

## Abstract

Amongst the most distinctive features of some late-fourteenth-century to mid-sixteenth-century East Anglian parish churches are their open timber roofs with angelic carvings. The relationship between the earliest and most prestigious angel roof at Westminster Hall (c. 1393-9) and these church roofs with carved angels is not straightforward, in terms of either structure or image. Different structural roof types and varied carved angelic representations were concurrent throughout the period, rather than following patterns of linear development. The research has identified connections between patronage and craftsmanship in urban centres and their rural hinterlands.

These roofs present a substantial body of previously neglected visual material for investigating the significance of angelic imagery, the liturgy and lay piety in comprehensive representational schemes, often covering the entire nave. Carved angels form, or are attached to, the beam ends or principal timbers, at prayer, or carrying musical instruments, symbols of Christ's Passion, implements of the Mass or heraldic devices. The distribution of angels had a significant connection to spatial organisation and patterns of activity at ground level. Diverse patterns of attributes were deliberately arranged to guide and affirm multi-sensory lay experience beneath in the nave, their iconography intended as a unified focus for a diverse lay audience, whose participation in the Mass was distinctive and socially important. The research also explores the visual relationships that would have existed between angelic roof programmes and other church art. It has established that there was a deliberate association between nave roof and Rood imagery in a significant group of churches where angels are vested as acolytes. The sacrificial imagery of the Rood is echoed by their Passion symbols or implements of the Mass. Supported by representations of saintly intercessors on chancel screens and on wall-posts, the angelic throng framed the Rood in a redemptive hierarchical ensemble.

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**Structure and Image in Late Medieval East Anglian Angel Roofs**

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Volume 1: Text

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## List of abbreviations

Add. – Additional

BAA – British Archaeological Association

BL – British Library

CPAT – Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust

DCN – Dean and Chapter of Norwich

DN – Diocese of Norwich

ERO – Essex Record Office

FCB – Faculty books

Fol. – Folio

HEA – Historic England Archive

HD – Private records, artificial and miscellaneous

IPMA – Ipswich, Suffolk: Church of St Matthew

KL – King's Lynn Borough Archives

KN – Knapton, Norfolk: Church of St Peter

MMA – Museum of Modern Art, New York

MS – Manuscripts

NCH – Norwich

NFK – Norfolk

NHER – Norfolk Historic Environment Record

NRO – Norfolk Record Office

NWHCM – Norwich Castle Museum

RIBA – Royal Institute of British Architecture

SC – George Gilbert Scott Junior, series 1 office papers

SROB – Suffolk Record Office (Bury St Edmunds)

SROI – Suffolk Record Office (Ipswich)



# **Structure and Image in Late Medieval East Anglian Angel Roofs**

## **Introduction**

### Context

Roofs with carved angels exemplify the peak of refinement and intricacy reached in late-fourteenth-century English structural and ornamental roof carpentry, across a variety of roof types. Unlike fragments of glazing or individual font carvings, these roofs present a unique opportunity to examine the significance of angelic imagery in comprehensive representational schemes, often spanning the entire nave. This thesis begins to address the surprising lack of their in-depth comparative study to date.

There is yet to be a detailed national survey of medieval angel roofs built in England, marrying analysis of extant material with documentary sources. My research has shown that to state that ‘over 170’ of these roofs survive (in varying states of repair) is an underestimation.<sup>1</sup> Counting roofs is fraught with pitfalls; some are inaccurately dated or omitted by certain sources, and those located in church aisles in particular are easily overlooked.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding these issues, carved angels seem to have prevailed especially in medieval East Anglia, rather than in other similarly wealthy areas, where some equally sophisticated churches were also built (Fig.1). This bias cannot be explained

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<sup>1</sup> Rimmer 2015, p. 1. Rimmer made the first serious and valuable attempt at plotting their distribution.

<sup>2</sup> Beech 2015, pp. 225-228; Haward 1999, pp. 170-172. Beech identified errors in Haward’s map of national distribution of medieval hammer-beam roofs, due to Haward’s apparent reliance upon a single source, which recorded some post-medieval non-East Anglian roofs as medieval; however, Beech and other sources cite Hitcham as ‘clearly post-medieval’, and it certainly includes Jacobean details, but there are late medieval elements, as noted in chapter four. My gazetteer was compiled using a range of written and photographic sources in addition to site surveys; where unable to undertake direct material study, I was sometimes unable to make a firm judgement because of gaps or contradictions in those sources.

simply by the concentration of extant medieval churches in the region.<sup>3</sup> The catalyst for the emergence of these parochial angel roofs was the royal roof at Westminster Hall (c. 1393-c. 1399), as discussed in chapter one. Elite East Anglian witnesses to its unveiling, such as Michael de la Pole and Bishop Despenser of Norwich, appear to have introduced a particular patronal taste for angelic roof imagery to the region, which was often adapted to specific circumstances by inventive local craftsmen, across a range of roof types.

There are notable exceptions to this general rule. The hammer-beam angel roof at Exeter Law Library (c. 1425), possibly a canon's residence in the fifteenth century, is a refined response to the Westminster design in form and iconography, with richly moulded timbers, pierced spandrel tracery and angels carved into the beams, bearing painted heraldic shields.<sup>4</sup> Other aspects of the roof are characteristic of local Devon carpentry, found in other hall roofs in the vicinity, particularly the coved sector at its apex, and varied boss imagery.<sup>5</sup> A contrasting approach is taken at York All Saints, North Street, where the boarded chancel and adjacent north and south chapel roofs (mid fifteenth century) are adorned with angels on the undersides of unbraced beams, or planks, recalling the construction, if not the carving, of the angelic beams at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel (c. 1401-1419). They are finely carved demi-angels, emerging from cloud. Those in the chancel have been brightly painted, unlike the bare wood of the chapel roofs, but the carvings and roof form are the work of the same craftsmen. Their attributes encompass musical instruments, implements of the Mass, crowns and scrolls; there are blank shields in the south aisle, alongside these other symbols. The ecclesiastical emphasis extends to most of the angels' attire, although some are feathered, including an energetic full figure, bearing a scroll, in a feathered suit (Figs. 2a and 2b). Some angel roofs outside East

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<sup>3</sup> Champion 2015, p. iix. 'East Anglia contains almost as many medieval churches as the rest of England taken as a whole, with more than 650 in the county of Norfolk alone.' However, the raw statistics do not explain the distribution of angel roofs within these counties.

<sup>4</sup> Historic England Research Report 21/2011, pp. i-69, especially p. 7; Cherry and Pevsner 1991, p. 412.

<sup>5</sup> Cherry and Pevsner 1991, p. 413.

Anglia are related to the region through patronage, as at Ewelme St Mary, where the fifteenth-century roof of the chapel of St John is associated with Alice, Duchess of Suffolk, whose tomb canopy is adjacent to the north.

Roofs in continental Europe are largely beyond the scope of this thesis, aside from brief reference to precedents to Westminster Hall in terms of scale, in chapter two. Parochial angel roofs appear to be peculiar to England and Wales, reflecting the impact of Westminster Hall and a courtly cult of angels, the quality of carpentry and carving, and in East Anglia, the dearth of indigenous stone for vaulting. Stone was deployed for church roofs more often on the continent.<sup>6</sup> However, continental angelic roof imagery merits further investigation. Fifteenth-century painted angels carry scrolls bearing liturgical texts on the stone vaulting of the choir at St Tugdual Cathedral in Tréguier, Brittany, in France, for example, confirming the decorum of angelic roof imagery in the region. A number of other churches in Brittany have timber barrel-vaulted roofs reminiscent of those in the West Country, and material analysis would discern whether there is a related pattern in terms of imagery on the bosses.

### Structure of thesis

The relationship between structure and image is at the core of the thesis. The term 'angel roof' is often used with imprecision or seen as exclusive to hammer-beam structures. My initial task was to establish the exact nature of the material I would be dealing with, establishing typologies through unprecedented systematic surveys in the field. The primary method underlying the thesis is the comprehensive direct material study of the wood carvings and timber construction of late medieval roofs, especially in Norfolk and Suffolk. This physical assessment confirmed that the variety of roof structures with carved angels matched the diversity of those angelic representations and their locations within roofs. When combined with documentary evidence, it became clear that these roof and carving types co-existed throughout the period c. 1400-c. 1540, rather than following patterns of linear development.

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<sup>6</sup> Salzman 1967, p. 210.

## Chapter one: Courtly angels: Westminster Hall and Norwich St Giles

Chapter one introduces Richard II's cult of angels, culminating in the earliest and most prestigious angel roof at Westminster Hall. Since its inception, the structure of the Westminster roof has been discussed at length, as have precedents for its hammer-beam form. The functions of its structural components have been contested, without complete agreement. Chapter one introduces the issue of the complex nature of the relationship between the royal roof structure and those of East Anglian angel roofs. Although the latter are often seen as synonymous with hammer-beams, they span a wide range of structural forms, as discussed in more detail later, particularly in chapters two and five.

Scholarly debate has overlooked analysis of the iconography of the royal roof, with its carved hammer-beam angels, bearing shields charged with the royal arms. The chapter explores the courtly origins of this motif of the angel as quasi-heavenly esquire. Few East Anglian angel roofs would follow this heraldic model, which was allied to elite patronage, with chivalric connotations. Parochial roof angels commonly projected alternative ecclesiastical displays, as pioneered at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, discussed in chapter two. The nave roof at Norwich St Giles represents a remarkable early exception, its hammer-beam angels bearing shields painted with the contemporary royal arms, in a unremittingly Lancastrian display. This exemplar appears to display a uniquely unambiguous dialogue with the royal roof. This strategy is compared with ecclesiastical shield iconography at Carbrooke, and other shield imagery in East Anglian angel roofs.

## Chapter two: Heavenly angels: King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel and the early development of East Anglian angel roofs

Chapter two illustrates the principal research methodology of the thesis, with analysis of an important early case study at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel (c. 1400-c. 1419), where unprecedented access was made possible via scaffolding to survey this influential early roof type which differs in significant respects from its probable model, the Westminster Hall roof. The chapter

develops the thesis that the relationship between the Westminster roof and church roofs with carved angels in East Anglia is not straightforward, in terms of either structure or image. Early fifteenth-century East Anglian roofs often retained existing arch-braced and tie-beam technology and their hammer-beams are frequently at variance with the Westminster model. Detailed scrutiny of the alternating arch-braced tie-beam with queen-post and angelic hammer-beam structure devised at King's Lynn is followed by discussion of key examples which illustrate its pervasive influence.

The chapter also reveals the influential and ambitious roof spanning the nave and chancel at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel as a persuasive model for the representation of beam angels attired as acolytes at the Mass carrying Passion, musical or Eucharistic attributes and its wide dispersal, especially across the west of the region. This overtly orthodox iconography consciously signalled lay devotion and support for the church in an era of dangerous confusion and ambiguity. In other early field studies, I explored comparable angel roof structures to trace the development of this structural and iconographic type, undertaking systematic photography, and measuring and recording roof structures and carved angels. This empirical analysis was combined with scrutiny of documentary sources to ascertain the origins and development of roof structures and to approach some understanding of their medieval significance and function. Chapter two introduces these aspects of selected East Anglian angel roofs to the west of the region in unprecedented detail: timber structure and production, angels, iconography and iconoclasm and patronage and production. It examines their early development in their regional context, considering how the expertise and fashion for complex timber church roofs with carved angelic representation arrived at its concentrated expression in the eastern counties.

### Chapter three: Structure and image: late medieval angel roofs in Norwich and Ipswich

Chapter three examines the variety of late medieval parish church roofs with angelic carvings or motifs in Norwich, which largely corresponds with the range of roof imagery and forms found across the county, including tie-beam,

arch-braced and single hammer-beam structures. The communal funding of most of these projects by the elite merchant class, often apparently in collaboration with the clergy, is as significant as their differences, perhaps finding its clearest expression in the innovatory faux-vaulted form of the roof at St Peter Mancroft (c. 1440-c.1460). Yet ambition and invention were not confined to the largest parish church in the city, as illustrated by the refined carvings and unique imagery at St Peter Hungate (c. 1440-c. 1460), raising interesting questions regarding the relationship between patronage and craftsmanship in the parish church and the cathedral. The chapter locates the development of these designs in a climate of intense experimentation and innovation, comparing the transfer of forms between churches in Norwich and the countryside with those in Ipswich and its rural hinterland. It also considers the degree to which invention and imitation in medieval church roofs are evidenced by the relative quality of carving and the degree of coherence and complexity of their iconographic schemes.

#### Chapter four: The iconography of angel roofs

Chapter four sets East Anglian roof schemes into the contexts of the contemporary proliferation of interest in angels. Through case studies such as Earl Stonham St Mary in Suffolk (c. 1500), this chapter examines the relationship between angelic roof imagery and iconography in other media and areas of the medieval church, with particular reference to the heavenly hierarchy visualised in Rood sculpture and on chancel screens. In these and other case studies, it explores the relative dearth of references to the angelic orders in roof schemes, the attire of angelic carvings, and the ecclesiastical focus of their attributes and wall-post figures. The embodiment of angels is explored. The inclusion of angelic and other imagery in these late medieval roofs was not confined to wooden carvings on the beams, cornices and wall-posts, but extended to painted ceillures and stone corbels. The thesis considers factors at play in the selection of different strategies such as the stone relief fragment at Stonham Aspal and examines the iconography of angels and saints as roof supporters across media in these roofs. Case studies such as Necton All Saints illuminate the relationship between structure, image and colour.

## Chapter five: Towards a typology of angel roofs: single frame to double hammer-beam

Roof angels are often associated with hammer-beam structures in East Anglia, and their frequent correspondence is significant. Hammer-beam design provided unique opportunities for carved angelic display, as chapter two also indicates. However, as chapter five reveals, roof angels are manifest in every structural roof type from c. 1400-c. 1540, from early single-framed scissor-braced examples to late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century double hammer-beam developments, disproving any narrative of chronological progression. Within hammer-beam construction, horizontal beam angels and beam-end angelic carvings were concurrent from the earliest structures, at King's Lynn and at Debenham St Mary (c. 1397-c. 1409) respectively. Diversity in structure and iconography continued to characterise later angel roofs and the deployment of angelic roof imagery endured as the Reformation approached.

### Appendices

Appendix one illustrates the different structural roof types diagrammatically. Appendix two is a table compiled using laser measurements taken in situ. It includes the scale of each roof for comparative purposes, the location of the roof in the church and the pitch of each roof, to corroborate the wide variation of roof pitch during the period, largely according to roof type. Steeply pitched roofs continued to co-exist alongside some of exceptionally low pitch, as at Blythburgh Holy Trinity in Suffolk. Shallow pitch reduced the downward thrust of a roof, potentially risking roof spread, and limiting weight. It needed a lead covering and it was arguably an aesthetic choice.<sup>7</sup> Appendix three is a gazetteer of roof types across the eastern region. It is hoped to develop this navigational tool further, sharing a version online, and adding to the number of roofs surveyed in detail in situ and understanding of roof patterns within the wider region.

### Roofs as Heavenly Canopies

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<sup>7</sup> McDermott 2005, pp. 3-4.

Late medieval angels dwelt in heaven, a divine Jerusalem of eternal joy and salvation. The rich iconography of heaven in the Middle Ages was adaptable, although its location was resolved. Scripture placed heaven in the celestial realm and Christian imagery reflected this early on. This lofty location was perceived as accessible, however; angels ascended and descended by a ladder, according to Jacob's dream as described in Genesis 28:12. This provided a model for the route to deliverance for humanity.<sup>8</sup> The prospect of angelic support for the soul on this journey was made tangible (and fear of the alternative option was also instilled) by the framing of Day of Judgement images across the chancel arch by roof angels, as at Earl Stonham in Suffolk.<sup>9</sup> The movement of angels and saints between heaven and earth was also rendered palpable in medieval church dramas and ceremonies.<sup>10</sup>

Medieval parish churches and cathedrals represented earthly models of the celestial realm and were settings within which earth and heaven could be united in worship. Architectural design, visual imagery and material furnishings echoed with musical harmony and were infused with incense in a mnemonic assault upon the senses. Davidson's contention that the conception of the church roof or vault in particular as symbolic of heaven prevailed in the late medieval period is supported by extant carved angelic and saintly representations, foliate motifs and records of dramatic ceremonies.<sup>11</sup> To these, one could add liturgical evidence and contemporary ideas about angels and saints.

The parochial angel roof was not envisaged as a static and decorative protective sheath, but reflected the attitudes, activity and movement of the laity and clergy beneath. This thesis argues for an experiential engagement with its design from the perspective of its viewers, as Crossley argues.<sup>12</sup> Just as Lunnon interprets the composition of medieval church porches using

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<sup>8</sup> Davidson 1994, p. 3. This imagery is found in English wall painting, as at Chaldon in Surrey.

<sup>9</sup> Tristram 1955, pp. 251-252. A wall painting at Starston shows two angels raising a soul up into clouds.

<sup>10</sup> Anderson 1963.

<sup>11</sup> Davidson 1994, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> Crossley, in Carruthers 2010, p. 215.



Carruthers' concept of 'ductus', this idea of 'flow, movement, direction, a journey or way' can be applied to the relationship between angelic representations in a roof and the earthly Mass below.<sup>13</sup> The arrangement of angels could be appropriated to emphasise spatial divisions and to reinforce clerical or individual control and power at ground level, as I will show.

However, before considering this experiential relationship further, one needs to explore how East Anglian late medieval parish church roofs with angelic carvings in wood can be reconciled with 'the vision of heaven' which emerged in early Christian religious art, predominantly in the decoration of apses, and persisted throughout the Renaissance and Baroque eras.<sup>14</sup> To do this requires both an examination of scriptural source material for the concept of the roof as celestial canopy and a brief analysis of earlier ecclesiastical roof designs.

The influence of descriptions of Solomon's Temple upon English medieval architecture is well-established, notwithstanding inconsistencies in scriptural sources.<sup>15</sup> In terms of the precedent set for a church roof, the references made to gilded wood appear significant, especially as medieval heaven was "al of brende golde bright."<sup>16</sup>

Other salient references in the scriptural descriptions are to carved 'cherubim' or angels.<sup>17</sup> Unlike many of the carved angels discussed in chapter one, the two gilded Old Testament figures seem to 'stand', but they are accompanied by other angelic representations on the walls and doors

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<sup>13</sup> Lunnon 2012, p. 7; Carruthers, in Carruthers 2010, pp. 190-213.

<sup>14</sup> Lehmann 1945, p. 1.

<sup>15</sup> Lunnon 2012, pp. 29-30 and pp. 39-40; Fergusson 2011, p. 57.

<sup>16</sup> There are references in the First Book of Kings, the Second Book of Chronicles and the prophecies of Ezekiel. I have referred to the Wycliffe and Vulgate versions of each of these in my research. For example, 1 Kings 22: 'Nothing was in the temple that was not covered with gold; but also he covered with gold all the altar of God's answering place.'

<sup>17</sup> 1 Kings 6, 23-29: 'And he made in God's answering place two cherubims of the trees of olives, of ten cubits of height... and he graved them with diverse gravings and smoothness; and he made in those walls cherubims, and palms, and diverse paintures, as standing forth and going out of the wall.'

and are described as spreading their wings 'over the ark'.<sup>18</sup> It is possible to imagine that details of a particular version inspired divergent interpretations of the motif in different parish churches, from the open-winged angels hovering at King's Lynn, to the unusual standing cherubim at Cawston St Agnes.

There is a compelling case for the derivation of celestial iconography in Byzantine churches from classical Roman domed vaults. Modernist orthodoxy promoted the dome primarily as a functional method of vaulting; a more persuasive argument that the earliest domed structures were made of timber implies that later masonry forms reflected 'an idea' beyond pure function.<sup>19</sup> This 'idea' seems to have transcended Christianity.<sup>20</sup>

Although Karl Lehmann's thesis regarding their origins has been contested, the prevalence of heavenly allusions and motifs in early Christian and medieval vaulting which he asserts is undisputed.<sup>21</sup> These references and images are diverse, yet they seem to be united by their blend of ordered meaning and aesthetic appeal.<sup>22</sup> In addition, this early Christian 'point of departure' resonates in terms of the formal development of the winged figure as a supportive ceiling motif in a celestial context, reconciling archaic painted Etruscan tomb Sirens with fifteenth-century East Anglian timber angels.<sup>23</sup> A further signpost on this iconographic journey is found within the square sixth-

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<sup>18</sup> 1 Kings 8, 6-7: 'And [the] priests brought the ark of [the] bond of peace of the Lord into his place, into God's answering place of the temple, into the holy of holy things, under the wings of the cherubims...And the cherubims spreaded forth their wings over the place of the ark; and they covered the ark, and the bars thereof above.'

<sup>19</sup> Smith 1950, p. 3; Stewart 2008, p. 170.

<sup>20</sup> Grabar 1990, p. 21.

<sup>21</sup> For a challenge to Lehman's interpretation, see Mathews 1982, p.15; for a functional interpretation of the domed form see Ruggieri 1991, pp.141-5; for imagery in early Christian apses see Brenk 2010; Ruggieri 1991, pp. 141-5 proposed a more functional rationale for the adoption of the domed form.

<sup>22</sup> They range from the starry vaulting of Sant' Apollinaire at Ravenna to the figural sphere and floral imagery at San Marco in Venice.

<sup>23</sup> Lehmann 1945, p. 2 asserts that the Sirens were associated with 'the celestial sphere' and that they carry a canopy of heaven.

century sanctuary vault mosaic at San Vitale in Ravenna (Fig. 3), and in a truncated rectangular version in the twelfth-century mosaics at Torcello Cathedral.<sup>24</sup> Four winged angels stand on orbs; they reference the four corners of the world and support the Lamb of God in a medallion or wreath located above the altar, Christ's sacrifice echoed in the Eucharistic 'sacrifice' below. Their wings and horizontal appearance stem from pagan triumphal imagery, appropriated to signal their spiritual, incorporeal nature and their 'cosmic acclamation of Christ's rule.'<sup>25</sup>

The spread of the concept of the celestial dome is associated with the Christian Neoplatonist writer Pseudo-Dionysius (late fifth or early sixth century), his pyramidal 'Ecclesiastical Hierarchy', and the 'Christianization of Neo-Platonism.'<sup>26</sup> In his hierarchical system, Dionysius placed earthly beings in all their variety at the lowest level and the illumination of 'singularity and unity within the Godhead' at the highest, the nine orders of angels positioned in between. Stewart describes the expression of this philosophy in the central dome of Hagia Sophia at Edessa, representing 'the zenith of the Pseudo-Dionysian pyramid', outlining the design from the singular cross mosaic at the apex of the dome to the 'increasing plurality' of the architectural idiom below.<sup>27</sup>

Centuries later, traces of this elite manifestation of an idea appear to have been transferred to the parochial context and rectangular timber roof and clerestory of the late medieval East Anglian parish church. Angelic carvings were positioned to accompany the earthly throng in the activity and experience of the mass and in their aspirations to 'unity and illumination' above.<sup>28</sup> Although the position of these angels above the clerestory windows was not universal, it was often preferred and the flooding of churches with

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<sup>24</sup> Maguire 2012, p. 4 and p. 102. Maguire notes that the 'sacred figures are embedded in a rich framework of nature-derived motifs'; the engagement of angelic roof schemes with imagery from nature will be explored in in chapter 3.

<sup>25</sup> Peers 2001, p. 40.

<sup>26</sup> Stewart 2008, pp. 176-7.

<sup>27</sup> Stewart 2008, p. 177.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, p. 177.

the extra light must have been embraced as more than a functional convenience.<sup>29</sup>

By the late medieval period, vaulting was probably especially imbued with celestial associations, with connotations of wealth and power, as a roofing mode of choice in elite church building. Wilson asks whether the design of the roof at Westminster Hall, with its 'large arches equating to major vault ribs and small repetitive panels approximating to the surface tracery of fan vaults' was contrived to 'enable it to emulate vaulting as a symbol of Heaven', noting the significance of the early application to the roof of the 'heaven-invoking term *celatura*', generally suggestive of ceilings.<sup>30</sup> In fact, carpenters and masons worked closely together, enjoyed similar status and emulated each other's work at this time.<sup>31</sup> In subsequent hammer-beam roofs at St Peter Mancroft Norwich (Fig. 4), at Ringland St Peter and in Suffolk at Framlingham St Michael, the beams are actually concealed by timber fan vaulting, although this is an exceptional device in this context. Chapter three considers why this format was not adopted more widely, especially as wooden vaulting was nothing new, and enjoyed structural advantages.<sup>32</sup> It had been employed successfully in some celebrated major ecclesiastical building projects, such as the lantern at Ely Cathedral, York Minster, St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle and the presbytery at St Albans Cathedral, and there is compelling archaeological evidence for lost twelfth- and thirteenth-century wooden ribbed vaulting in several churches, including the chancel at Benington All Saints in Lincolnshire.<sup>33</sup>

E. W. Tristram's reconstruction of the thirteenth-century polychrome scheme of the wooden vaulted presbytery roof at St Albans (c. 1285) has been essentially verified by painting conservators Catherine Hassall and Pauline Plummer; the foliated bosses, and contours of foliate scrolls visible through later paintwork, reveal a precedent for the later adornment of angel roofs

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<sup>29</sup> Lunnon 2012, p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam, 1997, pp. 59 and pp. 287.

<sup>31</sup> Coldstream, in Ford 1988, p. 77.

<sup>32</sup> Hearn and Thurlby 1997, p. 55.

<sup>33</sup> Howard and Crossley 1917, p. 131; Hewett 1980, p. 169; Hearn and Thurlby 1997, pp. 49-54.

within wider iconographic programmes, as discussed in chapter four.<sup>34</sup> The painted wooden nave ceiling at Peterborough Cathedral dates from the first half of the thirteenth century.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to the St Albans roof, its design does not reference stone vaulting; instead, its series of lozenges evoke opulent late antique mosaic flooring and late twelfth- and early thirteenth-century English and French Benedictine symbolic pavements.<sup>36</sup>

Notwithstanding representations of the Liberal Arts, and the sun and moon to the west, the depictions of kings and bishops along the central 'spine' of the west and centre of the roof, alongside the increasingly 'moral thrust' of the eastern section of the ceiling design, represent an alternative exemplar for later roof imagery, including a cornet-blowing musical angel.<sup>37</sup>

Writing about church porches as tomb canopies, Lunnon cites the long and 'prestigious lineage' of an association between porches and vaulting and the 'combined practical and auspicious nature of vaults'.<sup>38</sup> Porches were singled out for this special architectural treatment because of their perceived importance and it is unusual to find stone vaulting in other parts of Norfolk parish churches. Of course, stone vaulting was also costly, especially in a region where there was no local stone, and material would have to be imported from elsewhere. Whereas a wealthy patron might be prepared to fund such an elite structure to cover his own burial, the expense of constructing stone vaulting over an entire nave was probably prohibitive. Any building strategy (especially one as expensive and ambitious as stone vaulting) would have been the result of a complex assessment of several factors, including patronal and parochial taste, availability of a suitably skilled workforce, sufficient funds and competing demands upon expenses.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Harrison, McNeil, Plummer and Simpson 2012, p. 258 and pp. 261-262. The painted designs of the window arch mouldings seem to have resembled those of the vault ribs.

<sup>35</sup> Peterborough Nave Ceiling Conservation Project 2017 [https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/peterborough\\_he\\_2017/](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/peterborough_he_2017/) [accessed 14 April 2019]

<sup>36</sup> Binski, in Backhouse 2003, pp. 42-43.

<sup>37</sup> Binski, in Backhouse 2003, p. 47, p. 54 and p. 56. The angel is 'one of the earliest musical angels of the period, along with at least one figure painted on the vault of the south-eastern transept of Salisbury cathedral c. 1240.'

<sup>38</sup> Lunnon 2012, pp. 92 and pp. 114. See also Lunnon 2012, in Church Monuments 27.

<sup>39</sup> Lunnon 2012, p. 115.

Weighing these considerations inevitably led to diverse solutions, as evidenced by the variety and invention of strategies represented in extant medieval East Anglian church roofs.<sup>40</sup>

### Medieval Angels

Medieval belief in angels was deep and intricate, a conviction 'often intermingling facts of faith with picturesque fables'.<sup>41</sup> However challenging it is to encapsulate the nature of such a complex belief system, it is generally agreed that a belief in angels was widely held, probably reaching a peak in the later medieval period.<sup>42</sup> Belief in angels was not exclusive to Christianity. The Christian angelic image represented a synthesis of historic near-eastern religious concepts; however, this was not a passive absorption of ideas from past tradition, but a dynamic and evolving belief, just as angels themselves were viewed as imbued with agency.<sup>43</sup>

The impact of angels upon humanity was perceived to be varied, reflecting their diverse manifestations and actions in scripture. These messengers, mediators, protectors and guardians could also play a destructive role, dispensing divine justice. They were held primarily responsible for guiding humanity to salvation, as co-worshippers and models of the veneration of God and of good Christian conduct. The Feast of St Michael and All Angels on 29 September was an occasion to honour and remember all of the angels. The feast day confirmed the role of angelic beings within lay piety and European religious practice.<sup>44</sup> Jacobus de Voragine (c. 1229-1298)

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<sup>40</sup> For example, at Wiggenhall St Germans, the bench-ends were the financial priority over a relatively rustic timber roof, whereas at St Nicholas Chapel King's Lynn, funding and patronal taste was such that attention to bench-ends did not preclude the adornment of the roof with decorative mouldings and carvings.

<sup>41</sup> Chase 2002, p. 253.

<sup>42</sup> In discussion, Heslop has observed that many church dedications to St Michael actually pre-date 1100.

<sup>43</sup> Sangha 2012, p. 6; Chase 2002, p. 253.

<sup>44</sup> Keck 1998, p. 179.

emphasised their support for humanity in his endorsement of this tradition, stating:

‘There are many reasons for honouring and praising the angels. They are our guardians, our servants, our brothers, and our fellow-citizens; they carry our souls into heaven; they present our prayers before God; they are the noble soldiers of the eternal King and the consolers of the afflicted.’<sup>45</sup>

Scripture is the principal source from which our understanding of the nature of angels is derived and early Christian theologians were concerned to position their examination of the angelic host in scriptural terms. However, although Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite (c. fifth century CE) based his most comprehensive, celebrated and influential description of the celestial hierarchy on scriptural analysis, he was compelled to refer also to other sources to articulate its entirety and equilibrium.<sup>46</sup> Although his hierarchy was not the only one proposed by Latin authors (most of whom placed the Seraphim closest to God, with Angels as the lowest order), it was unprecedented in its orderly precision.<sup>47</sup>

Pseudo-Dionysius separated the nine angelic orders mentioned in scripture into three subdivisions; the first comprised Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, the second, Virtues, Dominations or Dominions and Principalities and the third, Powers, Archangels and Angels.<sup>48</sup> The first order was described as the most elevated and equal union of transcendent divine beings, nearest to and with God. The second order ‘suggests “ordained power”; thus the Dominions preside, the Virtues operate...and the Powers repel harmful forces’, ordering the universe.<sup>49</sup> Finally, the third order was

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<sup>45</sup> Voragine 2012, p. 593.

<sup>46</sup> Peers 2001, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup> Chase 2002, p. 19. The number of orders proposed was usually, but not always, nine. Jerome cites only seven and places Archangels as the lowest order, for example.

<sup>48</sup> Pseudo-Dionysius, in Luiheid and Rorem 1987, pp. 160-161; Peers 2001, p. 41. ‘seraphim (Is. 6), cherubim (Gen. 3:24, Ex. 25:22), thrones (Col. 1:16), virtues (Eph. 1:21), dominations, principalities, powers (Eph. 1:21, Col. 1:16), archangels (1 Thess. 4:16, Jude 9), angels (Gen. 16:7), for example.’

<sup>49</sup> Keck 1998, p. 61.

most closely engaged with humanity.<sup>50</sup> The specific attributes or functions of each order were conducted to secure universal veneration of the Trinity.<sup>51</sup> Although this hierarchy did not directly influence iconography, it set the parameters for later development of angelic imagery.

Wide-ranging descriptions of the seraphim and cherubim can be found in scriptural sources, whereas other angelic orders, whilst acknowledged, are not denoted in terms of specific qualities.<sup>52</sup> This omission of descriptive detail soon led early Christian artists to develop the use of the winged anthropomorphic form to symbolise angelic beings, within a heavenly context. Wings prevailed as angelic attributes from the fourth century.<sup>53</sup> This persistent generic iconography was derived from pagan precedents of the nikes and other beings located between earth and the celestial realm, albeit in an indirect and discriminating manner.<sup>54</sup> It could even be employed by artists in the representation of the cherubim and seraphim, in contradiction of descriptions in holy texts.<sup>55</sup> Peers also asserts the role of the liturgy in the development of Christian angelic iconography, yet Biblical references would

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<sup>50</sup> Keck 1998, pp. 61-62. Whereas the Seraphim, Cherubim, Archangels and Angels could be debated separately, the intermediate five orders were subject to more general discussion of the entire hierarchy. Hence they were more obscure and related medieval discussion was often vague. Greater clarity applied to the roles of the third order. It was commonly believed that Principalities were concerned with wise governance of earthly domains, Archangels guided throngs of people and individuals had guardian angels.

<sup>51</sup> Chase 2002, p. 19. These attributes and missions varied slightly.

<sup>52</sup> Peers 2001, p. 43.

<sup>53</sup> Peers 2001, pp. 36-41. However, as Peers explains, 'Christian painters and mosaicists determined the appropriateness of wings...according to the context.' Angelic intervention in the earthly sphere was represented in the form of wingless creatures.

<sup>54</sup> Peers 2001, p. 28. Wings 'were the attributes of numerous personifications, such as the winds, psychopompic figures, souls and astrological symbols.'

<sup>55</sup> Peers 2001, pp. 25 and pp. 41-45. The late fourth-century Sariguzel sarcophagus in the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul is cited as an example, both of early Christian dependency upon pagan models, especially winged victories, and the differences between the Christian figures and their pagan antecedents. Also, disregarding Isaiah's revelation (6:1-3), Seraphim appear as winged men at fifth-century Alahan in south-east Asia Minor, whilst a thirteenth-century anthropomorphic cherubim stands guard on the façade of the Church of Hagia Sophia at Trebizond.



also seem to account for other representations of the two most elevated angelic orders as 'six-winged and many eyed', distinguishable solely by accompanying inscriptions.<sup>56</sup>

The ambiguity or 'compelling paradox'<sup>57</sup> of Christian angelic imagery reflects the diversity and ambivalence of angelic scriptural references and the belief that angelic nature could not be fully comprehended. Theologians disagreed regarding the extent of their immateriality, Pseudo-Dionysius being one of those who emphasised their essentially spiritual nature.<sup>58</sup> The vague or generic quality of Christian angelic iconography suggests that artists and patrons may not always have been concerned with the distinguishing features of the angelic orders in Byzantine art and a similar ambiguity appears to characterise representation of angelic orders in late medieval English parish churches.<sup>59</sup>

Lay understanding of the angelic orders was more likely to derive from others' interpretations of the writings of Pseudo-Dionysius, liturgical texts and the Bible.<sup>60</sup> There is evidence that detailed knowledge of at least some of the orders was not widespread among the laity; this is unsurprising, given that texts were generalised in their discussion of the hierarchy. Notwithstanding, depictions of the angelic hierarchy exist in late medieval East Anglian chancel screen paintings and glass, although these are rare survivors; there may have been more (Fig. 5). Seventeen extant fourteenth- and fifteenth-century representations of the entire angelic hierarchy have been identified in England, across different modes, from glass to wall painting, alongside other

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<sup>56</sup> Peers 2001, p. 48 cites the liturgy of John Chrysostom and other examples. However, the Cherubim and Seraphim are referred to as six-winged and many-eyed in scripture; the Seraphim in Isaiah 6:2 and Cherubim also in Revelation 4:8, for example.

<sup>57</sup> Peers 2001, p. 203.

<sup>58</sup> Peers 2001, p. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Peers 2001, p. 49. He cites the amalgamation of the iconography of the cherubim and seraphim as evidence; this ambiguity means that it is often only through inscriptions that one can confirm the angelic orders.

<sup>60</sup> Morgan, in Scholz, Rauch and Hess 2004, p. 212; Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, in Taylor and Smith 1997, p. 231 and p. 257, n. 19 and n. 20.

partial examples.<sup>61</sup> Inscriptions could be used to aid identification of images, as there was such diversity in the iconography of the angelic orders.<sup>62</sup> It is therefore a moot point whether the orders are represented in selected East Anglian angelic roof carvings, given this lack of inscriptions or consistency.<sup>63</sup> Given their apparent role as assistants at the Mass in a substantial number of these roofs, it seems appropriate that they might be represented as angels or archangels, as the lower orders were seen as being closer to humanity.<sup>64</sup>

Unlike Nike, the pagan Greek goddess and exemplar of the winged figure, early Christian angels were often depicted as male, although they were generally assumed to be sexless, incorporeal celestial beings. Male beauty could be shown in a way that looks feminine to the modern eye. Gender in medieval representations was denoted more by dress than by facial features and hair. Christian angels were often depicted wearing male items of clothing, such as armour or ecclesiastical vestments and were perceived as androgynous. In the prose treatise, *Dives and Pauper* (1405-c. 1410), when Dives asks why angels have been painted in the likeness of young men, Pauper responds that the likeness of man 'in soule is most accordant to aungelys kende.'<sup>65</sup> Some later representations are more feminised, as in the Wilton Diptych, a portable altarpiece for Richard II (c. 1395-1399), now in the

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<sup>61</sup> Morgan, in Scholz, Rauch and Hess 2004, p. 215. Also, Nelson 1917, pp. 115-116 proposes a detailed list of the orders of angels represented in an alabaster panel at Norwich Cathedral, dating from c. 1450-1460 and exhibited in the 'Masterpieces: Art and East Anglia' exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts in 2013.

<sup>62</sup> The representation of the nine orders of angels in the east chancel window at Salle is an example of this, although some of the labels have been lost. See:

<http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/salle/history.html>

<sup>63</sup> Peers 2001, p. 49. Keck 1998, p. 185 also confirms the lack of representation of some of the orders in medieval drama, noting that the entire hierarchy of angels are recorded in only two of almost one hundred plays in Heinze's survey.

<sup>64</sup> The sixth-century mosaic representations of six-winged seraphim or cherubim in the pendentives of the central dome at Hagia Sophia in Constantinople appear to have been elite exceptions to this rule in relation to angelic roof imagery. As Peers 2001, p. 49 observes, 'although these creatures had six wings, neither the number of wings nor even the presence and absence of wings can be relied upon for general identification.'

<sup>65</sup> Barnam 1976, p. 95.

National Gallery, London. To twenty-first-century eyes, a minority of angelic representations in East Anglian church roofs have a more feminine appearance than others in their legion, although their attire may caution one to assume their androgyny. They are the subject of analysis in this thesis.

The ubiquitous conceptual and even tangible presence of angelic beings in late medieval Catholic ideology and culture is reflected in their repeated representation in art and church furnishings, including timber church roofs of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. It is easy to view these carvings as ornament and to disregard their emblematic significance as 'good to think with.'<sup>66</sup> However, like the saints and prophets depicted alongside or instead of them, in screen and wall paintings, glass and stone, these illusionistic figures brought the heavenly realm to life. The thematic programmes embodied by heavenly hosts of roof angels are diverse; their individual components need to be viewed within the contexts of their overall arrangements and the buildings they surmount, following Heslop's methodology with regard to the Angel Choir at Lincoln Cathedral, consecrated in 1280.<sup>67</sup> This earlier, elite scheme resonated in the East of England and the angelic host in the spandrels encompass musicians, bearers of the Instruments of the Passion and signifiers of paradise.<sup>68</sup> Seen in terms of their relationship to the rest of the sculptural programme and its locations within the building, the potential significance of their iconography for the interpretation of many angelic schemes in the roofs of churches to the west of East Anglia is noteworthy.<sup>69</sup>

Keck highlights the early origins of the perception of angels as concelebrants of the liturgy, 'the entire church [benefitting] from the shared presence of angels as co-worshippers.'<sup>70</sup> The presence of roof angels would have

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<sup>66</sup> Binski 2004, p. 268.

<sup>67</sup> Heslop, in Fernie and Crossley 1990, p. 151.

<sup>68</sup> Dean, in the British Archaeological Association Conference Transactions 1986, pp. 90-101.

<sup>69</sup> Heslop, in Fernie and Crossley 1990, p. 155. The combination of motifs representing paradise and those 'about getting there' is comparable to the symbolic objects carried by the roof angels at St Nicholas Chapel King's Lynn and at other churches, including St Mary Mildenhall and St Peter Upwell.

<sup>70</sup> Keck 1998, p. 37 and p. 39.

supported a widely-held view that angelic beings were united with humans in the offering of praise. The vestments of many roof angels support the contention that medieval angels were perceived as assistants at the Heavenly Mass. Elite English precedents for the representation of angels in contemporary liturgical attire (rather than classical tunics) date back to the stone relief carvings of demi-angels in quatrefoils on the façade at Wells Cathedral (designed early 1220s); some are lost, but at least twelve are attired in albs and three wear copes.<sup>71</sup> Stipulated for choir members at the Mass and during processions, such ecclesiastical apparel characterises many East Anglian angelic roof carvings, from their earliest manifestations as at King's Lynn.<sup>72</sup>

During the Sanctus, the congregation prayed that they might join its eternal chant with the angels in heaven.<sup>73</sup> The consecration of the Eucharist was believed to take place, both at the earthly and heavenly altars. At the moment of blessing the faithful may have understood that they were joined with the saints of the Church Triumphant, partaking in the Heavenly Mass.<sup>74</sup> This thesis explores the extent to which roof angels can be regarded as indicators of 'the transformation of sacred space into the infinite reaches of heavenly space', perceived by medieval laity as representations of the association between the church and its earthly liturgy, and the celestial realm and its heavenly Mass.<sup>75</sup>

In chapters two, three and four, the ecclesiastical attire of many angelic roof carvings, the attributes they carry and their arrangement are surveyed and interrogated closely, to ascertain the nature, extent and degree of

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<sup>71</sup> Malone 2004, pp. 17-26 and pp. 143-144; before the fourteenth century, angels are generally depicted in antique tunics and mantles, as in the (restored) painted vault roundels (c. 1240) of the Guardian Angels Chapel at Winchester Cathedral of the Holy Trinity.

<sup>72</sup> Bailey 1971, p. 14.

<sup>73</sup> Sheingorn, in Williams, ed. 1989, p. 181.

<sup>74</sup> Malone 2004, p. 167 cites the prayer of the *Supplices te rogamus* in the Canon of the Mass in support of this contention: 'We humbly beseech thee, almighty God, command these [gifts] to be borne by the hands of the holy angel to thy altar on high...'

<sup>75</sup> Sheingorn, in Williams, ed. 1989, p. 182.

consistency of their liturgical significance. Other roof angels discussed in these chapters hold heraldic shields; some of these would have been charged with religious armorials, but in other cases, they were appropriated by specific individuals able to pay for angelic guardianship and its advertisement. Both types emerged early in the development of church angel roofs, challenging any suggestion of a linear typology of roof angel designs.

In the treatise *Dives and Pauper*, angels are described as ‘peyntyd fedryd [feathered] and wyt wenggys [wings]’.<sup>76</sup> Angels in feathered suits are characteristic of some late medieval East Anglian chancel screen paintings and many stained glass images. Chapter four explores why they are not ubiquitous in roof carvings. The frequent suggestion that these were copied from mystery play costumes arbitrarily assumes such influence and its direction, without evidence.<sup>77</sup>

Representations of the angelic orders are not consistent, probably reflecting the lack of specific scriptural references and the ease with which late medieval viewers accepted and understood the angelic symbolism of such fluid depictions, like their early Christian predecessors. This flexibility, allied to liturgical concerns, variations in roof structures and patronal interests, led to the diverse strategies adopted by patrons and carvers in the representation of roof angels, from the earliest fifteenth-century models discussed in chapter one, to the eve of the Reformation.

## Literature

Rather as Wrapson observes in relation to screen and roof carpentry, the study of medieval angel roofs falls between disciplines.<sup>78</sup> This is problematic and technical structural studies far outweigh discussions of roof iconography. The earliest study of medieval open timber parish church roofs is that of Brandon and Brandon in 1849, which reflects its Gothic Revival context,

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<sup>76</sup> Heath Barnum 1976, pp. 238-239; Baker 2011, p.68.

<sup>77</sup> Anderson 1963, p. 168. ‘It is generally agreed that the feathered tights of angels, so often shown in art, were theatrical costumes, but to assume they originated on the stage would be dangerous.’

<sup>78</sup> Lucy Wrapson, in a paper titled ‘Thomas Loveday and his “occupation of carpynter’s craft”’, delivered on 5 September 2018 at the BAA Medieval Cambridge conference.

promoting selected roofs from East Anglia and elsewhere as models for restoration and building work, within a 'revival of a purer taste in Architecture'.<sup>79</sup> Its exposition of typology is biased towards tie-beam and hammer-beam construction, yet only two double hammer-beam examples are illustrated.<sup>80</sup> The drawings are valuable in their detail, although generally decontextualised and focused upon transverse rather than longitudinal framing. In 1917, Howard and Crossley lamented the neglect of the study of roofs since the Brandons and proposed their own typology with reference to roof designs across England and Wales.<sup>81</sup> Again, Howard's focus was structural rather than aesthetic or iconographic; his descriptive account was followed by that of Cescinsky and Gribble in 1922, after which the development of medieval roof carpentry was not seriously addressed until Smith's 1958 and Cordingley's 1961 typologies, with the exception of Cautley's brief but insightful typology and gazetteers of roofs in Suffolk and Norfolk.<sup>82</sup> Hewett's late twentieth-century analyses of carpentry development are extremely limited regarding hammer-beam construction and lacking in reference to angel roofs; also, like Smith's and Cordingley's work, they pre-date more recent developments in dendrochronology.<sup>83</sup> As discussed below, the structure of Richard II's elite angel roof at Westminster Hall has been widely researched, especially in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, by Courtenay and Mark, Waddell, Beech et al, although its iconography is curiously neglected, as noted by Munby.<sup>84</sup> Beech has also proposed a structural typology of parochial hammer-beam roofs.<sup>85</sup>

Haward's photographic survey is a rarity in its focus upon carvings rather than structures.<sup>86</sup> Although valuable, it is dogged by conjecture and

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<sup>79</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, pp. 11-16, 20-25 and 88-93.

<sup>81</sup> Howard and Crossley 1917, pp. 86-130; Howard 1914, pp. 293-352.

<sup>82</sup> Cescinsky and Gribble 1922, pp. 54-102; Smith 1958; Cordingley 1961, pp. 73-171; Cautley 1937 and 1949.

<sup>83</sup> Hewett 1980; Hewett 1981; Hewett 1985; Beech 2015, pp. 72-82.

<sup>84</sup> Munby, in BAA 2017, pp. 120-132.

<sup>85</sup> Beech 2015.

<sup>86</sup> Haward 1999, esp. pp. 19-21.

inconsistency, confined largely to Suffolk hammer-beam roofs, particularly spandrel carvings, and reference to angels is brief and descriptive. Cooper's analysis of Suffolk Puritan William Dowsing's iconoclasm, which offers valuable insights into lost angelic carvings, was followed swiftly by Nichols' useful reference tool for extant representations of angels and wall-post figures.<sup>87</sup> Bentley-Cranch, Marshall and Mayer's list of East Anglian angel roofs was refined by Rimmer, in his accessible photographic introduction to the topic.<sup>88</sup>

Studies of medieval angels have increased since the late 1990s, although often within the field of literature rather than art, and lacking reference to angel roofs. Nonetheless, Keck offers invaluable assessment of the integration of angels with the medieval church within an overview of angelology.<sup>89</sup> Translations, interpretations and studies of Pseudo-Dionysius and medieval discourse on angels, such as those by Mayr-Harting and Chase facilitate analysis of the meaning of roof angels.<sup>90</sup> Following the work of Marshall and Walsham regarding angels in the early modern world, Sangha has traced belief in angels from the late medieval period to the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>91</sup>

Despite Woodman's assertion in 1986 that English affection for parish churches accounted for 'an interest and study of parish churches quite out of proportion to their artistic merits', thirteen years later, Binski would observe their relative neglect by art historians (with notable exceptions) in favour of 'the glamour of the great churches', in contrast to religious or social historians such as Duffy or Kümin.<sup>92</sup> Studies were often characterised by fragmentation. Much has changed since then; studies of church art have addressed alabaster, glass and screens in relation to late medieval piety and

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<sup>87</sup> Cooper 2001, esp. pp. 94-96; Nichols 2002, esp. pp. 26-34, pp. 129-238, pp. 289-297, pp. 306-314 and pp. 325-326.

<sup>88</sup> Rimmer 2015, pp. 104-109.

<sup>89</sup> Keck 1998.

<sup>90</sup> Mayr-Harting 1998; Chase 2002.

<sup>91</sup> Sangha 2012.

<sup>92</sup> Woodman 1986, p. 150; Binski 1999, p. 2; Duffy 1992; French, Gibbs and Kümin 1997.

the ‘agency’ of audience and image.<sup>93</sup> A London conference in 2017 evidenced the flourishing and integrated study of parish church furnishings, but angel roofs have still been largely overlooked.<sup>94</sup> This thesis addresses this segregation and argues for the performative role of roof imagery, in concert with other church art and human activity and belief.

