished, they will perish) and in it Turner emphasised that the drawings and the catalogue itself were intended to encourage preservation. For example, in the list of drawings for St James Pockthorpe is an entry for the "Heads and Ornaments of the Roof…now, 1835, lying broken and scattered about the church". Its insecure state was presumably the stimulus for Harriet Gunn to make 24 drawings [untraced] of them (Turner, 1841, 134). Other motivations existed alongside the instinct for preservation. For example, Cotman's etchings of brasses (Fig. 10) were published to 'preserve memorials of the most ancient families of the county' and to illustrate the 'ecclesiastical, military and civil costume of former ages' (Cotman 1819, titlepage). This points to a significant characteristic of antiquarian recording of the period, that the particular was always intended to be exemplary. Similarly, Cotman's etching of the Thorpe Chapel was presented in his *Architectural Antiquities of Norfolk* in its own right, as an example of the style of architecture of *c*.1500 and of the beauty that flint workmanship could attain (Cotman, 1818).

This may explain something of the unreliability of Cotman's visual accounts of brasses. Although it has been suggested this probably resulted from his relying on assistants to etch some of his drawings, (Badham and Fiske, 2002, 517-18) which he was doing from at least 1817, Cotman did have strong views about what made a good picture. He often left out quite substantial elements of what he saw in order to make a more pleasing composition. He famously advised one of his sons to 'Draw sternly and true. Leave out, but add nothing.' (Blayney Brown, 2000, 87). This he did frequently. In respect of the brasses it is particularly obvious that Cotman chose to emphasise a strong outline overlooking any gestures towards three dimensionality, through shading for example, in the originals (Badham and Fiske, 2002, 512). His omissions from other drawings are not always so obvious. At first glance, the drawing of the west door of St Michael's Coslany (Fig. 11) appears faithful. However, Cotman omitted the four creatures carved in the mouchettes below the angels and added to the composition by instilling the two angels with a baroque *contraposto*. It is very likely that he also extrapolated the niches from above the shoulders of the door, so that they run down the two sides to the bottom, whereas it seems from an examination of the door itself that they stopped at the shoulders. Cotman's habit of dividing the object from its surroundings is again apparent here, as grass and leaves and the hint of the rough patched wall (with a plinth of quite

different dimensions from the original) give way to the ordered and intact splendour of the carved doors and their immediate architectural framing.

The common concern to isolate medieval fittings from their contemporary surroundings is suggested most strongly by the very small number of general interior views from before 1850. Only one rather curious interior of St Mary Coslany, by Henry Ninham, has been identified, which shows a woman cleaning a corner of the church, dwarfed by a mountain of woodwork including a hymnboard, pulpit and stalls (NWHCM: 1951.235.1190.B126). For the moment, it is only possible to speculate about the reasons why interior views were so uncommon. One clue is perhaps provided by Cotman's approach of decontextualisation. Modern fittings - box pews, altarpieces, galleries and three decker pulpits - were designed to make churches fit for reformed worship but they were almost certainly also perceived as obstacles to reading a church's medieval origins and fabric. Decontextualising medieval objects allowed them to be presented in a visually satisfying way, to be both particular and typical and to stand out of time (Fig. 12).

In exploring the depiction of the Ultra Aquam churches this last point is perhaps the most striking. By the act of decontextualisation the present of these buildings was separated from their past. From the 1790s Britain underwent near revolutionary changes, socially, economically and politically, and the state of religion, in particular the condition of the Church of England, was a matter of widespread concern. In Norwich these stresses were felt very acutely as the city was riven by political and religious difference. One response to all this upheaval was to turn back towards the medieval as representing a golden age of piety, stability and virtue (Brooks, 1999, 129-152). Thus antiquarianism mediated, albeit often indirectly, the problems of the present and gave hope of a different future. When Dawson Turner described his collection as containing the 'records of the learning and religious zeal of men, who, many centuries ago, inhabited the same spots with ourselves, and were, probably, some of them in the number of our ancestors' his was not just a historical point (Turner, 1841, ii). Similarly, when Cotman drew a mire in front of St Michael's or a broken floor in front of the font in St Saviour's [BL Add MS 29040] he presented his viewers with a contrast that was temporal and metaphorical. This was why decontextualisation was such a common device and why it did not matter that antiquarian drawings were not always entirely accurate. What mattered more was that the medieval past could be imagined intact and beautiful - because then it had the potential to be resurrected.

Methodological Conclusion

Writing the history of the medieval parish churches of Norwich necessarily involves varied approaches to a range of evidence culled from different sources. This paper seeks to exemplify what can emerge when these are brought together in ways that integrate the emerging topography of the city with the documentation and the extant buildings. Crucial to the enterprise is understanding the motivations of individuals and collectives at every stage, not just in the Middle Ages but in succeeding centuries when efforts were made to record relevant data and pass it on to future generations, particularly of Norwich citizens. There seems to have been a sense in certain quarters that Norwich was exemplary. The past provided evidence of the religious, moral and financial commitment of enterprising people to the good of the community and to their own memorialisation. In seeking to retrieve this, we like our predecessors are offering encouragement to sustain and work with this inheritance, but like them too (no doubt) we will come to be seen as operating very much within the parameters of our own cultural concerns and ways of working.

Abbreviations and unpublished sources

BL: British Library

BL Add MSS 23039-40

NWHCM: Norwich Castle Museum and Art Gallery

NWHCM 01/02/1832, MS - Sillett's Letter to the Committee of the Norfolk and Norwich Museum

NCC: wills proved in Norwich Consistory Court, registers held at the Norfolk Record Office (NRO)

NCC Betyns 90/91

NCC Brosyard 84

NCC Brosyard 210

NCC Brosyard 313

NCC Coppinger 77

NCC Gelour 106

NCC Popy 396

NCC Ryxe 47

NCC Ryxe 84

NCC Sayve 37

PROB, wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, held at the National Archives (TNA)

PROB11/9/82

PROB11/12/385

PROB11/13/578

PROB11/17/390

PROB 11/18/461

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Illustrations:

Fig. 1, Map of medieval Norwich north of the Wensum.

Fig. 2, Map indicating the site of St Botolph's and the putative market place.

Fig. 3, St Mary Coslany from the south west.

Fig. 4, West tower of St Michael Coslany from the west.

Fig. 5, Porch spandrel showing the arming of St George, from St George Colegate.

Fig. 6, Interior of St George Colegate, looking east.

Fig. 7, Interior of St Michael Coslany, looking north east.

Fig. 8 James Sillett, lithograph of St George Colegate.

Fig. 9 J. S. Cotman, etching of the Thorpe Chapel at St Michael Coslany.

Fig. 10 J. S. Cotman, etching of the William and Alice Norwich brass at St George Colegate.

Fig. 11 J. S. Cotman, etching of the west door of St Michael Coslany.

Fig. 12 Henry Ninham, Piscina, St Mary Coslany.