## **Chapter 1: Courtly angels: Westminster Hall and Norwich St Giles**

### Introduction

The fourteenth-century description of the ‘land of England [as] Mary’s dowry, whence Angles [are] as angels’ by the Franciscan John Lathbury referenced a much earlier play on words.<sup>95</sup> The story of Pope Gregory’s comparison of pale-faced young fair-haired English boys with God’s angels derived from the north-east of England.<sup>96</sup> Yet angelic roof carvings are particularly concentrated instead within the domain of the East Angles, populating many late-fourteenth- to early-sixteenth-century parish churches in Norfolk, Suffolk and, to a lesser extent, adjoining counties. Angel roofs proliferated across the eastern region in the wake of the unveiling of Richard II’s remodelled roof at Westminster Hall (c. 1393-9), in which hammer-beam angels are appropriated as the king’s guardians and display the royal arms. Given detailed academic scrutiny of this early angel roof form, the lack of analysis of the concentrated spread of parochial versions of this mode across East Anglia seems a remarkable omission.

Yet the relationship between the Westminster angel roof and those in East Anglia is not straightforward. Although the royal roof was a catalyst, its form was never strictly replicated, and angelic carvings took diverse forms in East Anglian parish church roofs of a variety of concurrent structural types from

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<sup>93</sup> For example, Marks 2004; Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson 2017.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Towards an Art History of the Parish Church 1200-1399’, June 2017, at the Courtauld Institute of Art.

<sup>95</sup> Oxford, Exeter College, MS 27, cited by Gordon 2015, pp. 72 and 126.

<sup>96</sup> Bede, in McClure and Collins 2008, pp. 70-71.



c.1400-1540, as shown later in this thesis. The heraldic imagery at Westminster was not generally followed in early fifteenth-century East Anglian roofs, although examples do exist. Perhaps the most notable early exception is found at Norwich St Giles (c.1420s), where the beam angels carry shields painted with the royal arms.

This chapter commences with an examination of the fourteenth-century development of the motif of the angelic shield-bearer, within its distinctly chivalric and courtly context. This is followed by analysis of its expression and function at Westminster Hall. The relationship between structure and imagery in the royal roof is compared to that at Norwich St Giles. Finally, the chapter assesses evidence for the limited popularity of such heraldic imagery in East Anglian nave roofs, where the courtly signifier of the angelic shield was often subverted in favour of ecclesiastical display.<sup>97</sup>

### Courtly angels

The most celebrated and widely-known medieval timber roof with angelic representation is Hugh Herland's splendid roof designed for Richard II at Westminster Hall. It is a tour-de-force of late medieval carpentry. The scholarly attention devoted to the royal roof is not surprising, as it has been accepted as representing the pinnacle of a late medieval roof carpentry tradition unrivalled in Europe, since its inception.<sup>98</sup> However, this interest has largely focused upon its structure, at the expense of the origins and character of its angelic imagery.

The motif of the angelic shield-bearer was a fourteenth-century invention, allied with elite patronage, as exemplified by the iconography of a tin-lead badge of the Black Prince, Edward of Woodstock (c. 1348), now in the British Museum (BM OA.100), in which an angel descends from heaven, bearing a shield charged with his arms (England and France ancient quartered with label of three points) to the kneeling Prince. (Fig.6 ).<sup>99</sup> The large shield is

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<sup>97</sup> Some aisle roofs feature shield-bearing angels, but these are discussed in chapter four.

<sup>98</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam, 1997, pp. 54-5 and p. 274.

<sup>99</sup> Carter 2011, p. 186; The British Museum collection online [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId)

presented to the Prince by God the Father, seated on a throne and bearing an image of Christ crucified. This imagery was designed to convey the sacred and heavenly origins of royal lineage, reinforced further here by the addition of a standing angel holding his crest and helmet.<sup>100</sup> As Lloyd de Beer has shown, there are earlier precedents for such representations.<sup>101</sup> These early depictions of the saintly presentation of the arms of England to the king, and of the association of angels with 'shields of faith' bearing the royal arms, are epitomised respectively in manuscript illuminations from the Milemete Treatise, Oxford, Christ Church MS 92, fol. 5r (1325-1327) and BL Additional 47680f. 10v (1326-1327).<sup>102</sup> The divine source of the royal arms and their angelic association were made increasingly explicit from the 1340s onwards, as illustrated by the iconography of the seventh Great Seal of Edward III, known as the 'Brétigny' seal (May-October 1360, as on Dean and Chapter of Durham, 1.3, Reg. 11). Remarkably, God is represented in a niche above the seated king, who is flanked by the Virgin and Child, St George and angels presenting heraldic shields.<sup>103</sup>

### Richard II, Westminster Hall and Secular Angels

The correlation of angels with Plantagenet imagery intensified further during the rule of Richard II. This took a variety of forms, from dramatic and mechanical performances at his coronation and later triumphal processions, to the painted depiction of eleven angels as his supporters, in ecclesiastical attire and wearing the king's badge of the white hart, in the right wing of the interior of the late-fourteenth-century Wilton Diptych (London, National Gallery), and culminating in the twenty-six carved roof beam angels at Westminster Hall.<sup>104</sup> The significance of the number of angels in the panel

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[=45776&partId=1](#) [accessed 25 February 2018]; The Badge of the Black Prince: British Museum <https://sketchfab.com/models/2f4f2bd7ed9a4ce6b10ac0d1fdec8257> [accessed 25 February 2018].

<sup>100</sup> The sanctity of heraldic symbols was discussed further by Lloyd de Beer in a paper titled 'A Throne between Two Feather Badges: Seals, Coins and Badges of the Black Prince' delivered at the Courtauld Institute of Art on 11 January 2018. I am very grateful to him for sharing his research with me.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Michael 1994, pp. 39-40; also, De Beer cites biblical assertions of the 'divine nature of armour', as in Ephesians 6: 10-18 and Psalm 28: 7.

<sup>103</sup> Heslop, in Alexander and Binski 1987, p. 495.

<sup>104</sup> Gordon 2015, p. 64.

painting has been subject to considerable conjecture; there is evidence that it may reflect the composition of a statuette owned by the king, who was aged eleven at his accession to the throne, or it could refer to the number of disciples after Judas's betrayal.<sup>105</sup> In the case of the hammer-beam carvings, their number was not necessarily determined by the length of the hall, as the trusses at each end were placed at some distance from the end walls, rather than against them, as was customary. This accentuates the parity of the beams and their paired angelic carvings.<sup>106</sup> The selection of thirteen pairs of angels carried both religious and chivalric connotations; the number thirteen was suggestive of Christ and the Apostles, tournament teams generally comprised this number, and there were twenty-six Knights of the Garter.<sup>107</sup>

In the Wilton Diptych, the angels surround the Virgin and Child, faced by the depiction of Richard II kneeling in profile in the interior left panel, accompanied by SS Edmund, Edward the Confessor and John the Baptist. The identity of these angels as royal retainers is signalled by their adoption of a simplified form of his personal badge. At Westminster Hall, carvings of the king's personal devices, including the white hart, saturate the roof cornice and recur elsewhere in the building in an innovative display, but the beam angels display shields with detailed carvings of the royal arms.<sup>108</sup> The ecclesiastical attire of both the painted and carved angels augments their embodiment of Richard's divine kingship.

The golden and red hair of the Wilton Diptych angels resembles that of the kneeling king, as Dillian Gordon observes.<sup>109</sup> To the modern eye, these painted angels have a rather feminine appearance, their faces comparable with those of two ladies depicted in a wall-painting scheme (c. 1380-1390) from Park Farm, now in the Gatehouse of St Osyth's Priory, Essex. In contrast, the robust facial features of the Westminster Hall roof angels are

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<sup>105</sup> Gordon 2015, pp. 66-68.

<sup>106</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam 1997, p. 285.

<sup>107</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam 1997, p. 54 and pp. 287-288.

<sup>108</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam 1997, p. 54.

<sup>109</sup> Gordon 2015, p. 66 and Gordon, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam 1997, pp. 22-26 also argues convincingly for the deliberate articulation of the specific Englishness of the angels as *Angles* in the painting, referencing the pun coined by Gregory the Great and repeated by John Lathbury; also, the latter's description of England as the Virgin's dowry may be referenced in the orb above the standard carried by an angel, and the globe apparently presented by the King to the Virgin.

masculine in modern terms, and more individualised, reflecting the work of different carvers (Fig.7).<sup>110</sup> The vigour and large scale of these carvings communicates their support of the enormous roof structure, as discussed further below.

Like some other details, the folded arms and other gestures of the Wilton Diptych angels derive from earlier fourteenth-century Italian painting; they reference courtly behaviour and they express the angels' solidarity and allegiance to the king and to the Virgin with subtlety.<sup>111</sup> By comparison, the conspicuous display of the carved contemporary royal arms of the French fleur-de-lys quartered with the three leopards of England on the large heraldic shields presented by the Westminster roof angels is unequivocal, representing the pinnacle of fourteenth-century elite deployment of the motif of the angelic quasi-esquire as heraldic supporter (Fig.8). The clarity of this display may have been amplified even further by the addition of pigment, although the turbulent afterlife of the royal roof renders this impossible to corroborate.<sup>112</sup>

Regardless, the nuanced angelic gestures in the panel painting, compared to the prominence of the heraldic shields presented by the roof angels, reflect their distinctly divergent scale and contexts. The Diptych was designed as a small and exquisite portable object for private devotion, whereas the Westminster Hall roof covered a more public sphere. Although the king had access to domestic palace chapels across his kingdom, it is particularly intriguing to imagine him enacting his own representation in the Diptych, kneeling in devotion before it at Westminster Abbey in the chapel of St Mary

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<sup>110</sup> Salzman 1967, pp. 218-219 cites BM Add. Roll 27018. This account dated 1395 includes payments to four named individuals (Robert Brusyngdon, William Canon, Peter Dauyn and Hubert de Villers) for the roof angel carvings. Curiously, these ranged from 15s. to 26s. 8d. per carving, and Brusyngdon received both the highest and lowest payments for four and two further angels respectively.

<sup>111</sup> Gordon 2015, p. 66, p. 111, p. 126 and p. 130; Gordon, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam 1997, p. 218 also observes that some of these gestures were 'deployed and interpreted in Richard's actual court.'

<sup>112</sup> Gerhold 1999, pp. 63-72. The roof has been subject to the ravages of fire, death-watch beetle and restoration. I am very grateful to Michael Leal of Michael Leal Woodcarving and Restoration for his insights and photographs during the 2019 restoration campaign. In email correspondence, he observes that he and his colleagues saw no sign of pigment during their work, and concluded that if there ever was any, subsequent damage and extensive repairs to the roof have eradicated any trace of it.

de la Pew, the chapel entrance flanked by carved demi-angels, bearing the royal arms and those of Edward the Confessor respectively.<sup>113</sup>

To contrast such chapels with Westminster Hall as a secular setting is too simplistic, overlooking some important aspects of the design and re-design of Westminster Hall, the functions of the building and the role of its royal patron. Firstly, the original ground plan from 1099 was augmented in an unprecedented manner, with two towers which recall the west towers at Old St Paul's Cathedral. The north front of Richard II's remodelled Westminster Hall was clearly designed to appear assertively and unusually ecclesiastical.<sup>114</sup> In fact, the very decision to remodel rather than to completely replace William II's hall reinforced the church- or cathedral-like character of the building. The narrow confines of the site had determined the location of the principal entrance in an end wall, unique in a secular hall.

It is not possible to assess the degree to which Richard II and his predecessors viewed Westminster Hall as a sacred location. However, it seems likely that such a view resonated with Richard's view and persistent affirmation of his God-given authority, just as the ambitious scale of William II's original design reflected a desire to adequately accommodate vast banquets marking coronations and religious festivals. Wilson offers a convincing account of the assertion of divine rule in the setting of the Hall, both through the wording of the blessing prayer at coronations and the presence of the king as 'the figure and image of Christ' at feasts following church ceremonies.<sup>115</sup> The 'day-to-day guise of combined law court and bazaar' of the Hall needs to be seen, like market places of the period, in the context of an ambiguity and lack of clear differentiation between sacred and secular space at the time.<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Gordon 2015, pp. 85-86. The chapel was endowed in 1377 by Mary de Saint-Pol, Countess of Pembroke. See also Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam 1997, pp. 207-208. The tomb for Richard and Anne of Bohemia, also at Westminster Abbey, was commissioned in 1395. Pairs of shield-bearing angels frame each end of its tester. Their shields probably bore the arms of the king and his wife; Wilson cites evidence that Richard's may have been impaled with those of Edward the Confessor.

<sup>114</sup> Gerhold 1999, p. 24; Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam, 1997, p. 49.

<sup>115</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam, 1997, pp. 33-34 and p. 275.

<sup>116</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam, 1997, p. 37; Postles 2004, pp. 55-57.

In the interior left wing of the Wilton Diptych, the kneeling Richard is accompanied by three saints in an almost unique combination.<sup>117</sup> The representation of the royal English patron saints Edmund and Edward the Confessor emphasised the legitimacy of Richard's rule, with St John the Baptist as his patron saint.<sup>118</sup> Prior to work on the new roof, Richard II commissioned thirteen stone statues of kings for Westminster Hall, although the scheme was revised, and only six were positioned in discrete niches on the south wall. Possibly these were intended to resemble an altarpiece, accentuating the 'quasi-divine status of the king seated on his throne below', an effect augmented by the roof angels.<sup>119</sup> The combination of full-figure statues and angelic roof carvings can also be seen in East Anglian churches. In some, timber niches and wall-posts would accommodate saints and other ecclesiastical figures beneath the angels, in dialogue with the Rood, as discussed in chapter four. In others, empty stone niches evoke lost relationships between stone wall and timber roof carvings, as at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel and Norwich St Peter Mancroft, discussed in chapters two and three.

### Westminster Hall: structure and imagery

#### Precedents: structure and form

The steep pitch and intricate design of the arch-braced hammer-beam design at Westminster may appear anachronistic in the face of an increasing trend towards the adoption of low-pitched tie-beam roof structures to cover large and important late fourteenth-century halls.<sup>120</sup> Low-pitched tie-beam roofs were employed in both secular and ecclesiastical architectural projects of the period. However, an ambitious design such as the Westminster roof

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<sup>117</sup> Gordon 2015, p. 56, p. 63 and p. 125.

<sup>118</sup> Gordon 2015, pp. 56-63.

<sup>119</sup> Gerhold 1999, p. 18.

<sup>120</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam 1997, p. 55. The roof pitch at Westminster is about 60 degrees, compared to 43.4 at Norwich St Giles or 28.6 in the nave at Mildenhall St Mary.

would not have emerged without reference to previous structural and aesthetic models.<sup>121</sup>

The development of hammer-beam construction was specific to England, although there is further scope to explore the possible impact of structural innovations in Northern France and the Low Countries upon thirteenth- and fourteenth-century English carpentry.<sup>122</sup> There were other structural precedents for imposing English hall roofs, and although hammer-beams had been deployed in buildings since c. 1300, they were originally deployed in 'relatively modest structures' such as the kitchen of the Bishop's Palace at Chichester.<sup>123</sup> Their first appearance in an extant open hall context (notably, with carved heads on the beam ends) is in three bays of the steeply-pitched roof of the misleadingly-named Pilgrim's Hall (Fig. 9), located in the cathedral close at Winchester, probably dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century and possibly the 'closest' in structure to the Chichester kitchen roof.<sup>124</sup> Its design probably influenced Herland, structurally and visually.<sup>125</sup> Another compelling aesthetic model for Westminster Hall was the repeated trefoil arch design of the infirmary hall roof at Ghent Bijloke Hospital (thirteenth century), and other prestigious European roofing projects provided precedents in terms of scale.<sup>126</sup>

Leading master carpenter Wintringham's construction for John of Gaunt at Kenilworth Castle set the trend for the use of hammer-beam construction on an unprecedented scale, spanning 'the widest secular unaisled hall' in

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<sup>121</sup> Courtenay 1984, p. 295; Munby 2017, pp. 123-124.

<sup>122</sup> Beech 2015, pp. 88-104; Courtenay, in Long 1985, pp. 89-124.

<sup>123</sup> Emery 2006, p. 543; Coldstream, in Ford 1988 p. 78 also observes that, by the late medieval period, 'a church roof could be a work of art in its own right, but because carpentry was rooted in the strong domestic tradition of houses, halls and barns, many new techniques were first developed in secular buildings.'

<sup>124</sup> Munby and Fletcher 1983, p. 108; Beech 2015, p. 118 also cites the hall of Tiptofts Manor, Wimbish, Essex as another possibly earliest surviving 'fully-formed' hammer-beam roof, but as Munby 2017, pp. 124-125 observes, the Chichester and Winchester roofs surely pre-date it.

<sup>125</sup> Waddell 1999, pp. 53-54 and p. 59. Herland was employed in Winchester c. 1388; Herland's design at Westminster also incorporates arch-braces to the hammer-beams and posts, creating a similar trefoil arch to those seen in the hammer-beam trusses at Winchester.

<sup>126</sup> Munby 2017, p. 124.

England when it was built.<sup>127</sup> The design seems to have been embraced by court patrons, from Richard FitzAlan at Arundel Castle, Sussex (mid- to late-fourteenth century) and John Holand, earl of Huntingdon, at Dartington Hall (c. 1388-c. 1400), to Richard II at Westminster Hall (c. 1393-c. 1399). Yet the Dartington beams had no immediate local successors and Courtenay points also to a series of other arch-braced and collar roofs as precursors of Herland's Westminster roof structure, including those at Windsor Castle, New College, Oxford and Lambeth Palace.<sup>128</sup> Most recently, Beech has highlighted the apparent (and puzzling) dearth of English hammer-beam roof carpentry after the late thirteenth- and early fourteenth-century examples at Chichester, Winchester and Wimbish until the late fourteenth century.<sup>129</sup> Regardless, Herland would have been able to draw upon lessons from a diverse range of ambitious roofs with elite patronage associated with Richard II, as well as from his own previous work and that of other royal carpenters, not all hammer-beam exemplars.<sup>130</sup>

#### Structure and form

Since Baines' early twentieth-century repairs, the royal roof structure has been endlessly debated, essentially between those who regard the arched ribs as the primary components conveying roof load to the corbels and others promoting the structural role of the massive hammer-beams.<sup>131</sup> The ultimately inconclusive argument regarding the precise structural workings of individual roof components is exacerbated by subsequent alterations due to degeneration and restoration work. Hence it is impossible to ascertain the extent of the load-bearing role of the hammer-posts and beams in conveying the downward thrust of the roof.

Ultimately, Herland's design appears to have married largely established fourteenth-century structural principles of braced post and beam framing with

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<sup>127</sup> The date is a matter of debate; Thompson 1977, pp. 214-216 argues for 1347-1348, whereas Harvey 1984, p. 6 suggests a complete rebuild in c. 1390-c. 1393, which is supported by Emery 2000, p. 403.

<sup>128</sup> Emery 2006, p. 543 and Courtenay 1984, p. 295.

<sup>129</sup> Beech 2015, pp. 126-133.

<sup>130</sup> Courtenay 1984, p. 302.

<sup>131</sup> Baines 1923, esp. pp. 14-15; Munby 2017, p. 129; Waddell 1999, p. 64.



aesthetic innovation and illusion.<sup>132</sup> In fact, it is remarkable that, whilst so much attention has been paid to the mechanics of the roof, there has been such limited discussion of its influential visual form and iconography.<sup>133</sup> For example, if the arch was not the most significant supporting component of the roof, Herland made it seem one of its sturdiest features, selecting the trefoil design for aesthetic reasons.<sup>134</sup> The main purpose of the arched ribs was to enhance the appearance of the roof. This was certainly the motivation for their later emulation in many far smaller and narrower East Anglian parish church double hammer-beam roofs, discussed in chapter five.

The selection of the Westminster Hall steep-pitched hammer-beam and arch-braced design was no more inevitable than the subsequent dissemination of its angelic representation in East Anglian church roofs. A number of these followed the early model at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, substituting the structural solution of the royal hall with the alternative strategy of alternating tie-beams and truncated angelic hammer-beams, as outlined in chapter two. In these and other regional roofs, the concept of roof angels was adapted and developed according to the purposes and resources of local communities. On the surface, it seems obvious to characterise this dispersal of angelic iconography in terms of its transfer from a secular setting to the sacred or ecclesiastical domain. However, the characterisation of Westminster Hall as a secular space is too simplistic, as discussed above.

It is often asserted that, given the exceptionally wide span of the Hall, the design of its roof must have been shaped by or at least influenced by the dimensions of available timbers.<sup>135</sup> As the king's master carpenter, Herland would have enjoyed access to timbers unavailable to others. At some 67 to 69 feet wide, the span of Westminster Hall exceeded its British predecessors by at least 22 feet and the length of the longest timbers available (deployed as collar-beams) was 40 feet. Although the most substantial individual sections of timber for the hammer posts derived from trees hundreds of years old, of a diameter exceeding 4 feet, the requisite width of the timbers of

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<sup>132</sup> Beech 2016, p. 56.

<sup>133</sup> Munby 2017, pp. 123-124.

<sup>134</sup> Waddell 1999, p. 64.

<sup>135</sup> Gerhold 1999, p. 20.

greatest length was clearly unobtainable, as each collar beam comprised two adjacent timbers.<sup>136</sup> It is well recorded that English oak timbers for the hammer-beam angel carvings sited at Westminster Hall were secured from locations including Hampshire, Hertfordshire and Surrey.<sup>137</sup>

Despite the apparently unprecedented scale of the project, there were significant alternative models and technical solutions to draw upon from English roof design and carpentry of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It is by no means certain that the earlier hall at Westminster had been aisled with columns, as is often contended, and, even without aisles, it could have been covered in a single span using a lightweight construction.<sup>138</sup> There are several arguments in support of an undivided original hall, and its width would not have been much more exceptional within the context of Romanesque roofing of the period.<sup>139</sup>

Herland chose to combine the hammer-beam and arch-brace with collar in a magnificent open timber roof structure; its angel carvings would prove widely influential in a diverse range of church roofs and the overwhelming effect of its hammer-beam structure offered a model for a series of subsequent church roofs, from some of the earliest onwards, as discussed later. These buildings were much narrower than Westminster Hall and the selection of this structural option was evidently an aesthetic one, rather than one born of necessity, but ultimately, it seems that the same was probably true of the royal hall, despite its awe-inspiring scale. As shown earlier, the number of angelic hammer-beams at Westminster appears to carry deliberate and significant layered associations, from the sacred to the chivalric, rather than serving functional necessity. The trusses do not extend to the walls; the height of the windows above the great timber arch would have been a consideration, but practical issues are unlikely to have been the only factor in this elite design. This question of the relative weight and consistency of practical spatial concerns versus symbolic meaning in terms of the number

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<sup>136</sup> Gerhold 1999, p. 20. Likewise, the arch ribs were formed of a tripartite timber sandwich.

<sup>137</sup> Salzman 1967, p. 218.

<sup>138</sup> Courtenay 1984, pp. 301-2; Munby 2017, pp. 121-122.

<sup>139</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam, 1997, p. 43 and p. 280.

and arrangement of angelic carvings in parochial church angel roofs lies at the core of my analysis of their structure and iconography.

#### Precedents: imagery

As mentioned above, the probable precedents for Herland's roof in terms of the form of its hammer-beam structure included diverse examples of elite patronage and the work of Herland himself and other royal carpenters. However, another key issue is the ancestry of the angelic beam carvings at Westminster Hall. Here, the evidence is more elusive. The early fourteenth-century roof at the Pilgrim's Hall, Winchester, introduces carved heads on the beam ends but these relief carvings are varied and added to the beams. Although the carved heads on the ends of the Winchester hammer-beams do not depict angels, they did provide a model of representational carving which Herland was able to refine and adapt.<sup>140</sup> Courtenay argues that 'contextual evidence' suggests that the original fourteenth-century roof at New College Oxford 'was a hammer-beam with angel terminals.' It is thought that Herland worked as master carpenter for the well-connected William of Wykeham at Winchester College and at New College, Oxford, collaborating with the royal master mason, William Wynford. Notwithstanding the lack of images of this roof (subsequently reconstructed by Gilbert Scott in 1877-1881), the suitability of the angelic motif in the context of a college chapel functioning as a chantry raises the possibility that Herland's Oxford roof was the first angelic hammer-beam roof.<sup>141</sup>

Were there truly secular roofs with angelic representation? One example is found at Framsdon Hall in Suffolk, where the roof trusses reveal the (probably early) fifteenth-century plan of an unusually ornate and impressive building, compared with its contemporaries. The substantial hall had two

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<sup>140</sup> Crook 1982, pp. 99-100 and 1991, pp. 143-5. Almost life-sized, the four heads are carved into the ends of the beams. On beam IV, the western head is clean-shaven and wears a coronet. It is probably significant that this crowned head is the only carving to have been deliberately vandalised. The eastern head is probably hooded, but badly eroded. On beam V, the western head is badly water-damaged and bare-headed. The eastern carving is much better preserved and represents a rather life-like man with a beard and moustache with a fashionable hair style, curled at the ends. It is interesting that Crook 1982, p. 100 ascribes the 'closest parallel' to these heads to the choir stall carvings at Winchester Cathedral, dating from 1308-10.

<sup>141</sup> Courtenay 1999, pp. 307-8.

principal bay divisions, spanned by tie-beams and intermediate collar-beams. There are two rows of purlins and principal rafters with carved queen posts. The cornices have pronounced roll mouldings; beneath them are pairs of winged angelic carvings, above denuded scrolls, juxtaposed with similarly stripped shields, which would have carried heraldic motifs, appropriate to the secular setting. It is interesting that tie-beam roofs with queen posts are characteristic of late medieval secular roofs in mid and north-east Suffolk and south Norfolk; this carpentry tradition existed alongside a similar one in ecclesiastical contexts in west Norfolk and north-west Suffolk.<sup>142</sup> The Downs farmhouse at Stoke-by-Nayland is probably an early sixteenth-century example, in which the central placement of a single angelic carving (Fig. 10) appears to have a heraldic meaning, possibly influenced by Framsdan Hall. Direct observation confirms no trace of pigment, although it has been restored. Secular roofs with angels merit further study beyond the scope of this thesis, but initial findings suggest that angelic representations in hall roofs followed a different tradition from those in most churches, as discussed in relation to shield angels below.

#### Norwich St Giles and shields in parochial church roofs

##### Structure: St Giles

Pevsner and others suggest a trajectory of structural development in church roofs from what is sometimes described as the more 'primitive' tie-beam form, supposedly less aesthetically pleasing or satisfactory, to the 'most spectacular' hammer-beam model, 'usually put in with brave new clerestories' in the later fifteenth century.<sup>143</sup> However, the early fifteenth-century hammer-beam nave roof at Norwich St Giles presents an alternative strategy to the more pervasive King's Lynn tie-beam model discussed in chapter two. The roof at St Giles is more closely allied with the structure and iconography adopted at Westminster Hall, albeit not identical in either respect, and on a smaller scale.

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<sup>142</sup> I have discussed this with Stephen Heywood, Historic Buildings Officer for Norfolk County Council. Framsdan Hall is only three miles from Debenham, where the church has a similar tie-beam roof.

<sup>143</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 61. Norfolk: NW and S.

Like the royal roof, the Norwich structure combines the hammer-beam form with arch-braces. However, at St Giles, the arch-braces form an unbroken curve from the wall posts, supporting the angel beams and rising to the ridge above (Fig. 11).<sup>144</sup> This arrangement contrasts with that at Westminster Hall, where each hammer-beam is supported by an arch-brace rising from the base of the wall post at string-course level to the underside of the beam end; then a further arch-brace ascends to meet the arch rib above (Fig.12). The resulting visual effect is quite distinct in each case; at St Giles, it is open and airy, whereas at Westminster, the great arch and 'forest' of timber and tracery are overwhelming and awe-inspiring. Although the pitch of the Norwich roof is slightly shallower than that at Westminster, it is nonetheless considerably steeper than some other early Norfolk examples, as at Norwich St Gregory, King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, or the nave at Mildenhall.<sup>145</sup>

Initially, the arch-braced single hammer-beam roof at St Giles may appear quite daring in its lack of collars (the horizontal timbers connecting rafters), an omission which would predominate in late-medieval roofs across Norfolk, in contrast to Suffolk. Whether the omission of collar-beams is actually structurally risky is debatable, as discussed in chapter five. It may have been perceived as so, although some other early fifteenth-century roofs in Norfolk also lack collars, including the hammer-beam nave canopy at Beeston-next-Mileham (c. 1410). In such roofs, the substitution of collars for king pendants (comprising vertical timbers descending from the apex into which the principals and possibly the ridge sections were framed) would appear to have provided a structurally satisfactory alternative.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 1997, p. 236. Norfolk: Norwich and NE. At St Giles, according to Pevsner and Wilson, the angelic carvings 'against the hammer-beams cut across the braces and finish at the wall-posts', an arrangement which they considered to be 'an early stage of the hammer-beam roof, as Cautley and Crossley explain.'

<sup>145</sup> The pitch at St Giles is 43.4 degrees, compared to 36, 29.4 and 28.6 respectively at St Gregory, at Lynn and at Mildenhall.

<sup>146</sup> Brian Morton MBE of the Morton Partnership Ltd. has extensive experience of leading conservation work on medieval churches and in conversation has stated that he does not regard the lack of collar-beams as necessarily structurally risky; Beech 2014, pp. 12-13 outlines the development of the king pendant and other strategies used to stiffen and support the framing of roofs without collars.

At Westminster Hall, the horizontal angels are carved 'out of the solid beam [as] an essential part of the structure', only their wings added above.<sup>147</sup> This is confirmed by study of reproductions of black and white photographs taken in the early twentieth century, and evidence from recent restoration work, and their structural role is generally agreed.<sup>148</sup> Equally, the angelic beams at St Giles would have been designed to combine this structural function with iconographic significance.<sup>149</sup>

### Imagery: St Giles

Another comparison to be made between the roofs of Westminster Hall and Norwich St Giles concerns the representation of the carved beam angels. There are twenty six hammer-beam angels at Westminster, their number not necessarily determined by the length of the hall, as discussed earlier.<sup>150</sup> At St Giles, there are only twelve angels in the nave, reflecting the more modest scale of the parish church setting. Unlike the Westminster beam angels, those at the east and west ends at St Giles are hard against the walls above the chancel and tower arches, the structure fitting the space tightly.

At least four hands are evident in the Westminster carvings; their facial features vary considerably and several seem like individualised portraits, whilst others appear more idealised. They lack strong expression, although some may faintly smile. The high quality of the carvings exemplified in the curls of hair reflects their royal patronage. Some have long flowing locks delineated along the upper section of beam, whereas others lack this detail. At St Giles, the faces of the angels are more generalised, with long noses, their expressions rather gloomy and introspective. Their curly hair is stylised and the work less refined than that of the royal project, although one needs to take account of restoration interventions. Their appearance differs from those I have surveyed elsewhere, in contrast to the similarities observed

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<sup>147</sup> Gerhold 1999, p. 23.

<sup>148</sup> Michael Leal has kindly shared photographs and insights from his access to scaffolding in 2019; Courtenay and Mark 1987, p. 392; Beech 2016, p. 44.

<sup>149</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 236. Norfolk: NW and S. 'The angels against the hammer-beams cut across the braces and finish at the wall-posts.' In conversation, timber expert Richard Darrah confirmed the structural role of such angelic beams. See also Beech 2015, p. 241.

<sup>150</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam, 1997, p. 285.

across carvings in some west Norfolk roofs and those at Lynn. This is at least in part due to repair work. Kirkham suggested 1865 as the probable date, just prior to the chancel restoration; this date and the initials P.R. are carved into the head of angel S5, but the carving of the arms suggests the possibility of an earlier date for some of the restoration work.<sup>151</sup>

The Westminster angels wear ecclesiastical attire, including the albs and amices of acolytes; some wear copes and the detail of costume and drapery is sophisticated. The angels at St Giles are similarly vested, although their costumes are simpler and far less detailed.<sup>152</sup> There is evidence that they were painted, so they may once have appeared more elaborate.<sup>153</sup>

Notwithstanding the financial support by the laity for fifteenth-century East Anglian nave roofs, angels tend to be represented in the liturgical costumes of the clergy more widely. That they are both at Westminster and across East Anglia is perhaps unsurprising; angelic ecclesiastical costume characterises other religious art of the period.<sup>154</sup>

In both roofs, the angels have wings folded at rest; however, they are probably eighteenth- century replacements at St Giles, antiquarian John Kirkpatrick observed that they were missing in 1712.<sup>155</sup> The Westminster angels surmount schematic clouds in a stylised design replicated in many parochial angelic carvings, but those at St Giles are devoid of this celestial signifier.

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<sup>151</sup> Kirkham 2010, p. 1. The drapery of the sleeves is extremely schematic and the arms and timber appear post-medieval. The left arm of N4 is clearly attached behind the location of the original limb. I am grateful to Clare Haynes for discussion of the arms.

<sup>152</sup> Any collars are restrained and the drapery is generally schematic. The costume of S6 has a side-slit. The costumes are gathered at the waist.

<sup>153</sup> Kirkham 2010, p. 1 observes vestiges of paint on the angels' torsos, 'protected' by the shields nailed to them. She adds that there are paint traces on their faces and on the cornice, in depressions where the (probably) nineteenth-century restoration and stripping work did not reach, providing persuasive evidence that the roof and its angelic scheme were adorned with colour prior to this. Paint samples were not taken, so we cannot be absolutely sure that these details carried medieval pigment, but it seems possible from the evidence of a number of other schemes, assuming that the bodies have not been replaced. Kirkpatrick, in Eade 1886, p. 209, also recorded traces of pigment on the cornice brace spandrels, suggesting that more of the structure was probably painted.

<sup>154</sup> McNamee 1972, p. 263. McNamee found that vested angels in Flemish art were always attired as acolytes, in common with contemporary Italian examples.

<sup>155</sup> Kirkpatrick, in Eade 1886, p. 208

Testamentary bequests imply that the nave at St Giles was under construction soon after 1389 and being furnished by 1429, suggesting a probable date for the roof during the second decade of the fifteenth century, so it provided an early model of angelic hammer-beam construction.<sup>156</sup> In the absence of documentary evidence for the funding of the roof, an abundance of elite heraldry recorded in the church may suggest its patronage by members of the gentry.<sup>157</sup> In 1712, Kirkpatrick recorded twenty heraldic shields painted on the cornice- or arch-brace spandrels; the Erpingham arms were the most decipherable, whilst the majority were 'almost effaced by their antiquity'.<sup>158</sup> Some of the painted heraldic shields held by the roof angels may also have signified their patronage.<sup>159</sup>

Richard II's Westminster angels represent quasi-heavenly esquires, holding large heraldic shields, carved with the contemporary royal arms of the French fleur-de-lys quartered with the three leopards of England. They are finely carved and are relatively large to ensure their prominent display. Few early East Anglian angel roofs followed this model, but in the nave at Norwich St Giles, the main angels carry shields. Most are painted with the royal arms, although their heraldic content cannot be trusted, as they have been repainted, according to antiquarian evidence and material analysis. The Norwich angels have shields nailed to their torsos; from ground level, they appear to be holding these, but Kirkham's photographs clearly confirm that their arms have been replaced and that their hands do not support the

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<sup>156</sup> Lunnon, in Heslop and Lunnon 2015, pp. 366-367; NRO NCC will reg. Harsyk 78; NRO NCC will reg. Surflete 86.

<sup>157</sup> Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 4, p. 246 records that 'it appears that the families of Scales, Thorp, Clifton, Caily, Shelton, Calthorp, and Vaus, were great benefactors to it [the church]; their arms now are, or lately were, in the windows, together with or, a lion rampant gul.; gul. in a bordure or, a cross arg.; gul. on a chevron arg. three roses proper. The principals of the roof are supported by angels holding shields, on which England and France quartered, St. George. The arms of the Priory, arg. a cross humettè gul. &c.'

<sup>158</sup> Kirkpatrick, in Eade 1886, p. 209. The Erpingham arms were recorded on the second north brace from the west end, apparently beneath the cornice. There is some ambivalence as to whether he refers to the cornice brace spandrels or the arch-brace spandrels here.

<sup>159</sup> I am grateful to Sandy Heslop for sharing his observation of a hierarchy of significance in the painted shields recorded by Kirkpatrick, from the east- to west-end shields. As he observes, if the first relates to the marriage of Gaunt's daughter Catherine to Henry of Castile, the second to the marriage of Henry IV's daughter Blanche to the elector palatine, Louis, son of Rupert king of the Romans (the lozengy is Wittelsbach), and the 5 label ermine to John duke of Bedford, the scheme was 'relentlessly Lancastrian' and promoted dynastic connections.



shields (Fig. 13).<sup>160</sup> The shields are also significantly larger in relation to the figures than many of those sported by angelic carvings in other parochial roofs, which are loaded with the arms of local gentry or apparently tokenistic. Those carried by the four angels at the east and west ends are unpainted replacements, whereas the other eight are painted with royal heraldry. N4 is painted in a distinct style from the others, with different materials and more recently.<sup>161</sup> While Kirkham is clear that the other painted heraldry is probably post-Reformation and one cannot be certain that it represents medieval intent, some of the shields may be medieval and it is possible that some of the later designs replicate the originals.<sup>162</sup>

The shield paintings differ in several respects from Kirkpatrick's well-informed and detailed descriptions of 1712, when several of the designs were difficult to discern.<sup>163</sup> The shields of N/S1 and N/S6 are blank today, yet painted schemes are described by the antiquarian for all but N6.<sup>164</sup> Currently, S2 incorporates the arms of the city of Norwich, yet Kirkpatrick does not record this; equally the design of N2 differs from his description.<sup>165</sup> Yet as Lunnon has observed, although the precise heraldry differs from that outlined by Kirkpatrick, ultimately the domination of the royal arms in 1712 is reflected in the current scheme and may corroborate a date for the roof after 1404.<sup>166</sup> The extant painting is eighteenth-century in style, although it could

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<sup>160</sup> Kirkham 2011, p. 1. The nails appeared C19, according to Joe Dawes, who undertook 'minor structural work to one of the shields.' The drapery of the sleeves is extremely schematic, the arms and timber appear eighteenth- or nineteenth-century in date, and the left arm of N4 is clearly attached behind the location of the original limb.

<sup>161</sup> Kirkham 2010, p. 2; Kirkham 2011, p. 1. She states that, according to members of the parish, this shield was removed and restored during the incumbency of the previous vicar. It features gold, in contrast to the yellow paint of the seven others.

<sup>162</sup> Kirkham 2011, p. 1.

<sup>163</sup> Kirkpatrick, in Eade 1886, p. 208. He records that the arms of 'several' of the shields were 'hardly distinguishable' in 1712.

<sup>164</sup> Kirkpatrick, in Eade 1886, p. 208. According to Kirkpatrick, these were charged as follows. N1: 'Per pale the first Quarterly Cattile-Gules or Cattle *Or* & Leon *as* (*Gwil arg*) a Lyon rampant Sable.' S1: 'St George's Cross', the sole exception to the otherwise royal imagery. S6: '[Gules 8 paleways] impaling France and England quarterly'. N6 was lost.

<sup>165</sup> Kirkpatrick, in Eade 1886, p. 208. The Norwich arms comprise 'Gules, a castle triple-towered and domed argent; in base a lion passant guardant *Or*', yet Kirkpatrick records the S2 design as simply 'France impald with france and Engld. quarterly'. N2 was listed as 'Lozengy *as*: & *arg* impaling England and France quarterly.'

<sup>166</sup> Lunnon, in Lunnon and Heslop 2015, pp. 266-367. The shields of N3, N4, S3, S4 and S5 are charged with the royal arms quartering France 'modern'; these arms recur with other motifs on the

have been undertaken in the early nineteenth century. The remains of a foliate design were discerned upon close study of the shield of N5, offering a tantalising suggestion of reuse or repainting.<sup>167</sup> It is possible that the shields could have carried other motifs such as Passion emblems, as at Tilney All Saints and at Swaffham; Passion emblems and donor arms, as seen in the later roof at West Walton; or instruments for serving the Mass, as at Emneth, but it seems unlikely. All that can be stated confidently is that at some point, the arms on the Westminster shields have provided a model and that the Westminster device of a roof full of shield angels was probably the medieval inspiration, especially given the similarly large scale of the shields in relation to the angelic torsos. Notwithstanding evidence for the replacement of some of the shields held by the angels at St Giles (and the repainting of others), it is likely that the angels at St Giles always bore shields in emulation of those at Westminster, albeit their medieval iconography and meaning may have differed to some extent. This practice does not appear to have been repeated often elsewhere.

#### Carbrooke SS Peter and Paul:

##### hammer-beams and ecclesiastical shield imagery

Shields carried by roof angels could display a range of imagery; heraldic devices represented only one option. Shields held by angelic carvings could also carry ecclesiastical emblems including the Arma Christi, as at St Mary West Walton in Norfolk (late fifteenth-century) and Earl Stonham St Mary in Suffolk (end fifteenth-century), discussed in chapter four. Shields of faith date from thirteenth-century manuscripts; for example, a symbolic diagram represents a knight on horseback bearing a large shield depicting the Trinity, in the treatise of Peraldus (c. 1240-55, BL Harley MS 3244, ff. 27-28.).<sup>168</sup>

The point that angelic shields are not necessarily indicative of secular heraldic imagery is particularly pertinent when considering the relationship

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shields of N2 and S2. In contrast, Kirkpatrick describes the arms of shield N4 as '[France and England quarterly] with a label of 5 points *arg*'.

<sup>167</sup> Kirkham 2011. A curving stem and leaf were suggested. There is no suggestion that this is medieval.

<sup>168</sup> Alexander and Binski 1987, pp. 254-255.

between the angelic imagery of the nave roof at St Giles and that at rural Carbrooke SS Peter and Paul (c. 1424), twenty-one miles west of Norwich and contemporary in date, albeit the dating evidence is circumstantial at Carbrooke.<sup>169</sup> Although the pier dimensions deviate between the two nave arcades and the Carbrooke roof has been extensively restored, there are some interesting parallels between the buildings and their single hammer-beam structures. The asymmetrical moulding profiles of the nave arcade piers of both churches are found elsewhere only at Blickling St Andrew.<sup>170</sup> Both roofs are collarless with arch-braces rising through the beams to the purlins and ridge in a continuous sweep, and relatively steeply pitched (Fig.14).<sup>171</sup> Sufficient extant material exists to suggest that the Carbrooke angels were six-winged, probably representing seraphim (Fig. 15). This representation of the highest angelic order is unusual in beam carvings in late-medieval church roofs; in Norfolk, the feathered angels at Emneth St Edmund further west are some of the closest comparators. It is probable that all of the beam angels at Carbrooke held shields like N1 and were painted with heraldic or ecclesiastical imagery, despite losses and replacements to the upper sections.<sup>172</sup> Beam carving N1 suggests a contrasting angelic scheme to that at Norwich St Giles in terms of attire and angelic order. The striking structural similarities between the two roofs raise questions regarding the possibility that restoration work at St Giles was more extensive than previously acknowledged, the current appearance of the carvings creating a false dichotomy with those at Carbrooke. However, it seems more likely that contrasting forms of angelic attire and shield vocabulary were devised within a common structural type at SS Peter and Paul and St Giles, expressing different modes of thinking. Similar divergence in angelic attire and emblems within a shared structural approach is discussed further in chapter two, with reference to the nave roofs at Mildenhall St Mary and Emneth St Edmund.

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<sup>169</sup> Heslop, in Harper-Bill 2005, p. 252.

<sup>170</sup> Lunnon, in Heslop and Lunnon 2015, p. 366.

<sup>171</sup> The pitch is 44.2ft at St Giles and 42.7ft at Carbrooke.

<sup>172</sup> The head of N1 is replaced and several others retain only their lower wings. Features such as the open book and ecclesiastical dress of N3 or the scroll and Art Deco-style headband of N2 clearly date from the nineteenth-century restoration work. Evidence of white pigment is found in S5 for example.

## Other manifestations of shield angels in East Anglian roofs

The angelic shields at Norwich St Giles do not represent the only early manifestations of this device, either in the city or elsewhere in the region. However, they appear to be the least ambiguous in terms of their relationship to those at Westminster Hall and their heraldic function, notwithstanding restoration interventions. The roof surmounting the nave and chancel at Norwich St Gregory appears to date from the end of the fourteenth century and is characterised by diminutive angelic corbels, rather than carved hammer-beam angels.<sup>173</sup> Some bear shields, but these are much smaller than those at St Giles. They have been repainted and their medieval imagery is a matter of pure speculation, as discussed in chapter three. The roof at Norwich St Swithun may be contemporaneous with that at St Giles, but its shield-bearing angels populate an alternating hammer-beam and tie-beam with queen-post structure aligned to early-fifteenth-century west Norfolk developments, and their shields are blank. There is circumstantial evidence supporting the involvement of Bishop Despenser in this project, as at St Gregory, as outlined in chapter three. Given these factors, the shields are more likely to have been charged with ecclesiastical rather than heraldic imagery if they were painted. Elsewhere, Michael de la Pole's early-fifteenth-century hammer-beam roof angels at Wingfield in Suffolk carry larger shields, but again, these are blank; it is possible that they conveyed heraldic content, but this is conjecture. The circumstances surrounding the insertion of angelic beams into the anachronistic structure of this roof are assessed in chapter five.

Perhaps the most renowned example of a roof with shield-bearing angels is found at Blythburgh Holy Trinity in Suffolk (c. 1440). It takes a very different structural form to the Westminster roof and its heraldic display is repurposed for the promotion of the local elite. The arch-braced cambered tie-beams of the roof spanning the nave and chancel are still flanked to east and west below the ridge by eleven extant relief carvings in the form of feathered demi-angels with outstretched wings, holding shields, between circular

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<sup>173</sup> Angelic (and other) corbels are discussed more widely in chapters four and five.

bosses carved as clouds (Fig.16).<sup>174</sup> Notwithstanding the loss of half of the angelic carvings and the illegibility of some of the paintwork, it is clear that at least some of the shields carried the arms of the Hoptons and allied families, including retrospective heraldry, although some may represent pure invention and antiquarian evidence is inconclusive.<sup>175</sup> Whilst the shield-bearing angels at Blythburgh diverge from their precursors at Westminster in form and imagery, they derive from the same fourteenth-century tradition of the angelic shield-bearer, resonant with chivalric connotations and associated with elite patronage.

The heraldic imagery displayed by angels was not exclusive to royalty or elite families, as seen in one of three copper-gilt and enamel roundels from Warden Abbey (c. 1377-97) now in the British Museum (BM MLA 53, 67, 3), depicting a demi-angel in relief against a background of clouds, bearing a shield adorned with the Cistercian abbot's arms (Fig. 17).<sup>176</sup> Carter has shown that the frequent deployment of inscriptions and heraldry to promote their rank, patronage and piety by late-medieval monastic superiors was allied to the model and support for monastic life provided by angels.<sup>177</sup> The display of abbots' arms on shields held by angels was not confined to vestments, but extended to seals, tombs and buildings including the roof corbels of Abbot Litlington's dining hall at Westminster (c.1375).<sup>178</sup> Few Cistercian abbots shared Litlington's elite Despenser pedigree; the relatively humble origins of many and their relationships with local communities are highlighted by Carter.<sup>179</sup> In this context, the relationship between the Cistercian abbey at Sibton in Suffolk and the wooden corbels in the form of angels bearing shields or open books in the nave of the parish church of Sibton St Peter nearby merits further investigation. Two very different sets of

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<sup>174</sup> Another eleven are missing: E/W1, E/W2, E3, E5, W9, E/W10, E/W11.

<sup>175</sup> Mackley 2017, pp. xix-xx; Reynolds and MacLachlan 1990; BL Add. MS 19080/106-7, pp. 97-8; Gardner 1754, p. 122; SROI HD 1538/106/xxviii; Middleton-Stewart 2001, pp. 246-50.

<sup>176</sup> Carter 2011, pp. 175-193 cites convincing evidence to support his assertion that these plaques were probably morses, badges used to secure a cope.

<sup>177</sup> Carter, in Heale 2014, pp. 215-239, especially p. 234; Heale, in Müller and Stöber 2009, pp. 99-124, especially p. 100; Carter 2011, pp. 185-186; Keck 1998, pp. 117-123.

<sup>178</sup> Wilson, in Gordon, Monnas and Elam 1997, p. 59.

<sup>179</sup> Carter, in Heale 2014, pp. 220-221.

imagery may have charged the angelic shields at Blythburgh and Sibton, just thirteen miles apart.

### Conclusion

Richard II's roof angels were devised as quasi-heavenly esquires, bearing shields emblazoned with the royal arms, to signal the divinity of his kingship. They represent the apotheosis of the courtly origins of the late medieval cult of angels. In their wake, the spread of this enthusiasm was manifested by a wave of parochial angel roof construction amidst the creation of angelic imagery in other church art across East Anglia. However, notwithstanding notable exceptions, as at Norwich St Giles, the fourteenth-century model of the angelic shield-bearer associated with elite patronage and heraldic display was rarely followed in East Anglian church roofs, where angelic imagery was devised and revised for local purposes.

In place of the heraldic shields borne by the Westminster roof angels, symbols relating to the Passion and the liturgy prevailed in parish church angel roofs. As Daunton warns, there are dangers inherent in assuming parallels in intent and meaning between parochial projects and national schemes.<sup>180</sup> Whilst the roof at Westminster Hall provided the impulse for the spread of this roof genre across East Anglia, a more probable elite example for the iconography of most angel roofs is the Angel Choir at Lincoln Cathedral, consecrated in 1280, where the angels carry musical instruments and Passion emblems. The early development and dissemination of this alternative ecclesiastical model is the subject of chapter two.

The innovatory and massive hammer-beams of the Westminster angels expressed their support of the royal roof, at the threshold between earth and heaven. The structure of the grand royal roof was never strictly replicated, and diverse interpretations of the angel roof genre were constructed concurrently in East Anglian churches from c. 1400-c. 1540, although the hammer-beam form was widely influential throughout this period. Its adaptation at Norwich St Giles represents one of several initial responses to

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<sup>180</sup> Daunton 2009, p. 10; Dean, in Heslop and Sekules 1986, pp. 90-101.

the regal hammer-beam angels, each driven primarily by aesthetic impulse rather than structural necessity. Chapter two outlines the development and impact of the open-plan roof at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, which would prove the most influential alternative early model in the west of the region.

## **Chapter two: Heavenly angels: King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel and the early development of East Anglian angel roofs**

### Introduction

One of the earliest and most ambitious angel roofs was established at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel as the fifteenth century dawned, in the wake of the unveiling of Richard II's renowned reconstruction project at Westminster Hall. This thesis contends that the undoubted influence of the royal roof upon East Anglian parish church roof design was not clear-cut. Several early variants of angel roofs emerged across East Anglia, all of which diverged from the London model to a greater or lesser extent. Of these, the Lynn roof type was particularly persuasive, especially in the west of the region. This chapter emphasises the methodology of direct material analysis at the core of the thesis, establishing the structural characteristics and iconography of the most influential early angel roof in the west of the region, through detailed study from scaffolding. Its impact is assessed using these insights and the examination in situ of other roofs which followed its model. Here, and throughout the thesis, a key is used to identify specific angelic carvings and wall-post figures, which are numbered north and south from east to west. Hence N1 and S1, or WPN1 and WPS1 are the first angelic carvings or wall-post figures respectively at the east end and the highest numbers are at the west. Where there are two tiers of angels in double hammer-beam roofs, lower and upper tiers are prefaced L and U, as in LN1 or UN1. Brace spandrel carvings are prefaced SP, with E or W to denote the direction they face, as in SPNE1, SPLNW1 or SPUNE1.

Pevsner suggests that the first Perpendicular church roofs in Norfolk were tie-beam or arch-braced structures, or an amalgam of the two, as seen at St Gregory in Norwich.<sup>181</sup> King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel represented one of the earliest manifestations of the ecclesiastical angel roof in East Anglia, in the form of an arch-braced tie-beam and queen-post construction with alternating short hammer-beams. This form seems to have dispersed across

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<sup>181</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 61. Norfolk: NW and S.



west Norfolk into north-west Suffolk and Lincolnshire, although it is not exclusive to, or within, the area. Its expression is characterised by noteworthy variety in terms of structural details, refinement and the presence and distribution of carvings, as discussed later. Notwithstanding this diversity, the pervasive impact of the Lynn roof is striking, given the co-existence of several alternative early fifteenth-century roof types with angelic hammer-beams, from the Norwich St Giles design discussed in chapter one, to those examined in chapter five.

Elements of the Westminster Hall model appear to have been selected and adapted, taking account of local carpentry methods. Its angelic idiom was appropriated in East Anglian church roofs to serve their ecclesiastical context. Whereas the Westminster angels were designed to preside over a consecrated king, these roof angels addressed a parochial audience and many appear to represent assistants at the Mass. How far the particulars and organisation of angels' specific attributes and attire related to liturgical arrangements in the church below and to what extent they were subject to consistent treatment in different church roofs are key questions addressed in this thesis.

#### Tie-beam roofs in historical context

As will be discussed below, angelic iconography was introduced to west Norfolk in the queen-post roof at St Nicholas Chapel King's Lynn, characterised by alternating arch-braced tie-beams and short hammer-beams (Fig.18). This structural model spread across west Norfolk and Suffolk and can also be found further north and west in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire. A brief survey of the literature sets the context for discussion of these roofs, considering the position and characteristics of the tie-beam structure within the development of open timber church roofs, especially in East Anglia.

Brandon and Brandon place tie-beam roofs into their first division of roofs, 'the earliest kind...never entirely discarded by the Medieval Architects'; other types are trussed-rafter or single-framed roofs, roofs framed with hammer-

beams and braces and finally, roofs constructed with collars and braces, or braces alone.<sup>182</sup> Howard and Crossley identify three main classes of roof, beam roofs, thrusting roofs and trussed roofs, all of which 'seem to have been in use from the earliest times'.<sup>183</sup> They note local variants and describe the tie-beam roof as the most common form of trussed roof in medieval England, essentially a combination of the other classes. Its structural advantages are widely agreed, in terms of reducing sideways thrust by bringing it down as low as possible, but also its limitations; in the context of church roofs, limited head room was far less of a concern than lack of vertical effect.<sup>184</sup> At lofty St Nicholas Chapel, the structural security of combining tie-beams with hammer-beams outweighed any such aesthetic concern.<sup>185</sup> Later flat-pitched cambered tie-beam construction would eliminate any perceived disadvantage of visual obstruction, as at Sudbury St Peter, and elsewhere in south-west Suffolk. Yet the Lynn tie-beam model with queen-posts holding the purlins in position persisted in lower and narrower church roof designs to the west of the region discussed in this chapter, as evidenced by the nave roof at Isleham St Andrew in Cambridgeshire, dated to 1495 by the carved donor inscription on the cornice.<sup>186</sup> Clearly, given the existence of alternative options, from arch-braced to hammer-beam forms as will be discussed in chapter four, aesthetic preference was allied to structural advantage in its selection.

J.T. Smith's attempts to trace the historical development of English roofs are mainly based upon secular roofs subject to relatively uniform conditions, compared to church roof structures which were sometimes hidden, due to vaulting or the demands of iconographical painting, before the tendency to lower their pitch with the development of the clerestory in the fifteenth-century.<sup>187</sup> Smith describes early trussed rafter roofs with tie-beams, followed

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<sup>182</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 11.

<sup>183</sup> Howard and Crossley 1917, p. 88.

<sup>184</sup> Cordingley 1961, pp. 78-9.

<sup>185</sup> The ridge height is 50ft.

<sup>186</sup> Rimmer 2015, p. 98.

<sup>187</sup> Smith 1958.

by a king-post variant. These roofs with timbers of uniform scantling and thrust on wall-plates lacked the ridge-pieces and principal rafters of the tie-beam roofs described in this chapter. Attempts to raise the whole roof on tie-beams followed, these roofs lowered to reduce thrust, necessitating large curved braces to join the beams to the wall-posts. Other roofs incorporated short principals with additional structures above.

Smith and Cordingley assert distinct traditions for roofs in remoter parts of England and Wales. Although tie-beam roofs were found there, Smith suggests that collar-beams were popular for open halls in the west and Wales, just as hammer-beam roofs or arch-braced roofs with collars and short principal rafters were favoured instead in the south-east, in order to create a lighter effect. This might imply that the East Anglian models were best suited to the addition or incorporation of carved angelic representations. Yet a cursory glance at the black-and-white photos in Howard and Crossley confirms that angelic carvings are found across a wide range of structures and different roof locations in Wales and the west of England, as in East Anglia.<sup>188</sup>

### King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel

In this section, the angel roof at St Nicholas Chapel is considered in detail. First, the structure of the roof is discussed in terms of its construction, materials and relationship to the rest of the building. The history and impact of restoration work is explored. Next, the building of the Chapel is examined with reference to patronage, the local community, their motivations and their experience of the roof within the entire edifice. Finally, the iconography of the scheme is explored in depth, setting the angelic imagery into the context of the rest of the embellishment of the roof and its location and possible significance in relation to activity in the Chapel at ground level.

### St Nicholas: Structure and Production

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<sup>188</sup> Howard and Crossley 1917, pp. 110-130.

'The inner roof of the chapel is of oak, in a plain and simple style; yet with a sufficiency of ornament to harmonize with the rest of the building...all over the upper windows there were originally figures of angels with outspread wings, represented as playing on various musical instruments.'<sup>189</sup>

The description of the carved angel roof at St Nicholas Chapel by the Reverend Edward Edwards in 1812 and a more recent account of its 'restrained classicism'<sup>190</sup> give a flavour of its controlled elegance and correspondence with the structure of the building it surmounts. Those details of Edwards' account which are inconsistent with the appearance of the roof today refer to its ornamentation rather than structure. These are significant in terms of its meaning and articulation of the space below, but relate to later discussion regarding the iconography of the roof.

The harmonious relationship of the roof with other elements of the edifice may be attributed, at least in part, to its construction within a complete rebuilding project, rather than as a later addition. Nonetheless, the incorporation of the pre-existing south-west tower into the new scheme and the large west window at St Nicholas demanded a unique structural solution in the adjacent roof timbers. There are no visible carpenters' assembly marks, which would have demonstrated the way in which the structure must have been assembled on a framing ground, taken apart and reassembled in situ.<sup>191</sup>

At St Nicholas, the clerestory is of twelve bays, reduced to eleven to the south due to the preservation of the earlier south-west tower (Fig. 19). Given the sole retention from the previous scheme of this tower, a request for burial outside the west door and the presence of heraldic elements related to Richard II on the exterior at the west end, I was inclined to favour the

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<sup>189</sup> Edwards 1812.

<sup>190</sup> Heslop, Mellings and Thofner 2012, p. 9.

<sup>191</sup> Pacey 2007, p. 99.

asymmetrical west end as the starting-point for the rebuild, but no firm evidence confirms this.<sup>192</sup>

The roof structure surmounts an arcade with moulded arches on lozenge piers. The angelic carvings project above the apex of the Perpendicular windows, enjoying maximum illumination. This does not appear to be an accident; it is the case in a number of other roofs and was often the preferred strategy. In some cases, especially where a complete rebuild was not possible, pragmatism held sway.<sup>193</sup> Arch-braces spring from wall posts on stone corbels and rise again from the beams; commensurate with the date of the rebuild, their spandrel tracery combines Decorated and Perpendicular elements, some of which are lost or replaced.

Wall jambs rise between the arcade arches to the clerestory, meeting stone corbel heads between paired vaulted niches. The structure of each beam springs from a wall post on a stone corbel head. Each wall post is flanked on either side by these empty ogee canopied niches.<sup>194</sup> There is no evidence that these were ever occupied by figures, yet any presumption that this might be accounted for by funding constraints in the wake of initial ambition is dispelled by the local availability of clunch, which would have been the most probable material of choice for such a sculptural project.<sup>195</sup> It is unclear whether a figural scheme was envisaged here (or in empty niches beneath alternate corbels at Norwich St Peter Mancroft, discussed in chapter two). Westminster Hall provided a regal masonry model, but even more significantly perhaps, several other fifteenth-century Norfolk church angel roofs with similar structures incorporate timber wall-post carvings of

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<sup>192</sup> KL/C12/8. Enrolled copy of will of John Wace, 1399; also microfilm copies NRO MF/RO 460/5 and NRO MF/RO 472/3.

<sup>193</sup> Refer to discussion of Tilney All Saints and Lakenheath St Mary the Virgin, below.

<sup>194</sup> The niche heads are 56" high. The lower canopies are a further 55.5" in height above the corbels. Exceptions to the paired arrangement are single niches NN1 and SN1, to the west of the north-east and south-east windows, and SN11, adjacent to the final west bay, where the earlier tower interrupts the arrangement.

<sup>195</sup> I am grateful to Sandy Heslop for his reference to the use of clunch in the sculpture of St Christopher from Terrington St Clement, now at Norwich Castle Museum.

ecclesiastical figures, as discussed later. Presumably, the latter provided a more financially viable method of augmenting the ecclesiastical hierarchy in the parochial roof context. Although master carpenters could command salaries almost commensurate to those of stone masons at this time, timber was cheaper than stone.<sup>196</sup> However, these craftsmen worked closely together, emulating each other's work.<sup>197</sup>

The roof is characterised by angelic hammer-beam carvings, alternating with tie-beams supporting queen-posts. The diminutive hammer-beams were devised to play a structural role, although in this respect they are subordinate to the arch-braced tie-beams, lacking arch-braces to wall-posts due to their location at the apex of the clerestory windows.<sup>198</sup> There is much evidence of restoration work where they meet the coving.<sup>199</sup> Whether the angelic carvings were integral to the beam, or attached underneath, was debated with timber expert Richard Darrah and master carver Gerald Adams during site surveys.<sup>200</sup> From a structural viewpoint, Darrah had anticipated angel beams carved in their entirety from boxed hearts of oak and N10 certainly provides an example, apparently carved from a single piece of timber, with slots for the wings (Fig. 20).<sup>201</sup> However, it was clear from the first analysis that more generally, the medieval angels are made of planks of timber with

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<sup>196</sup> Dyer 1986, p. 9 and p. 13.

<sup>197</sup> Coldstream, in Ford 1988, p. 77.

<sup>198</sup> Archaeologist and ancient timber specialist the late Richard Darrah asserted their structural role on site; Beech 2015, p. 236 dismisses their cantilever function due to their thin profile from the ground.

<sup>199</sup> Darrah confirmed this in detail. Several angels, including N1, would have been longer, but have been cut down and have timber sections inserted to replace damage by the wall-plate. Further evidence is provided by the relationship of the curve of the coving in relation to the carved sections of cloud beneath the angels. In the case of N2, the curve of the coving is matched by curves either side of the double cloud design, despite repairs to the wood underneath, above and behind the angel. In other cases, as in S2, the angel has clearly dropped from its original position.

<sup>200</sup> Gerald Adams is an experienced master carver; <https://www.adamswoodcarving.co.uk/?p=about> [accessed 10/12/18].

<sup>201</sup> Despite repair work to the adjacent principal rafter and possibly to the brace, the carving seems medieval, albeit by a different hand to N1, N2 and others towards the east.

slots for the wings, attached to the underside of the beams (Fig. 21). This pragmatic approach had been anticipated by Adams, who confirmed the method of their carving and assembly on site. It was agreed that a mixture of methods is on display in the roof, partially due to the complications of repair work, but that most of the medieval angels are of standard planks attached to beams above, rather than of boxed oak.<sup>202</sup> Ultimately, Beech's assertion of their 'structural redundancy' is an overstatement, but it is clear that their primary purpose was angelic display.<sup>203</sup>

Although the actual hammer-beams are shorter at St Nicholas, reflecting their primarily (although not exclusively) emblematic function, the angel carvings appear bigger proportionally, as the roof span is much narrower than at Westminster, where the angels are carved into the ends of the beams. The pairs of hammer-beams at Westminster, which Gerhold describes as 'very large timbers', were 17'9" long.<sup>204</sup> The planks used at King's Lynn vary in width. Several of the medieval angels were carved from planks 11 inches wide, with arms 2 ½" wide dowelled in each side, including N1-N5 and S1-S3/S6/S10. Their lengths vary slightly; for example, N1 is 46" long, whereas N2 is 50" in length.

Another difference between the angels at Westminster Hall and those at King's Lynn may be the wood used, although English oak was probably used for many of the angel roofs constructed in the east of England. A fourteenth-century contract for carpenter's work including new roofs at Ashwellthorpe All Saints in South Norfolk records the use of timber from trees felled in a wood belonging to the Salle carpenter.<sup>205</sup> However, recent first-hand study and dendrochronological analysis suggests that at least some of the medieval angel carvings at St Nicholas are likely to be made of Baltic oak.<sup>206</sup> The

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<sup>202</sup> It was clear that they were planks, rather than boxed timber cut lengthways during repair.

<sup>203</sup> Beech 2015, p. 236.

<sup>204</sup> Gerhold 1999, p. 20.

<sup>205</sup> Cattermole 1989, p. 298.

<sup>206</sup> In correspondence and discussion, both Martin Bridge and wood carver Gerald Adams are of the opinion that some of the angels are of Baltic oak. In his 2014 analysis of tree-ring data for the

presence of Baltic oak at Lynn is convincing, given the importance of the town as a trading port as a member of the Hanseatic League and contact especially with Danzig.<sup>207</sup> Dendrochronological analysis of the site confirms the dating of the rebuilding circa 1400; Bridge questions whether tracery could have been inserted into the eastern-most south spandrel at a later date, but this seems unlikely, given construction methods.

One assumes that carpenters designed roofs with knowledge of the sizes of available timbers. As discussed above, the options available to the king would have differed from those accessible to a church or chapel, but single timbers wide enough to span Westminster Hall were unavailable.<sup>208</sup> Herland would not have attempted such an ambitious roof structure to cover the wide span of Richard II's hall without previous experimentation and precedents. At King's Lynn, it was possible to adapt existing local arch-brace and tie-beam technology to incorporate angelic imagery, as the roof was less than half the width of the royal hall.<sup>209</sup>

St Nicholas was an ambitious project and its roof is higher than those of neighbouring grand churches.<sup>210</sup> However, compared to Westminster Hall and Norwich St Giles, the chapel at Lynn has the much lower pitch characteristic of many (although by no means all) contemporary tie-beam roofs.<sup>211</sup> Although there was a trend towards very low-pitched tie-beam nave roofs in the late medieval period, many of these roofs were actually more elevated, above a new clerestory.<sup>212</sup> Steeper-pitched roofs required wind

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Churches Conservation Trust, discussed on site, Bridge concluded that a tracery sample (from the spandrel to the south of the most easterly truss) was of eastern Baltic oak.

<sup>207</sup> King, in Bates and Liddiard 2013, p. 117.

<sup>208</sup> Timbers up to 40 ft. long had to be used to span a roof 67 ft. wide.

<sup>209</sup> The roof span at Lynn is 32ft.

<sup>210</sup> At just over 50 feet high, St Nicholas Chapel exceeds the height of the naves of longer churches such as Upwell St Peter and Outwell St Clement considerably. Upwell is 38' and Outwell is 43' high.

<sup>211</sup> The pitch of the Lynn roof is 29.4 degrees. This is similar to Methwold St George and Mildenhall St Mary, at 27.8 and 28.6 respectively, for example. However, there are startling contrasts; later Hockwold St Peter is merely 19.2, whereas South Creak St Mary is 41.3.

<sup>212</sup> Parsons 1998, p. 42.



braces, so it was structurally advantageous to reduce the pitch, but this might have depended upon the materials available to protect and cover the roof externally. The restoration of many roofs in the nineteenth century hampers specific detailed discussion in some cases. However, Parsons highlights the versatility of tiles and slates in contrast to thatch, which requires a steep pitch for drainage, contending that Clifton-Taylor and others have overstated the extent to which use of lead necessitates a low pitch. It seems that the choice of covering fabric was only one of a number of factors, including increased stability, enhanced illumination of the nave and raised eaves.<sup>213</sup>

Tie-beams are often cambered, with an upward curve, but at St Nicholas Chapel, they are not. This is significant, as it would have been more difficult to obtain straight timbers and these refined timbers are presumably an indication of the relative prestige of the project.<sup>214</sup> I base this supposition to some extent upon my comparative observations of straight tie-beams with considerable decoration as here at Lynn and at Mildenhall nave, versus cambered examples such as those at Wiggshall St Germans, which are more rustic and within plainer schemes. However, at St Nicholas, the shallow arch braces create a suitably Perpendicular upward impression towards the centre, although some of their spandrel tracery is lost or replaced. Modest foliate bosses and cresting appear on the tie-beams, creating a restrained decorative effect mirrored at Mildenhall St Mary. Arguably, practicality coincided with aesthetic preference in the curved or cambered tie-beam. Straight timbers would have been hard to source; yet the predilection for the pointed arch and verticality matched the natural arc of many tie-beam timbers.

The insertion of arch-braced queen-posts was structurally astute, but they were also devised to accentuate the verticality of the tie-beam design. Although they represented a pragmatic choice in a roof covering such a wide span, their use was replicated in smaller churches as much for their visual

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<sup>213</sup> Rodwell 2012, p. 125. Only a few early medieval churches had clerestories; their windows were diminutive.

<sup>214</sup> The St Nicholas tie-beams are 31' 7" wide and 13.5" deep.

effect.<sup>215</sup> At Lynn, their ornate brace spandrel carvings are invisible to the naked eye at ground level and were difficult to discern even from scaffolding.

Progress in roof development depended upon improvements of joints. By the fifteenth century, the pegged mortice and tenon joint seen at St Nicholas was universal. The principal rafters are tenoned into the tie-beams, the peg holes clearly visible, just as angel N13 is tenoned into a mortice hole in the truss, held by two pegs. First-hand scrutiny confirmed that the arch braces were pegged into the collars above the queen-posts too. The single purlins at St Nicholas, just over 46.5 feet from the ground, spread the weight from one principal to the next. They are tenoned into the sides of the principal rafters.<sup>216</sup> The purlins are clasped between a principal rafter of a section and a collar or arch-brace; this structural approach typical of hammer-beam and other structures derives from roofs of uniform scantling, with no principal rafters.<sup>217</sup>

In each bay, there are four common rafters between each principal rafter, with the exception of the final bay at the west, which is narrower to accommodate the existing tower to the south.<sup>218</sup> Here, only three common rafters flank each side of the principals. Despite this, the impression from ground level is of uniformity.

#### St Nicholas: Restoration work

Tracery repairs and renovation work in the second tie-beam from the east (T2) are characterised by elegant refinement, care and quality. Although the most easterly beam dates from the twentieth century, an eighteenth-century flavour characterises the second beam (T2) and the facial features,

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<sup>215</sup> The span at Lynn is 32ft, compared to 22' at Mildenhall and 21' at Outwell.

<sup>216</sup> I was able to observe closely how purlin PN1 clasps the principal rafter, for example.

<sup>217</sup> Smith 1958, p. 111.

<sup>218</sup> The common rafters are 7.25" wide and 5.5" deep. In the final bay at the east, the gaps between them vary from 8.5" to 10.75". The other bays are not entirely uniform; Bay 1 at the east is 14' wide; bay 2 is just over 15 feet wide. In the latter bay, from the eastern tie-beam to the angel beam is just over 7', whereas from the western tie-beam to the angel beam is only 6' 8".

hairstyles and attire of some of the related beam and cornice demi-angels, suggesting that these may be eighteenth-century replacements (Fig. 22).<sup>219</sup> Care has been taken by restorers with demi-angel reliefs barely visible from the ground in this section, whereas much of the restored nineteenth-century work in the hammer-beam angels is of poorer quality, with scant regard for any details invisible below.<sup>220</sup> Some of the demi-angels on the wall plates and tie beams have strikingly modern faces or costume details which are rendered with care, in contrast to others which are perfunctory. Some of these may be medieval, although the wide variation in style and execution of the demi-angels evidences extensive restoration and replacement work.

The second tie-beam from the west is probably a Victorian replacement, characterised by an excessive regularity alien to the pragmatism of medieval work and lacking the refinement of the original beams. Its situation in a section of the roof populated by several Victorian restoration beam angels, especially to the south, supports its probable date. In general, the restored work appears to be less detailed and more schematic than the earlier carvings. Although the new spire was designed by Sir Gilbert Scott in 1869 and it is assumed that he oversaw roof restoration work at that time, the 1852 restoration was the responsibility of Norwich architect John Brown. Beloe's lament of the 'deplorable wrecking' of the Chapel at this time refers mainly to the removal of its furniture at ground level, but similarly pejorative terms might be applied to the cursory, crude execution of repairs and replacement work of some of the angelic roof decoration, particularly towards the south west. Poorer quality wood was used and has not weathered as well

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<sup>219</sup> I am grateful to Richard Darrah, Gerald Adams and John Mitchell for confirming these thoughts in discussions on site. There is remarkably little documentation of restoration work at St Nicholas Chapel and the RIBA Scott archives have no records.

<sup>220</sup> In conversation in situ, Richard Darrah noted the typical quality of this work and its likely date. NRO PD 39/410 records that the spire had come down in 1741 and damaged part of the chapel, but money was raised in 1742 and 1749 to undertake repairs. Edwards 1812 observes that the collapse of the spire in 1741 'materially injured the adjacent part of the roof' and that 'the whole chapel was new glazed and otherwise completely repaired in the year 1805.'

as much of the medieval oak, particularly on the south side, where the roof has been subject to harsher environmental conditions and exposure to water.

Brown's work appears to have included repairs to the angel carvings in the roof and one can be confident that his hand is seen in some of the restored elements visible today.<sup>221</sup> The Scott archives make no reference to the work undertaken at St Nicholas when the spire was replaced in 1869, in contrast to detailed records of his work at Knapton St Peter and St Paul. These give an insight into his attitude towards restoration, supporting assessment from material evidence, and are discussed in chapter four.

Attitudes towards restoration had changed by the time of the replacement of the chancel beam above the sanctuary in 1932, in the wake of the assault of death-watch beetle. A new beam of English oak, seasoned for ten years, was 'fashioned in every way as the one removed' and the wardens praised the 'splendid' work of the carver and carpenters responsible.<sup>222</sup> One can be fairly confident that subsequent work has not markedly impacted upon the appearance of the roof.<sup>223</sup>

Detailed structural analysis of the roof at St Nicholas Chapel, and scrutiny of its repair has been especially valuable, given the relatively thin documentary evidence available. It provides a model for comparison with other tie-beam roofs in the west of the region, as discussed below.

### St Nicholas: People, Patronage and Production

The patronage of many late medieval church roofs is frustratingly elusive and there is a dearth of documentary evidence at St Nicholas. However, the roof was clearly a prestigious and expensive undertaking and there is evidence that individual funding of such projects often took place within a context of

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<sup>221</sup> James and Begley 2000, p. 14.

<sup>222</sup> NRO PD 39/394, King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel Book, beginning 22/4/1794 and ending 7/4/1932.

<sup>223</sup> NRO ACC 2012/328, box 7. Note on character of works. Records of the 1986 work by Donald W. Insall and Associates confirm the conservative and minimal nature of the approach taken by the team responsible for much of the work undertaken in the late twentieth century. Direct observation during the 2014/2015 repair campaign confirmed a lack of internal intervention.

communal benefaction.<sup>224</sup> Although subordinate to the parish church of St Margaret, St Nicholas is the largest “chapel-of-ease” in England and its reconstruction at the start of the fifteenth century was probably the most ambitious building project in Norfolk at that time. The community to the north of one of the main port towns of medieval England was expanding. Such a large-scale and impressive scheme must have been seen as some compensation for their dependency upon nearby St Margaret’s.

The inclusion of one of the earliest regional angel roofs within this programme reflected the impact of the grand Westminster Hall roof, but it is worth considering an additional motivation. In the wake of systematic prosecutions of heresy following late fourteenth-century censure and formal condemnation of John Wycliffe’s controversial works and opinions in 1382, ambiguity or perceived dissent from conventional religion was potentially dangerous. Although evidence is lacking to support any assertion that he organised a coherent movement of dissenters, Wycliffe was a prominent figure in the development of ideas against orthodox teachings, and had warned that angelic imagery could mislead viewers into supposing the corporeality of these spiritual beings. The selection and display of angelic imagery at Lynn may have represented an expression of orthodox belief in the face of such lollardy.<sup>225</sup> It may not be coincidental that the first lollard martyr was William Sawtrey, a former priest at King’s Lynn St Margaret’s and at Tilney All Saints nearby; he was burnt as a heretic in London 1401. This ‘hastily organised execution’ before implementation of a new statute followed an earlier conviction, when he had renounced his views before Henry Despenser, Bishop of Norwich, in 1399.<sup>226</sup> In my previous research, I have observed similarly orthodox iconographic choices on the part of screen donors and proposed that these may have been designed to send a political

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<sup>224</sup> Duffy 2005, pp. 354-358; Daunton 2009, unpublished PhD thesis, p. 155.

<sup>225</sup> Heslop, in Heslop, Mellings and Thofner 2012, p. 9; Nichols 1994, pp. 90-128; Hornbeck II 2016, pp. 15-23; like heresy, ‘lollardy’ is a ‘slippery fish’ of a term; used here without the capital L to denote the broad range of contemporary religious dissent, rather than specifically Wycliffite views or a clearly defined group.

<sup>226</sup> Hornbeck II 2016, p. 48 and p. 115.

signal, in addition to, rather than as a simple reflection of, unquestioning lay piety.<sup>227</sup> At Lynn, perhaps a political signal of allegiance was intended for the Bishop of Norwich.

The inhabitants of the former marshland to the north of the old civic hub of the town had acquired the wealth that would enable them to make such an unconstrained and impressive architectural statement. The area saw considerable economic development by the fourteenth century and there is evidence that wealthy merchants were associated with the chapel. Yet the residents of the 'New Land' appear to have battled for independence from St Margaret's, the parish church to the south, in the old town. Their drive to reconstruct and enlarge their place of worship seems to account for the ambition, scale and relatively early funding and execution of this project, and their sustained 'spirit of resistance and independence' in opposition to the Prior of Pentney.<sup>228</sup> It seems likely that such an ambitious scheme probably relied upon the support of the Bishop of Norwich, especially given evidence elsewhere.<sup>229</sup> Perhaps historic tensions between Bishop Despenser and the townspeople of Lynn were centred upon the old town around St Margaret's, rather than the burgeoning community to the north of the town. The community at St Margaret may have resented the rights of the Bishop to profits from fairs and the Saturday Market adjacent to the church. In the dispute between those at St Margaret and at St Nicholas, he delegated the decision to the Prior, presumably distancing himself from any resulting

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<sup>227</sup> Cassell 2012 unpublished UEA MA dissertation, p. 45; here I disagree with Duffy 2005, p. xxi; also see chapter two, in relation to orthodox imagery at St Peter Hungate.

<sup>228</sup> Beloe 1899, p. 148; <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1210545> [accessed 5/9/18]; 'In 1378, the chaplain of the Chapel of St Nicholas had obtained from Pope Urban VI a bull granting the chapel the right to perform the sacraments of baptism, marriage and the churching of women, not permitted under its status as a chapel of ease. A meeting held in the prior's chapel at St Margaret's, resulted in a declaration that the bull was fraudulently obtained [was] confirmed by third-party arbitration in 1381.'

<sup>229</sup> An example is found at Norwich St Andrew; Blomefield 1805-1810, vol. 4, p. 313 recorded the arms of Bishops Goldwell and Nix on the chancel roof timbers, as discussed in chapter four; an exterior armorial shield displays the Despenser arms at the east end.

antagonism.<sup>230</sup> The Bishop's influence upon the incorporation of hammer-beam angels in the roof scheme at St Nicholas is plausible, given that he had seen the royal roof at Westminster Hall at the opening of Parliament in 1399.<sup>231</sup>

Beloe records the original foundation of a chapel on the site by William Turbe, Bishop of Norwich, between 1146 and 1174, 'for the use of the inhabitants of the New Lande he had laid out for housing north of the Purfleet.'<sup>232</sup> The lost earlier building is thought to have been modest in scale, the nave perhaps no wider than the current south aisle. Only the thirteenth-century south-west tower remains, the grandeur of which contrasts with the refined delicacy of elements of the Perpendicular fifteenth-century rebuild attached to it.<sup>233</sup>

This section considers the roof in the context of its relationship with the space at ground level and the experience of people within it. One's impression upon entering the chapel today is distorted by the removal of earlier fixtures and fittings. The nave and chancel of St Nicholas comprise a single open space, an effect augmented by the removal of the original nave and choir fittings during the comprehensive 1852 restoration, and by the slender character of the rhomboid piers. Two vestries adjoining the sanctuary at the east end are imperceptible from outside and do not interrupt the apparent uniformity of the space. This impression prevails, despite the incorporation of decorative details such as the window tracery from an earlier style in a predominantly Perpendicular project.

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<sup>230</sup> Allington-Smith 2003, pp. 83-89.

<sup>231</sup> Like the relationship between Michael de la Pole's presence at Westminster in 1399 and the insertion of hammer-beam angels in the nave roof at Wingfield, discussed in chapter four, this is unlikely to be coincidental.

<sup>232</sup> Beloe 1899, p. 135 and p. 136. 'It was built by Bishop Turbe, but...the early charter of its foundation not being dated, we are left for the date to the years of the Bishopric, 1146-1174.'

<sup>233</sup> James and Begley 2000, pp. 2-3 and p. 19 suggest that the east wall of the tower dates from c1200 and that the tower was constructed in two stages.

I will argue later that the roof design clearly articulates the space below in terms of three separate zones. In this regard, it is significant that a medieval chancel screen and rood existed; Pevsner claims their removal in 1559, but Mackerell recorded his admiration of the fine carving and attached 'commodious seats' of the screen in 1738.<sup>234</sup> Just as this screen would have divided the nave from the chancel, aisle screens would have formed small chapels to accommodate guild altars. Francis Goodwin's 1806 engraving indicates the relatively cluttered appearance of the interior at that time, despite the removal of a screen in the late eighteenth century.<sup>235</sup> This had divided the chancel from the nave; it had been replaced by an open gallery, but Goodwin's illustration shows the view of the east end and Bell's altarpiece obscured by the subsequent insertion of rows of tiered seating. Goodwin's image shows galleries to each side of the chapel, dating from 1791 and removed during Brown's 1852 restoration, which also saw the eradication of the original nave seating, Bell's altarpiece and almost all the surviving medieval woodwork. The diminishing congregation had moved mainly to St Margaret's by the 1970s, and in 1981, the chancel stalls were removed and a narrow flagged pulpit was introduced to hold a new altar table, sedilia and oak benches.

The changes that have taken place to the structure and furnishings of the Chapel have stripped away much evidence of the visual and sensory experience of its medieval worshippers. Originally, screens would have defined the space, dividing the nave from the chancel and creating chapels for guild altars, for which there is some documentary evidence, in the aisles.<sup>236</sup> These changes will need to be remembered when considering the

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<sup>234</sup> Mackerell 1738. Also, James and Begley 2000, p. 10.

<sup>235</sup> James and Begley 2000, pp. 10-11. The engraving was probably taken from a painting exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1806.

<sup>236</sup> James and Begley 2000, pp. 7-8 record the will of a priest, Richard Prestone, requesting burial "'afore the crucifix in the body of the church"; NRO KL/C38/7. Account rolls of the Trinity Guild list payments to hermits there; other guilds and associations included those of St Thomas of Canterbury, St Ethelreda, St George and the Blessed Virgin Mary, St Edmund and St Peter.



location of angelic roof imagery and its dynamic relationship with lay and clerical activity at ground level.

### St Nicholas: Heavenly Angels

As discussed earlier, at Westminster Hall, Richard II's angels hold large heraldic shields, carved with the contemporary royal arms. Later, angels with shields carrying the arms of wealthy benefactors would adorn the roofs of some East Anglian churches, but the roof at St Nicholas does not display such symbols. If the Westminster angels were appropriated for royalty (albeit divinely-sanctioned), those at King's Lynn were re-appropriated for God. However, the structure they carry was also apparently supported by wealthy local citizens. Wealthy men and women appear to support the roof structure, in the stone corbels on which the wall posts rest. This strategy was repeated shortly afterwards in some of the timber corbels of the roof at Norwich St Peter Mancroft, where local figures may be symbolised.

At first glance, the arrangement and distribution of the attributes carried by these angels appears somewhat random, an impression intensified by the distortion of the medieval scheme by past restorers. However, my research is posited upon the assumption that such an expensive and practically challenging project was the result of deliberate intent. Its representational elements would have been carefully planned. Further analysis reveals the existence of several obvious beam angel pairings, at least two of which are at strategically significant locations in the chapel. These are accompanied by other emblematic representations which reinforce changes in spatial meaning and use at ground level.

The roof was conceived in three main sections, indicated by the distribution, concentration and nature of the iconography represented in the hammer-beam carvings, on the tie beams, cornices and tracery, with an additional focal point towards the east of the nave (Fig. 23). The first sector is the shallow sanctuary at the east end. Angelic representations on the tie-beams and cornices within the roof structure are located almost exclusively in the chancel. Polychromy is confined to the sector over the shallow sanctuary at

the eastern-most section of the roof, above the high altar.<sup>237</sup> Paint is evident on the beam angels and a central angelic boss at the ridge; the rafters and other structural elements of the ceiling, the canopy of honour above the altar, have a painted and stencilled decorative angel-wing pattern (Figs. 24-25). The use of pigment thus articulates the sacred character and activity of the space below, serving to distinguish the sanctuary from the choir, despite the lack of an architectural partition between them.

Two carved beam angels, dressed as deacons in dalmatics, face each other across the ceiling (N1 to the north, and S1 to the south). Now wingless, they carry a book with a clasp and a pax respectively (Figs. 26-27). They are clearly angelic, not human representations, as asserted by the old church guide. They are carved from planks with slots for wings like the others; more importantly, they resemble several adjacent carved angels in terms of facial features and expression, attire, hair and cloud design, proportions and dimensions. Similarities in the quality and detail of the carving of N1 and adjoining angelic carvings to the north east are particularly evident, as these have been less ravaged by the elements than N2 to the south. Presumably, patrons or benefactors would have seen samples of work before it was installed, accounting for the relative care taken to render details hidden from view at height in the production of some of these medieval angels, such as toes and clouds.

The closed blue book with clasp held by N1 is more likely to signify a missal, a liturgical book used to celebrate Mass, given its location and pairing with a framed Pax, held by S1.<sup>238</sup> A Pax is a rectangular tablet or plate of wood or metal. The imagery of English Paxes was more uniform than on the Continent; most bore an image of the crucifixion, and only a few depicted the

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<sup>237</sup> Hassall 2004 found two polychrome schemes, the first possibly fifteenth-century and certainly pre-1700, the second post-c.1818. Close examination from scaffolding in 2015 indicated no trace of paint elsewhere in the scheme.

<sup>238</sup> Watkin 1948, pp. xxx-xxxi observes that the missal 'contained everything necessary for the priest at the altar when saying or singing Mass.' It was 'almost invariably a single volume by itself', unlike some other book types. Missals were recorded at 352 of the 358 churches assessed in the Norwich Archdeaconry 1368 inventory.

Virgin, or the Virgin and Child, like the South Acre Pax.<sup>239</sup> A wooden Pax found in Sandon, Essex, c. 1900 is a rare survivor of a parish church example.<sup>240</sup> This would be kissed by the celebrant and passed to others to kiss during the Mass.<sup>241</sup> The representations of the book and Pax at Lynn appear authentically medieval, deliberately paired, and appropriately located above the realm of the altar.

The polychrome angels at the east end are constructed with wing slots like the others, but lack wings, unlike every other beam angel in the scheme. The outstretched form of the wings imparts a sense of added agency and dynamism to the other figures. Some of these wings are clearly replacements, but a deliberate decision has been made not to reinstate those lost at the east end. This may be accounted for by the belief that they represent benefactors (articulated in the old guide book), which was probably instilled by significant restoration campaigns in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Some of the wings of the angels further to the west are medieval; they would have been mass-produced using a template and there are at least two methods used to create the feathered appearance.<sup>242</sup> They are probably made of local oak and have a finer grain than the wood of the angels, making them softer to work. Most of the medieval wings are dowelled into prepared slots in the planks, aside from some attached to the beams after restoration work.

The rest of the chancel roof and the most easterly bay of the nave constitutes the second sector, characterised by the juxtaposition of musical angels and others carrying symbols of Christ's suffering. The pair of angel

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<sup>239</sup> Champion 2017, pp. 488-489.

<sup>240</sup> Pax-Board (Pax Brede) [http://s361690747.websitehome.co.uk/EoW2/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/da04\\_pax.pdf](http://s361690747.websitehome.co.uk/EoW2/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/da04_pax.pdf) [accessed 15 February 2016]

<sup>241</sup> See Harper, Barnwell and Williamson 2016; also 'The Experience of Worship in Late Medieval Cathedral and Parish Church: Making, Doing and Responding to Medieval Liturgy', project led by J. Harper, Bangor University (2009-2013) <http://www.experienceofworship.org.uk/> [accessed 15 February 2016]

<sup>242</sup> The wings at St Nicholas differ from those in comparable roofs, such as at Upwell nave, although those at Upwell and Mildenhall nave are also outstretched, in contrast to those at Westminster Hall and Beeston. They are radially carved and their wing span is substantial, at 67".

carvings in the bay adjacent to the sanctuary has lost their attributes, although a dowel and other fixings are evident. The fingers of N2 are lost; the arms are posed suggesting that harp strings or a scroll could have been plucked or held. The object held by the fat hands of S2 is indistinguishable. These eastern angels probably held musical instruments, reflecting the perceived musical nature of heaven and the central angelic role in the practice of the Laudes Dei. The finely carved psaltery held by N3 in bay three from the east continues this theme. S3 opposite has lost the object that was clearly dowelled into it and the hands are missing; the position of its arms resembles those of N3, suggesting that it held another musical instrument (Figs. 28-29).

In bays four and five from the east within the chancel, the arrangement of musical instruments and Instruments of the Passion is reversed; N4 has a gittern with a carved lion at the top of the handle, whereas S4 holds a damaged and partially lost crown of thorns (Fig. 30-31). N5 looks wistfully westwards, holding three nails and a hammer with a replacement head, but original handle. S5 plays a lute with a plectrum (Figs. 32-33).

In the sixth bay from both east and west, at the mid-point of the chapel, external doorways oppose each other across the width of the chapel. This bay would have been in front of the rood beam and chancel screen at the east of the nave. The angels face each other holding a scourge (N6) and a crozier or crook (S6) respectively. N6 is certainly medieval, wearing an alb and a collar, its upper dress, arm joint and collar resembling those features in the chancel and sanctuary angels on the north side. The rear section is in poor condition and probably a replacement.

S6 shares the medieval elements of the 11" plank and elbow joint, with convincing facial features. However, the attire is broadly rendered, new wood set in above the original angel. A particularly elaborate opening at the neck of the open collar appears noteworthy, but does not match that of the opposing angel and is probably accounted for by a different hand.

The crozier or crook is a concern; it resembles a fairly rudimentary crook rather than a decorative staff used by a bishop as a symbol of office and the

top section appears slotted in later. N11 also carries a crook or crozier, but is a Victorian replacement and may not represent the original motif (Fig. 34).

It is unclear whether the attribute of S6 was formerly a cross, a spear or another Instrument of the Passion. A cross or crucifix appears improbable on practical grounds. Given the convincing and apparently deliberately paired angels discussed above, it is plausible that in the original scheme, an Instrument of the Passion such as the scourge of N6 would have been paired with another emblem associated with Christ's suffering and death.

Moving further west in the nave, the third sector of the angelic roof imagery commences the seventh bay of the chapel from the east has a significant pairing, discernible despite the ravages of time and restoration work. Like those of the adjacent sixth bay, these angelic carvings appear to mark a special focal point in the roof scheme, as they are differentiated from the others by aspects of their attire and appearance. N7 wears a crown and a dalmatic, a long tunic worn by a deacon, its side slit, fringes at the hems and sleeves and tassels rendered in exquisite detail. S7 also wears a nicely-rendered crown (Figs. 35-37).

Both angels hold open books, although that of S7 is a rudimentary pine replacement and the fingers on the book of N7 are not aligned with those on the hand, suggesting that they have split off or moved and been reattached. Angel S7 comprises two sections, as the rear segment of the plank has been crudely restored. The front shares several features of other medieval examples in the roof. It is impossible to determine its attire exactly, as the replacement work is so cursory; its solid open collar is narrower than those of some of the others.

The crowns and dalmatic clearly distinguish these angels, which are at the approach to the holy realm behind the chancel screen and rood. Their crowns may associate them with the terrestrial realm of the nave and one can also understand the tiara or coronet of S8 in those terms. Alternatively, they may represent heavenly gatekeepers.<sup>243</sup> Angels are associated with the

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<sup>243</sup> Genesis 3:24; Ezekiel 10:19 and Revelation 21:12 have references to angels guarding gates.

theme of the Coronation of the Virgin, for example.<sup>244</sup> Evidence of the location of the guild altar associated with the Blessed Virgin Mary might be interesting in this respect, although one expects this to have been in one of the aisles. Their significance for those at ground level is unclear, as they are not located directly over an obvious point of transition in the nave, but they prompt an interpretation distinct from the others.

Moving westwards, another apparently significant pair of angels is found in the eighth bay from the east (the fourth bay of the nave from the west). N8 and S8 do not hold attributes (Figs. 38-39). Instead, the left hand and arm of N8 rests on an elaborately decorated belt, the other outstretched. S8 has lost its left hand, the arm located by its girdle. The right arm is raised. The attire of these angels differs from any of the others and is especially finely executed in S8, despite the extensive damage to this carving, restored in a manner which renders the medieval work clearly discernible (Fig. 40). Both angels wear delicate tippets and belts decorated with detailed rosettes. They wear simple kirtles; the lower half is lost in S8, but extant in N8. The angel to the south wears a tiara or coronet. The faces of these angelic representations appear more feminine than the others to the twenty first century viewer. However, as discussed earlier, it is not unique for angels' faces to appear feminised or androgynous in medieval representations; for example, in Jacopo di Cione's San Pier Maggiore Altarpiece (1370-1371, National Gallery, London), rather feminine-looking angels hold coronets.

These two angels at Lynn have a distinctive and courtly appearance, unlike most of the other angels, which wear albs, long tunics, either gathered at the waist or simply flowing to the ground, worn by acolytes at a ceremonial high mass. It is interesting to note that vested angels in Flemish art were always likewise attired, in common with contemporary Italian examples.<sup>245</sup> This convention may have been inspired by Latin liturgical dramas, in which

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<sup>244</sup> In the San Pier Maggiore Altarpiece (National Gallery, London), this theme was depicted by Jacopo di Cione in 1371 and the rather feminine adoring angels wear coronets.

<sup>245</sup> McNamee, 1972, p. 263. This consistency is not reflected in all angel roofs, but characterises many of them.

angels were attired as assistants at the mass, although earlier writers may have exaggerated the extent of any such influence of drama on art, or the influence may have been in reverse.<sup>246</sup>

Some of the attributes of the angels in the ninth bay from the east are problematic, given the extent of cursory restoration work in this area of the roof, especially to the south. N9 is a medieval angel carved from oak, with a strap around its waist, attached to the remains of a timbre, a tambourine or a drum. The front of this was dowelled into the plank and is missing, exposing the holes into which the pegs were inserted. The recorder held by S9 opposite is a modern imposter, although it probably replaces a musical instrument (Fig. 41-42).

A Victorian hand is seen at work in the expressive, sharp facial features and recessed forehead of S9, rendered in pine rather than oak. The form of the body is characterised by shallow carving and broad drapery. The flat hands and chunky brush-like toes are rudimentary, contrasting with the care taken by the medieval carvers to render even the most hidden detail.

In the tenth bay from the east, the hands of S10 are raised as if to hold a celestial trumpet or shawm. N10 wears an interesting diadem or crown, studded with three foliate rosettes (Fig. 43). This open-mouthed angel appears to have blown a wind instrument, rather than to sing. Although medieval angelic song was believed to echo the earthly liturgy, and mortal refrains imitated the angelic *Laudes Dei*, or sung praise of God, which was viewed as the 'proper activity of all angels', singing angels do not characterise angel roofs, as discussed in chapter three.<sup>247</sup>

Like S9, several other angels at the west end are Victorian pine replacements and the lutes of S11 and N12 (Fig. 44) and scroll of S12 are unconvincing. S11 shares the angular nose and narrow chin of S9; pine resin spatters the face like tears, disclosing the medium of modern work. The solid hands are barely carved out of the body; weighty arms, cursory toes and

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<sup>246</sup> McNamee 1972, pp. 277-8.

<sup>247</sup> Rastall, in Davidson 1994, p. 163, p. 165 and p. 167.

generalised drapery folds echo its near neighbour. N11 has the same almost malevolent countenance, fat stubby toes and perfunctory costume folds. Schematic hair, hands and drapery and brush toes also characterise S12. The crudely rendered lute held by S11 appears to be Victorian or later, matching the thick wing and pierced work of pitched pine above it and the adjoining restored tie-beam and arch brace tracery.

The crozier or crook of N11 and the unfurling scroll of S12 clearly date from the Victorian restoration work. Their association with the lute of S12, which is not as refined as the stringed instruments of medieval angels N4 and S5 may well not reflect the original attributes of these angels. The repetition of attributes might appear to suggest restoration work, but it is not entirely unprecedented.<sup>248</sup>

Although S13 has been restored in a rather cursory manner, it is clear from N13 that the hands of these angels were raised (Figs. 45-46). They might have offered protection to worshippers as welcoming angels at the west entrance. The scale and design of these angels at the west end are unprecedented and in complete contrast to the others, accounted for by the need to prevent the structure obscuring the west window. There is a gap one rafter wide (almost two feet) between this hammer-beam construction and the outer wall. To take account of the existing tower, the bay is considerably longer than the others, with six common rafters either side of the principals, instead of four elsewhere. Angel N13 is 82.5" long, compared to N1 at 45" at the east. The angels at the west appear to be slotted over the beam, facing east. The limited width of planks available seems to account for the split in their heads; a dowel is visible in S13, showing how the rest of the head was added, like the arm joints. This seems to be a one-off solution to a unique problem, in an otherwise uniform roof design. These unusual carvings marked the most westerly point of a journey through different levels of sacred space, which was underlined by the arrangement of other angelic imagery in the tie-beams and the wall-plates.

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<sup>248</sup> The open book is repeated at Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalene, for example (N2, N4, S5).



Other angelic representations are to be found on additional surfaces within the roof structure at strategic locations, marking shifts in the function and character of the space below. These are considered here from east to west. A large painted angelic boss, its form almost shield-like, is situated at the pitch of the roof where the principal rafters meet in the easternmost bay, above the altar at the mid-point between the wingless beam angels (Fig. 47). The hands of the crowned angel are raised; this could be seen as a gesture of blessing, invocation or salutation of the west end beam angels, but it seems most likely that this is an expression of praise or awe above the holiest point of the building. The wings are folded, unlike those of the beam and relief angels. Also in contrast to them, the body of the angel is feathered, denoting a cherub or seraph; the angel surmounts a raised diaper pattern of intersecting triangular forms, resembling the clouds of the recumbent angels.

The relief demi-angel carvings to the south of the ceiling (CS1 and CS4, for example) are exceptional in their polychrome appearance, which is echoed by the elements of their immediate architectural setting and seems to underline the especially holy nature of their location, as do some of their attributes. At least two on the cornice appear to be medieval and their attributes are ecclesiastical; CS1 appears to clasp the tablets upon which the Ten Commandments were written (Fig. 48), and CS4 may hold an Instrument of the Passion (Fig. 49). Opposite these to the north is a diverse mixture, including some very crudely executed examples.

The sides of the tie-beams at the east end each carry six angelic reliefs, facing east and west. The exception is the bare western-facing side of the tie-beam furthest east above the sanctuary; few would have seen this. It is worth noting that at least one of these figures is bearded, so not an angel (Fig. 50).<sup>249</sup> On the north cornice of the second bay from the east, the final bay before the sanctuary, outlines and holes in the timber indicate that there

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<sup>249</sup> Heslop, in Fernie and Crossley 1990, pp. 155-156. The bearded 'angel' at Lincoln is identified as King David, whereas the relief figure at St Nicholas lacks a crown. He is equally terrestrial, yet among the angels. However, he may not be medieval.

were originally three demi-angels rather than the existing two (Fig. 51-52).<sup>250</sup> This indicates an escalation of angelic presence at the holiest end of the building. Pairs of demi-angels with scrolls line the cornice either side of the beam angels westwards, until the first bay of the chancel (fifth from the east), where the tie-beam at the east of the bay is the last to be adorned with six demi-angels or winged figures, above little foliate bosses found throughout the scheme on these structural members.<sup>251</sup> Here, pairs of demi-angels decorate the cornices, alternately in prayer and holding shields.<sup>252</sup> This bay marks the side doorways and the transition between nave and chancel. Although this spatial change is not obvious today, the late medieval laity would have been very aware of its significance, as it was denoted by a chancel screen. Further west, in the nave, there are no further demi-angels on the tie-beams until the single wingless demi-angel or figure located in the centre of the easternmost tie beam of the bay between angels N8 and S8. This appears to signify or mirror the same hierarchical shift in space or activity at ground level underneath.

As noted earlier, the queen-post spandrel carvings are indistinguishable at ground level. A scroll-bearing angel is depicted in the blind spandrel of the south queen-post above the tie-beam to the east of the final bay of the nave, facing west and appearing to announce the holy realm of the chancel. Other queen-post spandrels feature carved motifs which appear rather randomly distributed at first viewing. At the east end, spandrel SPN1 carries a rather crudely executed depiction of a foliate form with leaves, an apparently insignificant image for such a privileged location. Likewise, SPS1 represents a flower head and leaves; perhaps these represent the garden of heaven. Another pairing locates a representation of an eagle, possibly representing St John the Evangelist, with an angel with scroll, possibly reading his Gospel. Other motifs include an intricately carved dragon, snake, fowl and dragon-

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<sup>250</sup> Where there have been losses, as in bay BN2, for example, it is obvious that there were three previously, from marks on the cornice. The wings were attached to the cornice first and the bodies added.

<sup>251</sup> The cornice is 7.5" deep at the east end.

<sup>252</sup> Their wing spans are 38".

like beasts, a phoenix or swan, a shield with foliate imagery and an intimate scene of a couple leaning together. More than one hand is discernible, and the quality of the carving is uneven. It is possible that their carvers enjoyed greater freedom in their execution and arrangement than in other more visible aspects of the design, taking private pleasure in some of their details, although whoever paid to create this largely invisible work must have concurred with their programme.<sup>253</sup> The detail and quality of many of these carvings matches much of the best Suffolk spandrel carving.

In conclusion, notwithstanding restoration work, the medieval scheme combined musical instruments and Instruments of the Passion, with references to the liturgy at the very east end. Costume and head attire appear significant. There was a link between the iconography of the roof at St Nicholas and the activities and spatial division at ground level, suggesting that the angels are shown as sub-deacons, lifted up to the roof to assist at the Mass. This hierarchical mirror of earthly and heavenly activity spread elsewhere. The final section of this chapter identifies other churches with similar schemes and begins to explore the similarities and differences between them. The location and recurrence of specific symbols are identified and appraised, taking account of the extent to which the lay experience of the Mass may have diverged from, or corresponded to, that of the clergy, and the degree to which it was imbued with social and communal significance.<sup>254</sup>

The influence of the King's Lynn roof in west Norfolk and west Suffolk

The roof at St Nicholas Chapel created an early structural and iconographic model for the representation of angelic imagery, which differed from the Westminster Hall roof in several important respects. The ambitious chapel roof proved a persuasive iconographic model for nave roofs in the west of

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<sup>253</sup> Daunton, in Powell 2017, p. 283; Neilson 2014, p. 63.

<sup>254</sup> Kieckhefer 2008, p. 168 and pp. 192-3 concurs with Reinburg's assertion of the distinctions and similarities between the experience of the congregation and the clergy, citing the 'segmentation and enclosure of processional space' as accountable for 'a diffused sense of sacrificial action' on the part of the laity, notwithstanding their 'sharp focus on one moment: the elevation of the host.'

the region.<sup>255</sup> This section explores the dispersal of various elements of the King's Lynn template, and varying responses to it, with reference to selected examples in the west of Norfolk and Suffolk. Some of these roofs followed the arrangement of alternating tie-beams with queen-posts and angelic hammer-beams and its angelic iconography and related adornment more closely than others. For example, the nave roofs at Mildenhall St Mary and Upwell St Peter are extremely similar to the St Nicholas roof in both respects, whereas at Emneth St Edmund, the iconography is supplemented and altered. In terms of the influence and dissemination of its angelic imagery, the perception of roof angels as acolytes at the Mass seems to have prevailed, especially in their attire.

#### West Norfolk and West Suffolk: Structure and production

The patron of the nave and its roof at Mildenhall St Mary may have been Sir Henry Barton, which, if verified, would confirm its status as a relatively early example of an angel roof dating from the early 1420s.<sup>256</sup> The nave roof structure of this remarkable north-west Suffolk church echoes that at St Nicholas Chapel and other west Norfolk nave roofs such as those at Upwell and Outwell (Figs. 53-54), all of which feature queen posts supporting the principals above horizontal tie-beams, supported by arch-braces, alternating with small hammer-beams carrying horizontal angelic representations. The Mildenhall nave roof resembles the King's Lynn through-build model particularly closely.

At Mildenhall, seven pairs of horizontal beam angels face each other; five pairs are set above the window arches and the others are sited at each end of the nave. Coldstream argues that the Mildenhall nave angels are carved directly from the underside of the beams.<sup>257</sup> From ground level, they appear to have been attached to the undersides of the beams, as in the majority of

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<sup>255</sup> Although subordinate to the parish church of St Margaret's, St Nicholas is the largest "chapel-of-ease" in England; its reconstruction at the start of the fifteenth century was probably the most ambitious building project in Norfolk at that time. See Heslop, Mellings and Thøfner 2012, p. 9.

<sup>256</sup> Middleton-Stewart 2011, p. xxix.

<sup>257</sup> Coldstream, in Ford 1988, p. 81.

cases at St Nicholas. Although this may reflect repair work, a more convincing argument is suggested by Adams' pragmatic view that they were probably more easily carved from fairly standard separate lengths of timber, with slots for the insertion of their outstretched wings.<sup>258</sup>

It appears to have been a deliberate approach to position beam angels above the apex of clerestory windows where possible in roofs of this type, to ensure that they received optimum lighting, unlike some alternative models outlined in chapter four. This strategy was adopted in the nave at Mildenhall, as at King's Lynn. At Outwell St Clement, probably dating to the second quarter of the fifteenth century, the nave angels are situated above the windows and the pointed arches of the arcade.<sup>259</sup> The practical benefit of the illumination made possible by the addition of such glazed clerestories is obvious, but the symbolic significance of heavenly radiance and brightness cannot have escaped their designers.

The nave angels at Mildenhall and Upwell are set within roof structures which neatly fit the uniformity of the architecture of Perpendicular rebuilding programmes, but others are not. It seems highly unlikely that carpenters ignored existing structural details and dimensions when they planned and constructed these roofs; instead, in some cases, the need to position carvings at relatively equidistant points inevitably led to their disjunction from the window series beneath, especially if this was irregular. For example, at the west end of the north side at Tilney All Saints, where the late fifteenth-century roof is integrated with a twelfth-century arcade, the beam angels are to the west side of the windows. However, on the south side, the angels are positioned above the apex of the windows. Although there is a Perpendicular clerestory, the string course of the earlier structure is still visible. Also, at Lakenheath St Mary the Virgin, a Perpendicular clerestory is accommodated in an earlier building with fourteenth-century details and a blocked window to the east. The roof does not entirely relate to the clerestory window series,

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<sup>258</sup> Gerald Adams is the master carver based at Long Stratton, who assessed the King's Lynn carvings in situ with me on two visits.

<sup>259</sup> Daunton, in Powell 2017, p. 288.

which differ to the north and south and surmount equally divergent arcade arches. As a result, N3 and S3 are especially out of step. Angel beam N3 lies to the left of the window completely, whereas N1-2 and N4 are to the left of the window arch.

Lakenheath St Mary the Virgin lies just a few miles north of Mildenhall; the nave roof shares the alternating tie-beam and angel hammer-beam structure with queen-posts of its larger neighbour, albeit with only five pairs of horizontal angelic beam carvings, as in the Outwell nave. Although the number of angels appears to have been significant at Westminster Hall and may have been in certain parish churches, it seems likely that in cases such as these, it was dictated by the scale of the existing fabric rather than any symbolic intent.

The relative scale of the angelic carvings also varies in these roofs. Although there are fewer beam angels at Lakenheath than at Mildenhall or King's Lynn, the length of each carving appears to be roughly one fifth of the width of the nave, as at Upwell, so they are quite prominent, especially given the lower roof height and pitch. The relative scale of the angels is the same at Mildenhall nave, but their increased height creates a more distant effect. At Northwold St Andrew, there are only three pairs of horizontal angels on exceptionally short hammers. Their hands are raised, holding relatively large shields underneath and they appear to occupy only one twelfth of the width of the nave. At Wiggenhall St Mary Magdalene, it seems as if up to ten of each of the diminutive beam angels would fit across the nave.

Practical constraints appear to have determined some of the strategies employed in these structures and their construction. However, their variations cannot be accounted for entirely on these grounds. The 'inventio' of local communities must have been at play, given the range of structural solutions in angel roofs across the region, including the arch-braced and single and double hammer-beam roofs discussed in chapter four.<sup>260</sup> The creation of novel and inventive arrangements would have been allied to the site-specific creation 'of new meaning out of the memories of a

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<sup>260</sup> Carruthers 1998, p. 10.

community.<sup>261</sup> I contend that this argument applies, both to the roof structures and to their angelic programmes, which are discussed next from the perspective of the west of the region.

#### West Norfolk and West Suffolk: Heavenly Angels

As discussed above, some of the angel roof schemes which emerged in the west of the region followed the iconographic model of the innovatory roof at King's Lynn far more closely than others. Some of the same artisans clearly laboured at more than one location. The perception of roof angels as assistants at the Mass seems to have prevailed across most of these churches; their attire is a key signifier of this role, but the combination and identity of their symbolic attributes is more diverse, suggesting that some of these held connotations specific to site or community.

The Mildenhall angels wear albs with amices, resembling those of the King's Lynn beam angels. Some are very similar in appearance to their west Norfolk predecessors, to the extent that one of the same hands can be identified. The face and hair of the angel possibly holding a Pax with a cross is identical to some Lynn angels, although the amice is narrower and the hands are clumsier, confirming Adams' view that different carvers may have worked on separate elements of a single carving. This also shows that at least one of the carvers worked at both sites. These carvings and the nave angels at Upwell are very similar in appearance to those at St Nicholas Chapel. The possibility that groups of carvers worked at several sites across this part of the region is reinforced by similarities between the angelic carvings in the naves at Outwell St Clement, Northwold St Andrew and Emneth St Edmund, where the beam angels are horizontal, but their heads are raised and their facial features are analogous.

Coldstream suggests that traces of pigment remain at Mildenhall, showing 'that the roof was originally coloured and gilded.'<sup>262</sup> It is clear that many church roofs were embellished with painted decoration, as discussed in

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<sup>261</sup> Garcia-Rivera 2003, p. 51.

<sup>262</sup> Coldstream, in Ford 1988, p. 81.

chapter three. At Mildenhall, (unlike at King's Lynn, except in the ceiling), the apparent vestiges of white paint on the angels' faces and other details are difficult to discern at ground level. At North Creak St Mary, there is evidence of original pigment, but in the nave roofs at Northwold, Outwell and elsewhere in the west of the region, restoration work and later interventions hamper identification of original painting.

At Upwell nave, the sixteen horizontal angels in ecclesiastical dress of albs and amices appear as clearly paired sub-deacons, as at Mildenhall and at King's Lynn. The arrangement and nature of their attributes is not identical, but there are some common threads. At the east end against the wall, angel N1 appears to hold a Pax, opposite the small open book held by S1. Although it does not duplicate the ceiling arrangement at St Nicholas Chapel, it is not dissimilar. The significance of the association of this imagery is discussed further in chapter three. N2 and S2 raise their hands palms forward (Fig. 55).<sup>263</sup> Towards the west, N7 and S7 form a musical pair, each holding a gittern or lyre. At the west end, N8 and S8 face each other, hands in prayer, perhaps in exhortation to the laity below. The rest of the angels in between hold instruments of the Passion; N3 and S3 each hold a spear or staff, N4 (probably) a spear, S4 a stick, staff and bucket, possibly the vessel to hold the gall and vinegar, N5 the pincer, S5 flails for scourging, N6 the crown of thorns and S6 the hammer and nails. These pairings seem quite deliberate and their locations appear considered too.

It is interesting that some of these pairings reappear at Mildenhall nave in different positions. For example, N1 and S1 hold their hands in prayer at the east end, not at the west. N3 and S3 hold lutes as a musical duo, again towards the east rather than the west as at Upwell. N4 and S4 hold an open book and a book or Pax further towards the west. N5 and S5 hold the crown of thorns and hammer and nails as the sole representatives of the

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<sup>263</sup> These hands are enormous and clumsy, like those of the north aisle angels, suggesting that the same carver worked on them. The curves of the hair are more finely rendered, and resemble carvings at St Nicholas Chapel at King's Lynn.



Instruments of the Passion. N6 introduces a different device, in the form of a shield with a cross, facing S6 with an open book at the west end.

Of course, identical schemes were impossible, due to variations in the number of angels. But while it seems that the location of some attributes was interchangeable, there do appear to have been deliberate pairings to mark out changes in spatial activity and meaning at ground level. Losses and restoration work can hamper full analysis; at Mildenhall, N2 and S2 appear to have no attributes. However, these gaps do not prevent investigation of the overall significance of angelic programmes, and while it is possible that angels were moved during restoration, this generally seems unlikely.

At other churches, some attributes already encountered are combined with new motifs, and their arrangement can be interpreted differently to the combinations of musical motifs and Instruments of the Passion displayed at King's Lynn, Mildenhall and Upwell. The open book recurs three times in no obvious order at Wiggshall St Mary Magdalene (N2, N4 and S5), alongside the lute (N3), a shield (S3) and hands in prayer (N5). N1 holds a scroll and S4 is vested as a bishop, wearing a mitre. S1 holds an unidentifiable object in its right hand and the attribute of S2 is unclear. The arrangement at Methwold St George is more fragmentary; a rather feminine angel wearing a crown recalls a similar motif at St Nicholas Chapel (Fig. 50) and familiar attributes include a book or bible (N4) and the crown of thorns (N2); the latter indicates the presence of instruments of the Passion (Figs. 56-57), but the original scheme remains elusive. The inclusion of these varied attributes in different schemes, and their significance, are considered further in chapter three.

In some roofs, the presence of the angels as servants at the Mass is explicitly referenced in their attributes and they are represented carrying the vessels and instruments of the Mass. At Emneth St Edmund, these attributes are mirrored to the north and south by pairs of angels. At the east and west ends, they carry the motif of the open book encountered at St Nicholas Chapel and Mildenhall, possibly representing the Gospels or missal (N1/S1 and N7/S7). Between, from east to west, are representations of the Pax

(N2/S2), the chalice and host (N3/S3), the candlestick (N4/S4), an incense box (N5/S5) and the censer (N6/S6). These motifs, combined with others, are found elsewhere in East Anglian angel roofs, including the spectacular hammer-beam example at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, which will be discussed in chapter three.<sup>264</sup> The organisation and significance of such schemes in relation to liturgical practice at ground level will be explored with particular comparative study of the representation of the chalice and Host. However, in the tie-beam roofs of west Norfolk, they are relative rarities and this seems interesting, given the vesting of so many roof angels as co-celebrants of the Mass.

If most of the angels discussed are attired as assistants at the Mass, there are occasional examples of angels with feathered bodies in some Norfolk roofs. The scroll-bearer at Wiggshall St Mary Magdalene (N1) is one; angels are similarly costumed with tippetts at Emneth St Edmund. Ubiquitous in other church furnishings and glass, this form of angelic representation is rare in roofs. Across the county, the nave roof at Cawston St Agnes has standing beam angels in feathered suits as cherubim, with two sets of wings, but this is an idiosyncratic exception. It is not surprising that the angelic orders are not often identified in these parochial angel roofs. As discussed earlier, most of the orders were not fully described in scripture and representations of the nine orders of angels in other modes were uncommon and could be accompanied by inscriptions to identify them. Ultimately, one would expect roof angels to be angels or archangels of the lowest order, as these were the angelic beings closest to humanity, working as assistants at the Mass and as intercessors on the path to salvation. This topic is revisited in detail in chapter four.

Angelic presence was amplified at several sites by the addition of demi-angels on the tie-beams and cornices, or by bosses along the ridge or at the meeting-points of the purlins and principals. Allowing for losses and restoration, it is clear that the positioning and extent of this additional adornment varied, as did the attributes and attitudes of the angels. On each

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<sup>264</sup> Tolhurst 1962, pp. 67-68.

side of the tie-beams at Emneth St Edmund and at Outwell St Clement, three demi-angels are positioned (Fig. 59), as extant material evidence suggests they would have been at Methwold St George, whereas at Upwell St Peter, both sides of each tie-beam carries a single central demi-angel, facing either east or west and flanked by small foliate bosses. There are no demi-angels on the cornice at Emneth, whereas the hammer-beam angels are flanked by single demi-angels to their east and west at Upwell, where there are additional single demi-angels on the ridge above each tie-beam. At Northwold St Andrew, six angel star bosses line the purlins on each side (twelve in total), and these are also found along the ridge, whereas foliate bosses punctuate the cornice. The cornice demi-angels at Upwell carry scrolls; this popular motif reappears at the ridge (RN3). The tie-beam angels at Emneth vary too; facing east, TNE3 again holds a scroll; instead, TNE4 has raised hands and TNE6 carries a (restored) cross. The presence of evident restoration work here, as seen earlier at King's Lynn, and the fragmentary survivals at Methwold St George confirm that one cannot always trust some of these schemes in their entirety. However, there are recurrent motifs and the specific attributes of these generally diminutive additional angelic carvings appear to have been less significant than their overall presence.

In some roofs, the figural presence is not exclusively angelic. As mentioned earlier, carved figures against the wall-posts feature at Beeston-next-Mileham and they are included in the nave roofs at Outwell St Clement and Emneth St Edmund. At Outwell, they rest on more elaborate stone corbels than at Emneth, but in both cases, they lack the canopied timber niches of the figures in the arch-braced nave roof at Walsoken All Saints and the false double hammer-beam nave roof at Tilney All Saints. Whereas regal stone figures served to trace the lineage and legitimacy of divine kingship at Westminster Hall, these parochial wooden figures often depict apostles or saints, extending the intercessory presence of the celestial hierarchy and

enveloping the congregation within it.<sup>265</sup> Their relationship with angelic roof imagery and the Rood across roof types is explored in chapter three.

At Emneth, there are fourteen figures and the dedicatory saint is incorporated into the scheme at the south-east end (WPS1); St Edmund appears with an arrow, wearing a crown, facing Christ, His hands lifted in blessing (WPN1). The other figures represent saints and apostles, including St Michael with the dragon (WPN4). Matthias at the south-west end (WPS7) has no axe and has lost a hand. At Outwell, there are twelve pairs of figures, located on figurative stone corbels below the roof angels. Representations of apostles among the smaller lower figures include Philip with his three loaves (WPN2) and James with hat, staff and bag (WPS4). At the west end is a child with hands joined (WPS6); some of the others have been damaged and are difficult to identify, but generally, these lower figures appear virtuous. Larger figures above these appear deviant and grotesque; some are demonic (WPN5, WPS1), whilst others seem to represent human personifications of vices, including a clawed woman with a wimple (WPN6), a wealthy gentleman in a hat (WPN3) and a tonsured friar (WPN2). These unusual duos have been the subject of detailed scrutiny by Daunton, who observes that, whereas from ground level, the larger figures behind appear to loom over the smaller figures in front, at eye level (as seen from scaffolding), the larger figures seem weighed down by the weight of the roof whilst the smaller figures stand 'free and assured.'<sup>266</sup> This raises questions regarding the intention of the carver and the perception of the relationship between virtue and vice in these pairings by the laity at ground level. This strategy does not seem to have been replicated elsewhere, suggesting that its reception was ambivalent at best. It is unclear whether it represents confusion or deliberate distortion of arrangements elsewhere by the carvers.

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<sup>265</sup> Duffy 2005, p. 158. In the same way, Duffy writes about the chancel screen surmounted by the Rood as a 'complex icon of the heavenly hierarchy', noting that 'many screens were clearly designed to underline this symbolism, perhaps most strikingly at Southwold in Suffolk, where the magnificent screen contains panels depicting the Apostles, the Prophets and the Nine Orders of Angels', creating 'a sense of being surrounded and assisted by the 'whole company of heaven.'

<sup>266</sup> Daunton, in Powell 2017, p. 289.

The juxtaposition of figures that are beautiful and virtuous with others that are ugly, deformed, threatening or evil was a common didactic genre in Christian medieval art.<sup>267</sup> It reappears in another guise in another west Norfolk nave roof at Fincham St Martin, a hammer-beam roof with alternating braced and unbraced hammer-posts, where angelic representations in ecclesiastical dress on the hammer-beams are interspersed with grotesque and crude heads, some of which bear a marked resemblance to those at Outwell (Fig. 60). Both churches had connections with the Fincham family, which also extended to Mildenhall St Mary in Suffolk.<sup>268</sup> Their roof schemes are discussed further in relation to the iconography of the north aisle roof at Mildenhall in chapter three.

Where they are present, the number of wall-post figures seems to have depended upon spatial concerns such as the size of the building, the distribution of the windows and arches of the arcades and therefore, the number of bays. A series of standing figures on wall-posts or in niches represented additional expense and, as a design option, it could be employed or omitted regardless of the roof structure it accompanied. The number and identity of the figures differ at Emneth and Outwell and this variation is found in other west Norfolk churches. There are sixteen figures in niches under the arch-braced nave roof at Walsoken All Saints (and others in the chapels and south aisle), and eighteen on the hooded wall-posts beneath the arch-braces of the hammer-beam roof at Beeston St Mary the Virgin. At Emneth, St Peter with his keys is represented next to Christ in a privileged location near the north-east end (WPN2), whereas at Beeston and at Walsoken, St Peter is centrally located to the south (WPS5 and WPS4 respectively). St John the Evangelist is represented with the chalice and dragon to the north-west at Emneth (WPN5); denoted only by the chalice, he is similarly located at Outwell (WPN4), yet to the south-east at Walsoken (WPS3). In contrast, the north-west location of St Simon with his boat is almost identical at Emneth (WPN6) and Walsoken (WPN6). Apparently, the

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<sup>267</sup> Daunton, in Powell 2017, p. 294; she cites Carruthers 2013, pp. 170-171 regarding medieval enjoyment of the mirroring of opposites.

<sup>268</sup> Daunton, in Powell 2017, pp. 296-297.

number, order and location of certain figures was adaptable and often less important than their symbolic presence in a roof, as discussed in chapter three.

At Lakenheath St Mary the Virgin, as at Beeston-next-Mileham, it is notable that the ecclesiastical beam angels have been subject to energetic iconoclasm. Some of their attributes, including a scroll, an open book and a chalice, their faces and hair have been attacked and some have lost their hands or arms.<sup>269</sup> This is exceptional, as many other roofs in this part of the region escaped such damage, either thanks to sympathetic local attitudes, or due to their inaccessibility. At Lakenheath, the relative proximity of the angels to the ground apparently increased their vulnerability.<sup>270</sup>

This section has established that a distinctive early form of the angel roof emerged in King's Lynn and extended to other parish churches to the west of Norfolk and Suffolk, in contrast to the Westminster Hall hammer-beam structure with its shield-bearing angels. The spread of this variant as far as Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire is exemplified by the roofs at Isleham St Andrew and Addlethorpe St Nicholas respectively. Some of these roofs are extremely similar in character to the St Nicholas template, whereas others display structural or iconographic adaptations and experiments. Sometimes, it is clear that the same makers have been at work on different roof carvings, or that different carpenters may have been employed. Elsewhere, communities and patrons appear to have had differing priorities, either with regard to relative expenditure upon embellishment of a roof compared to other furnishings, or concerning thematic programmes and their arrangements.

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<sup>269</sup> N1 and N2 have had their hands cut off and their attributes damaged, for example. N3 has lost its eastern arm, N4, N5 and those to the south have suffered substantial losses. S2 seems to hold a scroll; N3 has a chalice and N5 an open book.

<sup>270</sup> The cornice is only 28 feet high, compared to Mildenhall and King's Lynn at almost 40' and 41' respectively; Cooper 2001, p. 215, p. 216, p. 244 and p. 250; puritan William Dowsing's inspections as 'Commissioner for removing the monuments of idolatry and superstition from churches in the Eastern Association' in 1643-1644 were further south in Suffolk and west in Cambridgeshire, and he did not visit the area.

## Bury St Edmunds St Mary

The nave roof at Bury St Edmunds St Mary in west Suffolk (c. 1433) (Fig. 61) merits discussion here, because it relates closely to some variants of the Lynn type, especially in terms of its iconography. It resembles the scheme at Emneth especially, with carved hammer-beam angels bearing symbols of the Mass, above ecclesiastical wall-post figures. However, there is a significant structural difference. At Bury St Edmunds, the angelic hammer-beams alternate with collared arch-braces, rather than with tie-beams, creating a loftier, more open impression. As at St Nicholas Chapel, mercantile wealth funded the construction of the roof. It is particularly sophisticated in terms of its iconographic programme, carpentry and carving, perhaps reflecting its location adjacent to the Abbey.

The roof was presumably constructed in the wake of a number of bequests to the 'structure of the new Church of St Mary' and its 'fabric' between c1424-33.<sup>271</sup> Donations for furnishings followed, suggesting that the roof was probably constructed by the mid-1430s.<sup>272</sup> Tolhurst proposes a later date after 1444-5, on the basis of his assertion that the final two pairs of roof angels at the west end of the nave represent Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou, but this does not accord with the documentary or material evidence.<sup>273</sup> The carvings are clearly represented as angelic rather than human, in their facial expressions and attire. Their wings may be replacements, but they were designed with slots for wings. The toes of the left foot of S9 are clearly visible, as in other angelic representations in this scheme and others. Angels holding or wearing crowns and/or wearing elaborately decorated belts are found in paintings and in other roof schemes, as at King's Lynn St Nicholas and Methwold St George. Tolhurst's

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<sup>271</sup> Paine 2000; Tymms 1854, pp. 19-20 cites the substantial bequest of £20 towards the construction of the church by 'brasier' John Roche in 1425.

<sup>272</sup> Paine 2000; Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 137.

<sup>273</sup> Tolhurst 1962, pp. 69-70. This has been cited by others, including Mortlock 2009, p. 96. Gibson 1989, p. 170 also argues for a date 'about 1445,' but there are other flaws in her argument.

suggestion that the divergent faces of N/S10 resemble a portrait of Henry VI does not bear scrutiny at first hand.

Extant testamentary bequests for roofs are more limited than for furnishings such as screens and their terminology is often ambivalent.<sup>274</sup> This is exemplified at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, where the nave roof has been associated with John Baret, a wealthy and important local figure, on the basis of his extensive will (1463, proved 1467), which refers to ‘alle the werk of the aungellys on lofte wiche I haue doo maad for a remeberaunce of me and my frendys.’<sup>275</sup> Tymms reads this as a bequest for the embellishment of the east end of the roof structure alone.<sup>276</sup> His interpretation is based upon the painted decoration of this section of the roof, but by the time he was writing, this had probably been restored; one cannot be entirely confident that the design he saw, including Baret’s mottoes, represented the fifteenth-century scheme.<sup>277</sup>

In contrast to Tymms and Paine, Gibson is confident that the reference to the ‘werk of the aungellys on lofte’ is evidence of Baret’s probable patronage of the entire nave roof, but her argument is riddled with supposition and errors.<sup>278</sup> Her assertion of the ‘striking similarity’ and association of the Bury roof with that at Rougham St Mary, the church of Baret’s in-laws, the Drurys, is overstated. The Rougham roof does not share the alternating hammer-beam and arch-braced structure at Bury, nor is there evidence of his ‘generous will bequest to Rougham church’. Baret’s ‘Marian devotion’ is also cited by MacKinney, but his powerful dedication to the Virgin Mary and to St Mary’s church was not unique and is not proof of his conception or patronage of the entire nave roof in itself.<sup>279</sup> An elite group of gentry and merchants

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<sup>274</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, pp. 235-279.

<sup>275</sup> Tymms 1850, p. 39; Gibson 1989, p. 70.

<sup>276</sup> Tymms 1845-54, p. 169.

<sup>277</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 138. Suffolk W; Paine 1986.

<sup>278</sup> Paine 2000; Gibson 1989, p. 70, pp. 170-176 and p. 221.

<sup>279</sup> MacKinney 2007, p. 94; Mackinney 2007, p. 100. ‘By the fifteenth century, the Cult of the Virgin completely permeated the religious fabric of England, and was particularly strong in East Anglia, as



existed in Bury St Edmunds.<sup>280</sup> Others also exercised generous patronage at St Mary, including merchant John or Jankyn Smith, who built the chancel chapels.<sup>281</sup> The nave roof is characterised by exceptionally fine workmanship, with unusually detailed angelic and wall-post carvings. In the absence of will evidence, it seems likely that it was funded by more than one wealthy individual in the town.

Tymms may be right that the will evidence supports Baret's funding of the east end nave angelic carvings and structure. However, there is some ambiguity in the will, and the context of the passage cited doesn't seem to be the nave, although the window referred to might be the east window above the rood loft.<sup>282</sup> It is possible that the 'aungellys on lofte' were those on the existing loft above the reredos in the Lady Chapel, which Baret converted into his chantry. Paine asserts that the chantry chapel roof created by Peyntour according to Baret's instructions is still intact, albeit restored in 1968.<sup>283</sup> Tymms' description records the 'excellent preservation' of its decoration in 1850, including Baret's motto, 'Grace me Governe.'<sup>284</sup> Of course, this could have been restored prior to his account; if not, it may have influenced the restoration of the canopy to the Rood in the nave. Alternatively, given the original location of Baret's tomb on the north side of his chapel, one might suggest that the decoration of the canopy to the Rood in the nave with Baret's motto was entirely consistent.<sup>285</sup>

Beech asserts the impact of the construction and form of the Bury roof upon most subsequent late-medieval Suffolk carpentry.<sup>286</sup> It is true that the arch-braced collar-beams (transverse horizontal timbers connecting the principal

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even a casual perusal of Edmund Warterton's tireless catalogue of English medieval Marian devotion, *Pietas Mariana Britannica*, will attest.'

<sup>280</sup> Gottfried 1982, pp. 131-166.

<sup>281</sup> Tymms 1850, pp. 55-73. Paine 2000.

<sup>282</sup> Tymms 1850, pp. 38-39.

<sup>283</sup> Paine 2000.

<sup>284</sup> Tymms 1850, pp. 237-238.

<sup>285</sup> Statham, in Visser-Fuchs 2003, p. 428.

<sup>286</sup> Beech 2015, p. 242 and p. 250.

rafters to prevent sagging) characterise most Suffolk roofs, unlike the majority of Norfolk examples. Arch-braced angelic beams are also common, in contrast to the unbraced King's Lynn type found at Mildenhall St Mary and Lakenheath north of Bury St Edmunds. However, although alternate arch-braces and hammer-beams were probably manifested even earlier, further east near Ipswich, at Westerfield St Mary Magdalene, they were far from ubiquitous in the county. Aside from the use of collars, diversity is the hallmark of Suffolk single hammer-beam roofs, from the alternating tie-beam and hammer-beam structure at Bildeston St Mary Magdalene (c. 1420) and the arch-braced single hammer-beam type at Woolpit (c. 1450), to the alternating arch-braced hammer-beam and hammer-post idiom at Earl Stonham (c. 1500), as discussed in chapter five. Even in roofs which follow the Bury model, as at Hawstead All Saints and Kersey St Mary, there are discrepancies. For example, the roof at Bury has queen-posts instead of king-posts to the collars. In this respect, it follows the King's Lynn and Mildenhall models; the Bury collars are higher and the queen-posts are rather slender, like the braced hammer-posts beneath, so this was probably an aesthetic choice, to facilitate the insertion of spandrel tracery.

Although the arch-bracing of the angelic beams at Bury St Edmunds augmented their structural role, they were designed for aesthetic effect. The roof is particularly noteworthy for the exceptional quality, quantity and complexity of its angelic hammer-beam, wall-post and spandrel carvings, which indicate elite artisanship and are the subject of detailed analysis in chapter three. The beam angels are more differentiated in their mainly ecclesiastical attire than those at King's Lynn, and reference the Mass more directly. Unlike some other Suffolk roofs, the roof has not suffered iconoclasm and the wall-post figures are diverse and generally identifiable. Demi-angels populate the cornice, whilst the spandrels house tracery and further carvings of foliate motifs and diverse creatures. Good and evil are associated in the least accessible relief carvings, which exemplify the medieval appreciation of the juxtaposition of opposing qualities discussed above in relation to the roofs at St Nicholas Chapel and Outwell St Clement.

## Conclusion

Pevsner's view of the later fifteenth-century combination of hammer-beams with tie-beams at West Walton as 'primitive' underlines the conventional view of the tie-beam as an 'aesthetically unattractive' obstruction, blighting the interior outline of the church.<sup>287</sup> Yet this reliable structural form was harnessed at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel in the early development of an extremely sophisticated angelic hammer-beam roof type, which proved enduring in the west of the region, despite alternatives, and an increasing trend towards more open hammer-beam roofs elsewhere.

Close material analysis from scaffolding at St Nicholas enabled an accurate and particularly detailed assessment of the roof structure and its angelic beam construction, which confirmed the primarily aesthetic impetus of the design. These insights were extrapolated and applied to other roofs which followed this model, alongside surveys in situ at ground level. This methodology also facilitated the identification and intimate analysis of restoration work, explaining variations in construction and inconsistencies or omissions in the carved imagery of some of the hammer-beams in particular.

These detailed observations and recordings at St Nicholas Chapel and at other churches in the west of the region reveal the ecclesiastical emphasis of their roof imagery, unlike the heraldic displays at Westminster Hall and Norwich St Giles. They imply a link between the iconography of the roof at St Nicholas and the activities and spatial division at ground level, suggesting that the angels are shown as assistants at the Mass. Similar iconography appears in other roofs generally of the same structural type, particularly along a trajectory in the west of the region. From variations within this angel roof type, and from the development of alternative hammer-beam and other roof models discussed particularly in chapters three and five, it is clear that there was no one formula; instead, there were varied and creative solutions, generated by fashion, creativity and pragmatism and a complex web of decision-making by patrons, communities and makers.

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<sup>287</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 62.

## Chapter three: Structure and image: late medieval angel roofs in Norwich and Ipswich

### Introduction

Thirty-one medieval churches survive in Norwich, their density unparalleled by any other urban centre in northern Europe. Consequently, they represent a significant corpus of architectural and historical evidence and their 'remarkable variety of forms, architectural and decorative details' is reflected in an important concentration of diverse late-medieval roofs.<sup>288</sup> The variety of late fourteenth to early sixteenth-century medieval parish church roofs with angelic carvings or motifs in Norwich largely corresponds with the range of roof imagery and forms found across the region, including tie-beam, arch-braced and single hammer-beam structures. There are only four extant double hammer-beam roofs in Norfolk; none are in Norwich, contrasting with the pre-eminence of this structural form in Suffolk and Ipswich. As this chapter will show, connections can be drawn between the structure and imagery of certain Norwich roofs and others in the county, suggesting localised relationships related to patronage and craftsmanship, just as certain roofs around other urban centres such as Ipswich and King's Lynn appear to share common characteristics. Some examples of Ipswich roofs are included in this chapter to underline this and to provide a fuller urban counterpoint to the mainly rural examples in other chapters.

The communal funding of most of these projects by the elite merchant class, often apparently in collaboration with the clergy, is as significant as their differences, perhaps finding its clearest expression in the innovatory faux-vaulted open-plan form of the roof spanning the nave and chancel at St Peter Mancroft (Fig. 62).<sup>289</sup> Yet ambition and invention were not confined to the largest parish church in the city, as illustrated by the refined carvings and unique imagery at St Peter Hungate (Fig. 63). Arguably, these roofs

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<sup>288</sup> Medieval Churches of Norwich <https://norwichmedievalchurches.org/> [accessed 17 May 2017].

<sup>289</sup> Stewart 2015. I am choosing to use Stewart's term 'open plan' in preference to 'through-built', as the latter is suggestive of an uninterrupted constructional campaign.

represent the pinnacle of late medieval roof design in terms of coherence and craftsmanship. They also exemplify the contrast between imposing open-plan roof projects and others on a smaller scale, during a period of extensive church rebuilding across the city.<sup>290</sup> This chapter will locate the development of these designs in a climate of intense experimentation and innovation, related to increasing lay patronage, devotion and collaboration with clergy in a spirit of 'keen competition and emulation' against the backdrop of 'an undercurrent of dispute...between the cathedral and the city.'<sup>291</sup> It will also consider the degree to which invention and imitation in medieval church roofs is evidenced by the relative quality of carving and the degree of coherence and complexity of their iconographic schemes.

### Early roofs with angelic representations

#### St Gregory

Arguably, the earliest angelic representations to populate Norwich (and perhaps Norfolk) roofs are found in the earliest open-plan church design in the city at St Gregory, rebuilt from 1394 'in the handsome manner we now see it...at the expense of the priory, and such benefactors as they could get to contribute to it' according to the eighteenth-century antiquarian Francis Blomefield.<sup>292</sup> This seems to understate the collective commitment evident in its scale and unified form spanning the nave and chancel, although there is

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<sup>290</sup> Tanner 1984, p. 4. '...between the fourteenth and the early sixteenth century almost every parish church in the city that was not demolished was extensively rebuilt on a grander scale.'

<sup>291</sup> Medieval Churches of Norwich <https://norwichmedievalchurches.org/> [accessed 17 May 2017]; Sekules 2006, p. 284; Tanner 1984, pp. 126-129 cites evidence from lay and clerical wills which 'give an impression of considerable enthusiasm' for the rebuilding, adornment and furnishing of parish churches across the city.

<sup>292</sup> Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 4, p. 273; NRO DCN 1/10/9 records the cathedral infirmarer's contribution of £4 towards 'making the chancel' in 1394; Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 258; Stewart 2015, pp. 94-95 describes this early example of a church without structural division in Norwich as 'not without precedent in the wider region', referencing North Walsham St Nicholas (pre-1346), Beccles St Michael (late 1360s) and King's Lynn St Nicholas (late 1300s/early 1400s).

no known testamentary evidence of lay patronage of the church. At St Gregory, diminutive angelic corbels appear to support the arch-braces of the lofty late fourteenth-century roof covering the nave and chancel of open plan design with no chancel arch (Fig. 64).<sup>293</sup> Between the eight two-light clerestory windows to north and south, these elevated demi-angels and braces alternate with braced tie-beams on much longer posts with unusual drainpipe corbels, except at the east end, where short additional tie-beam braced posts surmount chancel window arches to north and south.<sup>294</sup>

This roof seems to have been contemporary with Hugh Herland's prestigious angel roof at Westminster Hall (c. 1393-9), but does not reference its much-debated hammer-beam form or shield-bearing carved beam angels, instead allying more restrained angelic imagery with tried and tested tie-beam construction. Unlike the influential open-plan design executed shortly afterwards at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, which would be manifested later in Norwich at St Swithin, the Pottergate roof lacks queen-posts to the tie-beams; instead, the principals are braced at the ridge. Arch-braces between the tie-beams do not offer the opportunity for angelic imagery carved in the round found in the hammer-beams at Lynn; nonetheless the more contained display at St Gregory provides a portent of the prevalence of angelic church roof iconography over the coming century.

The Norwich design is characterised by ambition rather than caution in its span and elegant, light interpretation of tie-beam construction. The ridge and purlins are punctuated by refined snowflake bosses where they meet the principals; otherwise, a lack of extraneous carved details reflects aesthetic discernment rather than financial restraint, as illustrated by the addition of the boarding, which would have incurred extra expense, especially as it appears to have been painted. Only traces of pigment remain, unlike several timber canopies elsewhere which retain evidence of heavenly iconography and colour, as discussed further in chapter three. These range from from angelic

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<sup>293</sup> The roof is 48ft high at the ridge in the nave. This exceeds others in Norwich such as at St Laurence (45ft). Only the roof at St Peter Mancroft is higher at 50ft.

<sup>294</sup> There are no angelic corbels here, where N/S2 would have been expected, thus reducing angelic presence in the chancel. A gold cross is painted on the underside of post SP2.

schemes for the chapels at Norwich St John Maddermarket, the words of the 'Te Deum' along the nave cornice at Salle (Fig. 65), delicately-rendered vine tendrils at Necton All Saints (also in Norfolk) and Marian motifs at Palgrave St Peter in north Suffolk. Passages of red and green are juxtaposed at Metfield St John the Baptist and Walsham-le-Willows St Mary in north Suffolk. The symbolic significance of these roofs as vaults of Heaven, signifying the special status of the spaces they surmount, was augmented by carved and painted imagery.<sup>295</sup> In some roofs, only one section was painted to highlight the importance of an especially sacred sphere, as in the ceiling at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, or the canopy to the Rood at Metfield, in which Christological and Marian monograms in roundels are surrounded by vines. Equally, boarding with the addition of carved bosses was sometimes reserved for such a location, as at Sibton St Peter in Suffolk (Fig. 66).

At St Gregory, painted imagery appears to have covered the entire span of the nave and chancel roof, in dialogue with the carved demi-angels, although it is impossible to confirm whether it was thematically zoned and if so, how. It is possible that the angelic presence in the roof at St Gregory was intensified by a painted scheme of angels, as in the chapel schemes at St John Maddermarket, where they hold scrolls carrying the text of the 'Te Deum', or in the arch-braced nave roof at Salle SS Peter and Paul, as discussed in chapter four. Alternatively, the scheme at St Gregory may have located the angelic corbels in the garden of Heaven or within a Marian or Christological scheme.

The angelic corbels at St Gregory are small and have lost their wings. They are characterised by late fourteenth-century variety in their form, attire, symbols or attitudes, and they do not neatly relate to the fabric of the building

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<sup>295</sup> Lunnon 2012, p. 114. 'Vaults and canopies universally promote and therefore the places beneath are special, their status deemed worthy of such treatment.' Leedy 1980, p. 33. Writing with reference to Henry VII's chapel at Westminster (c. 1498-1502), he observes 'that the roof of a church belongs to the heavens was not a new idea. Around 1225 St Hugh of Lincoln described the various parts of a church: the foundation is the body, the wall the man, the roof the spirit; ....the spirit [belongs] to the stars.'

(Fig. 67).<sup>296</sup> Some bear shields (N/S1, N3, S5), whilst some hold their hands together in prayer (N/S2, S3) and others raise their hands (N4, S3) or have lost an attribute (S4). All appear to have been painted in a post-medieval palette comprising predominantly greys, black and a subdued hue of dark red; gold paint has been applied to the costume details of N/S1, N6 and S5, shield of S5 and shield crosses of N/S1. The thickly applied pigment appears to be augmented by a layer of whitewash below and it is difficult to ascertain whether they are made of stone or timber.<sup>297</sup> The former seems more likely, but these corbels are unlike later examples (as at St Laurence) in their dimensions, their variety and their handling in shallow relief. Indeed, in their setting diagonally against the wall-post ends they are more akin to wooden demi-angel reliefs than stone corbels, clearly demonstrating that they support the posts purely symbolically rather than physically. This positioning contrasts with that of most corbels firmly underneath the posts elsewhere, although it is not structurally significant; corbels do not and were not considered to exercise a weight-bearing function, as discussed later in relation to the main roof at St Peter Mancroft. At St Gregory, the treatment of their forms is diverse and reveals the existence of more than one carver. Thin neat definition of cloud distinguishes N/S3 from the deeper folds of N/S4 and S6 and curvilinear forms of N/S1, N/S5 and S6. In the chancel, N/S2 correspond particularly in terms of their wide form and attitudes, yet at the east of the chancel, N/S1 differ in form; S1 has smaller hands, a narrower, more elongated body and longer hair. N1, N3 and S3 are more compact than the other angels in the scheme; located between the first two clerestory windows, N/S3 are closely related in their feathered costumes, small hands in prayer, thin neat folds of cloud, rather feminine facial features and long wavy hair. They appear to have heralded the transition to the especially sacred sphere of the chancel in their attire and carefully rendered detail. Yet S1 is more closely allied to several angels in the nave, the longer narrower body and straight folds of the simple ecclesiastical dress reminiscent of

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<sup>296</sup> For example, N2 is positioned between the first pair of chancel clerestory windows, not centrally, but at the edge of the most easterly window.

<sup>297</sup> I have analysed images at length; details such as the lost hand of N3 and underside of S1 appear stone, but the paint layers make it impossible to discern surface texture.



N/S4, N/S5 and N/S6, eliminating any simple suggestion of separate work for different patrons of the nave and chancel and providing an index of collaboration between clergy and laity at St Gregory instead. Equally, the particularly big hands of S5 and N/S6 at the west end also characterise N/S1 at the east in a further indication of shared craftsmanship across the nave and chancel; like N/S3, N/S4 form another closely related pairing with longer bodies attired as acolytes in albs, facial features and hair, and deep ribbons of cloud. This resonates with other evidence in the church fabric of a speedily executed 'single design', which is also reflected in the structure and imagery of the arch-braced aisle roofs.<sup>298</sup> These are punctuated by snowflake bosses of the same design as those of the main roof at the intersections of the main timbers, and their angelic corbels speak to those in the nave and chancel in their variety and carving.

#### The development of different angel roof models

##### St Michael-at-Plea

The heraldic hammer-beam design of the early fifteenth-century angel roof at Norwich St Giles was discussed in chapter one. I propose that the model developed at St Giles was adapted at St Michael-at-Plea in the mid fifteenth century in an almost equally steeply pitched roof (Fig. 68).<sup>299</sup> Although it conveys the appearance of an arch-braced canopy with angelic reliefs where the principals meet the ridge at first glance today, close inspection reveals that the five-bay medieval roof has had a complex afterlife and its true structure is less straightforward. Carved toes and drapery were identified flanking the shallow arch-braces in 2014.<sup>300</sup> This suggested that angelic beam carvings attired as acolytes had been cut back and bosses placed against some of the beam ends, excepting those at the west and east ends (NB1/6 and SB1/6). The square bosses include demi-angels (NB2/4 and

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<sup>298</sup> Stewart 2015, p. 92 cites features including arcade profiles and tracery patterns.

<sup>299</sup> The pitch of the roof at St Giles is 43.4 degrees, compared to 41.6 degrees at St Michael at Plea.

<sup>300</sup> The discovery was made by Helen Lunnon during a survey visit and kindly communicated to me by Sandy Heslop.

SB2/4) and stylised faces (NB3/5 and SB3/5) and important questions concern the dates of the apparent iconoclasm and the substitution of this alternative imagery. Nine demi-angel reliefs attired in feathered suits punctuate the ridge, except at the west end; they are characterised by outstretched wings, shields charged with symmetrically arranged crosses and heraldic motifs and post-medieval gilding and red and white paint.<sup>301</sup> The brattished cornices and diminutive brace spandrels are restrained and the narrow wall-posts are abridged diagonally, without corbels beneath. However, further imagery was probably located at the junctions between the principals and the purlins, as the moulding of the principals is interrupted here to provide a flat surface for the attachment of bosses or demi-angel reliefs. The tantalising remnants of angelic feet and costume appear skilfully carved, suggesting a degree of sophistication commensurate with the rich legacy of high-quality panel painting at the church.

The clean but brutal curtailment of the angelic beams is without precedent in Norfolk roofs. Despite their relatively slender character and primarily iconographic function, these beams would not have been purely cosmetic and the structural implications of their dramatic shortening may contribute to the uneven line of the ridge and slight bowing out of the nave walls, despite the addition of both lateral and longitudinal braces to the king pendants at the ridge. If angelic carving ended at the wall-posts, the beams did not.<sup>302</sup> The latter interrupt the roof profile unfortunately at its apex. These structural repercussions are probably exacerbated by the unusual relative width of the nave.<sup>303</sup> The audacity and risk inherent in the design is underlined by comparison with the relative caution of the west Norfolk model of alternating angelic hammer-beams and tie-beams with queen-posts initiated in the early fifteenth century at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel.

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<sup>301</sup> The omission at the west end is accounted for by the intrusion of pipe work.

<sup>302</sup> I am grateful to the late Richard Darrah for his insights into the structural role of apparently cosmetic hammer-beams.

<sup>303</sup> The nave at St Michael is 27 feet wide compared to only 19 feet at St Giles.

## St Swithin

There are six extant medieval tie-beam roofs in Norwich churches, but only at St Swithin does the west Norfolk queen-post type appear to have exerted its influence. Through the gloom and stage rigging at St Swithin (now Norwich Arts Centre), shield-bearing braced beam angels above the (now blocked-in) windows alternate with arch-braced tie-beams and queen-posts resting on angelic timber corbels (Fig. 69). Unlike the collarless arch-braced hammer-beam form of the roofs at St Giles and St Michael-at-Plea, the arrangement at St Swithin speaks to the early fifteenth-century West Norfolk model (outlined in chapter one), which combined innovative angelic hammer-beam imagery with tried and tested tie-beam construction; the Norwich roof is probably of similar date.<sup>304</sup> The conduit for the adoption of a structural type related to that at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel may have been Bishop Despenser, whose relationship to the Lynn roof was discussed in chapter one, and who appears to have held the advowson at St Swithin.<sup>305</sup> As at King's Lynn, the angelic imagery at St Swithin was positioned above the apex of the clerestory windows to maximise its illumination, although this effect has been lost. It is evident that this structural type was adapted by city craftsmen at St Swithin, where the beams are arch-braced and do not have the panel-like appearance of those devised at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel. At St Swithin, the beam angels projecting through the braces carry blank shields, rather than the Passion and musical attributes held by the angelic carvings at King's Lynn (Fig. 70). The Norwich shields may have carried similarly ecclesiastical imagery, as at West Walton, but one cannot be certain. The angels at St Swithin face outwards like those at Emneth St Edmund and at Outwell St Clement; they merit closer examination, but at least one wears a feathered suit and another has quite an elaborate tippet,

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<sup>304</sup> Dating evidence is limited. I am grateful to Sandy Heslop for drawing my attention to the nave aisle tracery, which resembles one of the designs in the clerestory at St Gregory, consecrated in 1401.

<sup>305</sup> Again, I am very grateful to Sandy Heslop for this insight.

more like those at Emneth than at Lynn, where the angels are carved in ecclesiastical attire. At St Swithin, short arch-braces to the beams spring from smaller timber shield-bearing demi-angel corbels, which echo the form of the beam carvings, in a design not seen elsewhere. The roof at St Swithin lacks the additional adornment of pierced tracery and spandrel carving found at King's Lynn, or the saintly wall-post imagery of Outwell and Emneth, but represents an inventive reinterpretation of the alternating hammer-beam and tie-beam angel roof model, signalling ambitious intent in a relatively small church.

### St Peter Mancroft and its influence

The hammer-beam roofs at St Peter Mancroft and St Peter Hungate demonstrate particularly ambitious vision, remarkable invention and exquisite refinement in their execution, although their impact elsewhere was quite localised. At St Peter Mancroft, ribbed timber coving conceals the hammer-beam structure (Fig.71). This strategy is found elsewhere in only three other extant medieval church roofs in East Anglia, at Norwich St John Maddermarket, Ringland St Peter in Norfolk and Framlingham St Michael in Suffolk. Some of the factors which may account for such limited diffusion of such an elegant and refined roof form are discussed below.

As at St Gregory, the main roofs at Mancroft and at St John Maddermarket appear to span the entire length of the buildings and there is no chancel arch. I have already identified another precedent for this unified approach, in a radical scheme to the west of the county, at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, discussed in chapter one. On the surface, there are a number of parallels between the aspirational communal rebuilding projects at St Peter Mancroft and St Nicholas Chapel. Just as the chapel of ease at King's Lynn had been rebuilt by a burgeoning mercantile community unable to secure independence from the existing parish church, the reconstruction campaign at Mancroft was funded by bequests from leading local parishioners and gifts from merchants and craft guilds in an assertion of civic pride and power in

the shadow of the cathedral.<sup>306</sup> In both cases, unified roof designs expressed the collaborative patronage and function of these open plan schemes on an impressive scale. Both roofs were innovative and ground-breaking in their unification of structure and angelic imagery.

Yet here the similarities end. At St Nicholas, the roof structure is a single entity, in which tie-beams with queen-posts alternate with hammer-beams carved as angels (Fig. 72). The rebuilding campaign seems to have progressed swiftly and recent dendro-chronological analysis confirmed dating of the roof to c. 1400.<sup>307</sup> In contrast, at Mancroft, the fan-vaulted coving conceals two separate and distinct hammer-beam roof structures, created during a more piecemeal rebuilding process around the mid-fifteenth century. The horizontal beam angels at King's Lynn were integral to the structural design of the roof, in contrast to the two tiers of little relief demi-angels at Mancroft (Fig. 73). Whereas the angelic carvings at St Nicholas are attired as assistants at the Mass and carry musical instruments and symbols of Christ's Passion in a complex and symmetrical programme, shields predominate in the Norwich roof, where a more generalised angelic presence is expressed.

At St Peter Mancroft, the communal funding of the roof is underlined by the apparent inclusion of heads and upper torsos of men and women with others (including a wingless angel in a feathered suit). These appear to support the hammer-beam roof structure, in the form of timber corbels on which the wall-posts rest, located above crenelated capitals alternating at the apex of the arcade arches and surmounting empty canopied niches (Figs. 74-75).<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> King 2006, pp. li-liii discusses the civic background of Norwich; p. lxxiv highlights the collaboration of clergy and wealthy laity in the building and adornment of St Peter Mancroft.

<sup>307</sup> Bridge 2015, report TF 618 204.

<sup>308</sup> Amy Gillette, in a paper titled 'The Font Canopy at Saint Peter Mancroft, Norwich: Toward a Reconstruction with New Finds from the Philadelphia Museum of Art' and delivered at the 52<sup>nd</sup> International Medieval Congress at West Michigan University in Kalamazoo on 12 May 2017, argued for the representation of kings and angels in the roof corbels at Mancroft; I have not observed the inclusion of royal imagery at first hand, although there is certainly a crowned head included in the scheme at St Nicholas Chapel King's Lynn; Daunton, in Powell 2017, p. 292; in both sets of corbels, some of the headdresses are consistent with

These are comparable with stone corbel heads at the base of the earlier angel roof at St Nicholas Chapel, King's Lynn. The use of timber rather than stone for the corbels at St Peter Mancroft was not unprecedented or unique; timber corbels are found in several extant East Anglian roofs, as at Sibton St Peter in Suffolk. Their use might not appear structurally risky, even in such a 'finely-built' purely hammer-beam roof structure as at Mancroft, as it has been shown convincingly that the perception of corbels as load-bearing is erroneous; this is evidenced by gaps between corbels and wall-posts and even the total absence of corbels in a number of roofs.<sup>309</sup> Corbels generally had an iconographic or decorative function. Yet at Mancroft, the use of timber was indeed audacious, as revealed during restoration work. In a 1964 paper, it was noted that Mancroft roof had developed the 'instability' typical of its refined hammer-beam type prior to its restoration.<sup>310</sup> There was evidence that repair work had been required relatively soon after the medieval construction. At the same time it was discovered that, next to the aisles, the timber corbels under the wall-posts in fact comprised the projecting ends of rafters spanning the aisles and passing through the arcade walls, where they had decayed. The rotten timber had to be removed and replaced with concrete. This discovery explains differences in the appearance and projection of these corbel heads compared to those located further east.<sup>311</sup>

The restoration report confirms that the unified appearance of the Mancroft roof is an illusion, created by the continuous canopy of ribbed wooden coving. It conceals the existence of two quite distinct hammer-beam structures; one of them was much poorer structurally.<sup>312</sup> The existence of two

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the inclusion of a range of male and female characters, as discussed by Dauntton in relation to the wall-post figures at Outwell St Clement.

<sup>309</sup> Beech 2016, pp. 52-54. The author cites several examples and I have found a number of others. See also Waddell 1999, p. 49.

<sup>310</sup> Gifford and Taylor 1964, pp. 327-329.

<sup>311</sup> There are 36 in total. 10 each side of the nave are bigger, project further forward and have plainer upper torsos than the 8 each side further east, which are more compact, their arms closely flanking their diminutive bodies.

<sup>312</sup> The precise location of the join is not recorded, but probably relates to the change in corbel design.

separate roof structures might appear unsurprising, as Woodman has argued that the rebuilding campaign at Mancroft was more extended and piecemeal than formerly suggested.<sup>313</sup> He cites inconsistencies in the corbels and in the building itself and documentary evidence for rebuilding and refurnishing the church from wills and bequests dating from the 1390s to 1479 to support this. In contrast, Stewart argues for a speedier campaign from c1440-60.<sup>314</sup> Both contradict the oft-cited assertion that the rebuild was completed 'within the one period 1430-1455.'<sup>315</sup> In fact, the apparent cohesion of the final roof design reflects the elegant disguise of two discrete canopies of differing quality during the redevelopment of the church.

I suggest that the refined canopy of timber coving, imitative of fan vaulting, was an expensive invention inspired precisely by the desire to hide the disjointed structures of separate phases of the rebuilding programme rather than necessarily the result of a coherent vision from the start, as at St Nicholas King's Lynn. Yet although the Mancroft coving had the advantage of concealing poor materials and workmanship, this was not a purely pragmatic choice. Stewart has shown that the impression of a single, cohesive design can be found in the construction of only 2% of the region's fifteenth-century churches.<sup>316</sup> Where these were developed, they reflected deliberate intent. These roof designs expressed unified purpose and changing relationships between clergy and laity, suggesting their interaction and engagement rather than separation.

The entire design at Mancroft is unified by the lower tier of twenty carved demi-angels at the ends of the hidden hammer-beams and others against the vertical cornice which surmounts the coving in addition to the eighteen corbel heads which appear to support the wall-posts above. The especially sacred realm of the chancel is underlined by additional carvings above and

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<sup>313</sup> Woodman, in Heslop and Lunnon 2015, pp. 267-282.

<sup>314</sup> Stewart, in 'Forging One and Fostering Many: The Open Plan Parish Churches of Late Medieval England', paper presented at the International Medieval Congress at Kalamazoo on 15 May 2016.

<sup>315</sup> Groves 2010, p. 113. Successive church guides repeat this assertion.

<sup>316</sup> Stewart 2015 and Stewart 2016.

changes in the design around this liminal sphere, including the suns in splendour at the ridge, a shift from foliate bosses where the principals meet the ridge and purlins in the nave to eight upper-tier angels at the purlins each side and suns in splendour at the ridge in the chancel. There is no reference to restoration of carvings other than the corbel heads in the report of the 1960s restoration, and the 1880 restoration report described the internal 'oak work of the roofs' as apparently 'in unusually sound and good state.'<sup>317</sup> Yet the timber coving was clearly restored after Plunkett's 1938 photograph (Fig. 76), and the condition of the lower tier of evenly-winged demi-angels is almost suspiciously good, with two exceptions against the east wall. These have lost their wings, but retain blank shields and the appearance of their facial features and material is distinctly medieval. Of course, their dark hue and weathered appearance may be accounted for by their adjacency to damp in the wall. The wings of the others have been replaced; most also carry blank shields, but one is left to ponder whether those in the nave with arms crossed (S2, N3, S4), a shield with a cross (S6, N13, N14), a lute (N10, S14), hands in prayer (S10, N11, S12), a mitre (N15, S16, S18), a crown (N17, N19) or hands together (S17, S19) are deliberate variants or reflect later invention rather than medieval intent (Fig. 77). The latter impression is amplified in the chancel by the uniform blank shields of fourteen upper-tier angels, assuming that these are authentic. These shield-bearing demi-angels derive from a different tradition to the ecclesiastical and musical angels at King's Lynn, as discussed in chapter four in relation to one of three copper-gilt and enamel plaques from Warden Abbey (c. 1377–97) now in the British Museum, and as seen in the stone corbels which characterise so many medieval roofs across the region.<sup>318</sup> They are also unlike Richard II's beam angels carrying enormous carved heraldic shields at Westminster Hall. They appear to carry no trace of pigment; the gilding of the sun bosses on the ridge is later work.

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<sup>317</sup> Gifford and Taylor 1964, pp. 327-329.

<sup>318</sup> The British Museum Collection online

[http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=44211&partId=1&searchText=warden+abbey+morses&page=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=44211&partId=1&searchText=warden+abbey+morses&page=1) [accessed on 18 May 2017].



## Influence of the Mancroft design

The Lynn and Mancroft roof schemes represented ambitious and highly inventive angel roof designs. Yet the spread of the structural example and imagery of the King's Lynn roof, across west Norfolk and Suffolk and beyond to Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire, far exceeded that of the Mancroft form.

By the late medieval period, vaulting was probably especially imbued with celestial associations, as a roofing mode of choice in elite church building.<sup>319</sup> Wooden vaulting was nothing new, enjoyed structural advantages and had been employed successfully in some celebrated major building projects, such as the octagon at Ely Cathedral (Fig. 78), York Minster and St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle. Although wooden vaulting was not fire-proof or as robust as stone vaulting, it was easier to erect and imposed less thrust on the walls. So why was its use not more widespread in a region where freestone had to be imported, and why was the innovatory faux-vaulted Mancroft design not more widely imitated?

Writing in 1917, Howard and Crossley noted the impact of the destruction of 'several important examples' of medieval timber vaulting, as at York Minster, and of their misguided abuse by 'critics of the school of Ruskin' who regarded their construction as false or dishonest.<sup>320</sup> There is no evidence that medieval carpenters shared the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century attitude that timber vaulting was second-rate. Loss of medieval fabric may distort our impression of the popularity of timber vaulting in more prestigious projects.

The skills required to create such ribbed coving may have been specialised, but seem to have been available in Norfolk and Suffolk, given their use in some chancel screens, as discussed later. It is true that vaulted coving is found less often in East Anglian screens than in extant examples in Devon, perhaps suggesting that this mode of design was less fashionable here. Although cheaper than stone vaulting, the cost of the extra timber required to

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<sup>319</sup> Leedy 1980, p. 31 and p. 34.

<sup>320</sup> Howard and Crossley 1917, p. 131. The roof at York Minster is cited as an example.

create vaulted coving on the massive scale required for a roof was probably prohibitive for many parish church communities. Where it was employed, it seems likely that it embodied the cachet of expense associated with stone vaulting and the Mancroft design resembles the pattern of the cloister vaulting at Norwich cathedral (Fig. 79).<sup>321</sup> Equally, screen or elite timber vaulting may have provided a precedent for the Norwich roof coving.

#### Imitation in Norwich and the region

As noted earlier, evidence of the impact of the Mancroft design is confined to three other churches. The most localised of these was the main roof at St John Maddermarket, although its appearance is distorted by restoration work (Fig. 80). The scheme is much more modest in scale due to the restricted site of the church, although the ashlar facing of the clerestory signals expenditure beyond the essential. The church and its roof are open plan; the clerestory of eight windows (two per arcade bay as at Mancroft) and the arcades give an impression of unity, although discrepancies including the heights of the bays, the pier bases and their mouldings reveal a more complex building history. Inconsistencies between the wall shafts to the north and south indicate that different roof designs were planned prior to the design of the clerestory, which necessitated the construction of a new west tower and the truncation of the north porch tower.<sup>322</sup> One cannot be certain whether the roof to be leaded according to the terms of a 1452 bequest of £40 by Robert Blickling was the roof installed over the nave clerestory or that

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<sup>321</sup> Leedy 1980, p. 29. He dismisses the assertion made by Harvey and others that stone fan vaults were cheap due to the use of standardised parts. 'The fact that it was not an economical way to build can be deduced from documentary evidence....The fact that a pattern repeats itself does not necessarily mean it will be cheaper to execute. The important cost here is the use of jointed masonry and it takes more time and labour to carve a stone that is doubly-curved than one that is simply shaped....the shaping of the stones for a fan vault required more skilled labour. Besides, it would hardly seem likely that Henry VII would have chosen fan vaulting for his chapel if it had involved any suggestion of economy to members of the court.'

<sup>322</sup> <https://norwichchurches.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/the-nave-of-st-john-maddermarket.pdf> [accessed 17 May 2017].

of the south aisle, but such a date is plausible for the nave roof.<sup>323</sup> Surviving bequests for other work indicate the association of textile dealers and key figures in civic society with the church, suggesting elite communal patronage, as at Mancroft.<sup>324</sup> Ralph Segrym was mayor in 1451; he and his wife Agnes almost certainly paid for the south aisle, as he was interred in the Lady Chapel at the east, and Kirkpatrick recorded his shield in the chancel window at the east end.<sup>325</sup> All Saints Chapel in the north aisle was associated with the burial of mercer, sheriff and MP Richard Hoste and his wife Elena. Both chapels had boarded roof canopies with painted angelic schemes (Fig. 81).<sup>326</sup>

The hammer-beam structure of the existing roof is hidden by the same ribbed coving as at Mancroft, studded with small foliate bosses. The rest of the upper structure is concealed by a low boarded ceiling dating from restoration work after the 1876 gas explosion. Long wall-posts like those at St Peter rise above corbels in the form of shield-bearing angels. Nine demi-angel relief carvings are placed where the beam ends are concealed each side, at the apex of the fan-vaulted coving where it presumably met the cornice. They appear to be coeval with the nineteenth-century boarding, so we cannot trust their painted shield designs or the two different hands at work each side. Likewise, the facial features and crisp edges of the shield-bearing timber angelic corbels evidence their Victorian production.

The only other extant fifteenth-century roof in Norfolk with a related design to those at Mancroft and Maddermarket is found at Ringland St Peter (Fig. 82).

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<sup>323</sup> NRO NCC will reg. Aleyn 130.

<sup>324</sup> <https://norwichchurches.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/the-nave-of-st-john-maddermarket.pdf> [accessed 11 September 2018].

<sup>325</sup> <https://norwichchurches.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/locating-the-segrym-screen-panels-in-st-john-maddermarket.pdf> [accessed 17 May 2017].

<sup>326</sup> NMS NWHCM: 1951.235.B101. The north chapel roof panels, and watercolour drawings of their designs by C.J.W. Winter (including these, dated 1846), are in the Norfolk Museums Service collections. <http://norfolkmuseumscollections.org/collections/objects/object-700964936.html#!/?q=st%2Bjohn%2Bmaddermarket%2Bwinter> The south aisle/chapel scheme remains in situ.

Daunton has described the impact of the wool trade along the Wensum Valley and the location of Ringland close to Norwich upon the patronage and design of mid-to-late-fifteenth-century glazing schemes and other furnishings at St Peter; this increased the role of guilds and parishioners of relatively modest rank in the absence of a dominant landowner.<sup>327</sup> For example, Robert and Matilda Gylys were represented in glazing as individual donors, but their scroll inscriptions also referenced their membership of the guilds of the Trinity and of the Virgin; their surname and those of other lay benefactors such as the Atmeres may relate to Norwich freemen.<sup>328</sup> It seems plausible that such networks could have resulted in the selection of a roof design closely allied to that at St Peter Mancroft. Ringland was not the only parish in the vicinity to share personal connections and access to Norwich workshops and craftsmen, yet the nave roof at St Peter is unique in the area in its similarity to the design at Mancroft. Ringland was not a particularly wealthy parish, so this may have been the result of a specific personal link to this Norwich church or an individual or guild preference. However, there is another possibility. As Daunton has observed, the abbot John de Wygenhale of West Dereham, patron of John Capgrave, later dean of the College of St Mary in the Fields in Norwich, had an extensive network of connections in the city and beyond.<sup>329</sup> Wygenhale's influence was almost certainly felt at St Peter Mancroft (where the College of St Mary in the Fields held the right to appoint the rector) and his influence could account for the similarity between the Mancroft and Ringland roofs, despite a lack of documentary evidence. If the roof at St Peter Ringland was inspired by the Mancroft scheme, the latter probably neared completion when the village roof was conceived and begun.

The Ringland roof fits the nave perfectly, with semi-fan vaults at each end. The long wall-posts between the clerestory windows, the braced principal

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<sup>327</sup> Daunton 2009, p. 119.

<sup>328</sup> Daunton 2009, pp. 149 and 154. In at least one case, bequests by an individual for both Ringland St Peter and Mancroft are cited. Daunton 2009, p. 150. 'In 1506, John Petwode, alderman and citizen of Norwich.....left money to the churches in.....Ringland in Norfolk. In addition, he funded a new tabernacle for the image of St Edward in the chapel of St Nicholas at the parish church of St Peter Mancroft.'

<sup>329</sup> Daunton 2009, pp. 147 and 289.

rafters and the vaulted coving of the nave roof at Ringland St Peter resemble the Norwich design on a reduced scale, although tiny bosses where the ribs meet are restricted to the chancel at Mancroft and the angelic corbels at Ringland are quite different. In the Ringland roof, a lower tier of small demi-angels (alternately winged) stud the beam ends along the embellished and castellated cornice, which is much deeper than at Norwich (Fig. 83). Unlike some of those at Mancroft and at Maddermarket, with only one exception (N2) these silvery oak angelic reliefs all appear medieval, with traces of red pigment. Their attributes and attitudes differ too; several hold their hands in prayer, others hold an open book and N4 has a bishop's mitre. An upper tier of small angelic carvings raise their hands in praise and delicate star-shaped bosses are placed along the ridge and the purlins where they meet the principals.

Although the roof design at St Peter Mancroft seems the most plausible model for the nave canopy at Ringland, it is worth reflecting that Norwich was not the only source of inspiration and workmanship for parishes in its hinterland, nor was timber vaulting confined to roof construction. The elaborate vaulted loft of the screen at St Mary Attleborough is a remarkable survivor. On the parclose screen to the south aisle chapel at SS Peter and Paul East Harling, about twenty-five miles south-west of Norwich and Ringland, the bosses on the ribs of the vaulted coving are different from those at Ringland and Mancroft and the cornice above is much plainer (Fig. 84). However, the basic pattern of the ribbed vaulting is similar.

The fourth surviving medieval roof in which timber coving disguises the lower section of the structure is at St Michael Framlingham in Suffolk (Fig. 85). Almost forty miles south of Norwich, Framlingham was the domain of the Mowbrays and then the Howards, Dukes of Norfolk from 1483. Their presence was to be exerted most emphatically in the chancel of the church, partially rebuilt by Thomas Howard, the third duke, between 1524 and 1547, but is not immediately apparent in the nave.<sup>330</sup> Instead, extant will bequests

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<sup>330</sup> The Howard tombs were removed from Thetford Priory to Framlingham after the Dissolution.

suggest collective lay funding towards the nave roof at the start of the sixteenth century.<sup>331</sup>

The nave and the roof are impressive, exceeded only by St Peter Mancroft in width and height. Between the widely-spaced clerestory windows, which are flanked by much shorter wall-posts than in the Norwich and Norfolk roofs, stone piers rest on angelic corbels at the string course; these suggest that a different roof design was originally envisaged. There is no extant evidence of angelic representation in the current roof and there is no record of the removal of angelic (or other) imagery by Suffolk Puritan William Dowsing's deputy Verdon during his visit in 1644 in the churchwardens' accounts. The construction of the roof also differs from the others discussed, incorporating braced collar beams, far more common in Suffolk than Norfolk. This might suggest the adaptation of the Norfolk design by Suffolk carpenters or an independent manifestation of a remarkably similar scheme to the Norwich roof, although it has been shown that roofs could be designed and constructed in a workshop some distance from the buildings in which they were to be installed.<sup>332</sup> Some Norwich roofs may have been sourced from as far as Essex and Cambridgeshire.<sup>333</sup> Evidence that the nave and north chapel roofs at Ashwellthorpe church were built at Salle, some 27 miles north, is discussed in chapter five.<sup>334</sup> Elsewhere, the chancel roof at Hardley in Norfolk was assembled, before the construction of the building, at carpenter John Peper's workshop in Harleston, over 17 miles south-west, near the border with Suffolk; the patron of the church was the Great Hospital, some 10 miles to the north-west.<sup>335</sup> It is interesting that this roof was taken to the Hardley site at least three years before the building was completed; as Woodman proposes, this was not purely for budgetary reasons, but to

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<sup>331</sup> NRO NCC will reg. Cage 131: 'A noble to the making of the roof of the church of Framlingham Margaret Spynke 28 Nov 1501'; SROI IC/AA2/4/61: 'To the making of the church roof of Framlingham 10 marks 10 Sept 1500 William Holland esq.'

<sup>332</sup> Woodman, in Buckton and Heslop 1994, pp. 203-210; Gee 1952-3, pp. 112-184.

<sup>333</sup> Woodman, in Buckton and Heslop 1994, p. 209.

<sup>334</sup> Cattermole 1989, pp. 297-302.

<sup>335</sup> Woodman, in Buckton and Heslop 1994, p. 204 and p. 210. The contract dates to 1458.

provide a template for the flint-rubble chancel, to ensure that the roof would fit.<sup>336</sup>

The beams at St Michael are disguised by timber fan-vaulted coving with an embellished cornice above and foliate bosses where the ribs meet. The underlying rib pattern resembles those at Norwich and Ringland, but sections of coving are filled with pierced tracery in the form of trefoils and quatrefoils and foliate bosses.<sup>337</sup> This elaboration of the central motifs between the fanned ribs creates a cruciform design with the illusion of a heraldic or shield-like centre (Fig. 86). It is extremely probable that the same carpenters worked on the Framlingham roof and the chancel screen at Bramfield St Andrew (Fig. 87) a few miles to the north-east, with its cruciform coving design on the west face, but this work could have been undertaken by Norfolk craftsmen.<sup>338</sup> It has been suggested that the roof dates from as late as 1521.<sup>339</sup> If so, it would support the association with the screen coving at Bramfield. There are no extant bequests to the screen, but on the basis of the painting and tin-relief adornment allied to work at Worstead and Tacolneston in Norfolk respectively, it can be dated to c. 1500-25.<sup>340</sup>

### St Peter Hungate

The restricted site of St Peter Hungate lies between the Dominican friary and the cathedral quarter.<sup>341</sup> Compared to Mancroft, the modest size of the

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<sup>336</sup> Woodman, in Buckton and Heslop 1994, p. 209.

<sup>337</sup> Pitcher 2005, p. 1 describes the fan vaulting as oak but the coving panels as chestnut.

<sup>338</sup> Wrapson 2013, p. 310.

<sup>339</sup> This is stated in the 'Brief History of St Michael's Church, Framlingham.'

<http://www.stmichaelsframlingham.org.uk/history/history-and-tours/> [accessed 7 June 2017];

the clerestory was 'in existence in 1464', but 'new clerestories' installed in 1520 according to

<https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/Data/Sites/1/media/parish-histories/framlingham.pdf>

[accessed 7 June 2017]; This suggests that twenty years elapsed between the extant will bequests and the completion of the roof.

<sup>340</sup> Wrapson 2013, p. 310.

<sup>341</sup> Heslop, in Heslop and Lunnon 2015, p. 368, notes that the location of the Blackfriars chancel within the bounds of the Hungate parish 'effectively reduced the space for housing and parishioners, to the detriment of St Peter's income' although some recompense was made by the friars for their 'alternative focus for devotion and benefaction.'

church and lack of clerestory belie the scale of ambition displayed in its magnificent canopy. The innovatory design, sophisticated carving and complex narrative of the roof are exceptional, not only within the medieval church roofs of Norwich, but across East Anglia, perhaps rivalled only by that of the nave roof at Bury St Edmunds St Mary. The single hammer-beam roof at Hungate is extremely unusual, not only in its structure, but in the form and evenly high quality of the angelic carvings and in the coherence of its multi-media iconography, discussed further in chapter three. Links with James Woodrofe, who worked at the cathedral and probably designed the Erpingham Gate, may account for the unusual structure of the Hungate roof, the form and the evenly high quality of the wooden beam and stone corbel carvings, and the coherence of their iconography.<sup>342</sup> Traditionally, the roof has been ascribed to Paston patronage, but there are issues with the conventional narrative, evidence is limited, and other wealthy parishioners were also associated with the rebuilding of the church, as discussed later.

At Hungate, there are north and south transepts, forming a cruciform design. The braced hammer-beam roof spans the nave and transepts, the braces set diagonally at the crossings (Fig. 88). The vaulted appearance of the design would have evoked heavenly associations, as discussed earlier in relation to the fan-vaulted design of the wooden coving at Mancroft. The rebuild of the nave and transepts at Hungate resulted in a three-dimensional centralised Rood canopy. The blocked Rood stair in the north transept implies the lost iconography of Christ on the Cross, the Virgin and John the Evangelist. Where the diagonal braces of the roof intersect, angelic carvings surround an exceptional wooden boss (Fig. 89). At the corners of the crossing, unusual stone corbels represent the four Evangelists, God's earthly messengers, in a hierarchical intercessory arrangement with angelic heavenly messengers on the beams above them, possibly all representing archangels, despite

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<sup>342</sup> For example, Lunnon 2017 has noted that the carving of fabric in stone corbels and the folded angelic wing design at Hungate resembles work on the Erpingham Gate; Trend 2017, p. 90; Woodrofe's connections with the cathedral may also explain the privileged position and particular detail of the bishop's mitre held by roof angel SET1, flanking the crossing at the east of the south transept.



variations in attire, and Christ with Mary and John the Baptist in the central boss above. The Evangelists are depicted winged with scrolls and their symbols. St Matthew is at the north-east; continuing anti-clockwise the others depict St Mark, St Luke, and St John (Figs. 90-93).

This ensemble at the crossing represents the culmination of a complex iconographic scheme, permeated with references to the Last Judgement, in an arrangement highly unusual in late-medieval roofs with angelic and other representations. The depiction of St Michael (SX2) at the crossing is unique and the armoured attire of the archangel associated with the weighing of souls at the Last Judgement seems very specifically linked to the unusual form and Revelation iconography of this roof (Fig. 94).<sup>343</sup> If the rest of the crossing angels represent archangels, their attire does not distinguish them from others elsewhere in the nave and transepts; those to the west wear albs and amices and NX2 to the north of Michael wears a feathered suit and tippet (Fig. 95).

The attire of the beam angels at St Peter Hungate is more complex, detailed and varied than any other roof surveyed, with the exception of the nave canopy at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, which shares the sophistication of conception and carving at Hungate, but on a grander scale. There seems to be a general massing of angels, mostly dressed as acolytes or sub-deacons in the nave and feathered angels around the crossing and transepts. Angels as sub-deacons wearing albs and amices are located predominantly but not exclusively in the nave (Fig. 96). Angels in feathered costumes are primarily around the crossing, with the exception of the incongruous apostolic pallium over a tunic in the centre of the nave to the north (N7) (Fig. 97).

The arrangement of symbols held by the roof angels at Hungate is distorted to some extent by damage, but some general points are discernible in the attributes held by angels, as we saw in their attire. Angelic pairings face each other north and south signalling three significant junctions along the nave (Fig. 98). At the west end, N1 and S1 hold shields, like N2. Heralding the

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<sup>343</sup> Barnam 1976, p. 96. Dives, in *Dives and Pauper* (1405-c. 1410), observes that representations of angels 'armyd wyt swerd, spere and sheld' signal their readiness to defend humanity from the demons that were 'besy nyght and day to lesyn vs.'

crossing and flanking the chancel arch, N4 and S4, N1 and S1 carry scrolls. Scrolls and hands raised or crossed in prayer dominate the arena of the crossing and transepts. The book of seven seals from Revelation is unique in roofs surveyed to date; it is located to the south of the nave (S6), heralding the Last Judgement imagery at the crossing (Fig. 99). The loss of the emblem of the angelic carving facing to the north (N6) and another further south-west (S8) may distort our understanding of the scheme, although it seems likely that further Passion symbols were included. In this particularly considered scheme it is likely that the location of the angel holding a spectacularly detailed bishop's mitre (SET1) flanking the crossing at the east of the south transept is significant, but the loss of its equivalent in the north transept (NET1) is unhelpful in this regard (Fig. 100).

It is impossible not to remark upon the modern gilding of the Hungate angels, which the 1968 guide book referred to as 'recently' done and which obscures some details.<sup>344</sup> This is not how they were intended to appear and there is no trace of extant colour in the rest of the roof. Equally, antiquarian evidence implies that it is possible that our contemporary perception of the Hungate roof is distorted by the loss of additional imagery. Dawson Turner's collections of drawings and annotations of Blomefield's 'History of Norwich' text, purchased in 1859 for the British Library, included 'sets of carvings which could be arranged neatly around the page.'<sup>345</sup> In the case of Hungate, some of the carvings depicted were described as found piled up on the floor. As Haynes has observed, the accompanying drawings of carvings, including heads, perhaps of donors or local people, roses, a crown of thorns, crosses and a heart pierced by nails are neatly restrained within square borders. Despite a concern for close examination of the subject and precision imbued in the drawings, they are completely de-contextualised, according to common early nineteenth-century practice, removing any sense of location, medium or scale, so it is impossible to ascertain whether they represented

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<sup>344</sup> Young 1968, p. 6.

<sup>345</sup> Haynes, in conversation and in 'City, Community and Architecture: The Visual Record of Norwich's Churches', at Norwich Cathedral on 29/04/2017. I am extremely grateful to Clare Haynes for her generosity in bringing my attention to this and related material.

roof bosses or other roof images (Fig. 101).<sup>346</sup> Some of the imagery may correlate with a set of bosses relocated to the south porch ceiling, but an exact match seems unlikely.<sup>347</sup> Given the refinement and restraint of the surviving scheme and the limited availability of surfaces for the attachment of relief carvings, it is unlikely that the roof was peppered with superfluous additional imagery. Only two foliate bosses are extant where the principals meet the ridge towards the west end of the nave; it is possible that others are represented in the drawings, but some of the illustrations may reference other sculptural material in stone or timber, either extant or lost, including some of the corbel heads in the transepts.

The high quality of the carving and iconography of the stone corbels under the wall-posts at St Peter Hungate is especially unusual, denoting expense and deliberate intent, suggesting high status work, as discussed in chapter three. In the nave, the corbels represent the Four Doctors of the Church, St Augustine, St Ambrose, St Gregory and St Jerome, possibly in a unique ensemble in roof corbel imagery (Fig.102).<sup>348</sup> In contrast, in previous research, I have shown that most donor images on chancel screens are associated with the four Latin Doctors of the Church, in an apparent show of orthodoxy or learning (Fig.103); inscriptions at Ludham and elsewhere also associate donors with this theme, and the selection of imagery with orthodox associations in some of these screens appears to have been (at least in part) a signal of their opposition to heresy.<sup>349</sup> I suggest that this motivation may also have applied to the imagery of at least some angel roofs. At Hungate, Thofner has discussed the roof in terms of Paston patronage, pointing out the significant connection between the work of John Paston as a lawyer and that of the ancient lawyer Saint Jerome.<sup>350</sup> It is possible that the imagery of

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<sup>346</sup> Haynes, in conversation and in 'City, Community and Architecture: The Visual Record of Norwich's Churches', at Norwich Cathedral on 29/04/2017.

<sup>347</sup> The bosses in the porch include representations of evangelist symbols for example.

<sup>348</sup> Their location is reminiscent of the wall-post figures at the west end of the nave roof at Necton, discussed in chapter three.

<sup>349</sup> Cassell 2012, p. 49.

<sup>350</sup> Thofner, in a public lecture on 9/8/12 titled 'On Angels and Iconoclasm: The Pastons and St Peter Hungate.'

the Four Doctors of the Church had an additional significance in the wake of the Norwich heresy trials of 1428-31, to make a point of underlining the orthodox belief of its donors, although heresy was not prevalent in the city, in contrast to some rural areas and other cities.<sup>351</sup>

The eighteenth-century antiquarian Francis Blomefield described how the right to appoint the priest or rector and collect tithes and other income was in the hands of the College of St. Mary in the Fields from 1271 until 1458, when it passed to John and Margaret Paston 'and their heirs for ever.' He claimed that this 'was no sooner done, but they and the rector demolished the whole old fabrick, which was in decay, and rebuilt the present church, which is in form of a cross, and is a neat building of black flint.'<sup>352</sup> A much-eroded inscription outside the church, by the north door was interpreted as meaning that the building was completed or 'fundata' in 1460, a mere two years later. This is a nice neat story, but it is impossible that the church and its stunning angelic canopy over the nave and transepts could have been reconstructed in such a short space of time and this interpretation has been discredited. Work must have started earlier. Medieval documentary evidence for church roofs is generally frustratingly elusive and Hungate is no exception. However, we know that the Pastons were in Norwich from 1440 onwards, at least periodically, and that they associated with other members of the mercantile elite, engaged in church rebuilding across the city, including at the neighbouring Blackfriars.<sup>353</sup> Material evidence supports this earlier date, as

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<sup>351</sup> Tanner 1984, pp. 162-163.

<sup>352</sup> Blomefield, 1805-10, vol. 4, p. 330.

<sup>353</sup> Sutermeister 1977, p. 23. She describes the oak door of the south porch as being 'of the mid-15<sup>th</sup> century and the gift of John Paston and Margaret Maultby [sic], his wife, showing the arms of both families.' An undated City of Norwich Amenities booklet titled 'The Norwich Blackfriars: A History and Guide to the Friary' repeats this reference and goes further, making the bold and apparently unsupported assertion that 'the beams for both the hammer-beam roof in the Nave and the roof in the Choir were a gift of the Paston family.' In conversation, Sandy Heslop has observed that arms of Paston and cross of Mautby on the porch door may in fact signify Margaret Paston's later patronage after her husband's death in 1466.

discussed in chapter three.<sup>354</sup> Rather than two years, their investment and engagement in the reconstruction at Hungate must have spanned nearer two decades. John and Margaret Paston are synonymous with St Peter Hungate and their investment in its fabric seems undisputed. However, it was not their private funerary chapel, as sometimes asserted; unlike their son, Walter Paston, they were not actually buried at Hungate, their benefaction spread far more widely than this church and it is entirely possible that the roof was a more collaborative enterprise than generally imagined.<sup>355</sup>

#### St Mary Coslany, Stody St Mary and the Hungate crossing design

The cruciform design of the Hungate roof over nave and transepts is extremely rare in extant medieval roofs; it seems particularly significant that another version of the unusual arrangement survives at nearby St Mary Coslany. Here, surviving roof iconography is restricted to the crossing, comprising a central boss of the Assumption of the Virgin within an aureole, with four angelic carvings beneath, where the purlins meet the principals on the diagonal arch-braces, and foliate bosses around the crossing and into the easternmost bays of the nave (Fig.104). The angelic reliefs are full-figure representations in ecclesiastical costume. S1 is adjacent to replacement work to the rafters following bomb damage and the facial features and darker wood (which also characterises N1) raise questions regarding possible restoration. However, those to the west (N/S2) are clearly medieval, confirming characteristics of the original scheme. N2 gestures as if holding a lost emblem and the hands of S2 are raised. Those to the east (N/S1) echo their attitudes, either in medieval symmetry or later emulation. Several wings have been lost and N2 is wingless. Whereas St Michael is clearly identified by his attire at Hungate, the angels at Coslany are not specifically identifiable as archangels or as representations of specific orders, although they may

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<sup>354</sup> Trend 2017, p. 91.

<sup>355</sup> See the edition of Margaret Paston's will in Davis 1971, pp. 382-389.

have been intended as such.<sup>356</sup> The angelic presence of the transepts and crossing at Coslany is augmented by angelic corbels with shields or scrolls, unlike at Hungate.

From documentary evidence, the Coslany roof appears to date from the work on the transeptal chapels of the mid-1460s and to represent a much-reduced imitation of the Hungate design.<sup>357</sup> Although the roof pitch is only slightly steeper than at St Peter, the church is larger at St Mary.<sup>358</sup> However, in both churches the transept roofs reach the same height as the nave canopy and the unified appearance of the Coslany roof, alongside other aspects of the design of the transepts, implies a single build and shared patronage, as at Hungate.<sup>359</sup>

This rare cruciform roof design survives outside Norwich only at Stody St Mary in North Norfolk, where it appears much restored (Fig.105 ). Intriguingly, the window arrangement is also extremely similar at Stody,

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<sup>356</sup> I disagree here with 'The Medieval Churches of Norwich: City Community and Architecture.' <https://norwichchurches.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/transeptal-chapels.pdf> [accessed 7 June 2017]. See earlier chapter for further discussion of this topic.

<sup>357</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 258. Robert Wood was buried in the 'new chapel on the south side' in 1464. See also 'The Medieval Churches of Norwich: City Community and Architecture.' <https://norwichchurches.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/transeptal-chapels.pdf> [accessed 7 June 2017]. 'In 1464 Gregory Draper left 26/8d to edify the cross-aisle and a request to be buried in the new chapel on the south side (NCC BETYNS 90) also in 1464, Robert Wood, citizen and carpenter, bequeathed 20/- to the cross-aisle and requested burial in the southern chapel, which was dedicated to the Virgin and contained a Pieta image (NCC BETYNS 164).' The northern equivalent was St Thomas's chapel where Henry Toke was buried in 1466.

<sup>358</sup> St Peter Hungate has a very shallow roof pitch at 17.4 degrees, compared to 20.6 at St Mary Coslany, where the nave is wider (25.56ft compared to 19.74ft) and the roof higher (31.57ft compared to 28.41ft).

<sup>359</sup> 'The Medieval Churches of Norwich: City Community and Architecture.' <https://norwichchurches.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/transeptal-chapels.pdf> [accessed 7 June 2017]. 'For one thing, the overall length of the transept is 14.52m, which is the length of the nave (20.45m) divided by the square root of 2. For another, the windows of the two chapels are the same as regards tracery pattern and dimensions. It is likely that one mason (no doubt with a team of assistants) was responsible for the whole design.'

where the donor of the nave glazing was Ralph Lampet, who knew the Pastons; in addition, arms recorded by Robert Kemp in the sixteenth century, and fragments of glass including St Margaret in the east window of the south transept, may evidence his wife's patronage too, suggesting their combined appropriation of the nave and transepts.<sup>360</sup>

Blakeney St Nicholas, Trunch St Botolph and other related hammer-beam designs

The form of the angelic beam carvings at Hungate is as exceptional as the roof structure. The carving is of unusually high quality, illustrated by the detail on attributes such as the bishop's mitre, the seven seals on the book and the attention paid to the unusually varied costumes. Angels carved into the hammer-beams are generally full-length elsewhere, often carved on horizontals coming through the arch braces at the level of the wall plate, as at St Giles. At St Peter most are smaller demi-angels (except those bisected at the walls) and they are attached or carved into the underside of the ends of the beams. Outspread wings are commonly attached to roof angels elsewhere (and have often been replaced), but at Hungate the wings are integral to the beams and flank the figures in a neatly contained design. Lunnon offers the intriguing suggestion that this form could have been inspired by the treatment of angelic feathers and folded wings in the high-status stone sculpture of the Erpingham Gate (c. late 1420s-c. 1430s).<sup>361</sup> If so, the sophisticated interpretation at Hungate of such an elite model, reinterpreted in stone carvings elsewhere in the city, must have communicated prestige and status.<sup>362</sup>

This design is rare in other roofs; the closest parallels are found in the north aisle roof at Wymondham Abbey (SS Mary and Thomas of Canterbury) (Fig.

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<sup>360</sup> <http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/stody/history.html> [accessed 7 June 2017]; Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 9, p. 442.

<sup>361</sup> Lunnon, in 'Where the artists have no name: from anonymity to attribution,' paper delivered at Norwich Churches conference at Norwich Cathedral 17/06/17.

<sup>362</sup> This wing design is also found in the carved spandrels of the west door at St Michael Coslany.

106), discussed in chapter four, and in the nave roofs at Blakeney St Nicholas (Fig. 107), Trunch St Botolph (Fig. 108), Marsham All Saints (Fig. 109) and Banningham St Botolph (Fig. 110). All are located in north-east Norfolk, aside from Wymondham, and feature long wall-posts framing the clerestory windows, alternating with short braces above small demi-angels at their apex. There is some evidence of shared craftsmanship between them in carpentry and carving, although the carving (especially of some of the hands) is uneven at Marsham (Fig. 111) and less sophisticated work at Banningham (Fig. 112) suggests imitation of others. Details of the carvings of the beam angels in these roofs differ from those at Hungate in terms of facial features, attire, attributes and cloud design, implying interpretation of the Norwich design by local craftsmen.<sup>363</sup> All of the roofs appear to post-date the Hungate canopy. Evidence for the suggestion that the nave at Blakeney was 'probably built' around 1434 is tenuous; Stewart's analysis of the fabric implies a later date.<sup>364</sup> The nave roof was probably not completed until the 1450s or 1460s, if not slightly later. Shared patronage of the roof is likely, given Blomefield's observations of several 'orate' inscriptions and arms in the clerestory windows.<sup>365</sup> John Payn left twenty marks towards making a new roof at Trunch in 1486.<sup>366</sup> At Marsham, the late fifteenth-century roof must pre-date the screen, for which bequests were made between 1503 and 1509.<sup>367</sup> It is probable that the Blakeney roof was the first in the area, as some of the most

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<sup>363</sup> <http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/blakeney/history.html> [accessed 27 June 2017]. However, extant (probably aisle) glazing at Blakeney is linked to Norwich craftsmanship.

<sup>364</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 395; Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 239 and pp. 276-277 cite an inscription on the north-west buttress of the north aisle as follows: 'Ista: ecca:ffuit:ffudita: A:dni:m°:cccc:xxx:iv; assuming this is transcribed correctly, assigning this date for the nave is based upon the assumption that the tower and aisled nave are coeval; I am extremely grateful to Zachary Stewart for his observations regarding material evidence that the tower and aisles were probably completed first and that the inscription implies that this work was commenced rather than completed in 1434, as 'ffudita' probably reads 'fundata'.

<sup>365</sup> Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 9, p. 364.

<sup>366</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 270; NRO NCC will reg. Norman 14.

<sup>367</sup> Wrapson 2013, p. 235; Cotton 1987, p. 46 and p. 49.



sophisticated and differentiated carving of angelic attire is found here, including elaborate belts (N3/S10) and a dalmatic (S5), although some work is more rudimentary, by different hands (N9/10, S11) (Fig. 113). Most of the angels at Blakeney wear varied ecclesiastical dress, as elsewhere, but at least one feathered angel (N5) is incorporated. There is considerable damage to the Blakeney carvings and several have lost their attributes (including N5/6/8/9/13 and S2/4/5/12). Others raise or hold their hands in prayer. Shield-bearing angels apparently framed the east, but S1 is now replaced. Some of the Hungate attributes recur in the other roofs, but not in the coherent scheme of their Norwich precursor. There is considerable repetition of some symbols. They include scrolls (N6, S3/6), shields (N1/5) and hands together in prayer (N7/8) at Marsham, where several others have raised hands, especially to the south (N10, S4/5/7/8/9). The mitre (N5), scroll (N3, S9), blank shield (N1/7, S2/9) crown of thorns (N2) and hands in prayer (N8, S1/3/6/10) (Fig. 114) feature at Trunch. There are differences between these roofs and that at Hungate in terms of their loftier structural proportions and pierced spandrel tracery, but it is noteworthy that most of these other roofs are located in an area closely associated with the Pastons; Trunch is just five miles from Bromholme Priory, where John Paston was buried in 1466, after his body rested overnight at Hungate.<sup>368</sup>

Later hammer-beam and tie-beam roofs: St Peter Parmentergate, St Laurence, St Stephen, St Andrew, St George Colegate and St Augustine

Remarkable variety characterises even the latest of late-medieval church roofs in Norwich, contradicting past narratives of a straightforward linear development in roof structures and their iconography, as discussed in chapter four. The tie-beam roof at St Peter Parmentergate (Fig. 115) and relatively steeply-pitched hammer-beam roofs at St Laurence (Fig. 116) and St Stephen (Fig. 117) co-exist with very shallow-pitched arch-braced cambered tie-beam canopies at St George Colegate (Fig. 118), St Andrew (Fig. 119) and St Augustine (Fig. 120), although all surmount clerestories of

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<sup>368</sup> Virgoe 1989, p. 153.

Perpendicular rebuilding projects.<sup>369</sup> Similarities between the designs and work at St George Colegate and St Andrew in structure, mouldings and cornice tracery panels, and in structure to St Augustine, and the resemblance of some of this work to features elsewhere, such as the wall-post design at St Laurence, support evidence of the same workshop working across roof types at the end of the period. Stone corbels under the wall-posts representing shield-bearing demi-angels characterise the late fifteenth-century roofs at St Laurence and at St Stephen, but there is a dearth of extant angelic timber imagery there and elsewhere, and other modes of adornment are evident in surviving early sixteenth-century roof carvings.

A different configuration to the shallow-pitched cambered tie-beam roofs discussed below is found at St Peter Parmentergate (c. 1490), in which crenelated tie-beams with pierced brace-spandrel tracery on long posts with capitals alternate with steep arch-braces rising to wide collars from abbreviated wall-posts. This roof spans the nave of a large city church and is characterised by elegant restraint and simplicity. Its late fifteenth-century date and steep pitch dispel simplistic linear narratives, in which late-medieval church roofs have been said to develop from basic tie-beam structures to the lofty open profile of the hammer-beam mode and from steep to shallower pitches.<sup>370</sup> Angelic imagery is confined to the stone corbels under the wall-posts. There may have been more in timber, but one cannot be certain and I suggest that any such representations are likely to have been limited in scale and extent. A drawing of an angel with a scroll inscribed “In princip[io]” allegedly found in the ‘shed of the church’ in 1831 may have represented a roof boss from a beam, cornice, purlin or ridge, but it is de-contextualised, with no indication of the original location, scale or medium.<sup>371</sup>

Fragmented investment and construction in the late fifteenth-century and mid sixteenth-century ‘open plan’ designs at St Laurence (nave from 1450s,

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<sup>369</sup> For example, the pitch at St Laurence is 35.2°, compared to 15.9° at St Andrew and 13.5° at St George Colegate.

<sup>370</sup> See Finch, in Rawcliffe and Wilson 2004, p. 70. He cites a reference to ‘the making of the new church’ in a bequest of 1486.

<sup>371</sup> Nichols 2002, p. 151; BL Add. MS 23,016, fol. 92.

chancel c.1490s) and St Stephen (chancel c. 1500-c. 1535, nave c. 1540-c. 1550) had particularly visible results in the fabric at St Laurence, where the pier designs alter from nave to chancel, indicating a later conception of unified design than at St Stephen.<sup>372</sup> Roofing would have come towards the end of construction, so it can be inferred that any distinctions between tracery, beam or corbel designs were deliberately designed to articulate spatial significance. The mouldings of the hammer-beams at St Laurence and at St Stephen show that none were designed to carry angelic reliefs at their ends.<sup>373</sup> The spandrel tracery changes to the east at St Laurence, but the roof has stone angelic corbel carvings throughout. At St Stephen, they are restricted to the chancel, although the 'very carefully wrought' extant non-figurative design of those in the later nave appears also to have been recorded in the chancel by Brandon and Brandon in 1849.<sup>374</sup> Such a non-angelic scheme is found elsewhere in some early sixteenth-century rural roofs, as in the nave at Bressingham St John the Baptist, discussed in chapter four (Fig. 121).

Another 'open plan' roof design executed towards the end of this period of intense rebuilding and aggrandisement of city churches is found at St Andrew (c. 1510-c. 1520), where hammer-beams were eschewed in favour of the flat-pitched cambered tie-beam idiom, towards the end of a rapidly executed building programme. The coherence of the design belies its collective mercantile lay patronage, in contrast to the clerical benefaction of the chancel roof.<sup>375</sup> Shield-bearing angelic corbels were retained, again 'supporting' long slender wall-posts between the clerestory windows.<sup>376</sup> They retain traces of pigment, including red and green wing feathers. The co-

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<sup>372</sup> Stewart 2015, pp. 219-220.

<sup>373</sup> This design also resembles those at Blackfriars.

<sup>374</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, pp. 86-87. This may be an error, but the roof illustration is unusually contextualised, featuring the east window, the window tracery and wall mouldings.

<sup>375</sup> Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 4, pp. 306-307 and p. 313 records the commemoration of Alderman Robert Gardiner (d. 1508) in particular, observing his mark 'on most of the principals of the [nave] roof', and the arms of Bishops Goldwell and Nix on the main timbers of the chancel roof and their 'considerable' benefaction to it; Stewart 2015, pp. 226-230.

<sup>376</sup> Corbels N10 and N11 appear restored.

existence of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century roofs with angelic and non-angelic timber carvings in the region is discussed in chapter four, but it seems likely that such imagery survived only in rather tokenistic stone corbels in Norwich by this period.

The cambered tie-beam roof type is also found at St George Colegate, where the clerestory glazing may be dated after 1514.<sup>377</sup> The cambered arch-braced tie-beam roof has long slim moulded wall-posts on non-angelic figurative demi-corbels holding shields between the clerestory windows and longitudinal arch-braces above them. Shared conception and craftsmanship are evident between this early sixteenth-century roof and another cambered tie-beam nave roof at St Augustine. Although the latter was envisaged in 1525 when William Myllys bequeathed 20s to its construction, the old roof had not been removed by February 1531, according to the wording of the will of carpenter John Sketur.<sup>378</sup> Its corbel demi-figures are attired like those at St George, but they rest their hands on ledges, which substitute the bands of stylised cloud which often characterise angelic corbels (Fig. 122).

### Ipswich

Only twelve medieval churches survive in Ipswich, just over a third of the number in Norwich. In addition to the destruction of the five religious houses and their churches, another twelve are documented but lost, although in some cases, a later church appears to have been constructed on or near one of these sites and may incorporate earlier fabric.<sup>379</sup> The extant churches have been subject to iconoclasm, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and to extensive nineteenth-century restoration work, including re-roofing projects at St Clement, St Lawrence, St Mary-le-Tower, St Matthew and St Stephen.<sup>380</sup> Yet sufficient evidence remains to discern a different

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<sup>377</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 257; NRO NCC will reg. Coppinger 77.

<sup>378</sup> NRO NCC will reg. Palgrave 195; NRO NCC will reg. Cooke 64;

<https://norwichchurches.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/st-augustines-church.pdf> [accessed 23 June 2018].

<sup>379</sup> Tricker 1987, pp. 9-12.

<sup>380</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, pp. 306-317. Suffolk: E.

distribution of angel roof types from that in Norwich, reflecting distinct patronal preferences and craftsmanship in this urban centre and its rural hinterland.

### Single hammer-beam roofs

The locations of single hammer-beam roofs in Ipswich evidence the deployment of this structural type over both naves and chancels. An example survives in the chancel at St Mary-at-Quay, although it may originate from St Peter; if so, it was installed at St Mary after 1528, several decades after the construction of the double hammer-beam nave roof.<sup>381</sup> It is clear that there was a hammer-beam roof in the chancel at St Peter, then the church of the Augustinian priory, until its dissolution that year. A second extant chancel hammer-beam roof is found at St Matthew (Fig. 123), where a tie-beam roof replaced the nave hammer-beam roof in 1843. At St Stephen, another chancel hammer-beam roof includes some medieval timbers, albeit almost entirely restored.<sup>382</sup> The other surviving single hammer-beam roof in Ipswich is found, not only in the chancel, but also in the original nave (now the north aisle) at St Mary-at-Stoke (Fig. 124). None of the surviving roofs cover clerestories, unlike the lost nave roof at St Matthew, and the elevated single hammer-beam roofs of Perpendicular rebuilding projects at St Peter Mancroft, St Stephen and St Laurence in Norwich. Consequently, the sturdy profiles of the collared Ipswich roofs with their short brace posts are clearly distinct from the lighter, collar-less Norwich canopies and their refined long wall-posts, emphatically framing the clerestory glazing.

Notwithstanding the loss of at least two nave roofs, and the impact of iconoclasm and restoration work upon those still in situ, the surviving material evidence displays a range of designs commensurate with those in

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<sup>381</sup> SROI HD 2448/1/1/255/3; Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 310 and p. 315. Suffolk: E; the roof referred to in the will of Dame Elizabeth Gelget (1528) appears to be the roof that she purchased when the chancel at St Peter was largely demolished to make way for Cardinal Wolsey's new college.

<sup>382</sup> Tricker 1987, p. 50; Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 316. Suffolk: E; the hammer-beam nave roof at St Stephen was replaced in similar fashion to that at St Matthew in 1846.

outlying rural locations, including robust plain and adorned structures, horizontal beam and beam-end angels and non-angelic hammer-beams. At St Mary-at-Stoke, the early fifteenth-century roof of the original aisle-less nave and chancel (now the north aisle) sits uneasily against the arcade introduced to the new nave to the south.<sup>383</sup> In the medieval nave, nine hammer-beams are carved as ecclesiastical angels, holding shields bearing passion symbols. Their heads are replacements, following iconoclasm, as are the shield-bearing demi-angels at the ends of the brace posts.<sup>384</sup> Although the current north aisle and arcade are uninterrupted, the roof articulates the distinction between the medieval nave and chancel. The lower purlin is higher and five moulded hammer-beams at the east are differentiated from the others; their cut ends probably carried carved demi-angels. The spandrel carvings at St Mary-at-Stoke depict foliate forms, pomegranates, the Agnus Dei and a shield, but their execution is undistinguished, not obviously related to others in Ipswich. In contrast, in the chancel roof at St Mary-at-Quay, the brace spandrels are completely plain, like the rest of the sturdy structure. As in the chancel roof at St Matthew, the beam-ends appear to be cut and probably bore angelic carvings, although these are replaced by shields at St Matthew. Any medieval imagery at the base of the brace-posts is lost from both roofs, replaced by crowned Victorian angels at St Matthew. In the chancel at St Stephen, the brace-posts are also cut diagonally. The lower brace spandrels are carved, but neither the deep moulded cornice nor the moulded hammer-beams were designed to display angelic or other carvings, suggesting a later fifteenth-century date for this roof.

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<sup>383</sup> Haward 1999, p. 112 assigns the roof to the late fourteenth or early fifteenth century, on the basis of the horizontal beam angels, but this mode is found at the end of the fifteenth century at Earl Stonham, as discussed in chapter four. The structure of the Ipswich roof appears later than that at Westerfield St Mary Magdalene (often dated c. 1400), as discussed in chapter four.

<sup>384</sup> Cooper 2001, p. 227; in January 1644, iconoclast Dowsing recorded only '2 cherubims [his usual term for roof angels] painted'; [https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101235601-church-of-st-mary-at-stoke-ipswich#.W\\_rmfvZ2vIU](https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101235601-church-of-st-mary-at-stoke-ipswich#.W_rmfvZ2vIU) [accessed 27 September 2017]; in an engraving of 1854, the heads of the figures are missing.

Single hammer-beam craftsmanship is also evident on the outskirts of Ipswich. The early fifteenth-century beam-end angels at Westerfield St Mary Magdalene are discussed in chapter four. The nave and chancel roofs at Bramford St Mary (probably early fifteenth century) share the sturdy character and curved braces to the collars of those at St Matthew, St Mary-at-Stoke and St Stephen, have wall-posts cut diagonally and feature decapitated beam angels in varied ecclesiastical attire reminiscent of those with replaced heads at St Mary-at-Stoke.<sup>385</sup> The brace spandrel carvings relate to others in Ipswich, at Bentley St Mary and at Coddenham St Mary, seven miles south and under six miles north respectively.<sup>386</sup> Other local single hammer-beam roofs are located at Sproughton All Saints, less than two miles south (with angelic imagery, restored in 1867-1868) and at Kesgrave All Saints, seven miles east, dating from the early sixteenth century.<sup>387</sup>

#### Double hammer-beam roofs

While the absence of the double hammer-beam roof type in Norwich reflects its scarcity in Norfolk, the manifestation of so-called 'true' Suffolk double hammer-beam roofs with upper hammer-posts at St Margaret and St Mary-at-Quay in Ipswich speaks to their pattern of distribution in east Suffolk, from Heveningham St Margaret (early sixteenth century) in the north-east to Tattlingstone St Mary further south, as discussed in chapter four. Although there are differences in the form and construction of some of the roofs, an understanding of upper hammer-post construction appears to have emanated from the town. Comparison of the conception and craftsmanship of the nave roofs at St Mary-at-Quay, St Margaret and Great Bromley St

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<sup>385</sup> Cooper 2001, pp. 234-235. Dowsing did not mention the roof angels when he recorded his visit on 1 February 1644.

<sup>386</sup> Haward 1999, pp. 50-51 and pp. 70-71. Haward hypothesises that this work represents either Ipswich craftsmanship or the work of the Copdoke brothers, based three miles south.

<sup>387</sup> [https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101285956-church-of-all-saints-sproughton#.W\\_wkM\\_Z2vIU](https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101285956-church-of-all-saints-sproughton#.W_wkM_Z2vIU) and [https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101030420-church-of-all-saints-kesgrave#.W\\_wnpfZ2vIU](https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101030420-church-of-all-saints-kesgrave#.W_wnpfZ2vIU) [accessed 27 September 2017].

George provides especially compelling evidence for this dissemination as far south as north-east Essex.

Bequests to other building work at St Mary-at-Quay were made in the 1440s, and the nave roof probably dates to the third quarter of the fifteenth century, when the earliest double hammer-beam roofs were constructed.<sup>388</sup> Despite substantial renovation at the turn of the twentieth century, much of the uniform structure is extant, including three tiers of arch-brace spandrel carvings and most of the hammer-beams (Fig. 125).<sup>389</sup> Wall-posts flank the upper half of the clerestory windows; iconoclasm is evident in their mutilated canopied carved figures and in the exposed tenons at the lower and upper beam ends, suggesting the removal of two tiers of carved angels.<sup>390</sup> The potential for the amplification of beam-end angelic imagery was exploited widely elsewhere in Suffolk double hammer-beam roofs, although they are often missing or replaced, as at Framsdon St Mary and Coddendam St Mary respectively. It also characterises roofs further north and west, including at Knapton SS Peter and Paul, and Swaffham SS Peter and Paul in Norfolk, and at March St Wendreda in Cambridgeshire, where Suffolk influence is apparent. Yet it was not the only option.

An alternative design is found in the nave at St Margaret (late fifteenth century, after 1460), one of the most impressive churches in Ipswich. Much of the medieval structure remains discernible, notwithstanding the insertion of painted panels and the replacement of the lower hammer-beam angels with heraldic shields at the end of the seventeenth century (Fig. 126).<sup>391</sup>

Carved initials and merchants' marks adorn shields on brace spandrels and

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<sup>388</sup> Tricker 1987, pp. 40-41; Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 310. Suffolk: E; Blatchly and Northeast 1996, p. 387. Two initials on roof shields remain unidentified.

<sup>389</sup> Haward 1999, pp. 106-109; replaced hammer-beams include N/S1 and N/S2.

<sup>390</sup> Cooper 2001, p. 228; Tricker 1987, pp. 12-13. The targeting of roof angels is not mentioned by Dowsing in his journal, but they could have been removed even before his visit on 29 January 1644.

<sup>391</sup> Blatchly and Northeast 1996, pp. 399-406. The painted panels date to 1694-1695 and the beam-end shields were installed in 1700. The panelling only conceals the upper structure above the collar-beams.



stone corbels.<sup>392</sup> The primary (but not exclusive) donors to the roof were members of the Hall family of dyers and clothiers, given the prevalence of their merchant mark in the roof scheme and on shields along the clerestory parapet, and John Hall's request for burial 'in front of the crucifix', as discussed in chapter three.<sup>393</sup>

An emphatic display of angelic imagery characterised the lower structure of the medieval roof scheme, with (now lost) angelic carvings at the lower beam ends and demi-angels along the cornice, evoked by their extant carved wings. However, this was not replicated at the ends of the upper hammer-beams. Their mouldings and crested adornment deliberately precluded the attachment of angelic reliefs, as in contemporary roofs at Bressingham St Andrew in Norfolk and Norwich St Laurence. In terms of their design, they are identical to those in the early sixteenth-century nave roof at Great Bromley St George, in north Essex (Fig. 127).<sup>394</sup> This evidence for the impact of Ipswich craftsmanship upon the Essex roof structure is augmented by similarities between the spandrel carvings of shields, pomegranates and foliate motifs at Ipswich St Mary-at-Quay, St Margaret and at Great Bromley. These recur in single and double hammer-beam roofs across Suffolk, with the exception of elite work at Bury St Edmunds St Mary and Mildenhall St Mary to the west.<sup>395</sup>

## Conclusion

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<sup>392</sup> Blatchley and Northeast 1996, pp. 387-396.

<sup>393</sup> Blatchley and Northeast 1996, p. 396.

<sup>394</sup> [https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101337189-church-of-st-george-great-bromley#.W\\_QcdvZ2vIU](https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101337189-church-of-st-george-great-bromley#.W_QcdvZ2vIU) [accessed 15 September 2017]. The entry dates the roof to the early C15, but this appears to be a typographical error, as the clerestory is listed as c. 1500; HBHME report FM 1/815 (formerly 30/2002). Martin Bridge's tree ring analysis was inconclusive, as the two oak samples taken were not possible to date.

<sup>395</sup> Haward 1999, pp. 43-168, esp. pp. 52-65, pp. 130-133, pp. 98-99, pp. 104-105 and p. 107. Different hands are evidenced by variations in depth of carving and subtleties of design, for example, in the shield with cross at Great Bromley and at St Mary at Quay. The shallow Essex carving of 4NMW (sprouting leaves) resembles several at Heveningham, the most northerly of the 'true' Suffolk double hammer-beam roofs.

Different modes of expression within East Anglian roofs derived not only from varied traditions of angelic representation and belief, but also reflected available craft skills, fashion or taste, financial capacity and local politics. In Norwich, the scale of rebuilding activity and manifestation of diverse angel roofs appears to reflect an increasingly autonomous lay piety, collaboration between laity and clergy and lay appropriation of city space in the shadow of the Cathedral Priory, notwithstanding shared craftsmanship in some cases. At Mancroft, a spectacular reconstruction project to create the largest parish church in Norwich strategically located by the market was funded by members of the city elite in an assertion of civic pride articulated by the final unified design of the roof. These ambitious roofs within major rebuilding schemes were innovatory and refined. The diffusion of the early and relatively structurally safe model at King's Lynn proved its adaptability to local preferences, skills and beliefs, especially in the west of the region, but its impact was limited in Norwich in favour of other types, as in Ipswich. Whether on grounds of cost, risk, belief or taste, emulation of the beautiful canopies at Mancroft and Hungate was more localised and they remain rare gems in the crown of East Anglian roofs. That ambition and innovation was not always restricted to large-scale 'open plan' projects like that St Peter Mancroft is demonstrated by the design of the roof over the nave and transepts of St Peter Hungate, restricted in scale by a confined site. Testament to patronal ambition, a complex iconographic programme and cutting-edge form is matched by extraordinarily sophisticated carving and execution. Later fifteenth- and early- to mid-sixteenth-century roofs are characterised by equal diversity. Angelic representations were less ubiquitous; where they persist, they mark a shift from timber roof carvings to diminutive stone corbels, accompanied by a general reduction in scale and emphasis. Across the region, from King's Lynn to Bury St Edmunds, quality and innovation appear to coincide in the most remarkable roofs of mercantile church rebuilding projects, but the display of invention and skill in these Norwich roofs was rarely matched.

## Chapter four: The iconography of angel roofs

### Introduction

This chapter sets East Anglian roof schemes into the context of the contemporary proliferation of interest in angels and follows discussion of contested religious practice and belief in chapters two and three. Through case studies it examines the relationship between angelic roof imagery and iconography in other media and areas of the medieval church, with particular reference to the heavenly hierarchy visualised in Rood sculpture and on chancel screens. Controversies surrounding ‘the difficult nature of angels and their incorrigible cult’ centred on concerns regarding their visual representation and their implications in idol worship recur periodically from the early Christian period onwards. Yet their prevalence in English medieval church art argues for their widespread popularity and acceptance.<sup>396</sup> The material depiction of ‘formless, bodiless and immaterial’ angelic beings was particularly deemed problematic in part because it depended ‘on viewers’ ability to discern symbolic rather than literal “likeness”’.<sup>397</sup> The chapter explores the relative dearth of references to the angelic orders in roof schemes against the prevalence of liturgical attire and ecclesiastical attributes of East Anglian roof angels, which can be understood as signalling lay orthodoxy in a period of theological contention over their representation. The inclusion of angelic and other imagery in these late medieval roofs was not confined to wooden carvings on the beams, cornices and wall-posts, but extended to painted ceillures and stone corbels. Case studies illuminate the relationship between carving and colour, highlight factors at play in the selection of different strategies and examine the iconography of angels and saints as multi-media roof supporters.

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<sup>396</sup> See Peers 2001, pp. 13-15. ‘The rejection of images of angels was directly related to ...fear of idolatry...it also involved other issues of primary concern in the early church, namely the worship of angels as gods and pagan attempts to equate Christian angels with their gods.’ See also pp. 126-128.

<sup>397</sup> Peers 2001, p. 19.

Although some examples have suffered from iconoclasm, East Anglian angel roofs present a substantial body of previously untapped visual evidence for investigating the significance of angelic imagery in comprehensive representational schemes which often cover the entire nave.<sup>398</sup> Angels are ubiquitous in late medieval art and religion, yet their pervasive existence has often been neglected.<sup>399</sup> Attending to the specificity of their presentation can indicate their function within the parish church. Studies which have taken similar approaches to details of late medieval parish church imagery include Nichols' discussion of the iconography of penance in East Anglian Seven Sacrament fonts, Baker's work on angelic screen paintings and Varnam's analysis of the relationship between medieval sermons and images in glass and wall-paintings.<sup>400</sup>

Compared to screen paintings, stained-glass schemes and font carvings, angels high in the rafters are inaccessible and more easily overlooked. Our experience of these roofs from ground level is expansive and shifting. Angelic carvings and their symbols defined in sharp relief by sunlight quickly recede enigmatically into darkness, retrievable only by artificial light. Access from scaffolding and specialist photography reveals minute aspects of their attire, attitudes and attributes, such as the seven seals on a book held by a beam angel at Norwich St Peter Hungate and the distortion of medieval schemes by restoration work, exemplified by the repainted prophets' names on scrolls at Knapton SS Peter and Paul. Dendrochronology and paint analysis can disclose further details, as at King's Lynn, discussed in chapter two.

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<sup>398</sup> Dowsing's role in Puritan iconoclasm (1643-44) is well-documented, although Cooper 2001, p. 96 and p. 444 shows that damage to angels, for example at Bildeston, does not necessarily date to this period. Publications to date lack detailed analysis of angelic roof imagery. For example, Haward 1999 primarily addresses typology and spandrel relief carvings and Beech 2014, pp. 9-15 focuses upon the structural development of early fifteenth-century hammer-beam roofs, rather than their iconography.

<sup>399</sup> Sangha 2012, p. 14.

<sup>400</sup> Nichols 1994, pp. 175-76 and pp. 231-35; Baker 2011, pp. 64-69; Varnam 2018, pp. 135-36.

Extant angelic carvings are found in some aisle and chancel roofs, but they prevail in nave schemes. The iconography of East Anglian roof carvings was often designed as a unified focus for a diverse and mobile lay audience, whose participation in the Mass was distinctive and socially important. The late-medieval glazing schemes which filtered their illumination have often been lost; inventories such as that of St Peter Hungate list lost candlesticks and statues before which lights were prescribed to burn, evoking the flickering light and smoke which would have punctuated the visual field of the medieval worshipper.<sup>401</sup> Visual experiences of roof angels as palpable representations of incorporeal beings were augmented by other forms of sensory perception. I contend that the imagery and form of these angelic compositions was deliberate and persuasive, enhanced and enlivened by a creative interaction with sermons and texts.<sup>402</sup> I argue that their reception was active and social, reflecting a reciprocal relationship between image and viewer.<sup>403</sup>

#### Iconography and integration: the Rood, the Doom and the roof

This contention calls for a holistic approach and for the ‘framing’ of these carved figures, not only in terms of their interaction with human activity at ground level, but in relation to other aspects of the iconographic scheme.<sup>404</sup> In particular, this chapter will examine the visual relationships that would have existed between angelic roof programmes and the heavenly hierarchy visualised in rood sculpture, Doom paintings and on chancel screens. Perhaps it is unsurprising that these have yet to be explored in depth, given

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<sup>401</sup> NRO PD61/23; Way 2010, p. 14.

<sup>402</sup> Here, I am strongly influenced by Binski’s assertion that the images and objects in churches ‘had a constitutive, rather than representational, role in the making of religion itself’ and of the importance of aesthetic matters in the process of creation. Binski 1999, p. 3. Also see Varnam 2018, p. 133 and pp. 123-178.

<sup>403</sup> Varnam 2018, p. 135. For a penetrating analysis of the relationship between screen images and a mobile medieval audience, see Jung, in Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson, 2017, pp. 176-194.

<sup>404</sup> Jung, in Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson, 2017, p. 194; Binski, in Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson 2017, p. 4.

the 'distortion of detritus'.<sup>405</sup> The principal imagery at the division between the nave and chancel, of the Crucifix, often flanked by images of Mary and John the Evangelist, was removed from every parish church where it existed. At Wenhaston St Peter in Suffolk, where the Doom painting is displaced from its original setting in the chancel arch, the clear outline of the three lost wooden figures of the rood group evokes their presence in a rare reminder of the imagery stripped away (Fig. 128).

Extant fifteenth-century East Anglian chancel or rood screens comprise a remarkable corpus of late-medieval English painting, but their pattern of survival does not always mirror that of angel roofs, especially in the west of the region. There are happy coincidences, as at Cawston St Agnes, Marsham All Saints and Trunch St Botolph in Norfolk. Elsewhere, apparent links are more problematic; iconoclasm, decay and restoration often make it difficult to confirm the original appearance of roof and rood imagery. In Suffolk, at Woolpit St Mary, angelic carvings on the ends of the hammer-beams date from Henry Ringham's 1862 restoration and the figures on the medieval screen panels were repainted in 1892. The nave beam angels are decapitated at Kersey St Mary, where six heavily restored screen panels are now dislocated and fixed to the wall of the north aisle (Fig. 129).

The relationship between roof angels and the iconography of Christ's sacrifice and the Last Judgement at the east end of the nave is often equally elusive. Last Judgement paintings were ubiquitous in late medieval parish churches, most located at the east end of the nave.<sup>406</sup> Yet only twelve survive in Suffolk; as with screens, the accidents of their survival rarely match those of angel roofs.<sup>407</sup> For example, at Bacton St Mary, where the Doom painting survives, the roof carvings have been removed. Only past records of the lost Doom and four beam-end angels survive at Bardwell SS

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<sup>405</sup> Marks 2000, p. 3.

<sup>406</sup> Rosewell 2016, p. 72 and pp. 75-77.

<sup>407</sup> Hawker 2001, p. 1.

Peter and Paul.<sup>408</sup> No image remains of the Last Judgement painting recorded by Keyser at Rougham St Mary, where headless beam angels hold shields with Passion and eucharistic symbols.<sup>409</sup> At Earl Stonham St Mary, the association of the medieval Doom and roof iconography is more tangible, although it still bears the scars of past iconoclasm. Faded images of the late-fifteenth-century Last Judgement still surmount the chancel arch and a hammer-beam roof with decapitated angelic carvings framed the lost rood (Fig. 130). Despite this fragmentation of late medieval imagery, much material evidence survives across the region.

Roods and chancel screens are widely assumed to have been ubiquitous in late medieval parish churches. Extant material and documentary evidence suggests a more complex picture, as Lunnon has shown; a third of Breckland churches surveyed in Norfolk lacked material or documentary evidence for a chancel screen, and in a fifth the original presence of a beam or loft could not be substantiated.<sup>410</sup> The arrangements where the nave meets the chancel were characterised by variety rather than by standardisation, and could be adapted or supplanted.<sup>411</sup> Nonetheless, sacrificial and intercessory imagery at the east end of the nave was sufficiently popular to suggest its frequent anticipation when a roof was designed and installed. In the fifteenth century, the funding and design of this imagery, and subsequent engagement with it, became a collective endeavour.<sup>412</sup> Individual sponsorship within communal schemes is sometimes possible to discern in inscriptions, the addition of

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<sup>408</sup> SROB JI11/7/p81 includes undated photographic evidence; SROB FL522/5/4/2 'Paintings on the walls of Bardwell Church', paper presented by Arthur Philip Dunlap to a meeting of the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology, listed at

[https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/search?s=Paintings+on+the+walls+of+Bardwell+Church&q%5Bkeyword%5D=0&q%5Bpartner%5D=&q%5Bidentifier%5D=&q%5Bdate\\_from%5D=&q%5Bdate\\_to%5D=&q%5Btitle%5D=&q%5Bperson%5D=&q%5Bplace%5D=&q%5Bsubject%5D=&q%5Bformat%5D=&cbpt=0&cbav=2&cbadvsearchquery=](https://www.suffolkarchives.co.uk/collections/search?s=Paintings+on+the+walls+of+Bardwell+Church&q%5Bkeyword%5D=0&q%5Bpartner%5D=&q%5Bidentifier%5D=&q%5Bdate_from%5D=&q%5Bdate_to%5D=&q%5Btitle%5D=&q%5Bperson%5D=&q%5Bplace%5D=&q%5Bsubject%5D=&q%5Bformat%5D=&cbpt=0&cbav=2&cbadvsearchquery=)

as in 1853, but as 1859 (vol. II) at <http://suffolk.institute.pdfsrv.co.uk/>.

<sup>409</sup> Keyser 1883 records the location of this painting over the chancel arch.

<sup>410</sup> Lunnon 2010, pp. 112-115.

<sup>411</sup> Marks, in Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson 2017, p. 10.

<sup>412</sup> Lunnon, 2010, p. 126.

saints 'of personal resonance' or more rarely, in donor images incorporated within increasingly compartmentalised screen designs.<sup>413</sup> Individual appropriation of roof imagery is not often evident, but there are examples. Some indicate substantial roof patronage on the part of a dominant individual. The Jermyn arms on the carved shields of angels N1 and S12 at West Walton St Mary stamp their presence at both ends and sides of the entire scheme. Also in Norfolk, at Gissing St Mary, the Kemp family name appears to be referenced in the jousting shield or ecranche, with a hole for a lance, held by angel US1 in a privileged position at the south-east end (Fig. 131).<sup>414</sup> This motif recurs further west, on and facing both sides of the scheme in spandrels SUNW2 and SCNE6.<sup>415</sup> In the roof of Ipswich St Margaret in Suffolk, the arrangement of carved initials and merchants' marks on shields on timber brace spandrels and held by stone corbel angels, allied to will bequests to the church, reveals hierarchical layers in negotiated communal roof investment by dyers, tile makers and thatchers.<sup>416</sup> The predominance of the merchant mark of the Hall family of dyers and clothiers in the roof scheme and on shields along the clerestory parapet underlines the dominance of their patronage. This is confirmed by John Hall's request for burial 'in front of the crucifix', the most favoured site in the nave, at the portal to heaven on earth, in dialogue with his angelic intercessors above.<sup>417</sup> Here and at Swaffham SS Peter and Paul in Norfolk, where rebuilding of the church was 'a community enterprise involving at least a tenth of the adult population', sponsorship of a unified roof design was not exclusive to the principal funders.<sup>418</sup> At North Burlingham St Andrew in Norfolk, at least two

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<sup>413</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126. For donor images, see Cassell, 2012.

<sup>414</sup> Blomefield 1805, vol. 1, pp. 165. 'The name Kemp is derived from the Saxon word to kemp or combat.' There are four monuments to the Kemp family in the north chapel.

<sup>415</sup> Angelic carvings are numbered from east to west in ascending order. N1 is the first angel at the north-east end and S12 the last carving at the south-west.

<sup>416</sup> Blatchly and Northeast 1996, pp. 387-396.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 396. For the interpretation of medieval chancel screens as the gates of heaven, see Lunnon 2010, pp. 120-123. For 'intercessory dialogue', see Burgess 2012, p. 310.

<sup>418</sup> Heslop, in Harper-Bill 2005, p. 260 and pp. 267-268.



bequests reference the late-fifteenth-century roof.<sup>419</sup> Despite limited documentary evidence, it is clear that nave roofs and their carved schemes were habitually designed and built with purposeful corporate lay funding, with other communally commissioned church art in mind.<sup>420</sup>

### Aisle roofs

Despite limited documentary evidence, it seems clear that often the endowment of aisle roofs was not such a collective endeavour. With notable exceptions, aisle roofs have generally been overlooked and they merit more detailed analysis.<sup>421</sup> Specific case studies suggest that angelic roof imagery could be appropriated by individuals or families, as discussed in chapter two in relation to John Baret's will and his chantry chapel in the south aisle at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, and in chapter three concerning the mercantile sponsorship of the north and south aisle chapels with painted ceilings at Norwich St John Maddermarket. Angelic carvings were also allied to peripheral arenas of guild activity, as explored below. The expansive idiom of hammer-beam construction is unusual in extant aisle roofs, but characterises some of the most remarkable examples with angelic imagery. These present a sharp contrast to the more symbolic requisitions of angelic supporters elsewhere, as exemplified by the diminutive angelic shield-bearers which pepper the cornices of the aisle roofs at Norwich St Peter Mancroft, discussed in chapter three.

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<sup>419</sup> NRO ACC 2011/204; Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 242; NRO ANW reg. Fuller *alias* Roper, fol. 132 (13s.4d. to new roof if begun in 3 years, William Rysyng, 1487); NRO ANW reg. Fuller *alias* Roper, fol. 186 (26s.8d. to new roof, Henry Smith, 1491).

<sup>420</sup> See Cattermole and Cotton 1983, pp. 235-279. Terminology is sometimes ambiguous in roof bequests. Amounts bequeathed vary and more than one bequest sometimes survives, as at Norwich St Augustine (NRO NCC will reg. Palgrave 195 and NRO NCC will reg. Cooke 64) and at Framlingham St Michael (NRO NCC will reg. Cage 131 and IC/AA2/4/61).

<sup>421</sup> An antiquarian exception to this neglect is the discussion of the roof of the north aisle at Mildenhall by Waller 1895, pp. 257-266.

<file:///C:/Users/User/Documents/Angel%20roofs/Mildenhall/Waller%20on%20Mildenhall.pdf>

[accessed 29 January 2015]

Aisle roofs often display alternative modes of expression and different carving to those in the nave, asserting their individual identity. For example, the north aisle roof of the parish church of SS Mary and Thomas of Canterbury at Wymondham Abbey (possibly c. 1430s) (Fig. 132) is distinct in terms of its structural details and angelic carvings from the higher roof of the nave, which it probably pre-dates.<sup>422</sup> Both are collar-less single hammer-beam structures, with arch-braced angelic beams and single purlins, but their profiles and angelic carvings differ remarkably.

The moulded beams and brace spandrels with pierced tracery of the restored aisle roof resemble those of the late fifteenth-century north-east Norfolk nave roofs at Blakeney and Trunch, discussed in chapter three in relation to Norwich St Peter Hungate.<sup>423</sup> Ecclesiastical demi-angels with folded wings are attached or carved into the undersides of the beam-ends, holding attributes including shields, musical instruments or with hands at prayer. If these are earlier than those at Hungate, as seems likely, they may have influenced angelic beam construction and conception in the Norwich roof. However, the carvings differ and the Wymondham scheme incorporates other carved beam-end imagery, including a grotesque figure in the Lady Chapel. This juxtaposition of sacred and profane recalls the roof imagery of Mildenhall north aisle and the naves at Fincham and Outwell, discussed below.

The Wymondham north aisle roof was an expensive project, as the rafters are panelled between the principal timbers, which are adorned with foliate bosses at their intersections, and carved openwork in the form of trefoils with fleur-de-lys embellishes the boarding. Pigment distinguishes the angels and adornment of the ceiling to the Lady Chapel at the east end, including Marian monograms on the panels; notwithstanding restoration work, the red, white and green scheme may reflect medieval intent. A painted wooden boss depicting a shield-bearing angel in an alb and amice adorns the braced king pendant at the centre of the canopy of honour. This has been interpreted as

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<sup>422</sup> Cattermole 2007, pp. 92-96; the nave roof may date from the 1440s.

<sup>423</sup> Cattermole 2007, p. 87 and p. 297.

bearing the arms of the Knight's Hospitallers, linking the patronage of the roof to their house at Carbrooke; this is plausible, but one must take account of restoration.<sup>424</sup>

In contrast to the north aisle roof, the lofty steeply-pitched nave canopy frames contemporary clerestories. Arch-braced full-length horizontal beam angels are located above the wall-posts between the clerestory windows, alternating with smaller scroll-bearing demi-angels attached to shallow arch-braces at the cornice, above the apex of the glazing. In contrast to the small beam-end carvings in the aisle, the projection of the beam angels represents a fifth of the width of the nave. Most wear uniform ecclesiastical attire, with the exception of the feathered angels with four wings and raised hands which differentiate the east end, although these include replacement work. At least some of the beam carvings had lost their attributes by the mid nineteenth century; extant attributes appear to include a lute (N1/S2) and a book (N2/S1), and other angels raise their hands (N3/5, S3/5/6), but other attributes are missing, their loss evidenced by the angels' gestures (Fig. 133).<sup>425</sup>

Two other outstanding extant examples dating from the first half of the fifteenth century articulate an ambitious expression of angelic hammer-beam imagery. The carpentry and carving of the angel roofs of the north and south aisles at Mildenhall St Mary articulate richly divergent responses to the pre-existing nave roof.<sup>426</sup> Their patronage is a matter of conjecture; they may have been funded by leading local figures associated with the rebuilding of the church in the first half of the fifteenth century, but their generous structures and elaborate carving indicate eminent craftsmanship and design beyond the local arena. They reflect the singular wealth of the manor, under

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<sup>424</sup> Cattermole 2007, pp. 36-37 and p. 94.

<sup>425</sup> Cattermole 2007, pp. 94-95.

<sup>426</sup> Haward 1999, p. 130; Middleton-Stewart 2011, p. xxv and pp. xxix-xxx. These and other sources suggest that the nave and aisle roofs were built after 1420, during the first half of the fifteenth century, before the tower. Northeast 2001 provides evidence of a number of wills to the fabric of the church during this period. The nave roof closely follows the model established at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel at the start of the fifteenth century.

the ownership of the abbey of Bury St Edmunds.<sup>427</sup> The arms on the font in the south aisle are those of its donor, Sir Henry Barton and the City of London, referencing his position as Lord Mayor of London.<sup>428</sup> However, it is equally possible that he sponsored the roof of the nave, where the font and his tomb were apparently originally located, although its workmanship, structure and iconography reference the more collective endeavour of the recently-completed roof at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel by its mercantile community.<sup>429</sup>

At Mildenhall, both aisle roofs are characterised by greater opulence than that of the nave in their impressive but unnecessarily sturdy structures and complex adornment. Both feature massive arch-braced crested hammer-beams; unusually, those against the south wall of the south aisle are flanked by decapitated standing figures facing east and west. Despite extensive damage, their attire as acolytes in albs and amices distinguishes them as angels. Arguably, the north aisle roof surpasses that of the south in invention and detail, mirroring the distinction of the exterior of the north aisle in relation to the south, albeit to a lesser extent.<sup>430</sup> As observed by Daunton, the innovatory iconography of the north aisle roof relates to that of contemporary nave roofs some twenty six miles north at Outwell St Clement and Fincham St Martin in Norfolk, as discussed below.<sup>431</sup> Selected elements of the Mildenhall design were adapted in different forms at Outwell and Fincham, juxtaposing angelic and demonic imagery. At Mildenhall, against the north wall of the aisle, six defaced beam angels in ecclesiastical dress with fragments of wings alternate with arch-braced hammer-beams, carved in the form of lions (N1, N7), a hooded bourgeois man with a dagger and purse

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<sup>427</sup> Bailey 2007, p. 21.

<sup>428</sup> Tymms 1853, p. 272. Barton held this office in 1416-1417 and 1428-1429.

[file:///C:/Users/User/Documents/Angel%20roofs/Mildenhall/Volume%20I%20\(1853\)\\_Mildenhall%20Church%20Samuel%20Tymms\\_269%20to%20277.pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Documents/Angel%20roofs/Mildenhall/Volume%20I%20(1853)_Mildenhall%20Church%20Samuel%20Tymms_269%20to%20277.pdf) [accessed 15 September 2015]

<sup>429</sup> Cautley 1937, p. 294.

<sup>430</sup> The exterior of the north aisle is defined and enriched by chequered flushwork, traceried stone parapets and corbel heads, in contrast to the less singular quality of that to the south.

<sup>431</sup> I am grateful to Dr Claire Daunton for discussion of this topic.

(N3), a reptilian wyvern with bat-like wings (N5), a crowned Saracen or Dane with a scimitar (N9) and a woman with a horned headdress, perhaps representing pride or lust (N11).<sup>432</sup> Underneath these 'symbols of evil' are wall-post figures, unusually canopied by demi-angels, rather than the vaulted niches popular elsewhere. On the wall-posts at Outwell, these angelic protectors are reinterpreted with unfortunate results, as discussed later. Representations of vices on the beams at Mildenhall are translated as oversized wall-post canopies at Outwell, including the smug wealthy burgher (N3 and WPN3/WPS2 respectively), the bat-winged creature (N5 and WPN4/5) and the woman with horned headdress (N11 and WP4). At Fincham, similarly demonic braced beam carvings are interspersed with angelic beams, referencing the Mildenhall scheme.<sup>433</sup> These allusions to Mildenhall structure and imagery do not replicate the exceptionally high quality carpentry and carving of the Suffolk roof, the standing angels above the piers along the south wall or the refinement and complexity of the brace spandrel carvings. The relief carvings juxtapose ecclesiastical subjects with secular and heraldic themes.<sup>434</sup> From east to west, those facing west depict St Michael and a dragon, the Annunciation, Abraham and Isaac, the visitation of the shepherds, the baptism of Christ and a demon with an organ. The heraldic imagery of the east-facing reliefs is flanked by depictions of an indeterminate bearded figure with foliage (NESp1) and St George and a dragon (NESp6). The Beauchamp motif of a griffin (NESp2) is repeated elsewhere on the cornice. A swan collared and chained (NESp5) could again reference the Beauchamps, the De Bohuns or another noble family; this motif recurs in the south aisle and in brace carvings in both aisles at Upwell St Peter.<sup>435</sup> In the Mildenhall spandrel carving, it faces a Talbot dog, while

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<sup>432</sup> Cooper 2001, p. 376 cites Simpson, p. 31, who suggests that the beam angels were defaced in 1651, alongside the destruction of other 'symbols of papish superstition'. The nave roof escaped this damage.

<sup>433</sup> The Mildenhall beam angels have lost their arms and any attributes. The Fincham angels are heavily restored; most have lost their attributes, but a book, hands in prayer and possibly a crown of thorns are recognisable.

<sup>434</sup> These contrast with the pierced tracery of the south aisle spandrels.

<sup>435</sup> Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 7, p. 267.

the spandrel to the east depicts a hunting scene (NESp3). The antelope, couchant, with coronetted collar and chain (NESp4, facing an eagle displayed, as on the tomb of Henry IV) may reference Mary de Bohun, Henry V's mother; it appears in Henry V's chantry chapel at Westminster. This motif reappears alternating with the swan on the south aisle cornice at Mildenhall. The north aisle cornice scheme is damaged, but forms such as the hart and the wyvern (repeated in south aisle imagery) may also have operated as royal or noble signifiers. Despite the ambiguity of some of these heraldic symbols, their inclusion in the aisle roofs at Mildenhall augments the impression of elite patronage created by their sophisticated craftsmanship and inventive designs, perhaps allied to guild activity in the north aisle at least.<sup>436</sup> The Finchams appear to have sought to align themselves with prestige through appropriation and adaptation. Influence could have spread from Mildenhall through Sir Henry Barton's heir Thomas, who held lands near Fincham.<sup>437</sup> Given evidence for Fincham family church patronage at Fincham and Outwell, it is also interesting to note the inscription on the tower to 'John Fyncham and his wyf' on the tower at Badwell Ash St Mary, twenty miles east of Mildenhall.<sup>438</sup>

Fincham patronage did not extend to the south aisle hammer-beam roof at Outwell St Clement and its mixed scheme of Mass and Passion symbols held by beam angels along the south wall (Fig. 134). These probably faced angelic representations to the north; all except N11 at the west end are replaced by a seventeenth-century arrangement of bosses carved with heads on shields, but the juxtaposition of the book held by N11 and the Pax of S11 was probably repeated at the east of the scheme and represents a

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<sup>436</sup> The initial dedication of the north aisle chapel to St John the Baptist relates to the guild of St John recorded at the church. A doorway at the north-west of the north aisle leads to the Lady Chapel above the north porch. BL Add. MS. 19096, fol.203; Middleton-Stewart 2011, p. xxviii. Perhaps the chapel to St Michael recorded by antiquarian David Elisha Davy from lost churchwardens' accounts was in the south aisle; one cannot be certain.

<sup>437</sup> Barton owned land at Barton Bendish, just two miles south-east of Fincham.

<sup>438</sup> The nave angel roof at Badwell Ash has a similar alternating hammer-beam and tie-beam structure with wall-post figures to those of the west Norfolk churches, but is heavily restored.

significant pairing, as discussed in relation to nave roofs below.<sup>439</sup> The ecclesiastical focus of the south aisle imagery contrasts with the secular displays of shield-angel reliefs in the north chancel and transept chapels. The aisle scheme is unusually sophisticated and ambitious for its setting and is more extensive than that in the nave, where five pairs of beam angels alternate with tie-beams. The angelic carvings in both roofs look upwards and have curly hair; they wear varied ecclesiastical dress and their attributes reference the Mass and Christ's Passion.<sup>440</sup> Otherwise they differ in appearance and structure. The nave carvings relate to the King's Lynn structural model, projecting on cloud straight from the cornice (as discussed in chapter two and chapter five). They have lost their wings. In contrast, folded wings are integral to the angelic beam carvings of the aisle and chapel. Their seated stance is unusual and their draped legs straddle the arch-braces of short wall-posts beneath them.

The angels at the very east of the Outwell south aisle roof scheme carry a Pax (S1) and a chalice and Host (S2) (Fig. 135), referencing lay engagement with communion, as discussed below. Their location adjacent to the Beaupré chapel of St Mary may have been significant. Divided from the rest of the aisle by an arch, the chapel is surmounted by an angel roof of similar structure, carving and iconography.<sup>441</sup> Lively musical demi-angels coeval with the beam carvings line the cornices of the aisle and chapel. This shared vocabulary underlines the possible shared patronage of the two roofs by the Beaupré family.<sup>442</sup> The record of a guild of St Mary at Outwell could suggest

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<sup>439</sup> S1 also holds a Pax, in the aisle by the chapel entrance.

<sup>440</sup> Blomefield 1805–10, vol. 7, p. 471. Blomefield describes the aisle roof as 'raised like that of the nave, supported by saints and angels bearing scrolls in their hands'. There is no evidence of the inclusion of saints in the aisle roof. The reference to scrolls is rather generalised; other attributes included in both the nave and aisle roof schemes clearly date from the late medieval period and are not later replacements.

<sup>441</sup> The roof structure and form of the beam angels are identical to those of the rest of the aisle. There is extensive damage to the attributes of angels S1 and S2 and that of S4 is lost, but S3 carries a soul, implying a related scheme.

<sup>442</sup> One of the chapel demi-angels bears a shield with a cross; it seems unlikely that the Beaupré arms were displayed in ecclesiastical scheme of the roof. NRO, NCC, Spurling 93–98. Nicholas

the relationship of the coherent scheme of angelic imagery of the Lady Chapel and aisle to guild activity, but the eastern location of the chalice and Host emblem in the south aisle equally may have referenced the worship and commemoration of Beaupré family members in the chapel.<sup>443</sup> The ecclesiastical focus of its roof imagery was married to Marian imagery and depictions of saints and kings in its ‘popish’ glazed scheme.<sup>444</sup> The lack of recorded or extant heraldry in this roofing and glass may suggest a self-effacing strategy designed to promote the piety of the wealthy Beauprés, in contrast to the peppering of the Fincham Chapel with shields bearing Fincham arms.<sup>445</sup>

At Wetherden St Mary the Virgin, the Sulyard patronage of the late-fifteenth-century south aisle and chapel is asserted forcefully in an equally consistent but different design.<sup>446</sup> In contrast to the varied hammer-beam structures at Wymondham, Mildenhall, Mattishall and Outwell, the cambered tie-beam roofs are characterised by richly carved arch-braced principals, which alternate with un-braced principals in the aisle, as in the north aisle roof at North Burlingham St Andrew in Norfolk. Surfaces are elaborately adorned, from the patterned cornices to the brace spandrels depicting grotesque or ‘Green Man’ heads, foliage and shields. Bosses at the junction of the principals and central purlin of the aisle are charged with Sulyard heraldry

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Beaupré’s will is dated 1513. As King has observed, its contents focus upon interior adornment of the chapel and repair of the parclose screen. This suggests that its glazing was already complete, following installation of the roof.

<http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/outwell/history.html> [accessed 31 August 2015]

<sup>443</sup> The chapel contains the tomb of (and monument to) Nicholas Beaupré and a tomb recess.

<sup>444</sup> BL, Add. MS 8844, f.79r; *Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi*

<http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/outwell/history.html> [accessed 31 August 2015]. King highlights the criticism of the scheme by antiquarians for its ‘popish’ character.

<sup>445</sup> Blomefield 1805–10, vol. 7, pp. 471-473. According to Blomefield, the Beaupre arms were allied instead to those of the Bishop of Ely and to religious imagery in the east chancel window. He assigns a south window to Margaret, wife of Thomas Beaupre (d. 1439) and describes extant iconography of a kneeling female donor figure with saints.

<sup>446</sup> John Sulyard died in 1488; his monogram adorns the exterior stonework of the aisle.



(B2, B3, B5 and B6), interspersed with foliate designs (B1, B4, B6) and some of the brace spandrels bear shields with Sulyard arms.<sup>447</sup> However, iconoclasm and restoration distort the appearance of the roofs and windows of the aisle and chapel. The Sulyard arms were clearly allied to lost religious imagery in the glass and elsewhere, which may have amplified its angelic presence.<sup>448</sup> The arch separating the aisle from the chapel springs to the south from a shield-bearing angelic stone corbel; from observation of remnants of stone under WPS1 in the chapel, it is probable that this imagery was replicated at the base of the wall-posts, as in the wooden corbel demi-angels at North Burlingham.<sup>449</sup> Some are appended by large wooden angels (WPN1/2 and WPS2 in the chapel; WPN1/2/3/4 and WPS4 in the aisle), but these are fictive imposters, as at Haughley St Mary nearby.<sup>450</sup> Large hatchments attached to the base of two aisle wall-posts (WPS2 and WPS3) are later replacements. The stone shield-bearers which appear to have supported the canopies of the Sulyard sphere of the church represented a restrained, perhaps rather tokenistic angelic expression compared to the tiers of wooden carvings in the 'false' double hammer-beam roof of the nave.

#### Roof and Rood: the King's Lynn model

The appearance and attributes of angels were varied and creative, generated by a complex web of decision-making and practice on the part of patrons, communities and makers.<sup>451</sup> However, case-studies provide compelling evidence that visual and conceptual links between the eucharistic

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<sup>447</sup> MacCulloch 1966, p. 25.

<sup>448</sup> Cooper 2001, pp. 241-242. Dowsing recorded the destruction of '100 superstitious pictures in S[i]r Edward Silliard's eile' and donor inscriptions in glass fragments recorded by Thomas Martin in the eighteenth century have been lost.

<sup>449</sup> The north aisle corbels at North Burlingham are much-restored, but two shield-bearers are trustworthy (S1 and S2).

<sup>450</sup> MacCulloch 1966, p. 24. The harp-playing angel (WPS1) in the chapel has been displaced since it was recorded by MacCulloch, but remains in the chapel. Damage has exposed the soft wood; the 'Art Deco' headwear, 'pretty' facial features and rather random selection of attributes of these angels are at odds with medieval oak carvings elsewhere in the church.

<sup>451</sup> Daunton, 2009, p. 12.

sacrifice, the Passion, redemption and salvation were routinely made. This chapter proposes a deliberate association between roof and rood imagery, firstly in a number of churches to the west of Norfolk and Suffolk, where roof angels are vested as acolytes. The sacrificial imagery of the rood was echoed by passion and eucharistic symbols in the roof. Often supported by representations of saintly intercessors on screen panels and wall-posts, the angelic throng framed the rood in a redemptive hierarchical ensemble. I will examine the late-medieval performance and perception of roof imagery and in dialogue with the rood, initially in relation to the exemplary fifteenth-century roof schemes at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel (c.1400-1419), Mildenhall St Mary (c.1420-30), Emneth St Edmund (mid-fifteenth century), Bury St Edmunds St Mary (c.1433) and Earl Stonham St Mary (c.1500). These archetypal arrangements will be compared with the extraordinarily complex and sophisticated ensemble at Norwich St Peter Hungate (c.1440s), to illustrate the extent to which angelic carvings were integrated in cohesive multi-media designs of wood, stone, glass, pigment and paint.

As discussed in chapter two, the roof of the chapel of ease at Lynn (c. 1400-1419) established a model characterised by angelic hammer-beam carvings above the clerestory windows, alternating with tie-beams supporting queen-posts. This example was soon imitated, at Mildenhall St Mary, Emneth St Edmund and elsewhere. The beam angels were attired as acolytes holding symbols of Christ's Passion and musical or eucharistic attributes. This iconography also spread to other roof types, alternating with arch-braces at Bury St Edmunds St Mary and Kersey St Mary, and interspersed with pendant hammer-posts at Earl Stonham St Mary. Although inclusion of a motif in the overall scheme was sometimes more important than exact location, I proposed in chapter two that at least some representations were deliberately positioned in relation to specific sites of engagement and furnishings. This is particularly marked at the spatial division between nave and chancel in the church, where angelic roof imagery was in dialogue with the sacrificial spectacle of the Rood.

There is no chancel arch at St Nicholas and the unusual 'open plan' roof appears to affirm the integration of clergy and laity in the collaborative

exercise of late medieval parish life.<sup>452</sup> Wealthy local citizens appear to support the roof structure, in the stone corbels on which the wall posts rest. At Lynn, stone and timber carving are combined and stone niches suggest an additional saintly presence in the roof. Many fifteenth-century angel roofs incorporate timber wall-post carvings of canopied standing ecclesiastical figures, as discussed below. The use of stone imagery between the windows in lieu of wall-posts was rare. An exception is the possible installation of stone statues of saints between the clerestory windows at Stonham Aspal St Mary and St Lambert in Suffolk, evidenced by extant wall fabric markings and a stone headless torso holding a sword, perhaps a representation of St Paul, now in the chancel (Fig. 136). This may be one of ‘a number of interesting carved fragments found walled up in the old rood stair’, drawn by Hamlet Watling in 1873.<sup>453</sup> Yet at St Nicholas, flanking the tie-beams between the angelic hammer-beams, empty paired stone ogee canopied niches imply the presence of saintly mediators beneath the carved angels.<sup>454</sup>

The iconographic scheme at Lynn references the relationship between the eucharistic sacrifice, Christ’s Passion, and the eternal chorus of musical angels. The roof was conceived in three sections, indicated by the distribution, concentration and nature of the sculptural iconography of the hammer-beams, tie beams, cornices and tracery.

Extant attributes held by chancel beam angels beyond the sanctuary are diagonally paired. Their musical and passion symbols include the psaltery (N3) and crown of thorns (S4). In the sixth bay from both east and west, at the mid-point of the chapel, external doorways oppose each other across the width of the chapel. This bay would have been in front of the rood beam and chancel screen. The changes that have taken place to the structure and furnishings of the Chapel have stripped away much evidence of the visual

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<sup>452</sup> Stewart 2015; I use Stewart’s term for a single, cohesive design spanning nave and chancel, which can be found in the construction of only 2% of the region’s fifteenth-century churches.

<sup>453</sup> Plunkett 1997, p. 58.

<sup>454</sup> Close scrutiny from scaffolding in 2015 revealed no evidence that these were ever occupied by figures. At Mancroft, similarly empty niches are located beneath alternate castellated piers under the wall-post corbels.

and sensory experience of its medieval worshippers. It is fairly certain however, that screens would have divided the space, separating the nave from the chancel and creating chapels for guild altars in the aisles.<sup>455</sup> Despite the lack of a chancel arch, the presence of a rood flanked by roof angels is suggested by the will of priest Richard Prestone, dated 1523/4, requesting his burial 'afore the crucifix in the body of the church'.<sup>456</sup> An undated 'finely embellished' screen with 'commodious seating' attached to it was recorded by Mackerell in 1738, but it was removed in the eighteenth century and no material evidence survives.<sup>457</sup> Here, as one moves between the domains of laity and clergy, it appears likely that both of the pair of roof angels directly above carried symbols of Christ's Passion. The beam angel to the north (N6) holds a scourge. Aside from repair work to the back of the beam, the carving is certainly medieval, the alb and collar, upper dress and arm joint resembling those features in the chancel angels on the north side. The pairing is distorted by Victorian restoration work to the south; from material evidence, it is possible that the angel there held a cross or spear. Given the thematic symmetry elsewhere in the scheme, it is probable then that the rood was introduced and flanked both to the north and south by symbols of Christ's suffering and sacrifice.

#### Influence of the King's Lynn model

Elements of the Lynn scheme were adopted on a reduced scale at Mildenhall St Mary, in a nave of five bays. Again, the angels are dressed as sub-deacons, in albs and amices. There are common threads between angelic attributes in the nave roofs at Mildenhall, elsewhere to the west of the region, and the Lynn model, albeit these arrangements are not identical. Such disparities suggest that the inclusion and symmetrical pairing of certain symbols often took precedence over their order.

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<sup>455</sup> NRO PD 39; James and Begley 2012, pp. 7-8.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>457</sup> Mackerell, 2014; James and Begley 2000, p. 10.

At Mildenhall, N4 and S4 hold an open book and a book or Pax at the centre and a Pax with a cross (N6) is paired with another book to the west, in contrast to the east at Lynn. I propose that the pairing of the book and the Pax here and in several other nave roofs directly augmented the message of the crucifixion presented to the congregation by the rood, the book representing the Gospels in witness of the sacrifice and the pax referencing the eucharistic meaning of crucifixion. N5 and S5 hold the crown of thorns and hammer and nails at Mildenhall, this Christological duo set immediately to the east of the main congregational entrance of the south porch. Such Passion symbols are extensively represented in another related roof scheme, at Upwell St Peter.

One can reasonably propose a relationship between the passion and eucharistic attributes of the nave roof carvings, and rood and screen iconography at Mildenhall. The chancel screen is twentieth-century, but it certainly replaces a medieval screen. There are two upper doorways to the rood loft and churchwardens' accounts record a payment of eight shillings by the vicar in 1505 for the painting of the canopy above the rood.<sup>458</sup>

At Emneth St Edmund, the bare medieval screen and embattled rood stair evoke absent elements of the carved and painted scheme, although the precise relationship between the images of the roof, chancel screen and rood has been stripped away. Carved angelic roof imagery still adorns the chancel arch, but the screen has lost its painted scheme, its dado and coving replaced. At Bury St Edmunds St Mary, a 'handsome' chancel screen and 'noble' rood loft are recorded by William of Worcester in 1479 and at least part of this ensemble may have remained in place until the early eighteenth century.<sup>459</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> J. Middleton-Stewart 2011, p. xxv.

<sup>459</sup> Harvey 1969; Tymms 1854, p. 22 and p. 84. An entry in the 1694-5 churchwardens' accounts for 1 January records payment of 1l to Mr Haywood 'for painting the partitions betweene the church and the chancell'. In 1739, the churchwardens were directed 'to put up two ornaments, at their discretion, at the entrance to the chancel.' The installation of these two columns (costing 5l. 2s. 4d.) suggests that the screen had been removed.

An alternative iconographic programme to that at Lynn, Mildenhall and Upwell was developed at Emneth in the roof of the six-bay nave. This reflects a different mode of thinking, embedded in the eucharistic sacrifice. The presence of the feathered angels as servants at the Mass is explicitly referenced in their mirrored attributes (Fig. 1). These invoke the physical contact, taste and aroma of the heavenly Mass, reflecting human experience beneath. This imagery is unusual in north-west Norfolk and Suffolk roofs, although not without comparators, as at Bury St Edmunds St Mary. At Emneth, (as at North Creake and South Creake further north-east) significant pairings of the book (N1/S1) and the Pax (N2/S2) frame the east end, speaking to the imagery of the rood and diffusing sacrificial witness into the lay domain. Pairs of angels carry the Pax (N/S2) and a candlestick (N/S4), flanking those holding the chalice and host (Fig. 137) just east of the centre of the nave (N/S3). The alliance of the Pax with the chalice and Host appears designed to signify the bringing of the Eucharist to the congregation and its active involvement in the sacrament, as at St Mary Bury St Edmunds and elsewhere. Angels gently swinging censers face each other further west (N/S6); it is interesting that the thuribles are not swung high in the air, implying they are being traced instead in the sign of the cross, referencing Christ's sacrifice and the Eucharist.<sup>460</sup>

In the late medieval Church, incense exemplified heavenly aroma, reputed to dispel the unsavoury odours of hell and the devil. As Davidson observes, use of incense in the earthly liturgy anticipated its angelic use in heaven as cited in Apocalypse chapter 8, verses 3-4:

"another angel came, and stood before the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given to him much incense....And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel."<sup>461</sup>

Carved representations of censuring angels were apparently supplemented by dramatic Pentecostal re-enactments of censuring, as at Norwich Cathedral,

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<sup>460</sup> Davidson 1994, p. 113.

<sup>461</sup> Davidson 1994, p. 112.

where an angel was mechanically installed and suspended from the vault during special services.<sup>462</sup>

The nave of St Mary Bury St Edmunds is on a grand scale, with ten bays. The roof (c. 1430s) comprises alternating angelic hammer-beams and arch-braces, with standing figures including prophets and apostles on the wall posts. As at Emneth, the beam angels hold mirrored Mass symbols, but they are characterised by ecclesiastical attire (Fig. 138). Mass-related attributes with multi-sensory associations prevail to the east of the nave scheme at Bury St Edmunds (Fig. 139). Pairings of angels carry incense boats and censers, invoking the aroma of incense that enveloped worshippers on the ground (N/S2 and 3); others dressed as sub-deacons and priests respectively hold candlesticks (N/S4) and a book and Pax (N/S5), flanking angels in the attire of deacons bearing chalices (N/S6). In both schemes, the order and pairing of their attributes would not have reflected processional activity on the ground. Instead, the symmetry of the procession of the clergy and the organisation of laity by status and gender was framed by balanced angelic pairings above. The mirroring and multi-sensory perception of generic symbols within the nave was more important than their consistent order, just as chancel screen panel images were characterised by generalised symmetry and some flexibility in their internal arrangement. The selection and order of Mass-related attributes varies across roof schemes of this type, in symbolic referencing of liturgical activity, rather than literal emulation of earthly ritual.

There is a significant exception to this flexibility. At Emneth (N/S3 and N/S2) and Bury St Edmunds (N/S6 and N/S5), as in the south aisle roof at Outwell St Clement discussed above (S2/S1) and in the nave at North Creake St Mary (S3/S2), the carved angel holding the chalice or chalice and Host is flanked to the east by an angel carrying the Pax; at North Creake and South Creake, they are also closely aligned (S3/S1).<sup>463</sup> Heralded by sacring bells,

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<sup>462</sup> Davidson 1994, pp. 118-119.

<sup>463</sup> At Outwell, the carving of the Host is painted with Christ's monogram, emphasising its transubstantiation.

the Elevation of the Host marked the most important moment of the sacrament for the laity, as opposed to the reception of communion which for most people was reserved for Easter and the deathbed.<sup>464</sup> Angelic support at this moment could be amplified by other devices; at Kings Lynn St. Margaret, mechanical angels appear to have been lowered from the roof 'to the high altar at the elevation of the Host'.<sup>465</sup> Although the late medieval lay experience of the Host was primarily visual at its elevation, as 'bread to be seen' rather than to be eaten, it invoked the taste of the 'bread of angels'.<sup>466</sup> Seeing the Eucharist anticipated the eternal vision of the bread of angels in heaven and represented an act of participation and spiritual union.

The significance of representing the chalice and Host or simply the chalice was a question of emphasis. The chalice and Host represented a synthesis rather than a literal depiction of the Eucharistic sacrament. The chalice retained its status as a signifier and reminder of the catching of Christ's blood at the Crucifixion in combination with the Host, but this was accentuated where it appeared without the Host, especially in Passion ensembles as at Swaffham SS Peter and Paul (S11). Other representations of the Host in English church furnishings emphasised the specific moment of its elevation by the priest, as bread to be seen rather than eaten by the congregation. In particular, as Nichols has illustrated, most depictions in East Anglian seven sacraments fonts presented an image which corresponded with the viewpoint of the congregation in the nave.<sup>467</sup> That the Host appears not to have been depicted alone in angelic roof schemes is unsurprising. Although the Elevation of the Host was the high point of the sacrament for the laity, the chalice was an enduring, materially precious and visually striking item of church equipment. It had more equivalence to other solid objects held by roof angels than the more abstract and fleetingly viewed perishable wafer, transformed only at its consecration into Christ's body.

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<sup>464</sup> Brigden 1984, p. 77.

<sup>465</sup> Amy Gillette, in a paper titled 'Late Medieval Angel Machines', at the 53<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo on 12 May 2018.

<sup>466</sup> The consecrated Host was perceived to be Christ as the 'bread of angels' (Psalm 78: 25).

<sup>467</sup> Nichols 1994, p. 252.



As discussed in chapter two, the Pax was the main vehicle through which the lay congregation had physical connection with the activity of the priest during the Mass in the late medieval period. Once the priest had kissed the tablet, it was passed to an acolyte who brought it to the congregation to receive in turn and to kiss in hierarchical order according to social status and gender.<sup>468</sup> The repeated juxtaposition of the Pax and the chalice and Host implies a deliberately ordered association of these symbols in these roofs, to reference the active engagement of the congregation in the Eucharist through the experience of sight, touch and metaphorical taste.

### Variations in attire

The Emneth angels are feathered, with three sets of wings, and wear relatively unusual courtly ermine tippets, rather than the more common liturgical attire introduced at King's Lynn. Multi-winged feathered angels referencing cherubim and seraphim, the highest orders of angels, are relatively rare in roof schemes, as are angels in feathered suits. As discussed in the introduction, the most influential description of the celestial hierarchy was that of fifth-century theologian Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, who identified nine orders of angels. This hierarchy set the parameters for later texts and development of angelic imagery. Detailed knowledge of the orders was limited among the laity; given the lack of description and/or differentiation of their appearance in scripture and available texts, it is unsurprising that the representation of the nine orders of angels in glass, screen painting and other imagery is rare and is characterised by a degree of flexibility.<sup>469</sup> For example, on the chancel screen at Barton Turf St Michael and All Angels, the cherubim is depicted with hands raised, in a feathered tunic with an ermine tippet, cloak and girdle, with three separate sets of wings. In contrast, in an alabaster panel first recorded in 1848 at the Bishop's Palace and now at Norwich cathedral,

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<sup>468</sup> The Experience of Worship project website [http://s361690747.websitehome.co.uk/EoW2/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/da04\\_pax.pdf](http://s361690747.websitehome.co.uk/EoW2/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/da04_pax.pdf) [accessed 27 June 2018]; Champion 2017, p. 487.

<sup>469</sup> Morgan, in Scholz, Rauch and Hess 2004, p. 212; Nichols 2002, p. 289; Sutton and Visser-Fuchs, in Taylor and Smith 1997, p. 231 and p. 257, n. 19 and n. 20.

he wears the alb and amice of an acolyte, holding a closed book with an incised cross on the cover (Fig. 140). Given the more prevalent attire of roof angels as assistants at the Mass, it seems likely that they were usually conceived as angels or archangels, the lower orders that were closer to humanity. However, the assembly of feathered and multi-winged Emneth angels is not unique; similar representations are found in a limited number of roof schemes elsewhere, although they appear confined to figures of seraphim or cherubim rather than the other orders and can be interspersed with angelic carvings in liturgical or other attire.

Despite restoration work at Carbrooke SS Peter and Paul and at Mattishall All Saints twelve miles to the north, it is evident that at least some of the extant angelic carvings are feathered. At Carbrooke, fragments of the medieval hammer-beam carvings are sufficient to indicate that the angels were feathered in a similar manner to the Emneth angels, with six wings, bearing shields rather than Mass symbols. The most intact example is N1, located against the east wall of the nave (Fig. 141). Only the head is replaced, in darker wood, with stylised hair dating from the nineteenth century; there is a crack through the lower body and the shield held by the left hand and the right hand is missing. The feathered torso has three sets of wings, the lower pair forming a skirt around the beam, as at Emneth. The other carvings are more substantially restored to varying degrees. None of their heads or attributes can be trusted, from the shield-bearers in ecclesiastical dress (N2 and S1) and the crown, scroll and ecclesiastical dress of N3, to the ecclesiastical attire, open book, shield with crossed swords and cracked shield held by the large hands of N4, N5 and N6 respectively. To the south, the big hands and cracked blank shield and scroll of S2 and S3, the open book of S4, the shield with crossed keys of S5, cracked shield of S6 and their ecclesiastical attire date from restoration campaigns. However, all retain evidence of the lowest layer of long medieval feathers through which the principal rafter rises at the base of the beam and some retain the set of shorter feathers above (S2, N/S3, N/S4, S5), suggesting that they replicated N1 as shield-bearing seraphim (Fig. 65). There is evidence of pigment; whether the painted shields of the angels at

this church of the Knights Hospitaller were heraldic rather than ecclesiastical cannot be confirmed, although relationships between work here and at Norwich St Giles where the roof angels hold shields painted with the royal arms are tantalising, as discussed in chapter two. Equally, one cannot be certain of the relationship of the angelic carvings to the iconography under the wall-posts, as the wingless angels projecting from their bases (in ecclesiastical dress on clouds with arms crossed or hands raised, clasped or in prayer) are restored imposters in dark wood, like the exceptionally large Victorian angelic carvings in this position at Knapton SS Peter and Paul, which date from Scott's restoration.<sup>470</sup> In both cases, these may include generalised copies from another scheme, but appear devised from pure invention.<sup>471</sup> Blomefield suggests the possibility of the association of the Carbrooke beam angels with lost apostolic imagery, but there are no wall-post niches to accommodate figures of saints and he does not evidence his claim.<sup>472</sup>

Representations of roof angels in feathered costumes or as members of the highest angelic orders are as diverse as those in other church art, although they are rarer. Despite structural similarities between the arch-braced single hammer-beam nave roofs at Carbrooke and Mattishall (discussed in chapter four), material analysis of the restored angelic beam carvings of the latter suggests a more varied pattern of attire than at Carbrooke. Varied ecclesiastical dress characterises some of the carvings (including S1, N3, N/S4, N/S5, N/S7 and S9), but is interspersed with the rather generalised feathered drapery of others (such as N/S2, S3, S8 and N9), lacking the clear definition of three sets of wings found at Carbrooke and Emneth. A different

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<sup>470</sup> See chapter five.

<sup>471</sup> Angelic carvings at the base of the wall-posts are far from ubiquitous; those at Tilney All Saints and at March St Wendreda are exceptions. If Scott assumed their former presence at Knapton on the basis of the exposed tenons, he may have been influenced by their retention in a specific roof elsewhere, but the scale of his replacements and the nature of their carved attributes bear no resemblance to medieval examples.

<sup>472</sup> Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 2, pp. 336. 'The roof was adorned with the images of our Saviour and his Apostles, all which were demolished in the time of the Usurpation.'

interpretation aligns the beam carvings with the higher angelic order of the cherubim at Cawston St Agnes, where all of the angels have two sets of wings unfurled (Fig. 142). They stand on the hammer-beams hands raised, and wear painted feathered tunics, like those commonly shown in glass, as exemplified by those playing the psaltery and gittern at Cawston, the rebec at Cockthorpe All Saints and lute or gittern at Shimpling St George (Fig. 149). The diversity of feathered angelic attire in roof carvings and other church art further undermines any suggestion that such feathered suits demonstrate the influence of medieval drama upon art, an argument which is arbitrary and without evidence, as discussed in the introduction.

### Wall-post figures

At Emneth and at Bury St Edmunds, carved standing figures of apostles and saints are integral to the roof structure, adorning the wall posts below the tie-beams, between the hammer angels. The dedicatory saint is incorporated into the Emneth scheme in a majestic pairing at the east end. St Edmund (WPS1) is crowned, holding an arrow (Fig. 143). He faces Christ, whose hands are lifted in blessing (WPN1). The close relationship between angels and saints was reiterated elsewhere in church imagery, but roof schemes like these underlined the affiliation and respective responsibilities of saints and angels throughout the nave, culminating in their relationship with and within the rood ensemble to the east.<sup>473</sup>

Wall-post figures represented an additional expense; nonetheless, although they are especially prevalent in double hammer-beam roofs, they are found across East Anglia in roofs of different structural types, from the alternating tie-beam and hammer-beam roof at Emneth St Edmund and interspersed arch-brace and hammer-beam structure at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, to the single hammer-beam models at Earl Stonham St Mary and Hopton All Saints. In the 'false' double hammer-beam roof at Wetherden St Mary they

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<sup>473</sup> For example, Sangha, 2012, p. 28 cites depictions of angels in the wall paintings of the Life of St Katherine at Sporle St Mary. Images of saints, especially the apostles, were common on chancel screens; Baker 2011, p. 69.

are augmented by hammer-post figures, found also at Tostock St Andrew nearby, as discussed in chapter four. Wall-post carvings vary in terms of their sophistication and many have been susceptible to iconoclasm, ranging from the mutilated figures at Rougham St Mary in Suffolk to those defaced at Knapton SS Peter and Paul in Norfolk (Fig. 144). Restoration work also distorts their appearance elsewhere, as at Gissing St Mary in Norfolk and to a lesser extent at Bury St Edmunds St Mary in Suffolk, where the attributes held by some of the figures appear to date from or after Cottingham's restoration in the 1840s and must be treated with caution.<sup>474</sup> Documentary evidence is limited to certain sites, but some conclusions can be drawn from close material study of even the most damaged ensembles, alongside well-preserved schemes elsewhere, including at Necton All Saints in Norfolk, although there is considerable scope for further research, based upon analysis from scaffolding, dendrochronology and paint analysis.

At Knapton SS Peter and Paul, iconoclasm is evident in the slashing of the faces of the wall-post figures, seems to have impacted upon the cornices and could have accounted for the complete loss of the carvings at the base of the wall-posts. Blatchly asserts 'patchy or non-existent' iconoclasm in 1640s north Norfolk, due to 'lassitude and inactivity in the absence of external impetus' and one cannot assume that the undocumented deliberate damage at Knapton dates to the Civil War period, whereas it seems more likely in some Suffolk churches visited by Dowsing, as at Ipswich St Mary at Quay, Wetherden St Mary and Tostock St Andrew, despite the apparent inconsistency of Dowsing's approach towards angelic and related roof imagery elsewhere noted by Walker.<sup>475</sup> Regarding the twenty-four wall-post

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<sup>474</sup> Tymms 1854, pp. 169-171. 'Casts of the whole of these figures were taken by Mr Cottingham, and the deficient symbols and parts were restored, in 1844, from contemporary figures or illuminations; the execution of the carving being entrusted to Mr Nash, of London.' Tymms describes each of the wall-post figures and asserts the identities of most. His observations were clearly made from the scaffolding erected for the work. Some of the attributes he lists have been altered or lost since, as discussed below.

<sup>475</sup> Blatchly, in Cooper 2001, p. 117 and p. 122; Cooper 2001, pp. 228, 241 and 242; Walker, in Cooper 2001, p. 39.

figures at Knapton, from east to west, facial damage is especially acute in WPN2, WPN3, WPN5 and WPN7 to the north and WPS6, WPS8 and WPS10 to the south. Wider mutilation characterises WPN11 and WPS9 and prevents attribution. The damaged figures are clearly medieval, although some of the paintwork may be later.

Three wall-post figures were replaced by George Gilbert Scott Junior at the west end. They are identifiable as they are unpainted and unmutilated. They replicate kings found elsewhere in the original scheme, but reflect Victorian nostalgia for Anglo-Saxon kings in their nineteenth-century appearance, despite the emphasis in Scott's specification that new carving should be created 'in exact conformity' with the medieval design.<sup>476</sup> WPN12 is crowned at the north-west corner, holding an arrow in his right hand (Fig. 145). He represents St Edmund and faces another replacement crowned king (WPS12) whose emblem is more elusive. The third new carving is adjacent and represents another indeterminate crowned king (WPS11).

It seems very unlikely that these three figures replicate the appearance and attributes of the lost medieval carvings. Bearded and crowned kings are already located much further east in the original arrangement, Edmund identifiable by his arrow and book and possibly Edward the Confessor or Aethelbert with a sceptre and possibly an orb (WPS4 and WPN4 respectively), although representations of Anglo-Saxon kings other than Edmund on wall-posts and in screen paintings are often ambiguous.<sup>477</sup> Edmund appears recognisable from his arrow at the south-east of the scheme at Bury St Edmunds St Mary (WPS2), assuming the arrow is

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<sup>476</sup> RIBA SC/KN/29 1882, pp. 10-12. 'Carefully take down such portions of the carving as it is necessary to refix and refix same in their original positions. Such portions of the old carved work as are mutilated are not to be replaced but where ever the old carving has been removed it is to be replaced by new work in exact conformity with the old design'. It is difficult to reconcile this with the addition of angelic carvings in the roof where there were none surviving, or with the unpainted bulky winged forms and inauthentic facial expressions of the low-level restoration figures.

<sup>477</sup> Pinner, in Bale 2017, p. 123.

medieval, rather than restoration work.<sup>478</sup> He faces another king with a sceptre and left hand raised (WPN2), identified as Edward the Confessor by Tymms.<sup>479</sup> There are two other kings, located further south-west at Bury. One carries a partially restored sceptre and scroll (WPS6) and the other an apparently Victorian sword or dagger and sceptre (WPS18).<sup>480</sup> Edmund and other kings are alternated with prophets in the screen at St Mary Kersey and Anglo-Saxon monarchs are depicted in a mixed scheme in the screen at Ludham St Catherine, as they are in several roof wall-post arrangements as at Knapton.

There does not seem to have been a standard arrangement of wall-post figures in angel roofs where they appear; their selection and order was adaptable. There were practical considerations; numbers depended upon the scale of the roof. However, I contend that other factors would also have influenced the selection and order of these intercessory figures. Although Duffy finds 'little sign in the later Middle Ages of strong individual devotion to the parish patron', it is not surprising that the wall-post figure of the dedicatory saint at Emneth St Edmund should be located at the east (a privileged position) facing Christ, in contrast to his location in the fourth bay further west at Knapton.<sup>481</sup> Likewise, the Virgin Mary (WPS1) is located at the extreme south-east of the scheme at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, flanked by St Edmund (WPS2). However, it seems likely that this is as rare as the depiction of dedicatory saints on surviving screens; in the roof at Knapton SS Peter and Paul, St Peter (WPN7) is at the centre to the north holding keys, his face obliterated by iconoclasm and St Paul is missing from the scheme,

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<sup>478</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 93 and p. 171. Tymms cites Cottingham's 1853 report to the churchwardens regarding the roof and church fabric, in which reference was made to the need to repair some of the 'richly carved [wall-post] figures of Kings, Queens, Bishops, Knights &c.' He identified WPS2 as Edmund on the basis of the arrow.

<sup>479</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 171.

<sup>480</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 171. His suggestion that the figure may represent Henry VI is not evidenced; however, see Nichols 2002, pp. 203-204 for representations of Henry VI on screen panels and pilgrim badges in Norfolk.

<sup>481</sup> Duffy 2005, p. 162.

possibly replaced by a king at the west during Scott's restoration. In fact, the relative locations of Peter and Paul vary considerably; they probably face each other at the centre of the wall-post scheme at Necton All Saints (WPN5 and WPS5, bearing a key and book and sword and book respectively), whereas they are both placed to the south at Bury St Edmunds, Peter flanking St Edmund at the east (WPS3, holding a key and open book with a clasp) and Paul much further west (WPS15, with sword and book), assuming that one can trust these attributes. Peter is generally included and often privileged at the east in extant arrangements, as at Emneth (WPN2) and Outwell St Clement (WPN1), whereas Paul appears to have been excluded from some schemes as a non-apostolic saint, as at Emneth, and is often unidentifiable, as at Outwell, although he is located prominently at Earl Stonham (WPN1).

Early Christian art had established the representation of the apostles barefoot 'in token of innocence and penance', in classical costume comprising a long robe with a cloak worn over the shoulders, 'in token of the virtue of pouert [poverty]'.<sup>482</sup> Yet it seems that was not until the fourteenth century that they all developed individually identifiable attributes.<sup>483</sup> Various medieval writings informed portrayals of the apostles, including those of the thirteenth-century Dominican friar Vincent de Beauvais. Jacobus de Voragine's compilation of saints' lives, the *Legenda Aurea* (The Golden Legend, dating from the 1260s) was extremely influential in the late medieval period; more versions are known to have been printed than those of the Bible between 1470 and 1500, including four English editions.<sup>484</sup> The 1368 inventory of church goods in the Norwich Archdeaconry records copies owned by ten churches.<sup>485</sup> It derived from a range of sources, including legends supposedly first recorded by Abdias (bishop of Babylon) in the first century AD, which were later translated into Latin. The *South English Legendary* versified saints' lives and revised versions of this thirteenth-

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<sup>482</sup> Henry Parker, in *Dives and Pauper* 1493, quoted in Baker 2011, p. 69.

<sup>483</sup> Mâle 1972, pp. 286-288.

<sup>484</sup> Duffy, in de Voragine 2012, p. xii.

<sup>485</sup> Watkin 1948, p. xlvi.



century compilation were widely copied and read in the fifteenth century, with implications for local and regional interpretation and preference.<sup>486</sup>

The appearance and order of even the most important apostles varies in wall-post arrangements, as in other church art, so it can be difficult to identify damaged or restored figures. As in various other schemes, some of the apostles at Knapton are more clearly identifiable than others, depending upon the extent of damage inflicted. This is equally true of contemporaneous sculpture from the Low Countries, such as the depictions of eight apostles carved from polychromed pear wood in Brussels or Leuven (c. 1440-50), probably for a carved altarpiece, now in the Oscott College Museum in Birmingham (Fig. 146); only John and Thomas can be identified from their respective chalice and set square, as most arms or hands are lost.<sup>487</sup> At the east of the wall-post scheme at Knapton, bearded and faceless WPN2 holds a book in his left hand and may have held a flaying knife in the other; perhaps he represented Bartholomew, who is represented in this position at Necton, but further north-west at Bury St Edmunds (WPN8) and on the south side at Emneth (WPS3). WPS2 at Knapton is an enigma; again he holds a book, but has lost the attribute clasped by his right hand. This could have been Thomas's spear, or Matthew's lance, but one cannot be certain; Thomas is found elsewhere at Necton (WPN7) and at Bury St Edmunds (WPN6) and he is absent from the Emneth scheme.<sup>488</sup> Unlike those of most other apostles, Matthew's attributes are not uniform in East Anglian church art.<sup>489</sup> Matthew gathered taxes; he may be represented with a purse at Outwell (WPS1), although James the Great is another possibility. Matthew's medieval attribute was often a lance, as at Emneth (WPS5). He was also

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<sup>486</sup> D'Evelyn and Mill, 1967; Blurton and Wogan-Browne 2011.

<sup>487</sup> Woods 2007, pp. 220-221.

<sup>488</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 171 also identifies Thomas here at Bury St Edmunds, although his spear looks as if it has been replaced.

<sup>489</sup> Nichols 2002, pp. 313-314. Matthew can also be confused with Matthias or other apostles on church screens in Norfolk. Nichols' assertion that the attributes of other apostles are 'generally uniform' (in Norfolk) is belied to some extent by her own entries and those of Baker 2011 across East Anglian screens.

represented by the wide-sword or halberd supposedly used to kill him, which can cause confusion with Paul, although the latter seems more likely at Necton, as he faces Peter (WPS/N5). St Philip should carry a cross reflecting stories from his life described in the 'Legenda Aurea', as at Bury St Edmunds (WPS7), where he holds a tau cross, facing a prophet with a scroll; similar representations appear on the screens at Salthouse and Aylsham.<sup>490</sup> Yet he holds a basket of loaves in most East Anglian representations, referencing his pastoral work as a deacon distributing food, as at Knapton (WPS7), where he faces St Peter; he holds two loaves at Outwell (WPN2) and his location varies, at Emneth (WPS2) facing Peter (WPN2) and at Necton (WPN6), facing Matthias (WPS6) with his axe. Matthias also replaces Judas in the apostolic scheme at Emneth (WPS7). At Bury St Edmunds, a figure holds a basket apparently bearing turtle doves rather than loaves, facing another prophet; Tymms identifies him as Joachim, although this would represent an extremely unusual wall-post subject.<sup>491</sup>

At Knapton, bearded WPN8 carries a boat, identifying him as Simon, opposite faceless Jude holding a fish (WPS8). These saints flank each other at the north-west at Emneth (WPN6/N7), in contrast to their more privileged locations at Necton (WPN1 and WPS2 respectively).<sup>492</sup> Knapton's WPN9

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<sup>490</sup> Nichols 2002, p. 213. It also appears on stone work in some Norwich churches and in trefoil crosses at Salle and Lynn, the latter a Flemish example. Nichols suggests Continental influence where this motif appears in association with the apostle.

<sup>491</sup> Baker 2011, p. 73 and pp. 145-146. Joachim does not appear on East Anglian screens either, except next to Anne on a door of the screen at Harpley St Laurence. As this work appears to date from 1865 or 1877, one cannot be certain that it replicates the medieval scheme. Woods 2007, pp. 205-209. He is often paired with Anna in late medieval sculpture, as in an oak altarpiece fragment made in Brussels (c. 1500), now in the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at the University of Birmingham. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O71623/the-marriage-of-the-virgin-relief-unknown/> [accessed 14 March 2018]. Alternatively, he appears in group compositions, as exemplified by a walnut relief of the marriage of the Virgin (c.1450) made in Brussels for a carved altarpiece and now at the Victoria and Albert Museum (974-1907).

<sup>492</sup> Baker 2011 p. 235 and p. 238 ascribes the boat to Jude in screen paintings and the fish, oar, axe or saw to Simon, so they may be interchangeable or reversed in these wall-post schemes. They are

represents John the Evangelist, carrying a chalice in his left hand; he is also to the north at Emneth (WPN5 with chalice and dragon) and at Outwell (WPN4). At Necton and Bury, he is further south-east (WPS3 and WPS5 respectively). He faces James the Great with the purse and staff of a pilgrim at Necton (WPN3). As an important apostle, James the Great is often towards the east or centre in wall-post schemes, as at Bury St Edmunds (with scallop shell on hat) and Emneth (both WPN4). Equally, Andrew is often positioned towards the east with his saltire cross (WPS1 at Necton, WPS4 at Bury, albeit his cross is replaced, and WPN3 at Emneth). Yet like Paul, they defy identification at Knapton and must have been further west if included in this scheme, which seems likely. At Knapton, WPS9 wears a cloak and a hood or hat, but is badly damaged, like WPN10, who retains only his book, and long-haired WPN11, missing his left arm and right hand. A block to his left is suggestive of a book. Similarly anonymous mutilations characterise some figures elsewhere, as at Outwell (including WPN6 and WPS5; the damage to this west Norfolk scheme is in sharp contrast to its intact neighbour at Emneth). However, Knapton's faceless St James the Less (WPS10) holds the fuller's club of his martyrdom. His location towards the south-west is echoed at Necton (WPS7) and Emneth (WPS6).<sup>493</sup> At Knapton, a series of apostles appear to have populated the wall-posts from the centre of the scheme westwards, despite the losses and the replacement of WPS11, WPN12, and WPS12 with regal imposters. The kings of the 1880s restoration campaign probably replaced missing saints, perhaps including popular local figures, such as Walstan of Bawburgh, Wulfstan and Dunstan, as found at Earl Stonham St Mary; Wulfstan is identified by Tymms at Bury St Edmunds (WPN16), holding a pastoral staff.<sup>494</sup>

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paired on the south chancel screen at Fritton St Catherine and in woodcarvings at Wiggerhall St Mary in Norfolk.

<sup>493</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 170. Tymms' identification of WPS13 as St James the Less cannot be corroborated with confidence. Tymms describes the carved figure holding a spear in his right hand and a scroll in his left. The right hand now holds a wooden staff.

<sup>494</sup> Tymms 1845, p. 170. At Bury St Edmunds, Wulfstan wears his bishop's mitre and raises his right hand; the crozier in his left hand is probably a replacement. St Walstan is also depicted in ten extant

There are no female saints in most extant schemes, including at Emneth, Outwell, Knapton and Necton, unlike at St Mary Earl Stonham, where the figure of St Catherine is identifiable with her wheel (WPS). Two figures facing each other to the west of the scheme at Bury St Edmunds are identifiable as female from their attire (WPN20 and WPS20). At the 1854 restoration, Tymms identifies WPN20 as a virgin martyr carrying a palm branch, although she may represent Mary Magdalen or Mary of Egypt, given her uncovered hair and the buttons on her dress.<sup>495</sup> Her left hand and attributes are probably replacements.<sup>496</sup> Tymms describes WPS20 in 'fourteenth-century attire', holding a heart 'to denote zeal' in her right hand and a rosary with a cross suspended in her left hand, although any attributes now appear damaged or lost. He makes the unlikely suggestion that she may represent a roof donor, paired with the knight in armour with spear to her west (WPS19), although he posits a more probable alternative identity for the latter, as St Longinus, the saint associated with wounding Christ at the crucifixion.<sup>497</sup> WPS20 could represent St Sitha, as she held beads (although her lack of apron and keys or purse weakens this suggestion).<sup>498</sup> A third female figure at Bury St Edmunds, Margaret of Antioch is represented with a dragon at her feet (WPN18), although her spear is a replacement; the wafer-shaped object in her left hand is not mentioned by Tymms.<sup>499</sup> It is possible that damage to schemes elsewhere has disguised the true extent of the portrayal of female

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East Anglian chancel screen painted schemes, as at Beeston-next-Mileham St Mary and Ludham St Catherine.

<sup>495</sup> Nichols 2002, pp. 217-219. Mary Magdalen is more extensively represented in Norfolk church art of the period, but Nichols details East Anglian connections to the representation of Mary of Egypt, a prostitute before her conversion.

<sup>496</sup> Regarding the book in her left hand, I am grateful to Professor John Mitchell for questioning the binding and communicating Professor Nicholas Pickwood's observation that the catch-plate on the left board is not of a medieval type and resembles the sort of catches found on 19th-century photograph albums. The apparent raised band at the head of the spine is also a curious feature for a late medieval English binding and may represent later 'medievalism'. The object in her right hand appears to be a Victorian invention.

<sup>497</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 170.

<sup>498</sup> Nichols 2002, pp. 227-228.

<sup>499</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 170. Therefore it may post-date the 1854 restoration.

saints; given their popularity on painted screens, such as at Litcham All Saints and North Elmham St Mary, and the visual clarity of their symbols, one might expect their representation to have been more widespread in wall-post niches. Despite the popular appeal of their gory legends, female saints were interchangeable with their male counterparts as a potent source of intercession, rather than providing a model of chaste behaviour for imitation.<sup>500</sup>

At Emneth, all of the wall-post figures represent apostles, except for the patronal saint Edmund (WPS1) and Michael (WPS4, found rarely elsewhere, except WPN19 at Bury St Edmunds). Aside from a child with hands joined (WPS7), all of the identifiable figures at Outwell are apostolic representations. Elsewhere, arrangements are often more complex, albeit dominated by apostles and saints. Most of the Knapton wall-post figures represent apostles, but they are interspersed with saint kings, prophets and bishops. The east end figures at Knapton (WPN1 and WPS1) hold scrolls and their floppy hats and attire suggest that they are prophets; unlike the apostles, they lack beards.<sup>501</sup> WPN3 and WPS3 may represent other prophets. The face of the figure to the north is erased. They hold painted scrolls. The text of that held by WPN3 appears to imitate Hebrew; that of WPS3 is Latin and includes the name 'Jonas'. However, the painted lettering on them is untrustworthy, resembling restoration work on some of the scrolls carried by angelic carvings above. WPN5 and WPS5 also appear to represent prophets. The figure to the north has suffered facial mutilation, but points at a scroll with unreliable lettering. His partner to the south wears a

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<sup>500</sup> See Duffy 2005, pp. 171-178.

<sup>501</sup> Nichols 2002, p. 242 and pp.311-313;

<http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/bale/history.html> [accessed 14 March 2018]; Henry 1987, appendix B. Prophets and apostles are paired in some church art in Norfolk. King notes that two fourteenth-century prophets in glass at Bale All Saints were probably part of a series of twelve, paired with apostles with creed scrolls. The prophets at Bale do not wear hats; those in Norfolk church art elsewhere wear a variety of hats, as illustrated by those on the screen at Thornham All Saints. Nichols 2002, p. 312 questions the suggestion that imagery from versions of the *Biblia Pauperum* was influential upon Norfolk, citing differences between hats illustrated by Henry and those at Thornham.

cap; his right hand is raised and the left holds a scroll with strange restoration text, apparently reading 'Isaac'. Prophets with similar headwear and unpainted scrolls are interspersed with apostles and saints in the wall-posts at Bury St Edmunds St Mary (WPN7/12/14 and WPS9/12/14), but their didactic dialogue is restricted to a section of the scheme. Despite the ravages of iconoclasm and apparent restoration work at Gissing St Mary, it is reasonable to propose that the extant figures could represent a blend of apostles and/or saints with prophets, from fragmentary material evidence and comparison with those in less ravaged schemes (Fig. 147). The scroll probably held by WPS7 may signify an apostle carrying a clause of the creed or a prophet. However, the turban-like headwear of bearded WPN6, hat of WPS1 and close-fitting hat of bearded WPS2 and WPS4 seem to represent Victorian invention. Prophets hold scrolls on screen panels from Coddanham St Mary and appear on chancel screen panels at Aylsham St Michael, Salthouse St Nicholas and Thornham All Saints, where they tend to wear floppy hats, are interspersed with apostles or saints and are generally associated with scrolls.<sup>502</sup>

Some schemes incorporate bishops, although their locations are as varied as those of saints and prophets. At Knapton, they are paired at the centre of the nave (WPN6 and WPS6); the figure to the south is faceless due to iconoclasm, but otherwise they are identical, wearing mitres and chasubles. They raise two fingers of the right hand in blessing, the left clenched, but devoid of the emblem previously held. In contrast, they are confined to the north-west of the scheme at Bury St Edmunds, where both raise their right hands in blessing (WPN16 and WPN17). Their respective crozier and staff are restored.<sup>503</sup> At Necton, pairs of carvings apparently represent the Four Doctors of the Church at the west of the nave; they are the only figures with little or no extant pigment, separated from rather than interspersed with the

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<sup>502</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 177. The Coddanham screen paintings are not on view in the church. Baker 2011, p. 76. The alternation of prophets and apostles is found much more extensively in Devon screens.

<sup>503</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 170 identifies them as St Wulstan (with a pastoral staff rather than the current crozier) and St Thomas à Becket respectively.

apostles (Fig. 157).<sup>504</sup> Whether the removal of most or all of their polychromy was an act of targeted damage to these communicators of orthodoxy is a matter of conjecture. WPN8 and WPS8 probably represent St Augustine and St Ambrose respectively, alongside St Gregory (WPN9) and St Jerome (WPS9), as in many screen paintings.<sup>505</sup>

Other subjects are rarely depicted on wall-posts, taking account of deliberate disfigurement of carvings at some churches. The eccentric alliance of apostles and demonic characters discovered by Daunton at Outwell St Clement is an apparently unique experiment that was not repeated, either due to its local significance, or because its appearance from ground level was unsatisfactory. From scaffolding, it seems that the smaller apostles appear to stand free 'tall and proud', their refined carving and demeanour contrasted with the larger figures behind them, which look burdened supporting the roof. From the ground, the effect is quite different; the 'deviant' figures, including a clawed demon behind St John (WPN4) and a 'playful' demon with bat wings behind Mark (WPN5) loom menacingly over the saints (Fig. 148), unlike the protective angelic canopies over the wall-post figures in the north aisle roof at Mildenhall, discussed earlier.<sup>506</sup> As Daunton observes, the contrast of beauty and virtue with deformity and evil characterises other late-medieval art; although it is not found in this form, similarly grotesque demons alternate with angels on the hammer-beams at

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<sup>504</sup> The limited (or lack of) pigment is evident from observation. See also Martin-Jones 1910, pp. 159-164.

<sup>505</sup> Baker 2011, p. 72 discusses their representation on screen panels. It seems likely that these Necton wall-post carvings represent the Four Doctors, often also represented paired separately from other figures on chancel screens, as to the north at Fritton St Catherine, on the doors at Foxley St Thomas and flanking the doors at Ludham St Catherine. Baker states that they are sometimes depicted individually on screens, citing Jerome at Foulden All Saints as an example. However, it seems more likely that such instances are due to loss of imagery; for example, at Foulden, several panels are blank or damaged and an image of a bishop probably represents Augustine or Ambrose.

<sup>506</sup> Daunton 2015, <http://www.stclementsoutwell.org.uk/ChurchGuide/ChurchGuide.aspx> [accessed 31 August 2015];

<file:///C:/Users/User/Documents/Angel%20roofs/Wall%20post%20figs/nave%20figures%20north%20Oside.pdf> [accessed 31 August 2015]

Fincham St Martin fourteen miles east and grotesque wooden corbel heads are juxtaposed with beam-end angels above at North Burlingham St Andrew. The rather crudely carved corbel heads at Norwich St Peter Mancroft juxtapose cowed monks, females in head-dresses and males in early fifteenth-century attire with angels. Whether one can equate these with the rotund friar and monk (N2 and S3), moustached wealthy men (N3 and S2) and clawed women with head attire suggestive of vice and lust at Outwell is a matter of speculation, but they certainly seem to embody an element of social satire.

Unusually, in the complex roof scheme at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, angelic presence in the roof beams above is augmented by angels on the posts at the east and west ends. Gabriel (WPN1) holds a wand and scroll, facing the Virgin Mary with a pot of lilies to her right in an Annunciation pairing; restoration of the crisply-defined wings is possible, yet other features of these figures appear trustworthy.<sup>507</sup> Both are the only painted wall-post figures, incorporated into a wider polychrome scheme across the first principal rafters, the first beam angels and the ceiling. Although the pigment has been restored, it is highly probable that these elements were always distinguished from the rest of the roof by colour, although one must question claims by Tymms and others that the nineteenth-century restoration replicated the previous design and their assertions of John Baret's patronage of the roof, often repeated since, as discussed in chapter one.<sup>508</sup> Tymms

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<sup>507</sup> Details such as the nails on Mary's hands exemplify the fine rendering of both figures.

<sup>508</sup> Myles 1996, pp. 105-106. Following Cottingham's restoration (1843-44), the *Bury and Norwich Post* (4 December 1844) reported that the principal at the east end of the nave had 'been repainted and regilded precisely as it was decorated in the fifteenth century from vestiges of the designs remaining.' The writer stated that the restoration as a whole was characterised by 'a faithful adherence to the original design and all that is new has been done in the same spirit and made to harmonise with the old.' This claim resonates with similar assertions regarding nineteenth-century restoration work as at Knapton and Gissing, as discussed elsewhere. In all of these cases, there are obvious distinctions between medieval work and its Victorian interpretation. Paine 1986 states that the 'figures and mottoes were recoloured by Thomas Willement in the 1844 restoration.' Tymms 1854, p. 169. 'The principal at the end of the nave, which formerly sheltered the holy rood, was



identifies a pair of musical angels with stringed instruments at the west end; the current attribute/s and unusual costume of WPN21 warrant closer inspection, but the attire and instrument of WPS21 are convincing. At Necton All Saints, Christ carries an orb, his right hand raised in blessing (WPN4), opposite the Virgin, hands raised (WPS4), flanked to the west by the central figures of Peter and Paul respectively. It is interesting to compare these juxtapositions with figurative screen paintings in the region; many rood screens were designed with twelve panels, reflecting the predominance of representations of apostolic figures at the juncture between nave and chancel.<sup>509</sup>

Like the painted saints on many screens, the arrangement of wall-post figures in roofs surveyed does not reflect an obvious order like the hierarchical display of the creed of the apostles, nor a specific combination of figures, although some are more common than others. It may indicate the exercise of 'popular devotional preference' in a communally-funded venture. Perhaps name-saints of individual roof donors were incorporated in some schemes, as in screens at Aylsham St Michael and All Angels and North Burlingham St Andrew.<sup>510</sup> Such idiosyncratic decision-making would explain the diversity of wall-post schemes. They accommodated flexibility, signifying a general intercessory symbolism, in dialogue with angelic roof imagery and the iconography of painted glass, chancel screens and the Rood.

One might assume simply that timber wall-post carvings provided a more financially viable method of augmenting the ecclesiastical hierarchy than stone statues between the wall-posts in the parochial roof context. Instead, their selection is more likely to have been a decision, expressed through form and material, to emphasise the conjoined support of the roof by saints

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painted and gilded at the cost of John Baret, whose mottoes or 'resons' of 'God me gyde' and 'Grace me governe' are inscribed on the braces of the hammer-beams. It was recoloured in 1844.'

<sup>509</sup> Baker 2001, p. 69 suggests that the frequency of their representation may be accounted for by the expediency of this number, but the number of screen panels was a design choice.

<sup>510</sup> For North Burlingham, see NRO ACC 2011/204; Hill 1939, p. 29.

and angels and their ‘separate, but complementary [intercessory] roles’, reflecting their alliance in the rood ensemble.<sup>511</sup>

### Colour

Theologians disagreed regarding the extent of the immateriality of angels, but Pseudo-Dionysius and others emphasised their essentially spiritual nature.<sup>512</sup> Yet these incorporeal celestial beings and their saintly wall-post companions assert the physical properties of the wood they are carved from or its opaque painted surface in these rood schemes.<sup>513</sup> Medieval wooden sculptures were frequently painted. It can be argued that wood was valued as an organic substance, functioning like the human body and bringing the carving to life, and that the application of pigment amplified rather than concealed its animating properties.<sup>514</sup> Rather than imitating nature in art, the medieval artist’s use of light and colour could surpass it.<sup>515</sup> Devotional polychrome wood carvings, such as a gilded and painted oak angel from an Annunciation ensemble (c. 1415-1450), made in northern France and now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (A.10-1914) (Fig. 149) are testament to the role of colour in bringing figures to life and defining details for worshippers. At Emneth, the rood carvings bear traces of pigment; elsewhere some appear unpainted, as in all but the most easterly carvings at King’s Lynn St Nicholas and Bury St Edmunds St Mary. Evidence of extant medieval paint can be observed in other roofs, alongside restored

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<sup>511</sup> For relative costs of stone and timber and the close working relationship between master carpenters and masons, see Dyer 1986, p. 9 and p. 13. For the relationship between saints and angels see Sangha 2012, p. 21 and pp. 24-29.

<sup>512</sup> Peers 2001, pp. 90-93.

<sup>513</sup> See Kessler 2004, pp. 19-42 for discussion of the ‘overt materiality’ of medieval art.

<sup>514</sup> Neilson, in Anderson, Dunlop and Smith 2015, pp. 223-225 and p. 231. Certain woods were specified for a variety of reasons, including their resilience, ease of carving and symbolic properties; availability and practicality would appear most likely in the case of East Anglian oak rood angels.

<sup>515</sup> Panayatova 2016, p. 314; Wrapson, in a paper titled ‘Heralding the Rood’ and delivered at the 53<sup>rd</sup> International Medieval Congress at West Michigan University, Kalamazoo in May 2018, observes that medieval painters understood colour ‘in terms of intrinsic qualities of materials and their effects.’ For medieval colour in painting, see also Pulliam 2012, pp. 3-14.

polychromy, as discussed earlier at Norwich St Giles, but also at Necton All Saints, North Creake St Mary the Virgin, North Burlingham St Andrew, Knapton SS Peter and Paul and even in some particularly mutilated schemes, as at Kersey St Mary. The purpose of these representations in the 'living matter' of crafted timber, exposed or embellished, was not imitation, but suggestion; like the more ephemeral intercessors in Doom paintings that they framed, their identities as agents of divine revelation were based upon their attire and attributes.<sup>516</sup>

The restriction of paintwork to one section of the roof is a matter of decorum at Lynn, where the pigment denotes the ceiling above the altar. Several East Anglian church roofs retain evidence of a painted ceiling over the first bay of the east of the nave, signifying the especially sacred nature of the canopy of honour to the Rood, just as the costliest pigments have been found to be concentrated facing the laity on chancel screens and close to the Rood above.<sup>517</sup> At Metfield St John the Baptist, Christological and Marian monograms in roundels are surrounded by vines. However, one needs to take account of the impact of decay, destruction and restoration here and elsewhere. For example, at first glance, the first bay at the east of the nave at Kersey St Mary, also in Suffolk, appears to be privileged by pigment. Stylised heavenly white clouds on a black background adorn some of the common rafters and there is evidence of colour on the ridge and cornice. There are traces of red on the cloak and white on the shield of one of its decapitated, wingless beam angels (N2 (Fig. 150). Yet closer observation reveals white paint on the arch-braces to the hammer-beams and their carved spandrels throughout the roof and tiny traces of pigment in other sections of the cornice. Restoration of the other beam angels and structural elements has stripped them of colour, altering the more all-enveloping effect apparently intended.

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<sup>516</sup> For image theory and further discussion of materiality and images, see Walker Bynum 2014, p. 41, pp. 58-59 and p. 122.

<sup>517</sup> Wrapson and Sinclair, in Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson 2017, p. 158.

Elsewhere, evidence of painted adornment is retained along the length of the nave, as in the Marian motifs at Palgrave St Peter in Suffolk. The angel roof at Necton All Saints is celebrated for its extant medieval polychromy.<sup>518</sup> Yet the history of interventions since its medieval scheme was devised is layered and complex. According to Martin-Jones, the 1838 restoration of the roof saw the eradication of its 'gaudy colours' and their replacement with 'oak colour', whilst the angelic beam and relief carvings were 'made gold colour' and the wall-post figures were rendered in 'stone colour'.<sup>519</sup> In his account of the roof, dated 1910, he notes the removal of the 'modern distemper colouring', uncovering 'much of the pre-Reformation' pigment.

His detailed description of the polychromy exposed in 1910 offers valuable insight into the medieval colour scheme, with some caveats; he observes loss of, and alteration to, some pigments and at least some of the paint he describes could have dated from earlier restoration work. Red and white appear to have dominated the boarding and rafters with a vine scroll pattern rather than Marian or Christological symbols along the centre of the boards and vestiges of red 'Tudor' roses against white on the principal rafters; the scroll design and some of the pigments are still visible in sections of the roof today. Traces of red, white and green prevailed on the mouldings of the structural elements and cornice. This colour scheme is common elsewhere, as in the structural elements of the nave roofs at Palgrave and at Walsham-le-Willows St Mary the Virgin in Suffolk and the angelic arch-braced hammer-beams at North Creak St Mary, echoing the alternating red and green backgrounds which characterise most painted East Anglian screens in a non-hierarchical relationship.<sup>520</sup> The popularity of the juxtaposition of these hues and their combination in other medieval painting is exemplified by details of interiors and costumes in manuscript illuminations held at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (MS 251, fol. 174r, fol. 163r, fol. 166v, fol. 247v and fol.

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<sup>518</sup> <https://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101152204-church-of-all-saints-necton#.WvRXBExFzIU> [accessed 4/6/2017]. 'Very fine 15th century nave roof retaining much original colouring'.

<sup>519</sup> Martin-Jones 1910, p. 159 cites the 'Old Church Record.'

<sup>520</sup> Wrapson and Sinclair, in Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson 2017, p. 159 have observed a regional preference for this combination on screens, in contrast to Devon examples.

104r) (Fig. 151).<sup>521</sup> At North Creake, red and green hues are interspersed on the underside of the arch-braces, flanked by the white drapery of the ecclesiastical beam angels. They characterise some of their attributes, such as the red book (N1) and green crown of thorns (S5) and the angels' collars are red. This scheme may have been mirrored in the neighbouring roof at South Creake St Mary, although the vibrant hues of their white albs, alternating red and green amices, interspersed red and green attributes and red, green and white clouds seen today are highly restored (Fig. 152).<sup>522</sup>

Gage warns against any presumption that the symbolic associations of medieval colours were regularised and as Jackson observes, the manifold connotations of a given hue depended upon context.<sup>523</sup> In the celestial domain of an angel roof, red might suggest the blood and wounds of Christ's sacrifice and the love of God. Its complement, green was resonant of the Resurrection, rebirth and the garden of Heaven. Bucklow highlights the material and planetary qualities of these complementary hues.<sup>524</sup> Angelic acolytes on the beams are often attired appropriately in the chaste, flawless white of virtue, as described in poetry and sermons and in other painted representations.<sup>525</sup>

It is clear from photographic and anecdotal evidence that some of the angelic beams at Necton were removed from the roof for extensive repair, probably more than once, although some confusion surrounds the dates of this activity.<sup>526</sup> The 1982 restoration campaign involved repairs to the timbers as

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<sup>521</sup> Wrapson and Sinclair, in Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson 2017, p. 159. Panayotova 2016, p. 20 and p. 128. As she observes, Alberti promoted the apposition of such contrasting hues in the 1430s.

<sup>522</sup> For example, N6 holds a red cross; S1 carries a green Pax with a cross. The hair is alternately white and yellow. Some attributes are gilded, such as the chalice (S3). A photograph of one of the angels before the 1950s restoration is inconclusive, as it is black and white.

<sup>523</sup> Gage 1995, p. 87; Jackson, in Panayotova 2016, p. 345.

<sup>524</sup> Bucklow, in Streeton and Kollandsrud 2014, pp. 154-155; Bucklow 2014, pp. 217-39.

<sup>525</sup> See Jackson, in Panayotova 2016, pp. 345-353 for further discussion of colour and its symbolism; Woolgar 2006, p. 162.

<sup>526</sup> Restoration records have proved elusive, but I am grateful to Michelle Faccenda-Tait for informing me by email that she understood that 'the angels or parts of them had been removed and

a result of death-watch beetle.<sup>527</sup> During previous restoration work in the late 1960s, most of the body of a crown-bearer (N1 or S1) was badly eaten away by beetle, only its head, upper torso and a section of drapery intact.<sup>528</sup> The colours described by Martin-Jones in 1910 correspond to those still observed, although there must have been considerable restoration of the paintwork in the late twentieth century.<sup>529</sup> The ecclesiastical drapery of the beam angels is white, with red cuffs, as exemplified by N5 (with incense boat) (Fig. 153) and S3 (with chalice and Host). The multi-coloured feathers of the wings (integral to the angels' bodies, but with extensive repair work) incorporate red, blue and yellow. Yellow also characterises the curly hair of the angels, although the suggestion that this and the bosses where the principals and purlins meet may have been gilded requires technical analysis.<sup>530</sup>

Martin-Jones described the wall-post figures as 'all brilliantly coloured, with the exception of those of two bishops and two doctors, on which very little colour is to be found.' Their canopies were painted blue or white 'with lead stars'; like those elsewhere, these evoked heavenly vaults, as discussed in chapter two.<sup>531</sup> Essentially, the extant polychromy matches these details, although paint analysis is needed to confirm its date.<sup>532</sup> Such bright colours

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'caged' to protect them since around 1973 and were replaced when the roof was restored in 1982.' During an earlier survey visit, a member of the congregation recalled their removal during the restoration from memory.

<sup>527</sup> I am grateful to Michael Morrison of Purcell for confirming the nature of the 1982 restoration work from memory by email, as any report appears to be lost. He also recalls other work, including having to 'recurve some minor bits and pieces (missing bits of decorative work and odd missing bits of angel wing etc.).'

<sup>528</sup> Analysis of photographs from the Hallam Ashley G series at the Historic England Archive (HEA) shows the poor state of at least two of the angelic beams and their location on scaffolding 'during restoration work 01/01/1965-31/12/1969' (AA99/04260 and AA99/04261).

<sup>529</sup> The patchy appearance of N2 (with a mitre) is caused by damage to the pigments.

<sup>530</sup> Martin-Jones 1910, pp. 160-161. The HEA images show extensive wing loss.

<sup>531</sup> Martin-Jones 1910, p. 161.

<sup>532</sup> The paintwork of two of the apostles appears relatively intact in HEA AA99/04260.

would have been recognised and valued for their saturation of light.<sup>533</sup> The four figures at the west end (N/S 8 and N/S9) appear to have lost most of their pigment prior to the early-twentieth-century campaign to remove the layer of nineteenth-century 'distemper', but before the rebuild of the tower in 1864-1865. Whether this was caused by deliberate targeting of their imagery (as they probably represent the Four Doctors) or by damage during other building work is a matter of conjecture, although one would have expected mutilation of their faces or attributes if they were subject to iconoclasm.

Twenty-one miles apart in north-east Norfolk, both the arch-braced single hammer-beam roof at North Burlingham St Andrew (late fifteenth century) and the double hammer-beam roof at Knapton SS Peter and Paul (early sixteenth century) display extant medieval polychromy, alongside later repainting.<sup>534</sup> The demi-angels on clouds at the beam ends appear to be the work of different hands, and the more complex Knapton scheme includes angels with scrolls and Passion symbols. However, their musical instruments, shields and colour schemes are interesting to compare; despite restoration work (which is extensive at Knapton), the most trustworthy elements confirm the ubiquity of white angelic attire, the use of yellow or gold to highlight and striking red and green juxtapositions in East Anglian roof adornment. Whether this is a matter of local convention (as shown by Wrapson and Sinclair in screen painting) or more widespread requires further research.<sup>535</sup>

At North Burlingham, the angels wear white ecclesiastical dress; they wear yellow or gold crowns, contrasted with red rather than yellow hair (Fig. 165). Traces of gold or yellow are visible on musical instruments, such as the trombone or sackbut (N2) and harp (N4); these are clearly coeval with other such traces on the collars and green-lined sleeve-cuffs of these carvings, in

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<sup>533</sup> Panayotova 2016, p. 21; Gage 1999, pp. 68-69. The restored colour at South Creake may appear garish to the modern eye, but apparently subtle traces of medieval colour elsewhere belie medieval appreciation of hues on a 'scale of brightness'.

<sup>534</sup> For the dating evidence for North Burlingham, see NRO ACC 2011/204; for Knapton, see chapter five.

<sup>535</sup> Wrapson and Sinclair, in Bucklow, Marks and Wrapson 2017, pp. 158-159.

which red and green are juxtaposed in the cloud designs. Shields with crosses are held by angels at North Burlingham (N5, S1 and S5) and at Knapton (LN10, LS9, UN1, UN6 and US9 all red on white, and UN2, UN9 and US4, all white on red) (Fig. 166), but one cannot be certain whether all are trustworthy (for example, UN2 is very crudely painted), and there are other anomalies which raise questions. Two shields at North Burlingham are especially intriguing. At least some of the patchy paintwork of N1 appears to date from the same campaign as that of musicians N2 and N4, including the red hair and red and green cloud. Despite damage, the surface of the shield is clearly outlined in red, possibly with a crown against the green background. N3 bears a shield emblazoned with an illusionistic hammer against a flat red ground; this is a clear case of repainting in a later style, but one cannot be certain whether it reflects a medieval design based upon Passion symbols, or subsequent whimsy. At Knapton the blank shields at each end of the lower tier (LN/S1 and LN/S12, plus US12) represent even more unidentifiable replacements. Nonetheless, in their association with symbols of angelic music (and at Knapton, Christ's Passion), it seems clear that their polychrome blazons expressed a vocabulary of ecclesiastical rather than secular moral principles, in contrast to the language of power and status of those at Norwich St Giles and Blythburgh Holy Trinity discussed earlier.<sup>536</sup>

In 1882, Scott stated that the 'interest and beauty [of the roof at Knapton] is enhanced by the admirable coloured decoration of which the greater portion remains intact', and he was especially concerned to avoid damage to the 'coloured decorations' of the roof, in stark contrast to the aversion to colour in sculpture of many contemporaries, which led to the stripping of paintwork elsewhere.<sup>537</sup> His comments confirm the presence of paint on the carvings

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<sup>536</sup> Gage 1995, pp. 80-83.

<sup>537</sup> RIBA SC/KN/28 1881, p. 3. See also RIBA SC/KN/29 1882, pp. 10-12. For the historic treatment and removal of medieval pigment on carvings, see Kargere and Marincola 2014, p. 12 and p. 16.



prior to his restoration campaign. The pigment visible today differs from the blanket of yellow subsequently described by Fox in 1890, since removed.<sup>538</sup>

Much of the replacement work from Scott's restoration is distinguished by its lack of colour and appears to be largely confined to the lower tiers of the double hammer-beam roof, including the three wall-post figures of kings at the west end and relief carvings of angels at the base of the wall-posts.<sup>539</sup> Extant remnants of medieval pigment include those on a lower-tier hammer-beam-end angelic carving with scroll NL11, but most of the scrolls and some other angelic and figurative carvings have been repainted since the roof was first installed, although paint analysis would be required to confirm whether any of this dates to Scott's restoration and this has not been undertaken.<sup>540</sup> Alongside other renovation work, the repainting has implications for the interpretation of the roof scheme.

Ann Nichols proposes a 'clear' Te Deum plan at Knapton in the iconography of the wall-post figures and two tiers of angelic beam-end relief carvings. On the basis of extant material evidence, this argument is plausible, but aspects of her analysis need revisiting.<sup>541</sup> Like wall-post figures WPN/S3 and WPN/S5 discussed earlier, upper hammer-beam-end angels UN/S3, UN/S5,

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<sup>538</sup> Fox 1890, p. 71. 'It has received a coat of yellow colour throughout, none of the natural wood being left, and the figures and mouldings are touched with red, green and white'. This was probably removed in 1932.

<sup>539</sup> NHER 6912 Heywood 2014, p. 10. 'The most noticeable restorations of the roof are the re-introduced angels at the feet of the wall posts.... This new work was of George Gilbert Scott's restoration of 1882.' The wall-post angels are missing from an engraved representation of the roof (in the church in 2014) showing bare tenons at the foot of the wall-posts, cited by Heywood as mid-nineteenth-century. If this date is correct, it would suggest that there were no extant medieval carvings in this location at the time of Scott's restoration. The 1882 estimate cites costs for three new saints and canopies, plus repairs to twenty-one, fourteen new beam-end angels and repairs to fifty-six of the latter, in addition to thirty-five new cornice angels and repairs to nine. Replacement wings for half the beam carvings and twenty-seven for those along the cornice are listed. Not all of the work proposed was undertaken. See RIBA SC/KN/27 1882, p. 16. 'Omit this' is written under these listings; it is unclear exactly which aspects of the work were to be excluded.

<sup>540</sup> This was confirmed in email correspondence with Andrea Kirkham.

<sup>541</sup> Nichols 2002, p. 325.

UN7 and UN/S10 and lower hammer-beam-end angelic carvings LN8 and LN11 carry painted scrolls (Fig. 167). Some are equally unreliable, due to repainting; in fact, the only definitively trustworthy text appears towards the west end, on the scroll of lower-tier carving N11 ('Majes [tatis]) (Fig. 154) and the upper-tier scrolls of N10 ('....em') and S10 (....te). The latter are difficult to decipher, but contradict the assertion that S10 reads 'Amen'.<sup>542</sup> LN8 holds a repainted blank scroll. Upper-tier UN5 and US5 certainly read 'Te Dominum' and 'Confitemur', but their lettering may not be medieval. Nichols' textual analyses of the other scroll texts are correct, but the latter are certainly not original. It is unclear whether UN3 reads 'Laudamus'; the 'Te Deum' of US3 has the bright white background and strange script of UN7 and the restored wall-post scrolls. The extant evidence of the others at the west suggests that it is possible that their texts replicate medieval lettering, potentially evoking the angelic song of the Te Deum, but one cannot be certain.<sup>543</sup>

Ultimately, only observation from scaffolding and professional paint analysis can determine the presence and nature of extant medieval paintwork, as at Lynn. Such examination is needed to verify the apparent absence of pigment in similar roof schemes at Mildenhall St Mary and Methwold St George, where some of the angels' faces and attributes appear bleached rather than painted, given that some other roofs of this type bear polychromy, as at North Creake.<sup>544</sup> Embellishment of carvings with painted decoration was costly; roof bequests might not stretch to such an expensive luxury.<sup>545</sup> Varied practice regarding pigmentation in angel roofs may have mirrored that in freestanding wood carvings more generally and the quality of the wood itself

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<sup>542</sup> Nichols 2002, p. 325.

<sup>543</sup> Examples elsewhere are equally elusive. For example, at Outwell St Clement, the scrolls held by angels in the south aisle are either blank (S3) or repainted with incoherent lettering (S8/9).

<sup>544</sup> Examples include the Pax of S4 at Mildenhall and the crown of N3 at Methwold.

<sup>545</sup> See Wrapson 2018 for discussion of the cost and availability of pigments; Woods 2007, p. 100, writing in relation to Netherlandish wood sculpture, observes that polychromy 'was very expensive largely because of the price of the materials, but also because of the painstaking labour required and it sometimes cost as much as twice the price of the carving.'

was recognised and often regulated.<sup>546</sup> The relationship between carpenters, carvers and painters of roofs requires detailed analysis bringing together dendrochronology and documentary and paint analysis, such as that undertaken for screens.<sup>547</sup> Yet given the extensive damage to church roofs over several centuries and their reparation prior to current conservation standards and approaches, unpainted schemes are likely to have been rarer than they appear today. Other devotional wooden carvings from Britain and elsewhere in Europe were often deliberately modified and stripped of their medieval pigment, as a result of an aversion towards polychromy on sculpture derived from neo-classicism, or a search for the ‘true essence’ of a piece, as illustrated by a south Netherlandish group of apostles at prayer in oak (c. 1400 – 1410), now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Fig. 155).<sup>548</sup> Although many angelic roof carvings remain in situ rather than in museum collections, their surfaces share complex histories of human intervention.

### Earl Stonham

The close association established between angelic roof carvings and the rood at the beginning of the fifteenth century in King’s Lynn was sustained until the eve of the Reformation and spread across the region, as exemplified by surviving material evidence at Earl Stonham St Mary in mid Suffolk. Given

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<sup>546</sup> Woods 2007, pp. 98-100. Riemenschneider’s Franconian carved altarpieces and statues were ‘designed to receive no, or only touches of polychromy,’ whereas Netherlandish carvings were ‘routinely’ entirely painted. See also <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O70318/mary-salome-and-zebedee-statu-riemenschneider-tilman/> and other website pages featuring late medieval carvings at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

<sup>547</sup> Bucklow, in Streeton and Kollandsrud 2014, p. 149 observes the potential of the study of polychrome sculpture to overcome the compartmentalisation of specialist fields in conservation and art history. Regarding screens, ‘there is little evidence of direct interaction [between carpenters and painters]’.

<sup>548</sup> MMA no. 16.32.214; Kargere and Marincola 2014, pp. 16-18. [https://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/fineart/people/faculty/marincola\\_PDFs/MMSAST2\\_Kargere\\_Marincola.pdf](https://www.nyu.edu/gsas/dept/fineart/people/faculty/marincola_PDFs/MMSAST2_Kargere_Marincola.pdf) [accessed 3 June 2017]; Woods 2007, p. 100 for the removal of polychromy from sculpture without trace in the nineteenth century.

the rich, full carving of its figures and pendants, the nave roof was probably installed after Edward IV's rebuilding of the Great Hall at Eltham Palace in 1475, but before the Last Judgement painting in the chancel arch and a bequest to the rood in 1526.<sup>549</sup> The complexity and holistic character of the iconographic scheme are tangible, notwithstanding extensive restoration work dating from 1874-5.<sup>550</sup>

The decapitated angelic carvings at Earl Stonham wear ecclesiastical dress and hold shields; most of these are now blank or damaged, but towards the south-west, S3 and S4 bear shields with a mitre and a hammer and pincers respectively and S5 holds a shield with a cross (Fig. 156), facing N5 with the chalice and Host to the north.<sup>551</sup> These attributes are typical of other extant roofs with beam angels dressed as acolytes at the Mass, as at Rougham St Mary, where they are symmetrically ordered. Their presence here implies a lost scheme incorporating Passion and Mass iconography, speaking to the painted angelic activity of the Doom, which references Christ's sacrifice, and enveloping its lay audience. Similar dialogues between carved and painted angels are likely to have existed elsewhere, given the presence of angels holding Passion symbols, playing trumpets and accompanying saved souls to Heaven in most surviving Suffolk chancel arch Dooms.<sup>552</sup>

At Earl Stonham, the deeply-carved wall-post figures have suffered extensive mutilation, but extant attributes such as the wheel of St Catherine and the fish of St Simon to the south of the scheme evidence a close relationship between images of saints and angels in the roof, as discussed earlier. This is mirrored in the Doom above the chancel arch, in which Mary leads apostles and blonde angels attired in red carry Instruments of the Passion.<sup>553</sup> The carvings and imagery of the cornices, pendants and spandrels of the single

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<sup>549</sup> See chapter five for further discussion. The Doom cannot be precisely dated, but Hawker 2001, p. 21 and pp. 25-26 cites iconographic evidence in support of a late-fifteenth-century date.

<sup>550</sup> SROI FB23/E3/2.

<sup>551</sup> From the tower gallery, one can see gaps at the shoulders of the beam carvings where the missing wings were inserted.

<sup>552</sup> Hawker 2001, pp. 30.

<sup>553</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

hammer-beam roof are particularly rich and complex, culminating in the Christological references of the carved cross and heart in the roof spandrels directly above the chancel arch, which address the faded fragments of the Doom, uncovered by Watling in 1874.<sup>554</sup>

The clerestory and elaborately carved nave roof signify ambition despite the lack of aisles at Earl Stonham.<sup>555</sup> This effect is amplified by the addition of north and south transepts. The roof structure relates closely to the clerestory windows, which are flanked by the carved wall-posts with figures, yet the wall-posts of the first three bays at the east are suspended mid-air over the transept arches (Fig. 157). To the modern eye, this is an uncomfortable relationship that one might be inclined to attribute to distortion during the nineteenth-century restoration campaign, but it is not unique, as similarly carved wall-posts overhang aisle arches elsewhere, for example at Wetherden St Mary.<sup>556</sup> At Earl Stonham, the emphatically carved heavenly hierarchy of figures on the mutilated wall-posts and angelic beams turn away from the transepts, framing and augmenting the Doom ensemble.

#### Norwich St Peter Hungate

A very different and innovatory solution to roofing a church with transepts is found at Norwich St Peter Hungate. The carving is refined and its iconography displays some unique nuances. In contrast to the nave canopy at Earl Stonham, the single hammer-beam roof at St Peter Hungate covers the nave and transepts, with braces set diagonally at the crossings to form a cruciform plan, as discussed in chapter two. The rebuild of the nave and transepts at Hungate probably dates from a single campaign from the 1440s

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<sup>554</sup> SROI FB23/E3/2.

<sup>555</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 31. Pevsner argues that the roof 'can without hesitation be called the most beautiful single hammer-beam roof in England.'

<sup>556</sup> SROI FB23/E3/2. Close observation suggests that the transept arches with fleuron embellishment at Earl Stonham might have been restored, although the architect's specifications for the 1871-1876 restoration campaign make no reference to their remodelling. It seems unlikely that any alteration to their fourteenth-century profiles accounts for their uncomfortable relationship with the wall-posts.

and resulted in a three dimensional rood canopy.<sup>557</sup> Its vaulted appearance evoked heavenly associations.<sup>558</sup> As noted in chapter two, this unusual arrangement is echoed in Norwich at St Mary Coslany, where the height of the transept roofing (c. mid-1460s) matches that of the existing nave and the unified design of the transepts suggests synchronised patronage and production, perhaps inspired by the Hungate scheme, recently completed.<sup>559</sup>

As observed earlier, in many roofs, although inclusion of a motif in the overall scheme was sometimes more important than exact location, at least some representations appear to have been deliberately positioned in relation to specific sites of engagement and furnishings, especially at the spatial division between nave and chancel in a church. This seems to be true at Hungate where ‘the nave is constituted as concerned with the authority of the Church on earth and the crossing area as the realm of heaven.’<sup>560</sup> In the roof at Hungate, there is a general massing of wooden beam angels, their original appearance distorted by the application of modern gold paint.<sup>561</sup> Most are dressed as acolytes or sub-deacons in the nave, with

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<sup>557</sup> Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 4, p. 330 claims that Paston acquired the advowson in 1458, immediately ‘demolished the whole old fabrick, which was in decay, and rebuilt the present church’ and that an inscription in stone outside the north door dated its completion by 1460. Such rapid construction of a scheme of this scale and sophistication is impossible, as I noted in a paper titled ‘Structure and Image: Mercantile Ambitions and Angelic Representations in Late Medieval Church Roofs in Norwich’, presented at the 52<sup>nd</sup> International Medieval Congress at the University of West Michigan, Kalamazoo in May 2017. See also Trend 2017, pp. 89-92. Trend 2017 refers to a range of documentary and material evidence which discredits the supposed inscription evidence and supports the assertion of an earlier date for a single campaign. The window traceries share a single design, which is only found elsewhere in Norfolk churches dating between 1437 and 1451. Connections with James Woderofe also suggest a date for Hungate, before Woodrofe’s death in 1451, as does a will referring to the chancel screen.

<sup>558</sup> By the late medieval period, vaulting was probably especially imbued with celestial associations, as a roofing mode of choice in elite church building. See Leedy 1980, p. 31 and p. 34.

<sup>559</sup> <https://norwichchurches.files.wordpress.com/2014/11/transeptal-chapels.pdf> [accessed 26 January 2016].

<sup>560</sup> Heslop, in Heslop, and Lunnon 2015, p. 368.

<sup>561</sup> Young 1968, p. 6 refers to this as ‘recently’ done. There are traces of pigment in the stone corbels, which may suggest that the angels were painted too.

predominantly feathered angels around the crossing and transepts. Angelic pairings face each other north and south signalling three significant junctions along the nave. The uniquely detailed book of seven seals from Revelation located to the south of the nave (S6), signals the Last Judgement imagery at the crossing.

The roof scheme at Hungate is permeated with eschatological iconography. The inclusion of St Michael in armour (SX2) at the south-east of the crossing is particularly innovative and underlines the pre-eminence of references to Revelation in the roof. The privileged location of this beam carving of the archangel associated with the weighing of souls at the Last Judgement speaks to its juxtaposition with the imagery of the lost rood, the staircase to which is still visible in the north transept.<sup>562</sup> Where the diagonal braces of the roof intersect, angelic carvings frame a remarkable wooden boss, depicting Christ in Judgement. At the corners of the crossing, finely carved and unusual stone corbels represent the four Evangelists, God's earthly messengers, in a hierarchical intercessory arrangement with the angelic heavenly messengers on the beams above them, and the tripartite group in the central boss above.

This ensemble at the crossing represents the culmination of a complex scheme, which illustrates how images in different materials could be assembled in the late medieval church, both in site-specific dialogue with each other and as components of a coherent whole. The relationship between roof and rood marked the climax of a sustained multi-media programme, in stone, wood and paint. Stone corbels often 'support' the wall-posts of late medieval church roofs, where they survive.<sup>563</sup> Carved as demi-angels, they may provide or augment the angelic character of a roof,

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<sup>562</sup> See also NRO NCC will reg. Aleyne 77. This 1451 bequest gave four marks to creating a bell or painting the rood loft.

<sup>563</sup> The 'supporting' role of corbels is generally an illusion; see Beech 2016, pp.52-54; Waddell 1999, pp. 47-67, p. 49. Corbel imagery is often lost or replaced, as at Great Barton Holy Innocents and Gissing St Mary. Many corbels under wall-posts are stone, although wooden examples include heads at Lynn and Mancroft and demi-angels at Norwich St Swithin, Ringland St Peter and Grundisburgh St Mary.

although they take a variety of other forms.<sup>564</sup> At St Peter Hungate, the refined carving and unusual iconography of the corbels at the crossing are matched by those in the nave, where they represent the Four Doctors of the Church, St Augustine, St Ambrose, St Gregory and St Jerome. The association of the Evangelists and the Four Doctors is found on church screens, but is unprecedented in roof corbel imagery.<sup>565</sup> The representation of the Four Doctors at Hungate may signify a show of orthodoxy or learning by the patrons of the roof, as discussed in chapter two. Corbel heads of men and women flank the windows of the transepts, facing in towards the crossing under the canopy to the Rood. The claim that those to the south represent John and Margaret Paston is tenuous at least, but they may represent an expression of wider patronal or communal association with the evangelists and angels in search of salvation before Christ in Majesty.<sup>566</sup>

As Trend has observed, the aisle-less nave and transepts are characterised by remarkably large windows, devised to illuminate the roof and other imagery.<sup>567</sup> Extant stained glass includes seven demi-angels bearing scrolls with liturgical texts, now in the tops of the main lights in the east chancel and north transept windows. Although the location of some angelic representations in glass at Hungate has been altered, they signal the saturation of medieval angelic presence in the nave and transepts in glass and wood and its interaction with sermons and ritual.<sup>568</sup>

### Medieval angels, music and liturgy

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<sup>564</sup> Stone corbel carvings constitute the only angelic iconography of some roofs, as at Norwich St Gregory, Barking St Mary, Framlingham St Michael and Norwich St Peter Parmentergate; angelic roof beam or beam-end carvings can be supplemented by angel corbels in wood or stone, as at Sibton St Peter and Norwich St John Maddermarket respectively.

<sup>565</sup> Baker 2011, pp. 71-72.

<sup>566</sup> Young 1968, p. 7. On medieval portraiture, see Kessler 2004.

<sup>567</sup> Trend 2017, p. 88.

<sup>568</sup> Compare

<http://www.cmva.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/norwichhungate/catalogue.html>

[accessed 14 September 2016] with Trend 2017, pp. 91-92.



Churches were earthly models of the Heavenly Jerusalem. The frequent decoration of late medieval parish church roofs with carvings of angels, flowers and stars suggest that within the buildings, the roofs were identified with the highest celestial realm. According to Bede the 'wonderful fragrance' of heaven 'dispelled the foul stench' of hell; equally, angels were connected to 'sweet smelling things' with healing qualities.<sup>569</sup> Angels dwelt close to God. They could also descend to the level of humanity, as occurred in Jacob's dream of Genesis 28:12:

'And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it'.

The hope of angelic mediation and support for the upward journey of the human soul as articulated by Jacobus de Voragine was expressed in these timber roofs and the related images of the Last Judgement.<sup>570</sup> Both carved and painted angels are out of reach, but close enough to be perceived, their explicitly material presence asserting their intermediary status.

'Association with the angels' was a feature of the Eucharist according to St Bonaventure (1221-1274).<sup>571</sup> As Sangha argues, 'the idea of angelic participation [and co-operation] in worship was evidently deeply ingrained in the theology of medieval religion', reinforced by the impact of the circulation of Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda Aurea* and John Mirk's *Festial* (c. late 1380s, and revised in the fifteenth century), and the pervasive presence of angelic imagery in the church.<sup>572</sup> The sense of the company of angels at the Mass was augmented further by the adornment of ecclesiastical vestments with angelic imagery, such as the Bircham cope (c. 1480), later converted to an altar frontal, and now in the collections of the Norfolk Museums

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<sup>569</sup> Davidson 1994, pp. 110-125.

<sup>570</sup> De Voragine 2012, pp. 595-596.

<sup>571</sup> See Goris, in Hoffmann 2012, pp. 149-185 for comparison of Bonaventure's views regarding angelic knowledge with those of Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>572</sup> Sangha 2012, pp. 17-18.

Service.<sup>573</sup> There was a widespread perception that angels were actively engaged in the Mass, 'bearing the sacrifice from the altar on earth up to the altar in heaven.'<sup>574</sup> At the conclusion of the consecration of the Eucharist, as the congregation prayed that it might join the eternal chant of the Sanctus with the celestial angelic host, musical roof angels from St Nicholas Chapel King's Lynn and St Mary Mildenhall in the west to Knapton SS Peter and Paul in the east directed them to hear their celestial chorus, evoking Paradise where the redeemed would be received by Christ. The laity may have understood that it was united with the angels as it sang these words:

'Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus,

Dominus Deus Sabaoth

pleni sunt coeli et terra gloria tua

Osanna in excelsis.'<sup>575</sup>

As Rastall proposes, medieval angelic song was believed to echo the earthly liturgy and mortal refrains imitated the angelic 'laudes dei', or sung praise of God, which was viewed as the 'proper activity of all angels.'<sup>576</sup> The hymn of ceaseless praise of God by the seraphim in Isaiah's vision of heaven was reflected in the liturgy; close to the opening of the Te deum laudamus and in the Preface of the Mass:

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<sup>573</sup> Watkin 1948, p. lix and p. lxi records the adornment of some vestments with figures, including gold angels, and a vestment with gold chalices and angels; I am grateful to Ruth Battersby-Tooke of Norfolk Museums Service for sharing documentation regarding the Bircham cope (NWHCM: 1939.75). The Virgin is supported by demi-angels, with three pairs of wings, on wheels. Scrolls above the angels are inscribed with the words 'sanctus' and 'da gloriam deo.' Whether it is indeed the red velvet cope bequeathed to Great Bircham church in 1505 by Roger le Strange is a matter of debate. In the catalogue for an exhibition in 1961 titled *Needlework in East Anglia* (p. 7) it is noted that his will specified the bequest of a white cope. Browne, Davies and Michel 2016, p. 32. Gold angels characterise many other examples of *opus Anglicanum*, or English medieval embroidery; a particularly similar design to that of the Bircham cope is another such vestment in the Chicago Art Institute (museum number 1971.312a), which also features the Assumption of the Virgin with multi-winged angels on wheels.

<sup>574</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>575</sup> Malone 2004, p. 167.

<sup>576</sup> Rastall, in Davidson 1994, p. 163.

‘Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of Hosts. Heaven and earth are full of thy glory...’<sup>577</sup>

The angel roofs at St Nicholas Chapel and Bury St Edmunds St Mary surmounted Perpendicular rebuilding projects on an ambitious scale. New clerestories raised the height of the main body of the church, creating an acoustic space in which the notes and tones of polyphonic singing, antiphons and responses would have echoed and vibrated, creating a layered and unceasing soundscape. Their example was emulated elsewhere, as at Mildenhall and Emneth. Yet the representation of angels playing musical instruments did not characterise early Christian art, and musical activity depicted in the angelic roof carvings of these churches did not represent a literal reflection of music making in the church below.<sup>578</sup> Parish church music was primarily vocal, with little, if any, use of instruments aside from the organ. It is perhaps a matter of regional or national decorum that East Anglian roof angels play lutes, trumpets and tabors, but do not sing; Woods has found no evidence of the ‘silent rhetoric’ of Mediterranean speaking sculptures in English medieval carvings to date.<sup>579</sup> Symbolic roles accorded to musical instruments by Augustine and the Doctors of the Church were discussed and reviewed throughout the later medieval period. Debate surrounded the nature and perception of angelic music. Although angelic song was viewed as beyond description to human beings by Richard Rolle (d. 1349) and Walter Hilton (c. 1340-1396), a tradition of heavenly music derived from scriptural sources and (like those in more localised sites in glass) musical roof angels appear to have suggested the celestial Paradise into which those redeemed would be received by Christ.<sup>580</sup>

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<sup>577</sup> Watkin 1948, p. xlii illustrates that the Use of Salisbury was the liturgy followed in the Norwich diocese by the fourteenth century.

<sup>578</sup> Gillette 2015, p. 95.

<file:///C:/Users/User/Documents/Angel%20roofs/Articles/Angels Music and Angelization in Media.pdf> [accessed 23 June 2016]; Boehm 2009, p. 12.

<sup>579</sup> I am grateful to Kim Woods for confirming this in discussion at the conference ‘New Directions in the Study of Medieval Sculpture’, at the Henry Moore Institute in Leeds, where she delivered a paper titled ‘Speaking Sculptures’ on 17 March 2018.

<sup>580</sup> Rastall, in Davidson 1994, p. 170.

Angelic pairings at the east and west ends of these roofs appear to have been particularly significant. At the east end, they border the chancel arch, except in open plan schemes, as at St Nicholas, where they surmount the canopy of honour over the altar. The visual relationships that existed between angelic roof programmes and the iconography of the heavenly hierarchy in the rood and on chancel screens were funded by the diverse lay audiences they addressed. Representations of saintly intercessors increasingly addressed the laity on chancel screen panels, from Aylsham St Michael to Hunstanton St Mary; these were augmented or replaced by standing figures of apostles and prophets on the wall-posts of some roofs, as at Emneth St Edmund and Earl Stonham St Mary.

### Conclusion

In the roofs discussed above, the attributes of the angelic throng flanking the rood echoed its sacrificial theme. Images of angels flanking Christ crucified date from the early medieval period across a range of media, from ivory to illuminated manuscripts, as in a French ivory crozier head (c.1330-c.1350) now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (A.558-1910) and a late-fifteenth century miniature, possibly from a missal, in the J. Paul Getty Museum (Ms. 52, recto). In late medieval representations such as a late fifteenth-century alabaster by an unknown maker now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (A.23-1946) and a manuscript miniature known as the Wyndham Payne Crucifixion (c.1405-c.1410) now in the British Library, London (Add. MS 58078), angels often hold chalices to catch Christ's blood. Equally, roof angels flanking the rood offered the prospect of redemption through the Mass and eucharistic sacrifice. The representation of angels holding passion symbols and trumpets characterises other late-medieval Last Judgement compositions, from a triptych in oil on panel (c1467-71) by Memling in the National Museum, Gdansk (MNG/SD/413/M) to the parochial Doods at Stoke by Clare St John the Baptist in Suffolk and at Penn Holy Trinity in Buckinghamshire. Angelic roof imagery frequently referenced Christ's Passion - and at Hungate, the awe-inspiring events described in Revelation. In churches where roof angels and rood sculpture were

accompanied by Doom paintings, as preserved at Earl Stonham, the role of the angelic throng at the Last Judgement was amplified.

Ensembles of angelic carvings vested as acolytes spread across fifteenth-century church roofs in Norfolk and Suffolk, from Necton to Earl Stonham. They often carried pairs of passion and eucharistic attributes, reinforcing the conception of their shared involvement in church rituals.<sup>581</sup> However, they were not shown literally mirroring the actions of the clergy. Their motifs worked in concert with the iconography of other furnishings, especially at the east end of the nave. Motifs including the book and pax and the chalice and Host disseminated sacrificial witness and eucharistic meaning in the domain of lay activity. Through the implied shared perceptions of sight, smell, sound, taste and touch, worshippers and their angelic protectors enjoyed sensorial empathy. Despite the distortions of iconoclasm and restoration, material and documentary evidence reveals arrangements adaptable to local preferences, skills and beliefs, their imagery often communally funded by the diverse laity it addressed. At the division between nave and chancel, the devices borne by angels functioned to embrace the congregation in the prospect of redemption and eternal Paradise through Christ's sacrifice.

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<sup>581</sup> Sangha 2012, p. 19.

## **Chapter five: Towards a typology of angel roofs: single frame to double hammer-beam**

### Introduction

The relationship between structure and imagery is examined further in this chapter. Through comparison of case studies, it considers factors in the selection and distribution of different types and the extent to which the organisation and execution of their carved figurative schemes are suggestive of imitation or invention. Late medieval angel roofs are often equated specifically with hammer-beam structures and indeed their concentrated coincidence in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century East Anglian parish churches is remarkable. Hammer-beam roofs certainly offered a particularly wide range of opportunities for angelic, figurative and other embellishment, as discussed below. However, whereas previous analysis is primarily confined to hammer-beam exemplars, this chapter will demonstrate that there were alternative ways to incorporate angelic carvings in East Anglian parish church roofs of a variety of concurrent structural types from c.1400-1540.<sup>582</sup>

In addition, although documentary evidence is limited and more dendrochronological analysis is needed, it is clear from existing data and material evidence that diversity characterised angelic displays in hammer-beam roofs throughout the period, belying oft-repeated assertions of chronological progression. Roofs with horizontal hammer-beam angels span the period, from King's Lynn St Nicholas (c.1401-1419) to Earl Stonham St Mary (c. 1500), whilst the angelic relief carvings attached to the beam ends exemplified by those at Knapton SS Peter and Paul (early C16) are evidenced in early fifteenth-century exemplars by exposed beam-end tenons at Debenham St Mary (tree-ring dated to c.1397-1409) and at Bardwell (c.1421), where four carvings survive in situ, as discussed further below.

Each of the main sections of this chapter examines the relationship between angelic imagery and a specific structural roof type, from late fourteenth-

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<sup>582</sup> Beech 2015, pp. 222-267.

century single-framed canopies to the height of extravagance in double hammer-beam framing. A range of selected examples is discussed by county and/or chronologically, according to developments within a given roof category; accordingly, where more than one roof could illustrate a particular characteristic or development, priority is generally assigned to roofs where I have undertaken a detailed physical survey and there is at least some dating evidence.<sup>583</sup> Where relevant, reference is made to what is known of the patronage of a roof, in the detailed case study of Salle SS Peter and Paul, for example. The history of its fabric and its restoration is examined where salient, as in the case study of Knapton SS Peter and Paul. Other roof analyses are informed by the interpretations of early modern writers, from iconoclast William Dowsing, to antiquarian historians, such as Francis Blomefield and the Brandons.

#### Single-framed and braced roofs (Fig. 172)

Single-framed and braced rafter roofs in the region were employed from at least the thirteenth century, although surviving examples predominantly date from the fourteenth century, when they appear to have been most popular.<sup>584</sup> These common-rafter roofs lack the principal rafters, longitudinal purlins and ridge introduced into double-framed roof structures. In their mid-nineteenth-century celebration of English open timber roofs, Brandon and Brandon labelled these as 'trussed rafter' roofs.<sup>585</sup> Their architectural drawings and analyses remain valuable and include records of subsequently restored or rebuilt roofs, as at Lympenhoe St Botolph in Norfolk, where they recorded a steeply-pitched, canted scissor-braced roof, in which opposing braces crossed the collar and intersected each other, tenoned into the rafter

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<sup>583</sup> See Appendix 3 for a longer list of extant roofs identified across East Anglia.

<sup>584</sup> See Appendix 3; Cautley 1937, p. 103; Fletcher and Spokes 1964, p. 169 illustrate a thirteenth-century example elsewhere, in the chancel of Oxford St Giles (c. 1270); Fletcher and Spokes 1964, p. 182. 'Probably less than 1% of the roofs built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century have survived'.

<sup>585</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, pp. 17-19. This publication is an unabridged republication of the 1849 edition.

opposite that from which they rose.<sup>586</sup> The Brandons were of their time in admiring the 'structural honesty' of this and similar roofs (as at Great Blakenham in Suffolk, illustrated by Cautley) in which the timbers are exposed, and exultant at the imminent removal of a plaster ceiling concealing the braced single-framed roof with two collar-beams at Stow Bardolph Holy Trinity, also in Norfolk.<sup>587</sup> They also perceived an advantage of these roofs as opposed to tie-beam roofs in terms of the unobstructed open view that they offered, inspiring the faithful to look upwards to heaven and to worship, and delighted particularly in the 'pleasing' arched aesthetic of the polygonal bracing at Lympenhoe (Fig. 173).<sup>588</sup> This visual bias may have underpinned their unsubstantiated and erroneous claim that this roof type was also structurally superior to tie-beam construction.<sup>589</sup> Although this roof type was selected at times for elite buildings, their contention is contested by Cautley, in this respect a more convincing source, who highlights the reliance of the single-framed and braced roof upon close-fitting framing, the difficulty of maintaining this with oak timbers and its subsequent 'progressive weakness'.<sup>590</sup> In support of his argument, he cites the early twentieth-century reconstruction of three such Suffolk roofs 'at the point of collapse'.<sup>591</sup> Many of these roofs have been repaired or rebuilt; the survival of such a substantial example as at Dennington St Mary, spanning a wide nave, appears as much

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<sup>586</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, pp. 38-39; Norfolk Heritage Explorer NHER entry 10364

<http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/record-details?MNF10364-St-Botolph's-Church-Lympenhoe> [accessed 5 June 2018] records that the church 'was largely rebuilt in 1881.'

<sup>587</sup> See chapter three regarding the wooden fan vaulting in the roof at St Peter Mancroft; Cautley 1937, pp. 88-89.

<sup>588</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 3, p. 17 and p. 39.

<sup>589</sup> Beech 2015, p. 68. 'In general, and understandable given the period, their grasp of forces in roof structures is rudimentary and intuitive.'

<sup>590</sup> For example, the nave roof at Ely cathedral; Cautley 1937, p. 89; I concur with Beech 2015, pp. 223-224 in my assessment of Cautley's reliability, practical experience and expertise. Cautley 1937, p. 103 does observe that within this roof type, scissor-braced examples as at Laxfield and Troston feature 'stronger and better carpentry than the ordinary method'.

<sup>591</sup> Cautley 1937, p. 90; appendix 3; Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 92 also observe 'the lack of horizontal stiffening' in single-framed scissor-braced roofs and the greater stability of tie-beam roofs with queen-posts.



based upon the addition of longitudinal arch-braces springing from wall-posts to the initial junction of the rafters and braces as it does to the insertion of a second collar-beam, as at Stow Bardolph.<sup>592</sup> As Cautley explains, wall-posts stabilised the wall-plate to which they were attached and thereby prevented outward spread of the roof.<sup>593</sup> Given the Brandons' disdain for tie-beam roof structures, it is ironic that fourteenth-century single-framed roofs often featured robust and generally unadorned tie-beams with king-posts or crown-posts for additional strength, as at Barking St Mary in Suffolk.

### Panelled roofs

Given their penchant for 'structural honesty', Brandon and Brandon preferred the 'simple grandeur and picturesque effect' of plain open single-rafter and braced roofs to others in which the structural timbers were concealed by boarding, although they illustrated such an example at Wimbotsham St Mary, otherwise comparable in structure to that at Stow Bardolph and subsequently restored.<sup>594</sup> Although much less common than in the west of England, here and elsewhere, boarding was subdivided into panels by slender moulded ribs, with bosses at their junctures, providing the opportunity for sculptural and painted embellishment. Material evidence has been distorted by restoration work at Wimbotsham, but Brandon and Brandon recorded an embattled cornice and 'richly coloured' roof mouldings and carvings, although they observed no trace of pigment on the panels.<sup>595</sup> The scissor-braced nave roof at Denver St Mary has renewed panelling, but retains its medieval foliate bosses; shields and fleurs-de-lys adorn the cornice.<sup>596</sup>

Embellished panelling appears to have been more prevalent over chancels

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<sup>592</sup> Cautley 1937, p. 103. 'Probably an early use of the wall-post is that to be found in the roofs of Dennington and Kelsale.' Another example is at Billingford St Leonard in Norfolk, where sturdy braced wall-posts and an embattled cornice survive.

<sup>593</sup> Cautley 1937, p. 90.

<sup>594</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 19 and pp. 42-43; appendix 3.

<sup>595</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 43.

<sup>596</sup> [https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101342310-church-of-st-mary-denver#.W3wk\\_vZFzIU](https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101342310-church-of-st-mary-denver#.W3wk_vZFzIU)

[accessed 5 June 2018] records the cornice as fifteenth-century; the boarded single-framed roofs to nave and chancel surmount fourteenth-century fabric.

and chapels with altars or at the east end of the nave in dialogue with the Rood. It was not confined to single-framed and braced roofs, as discussed in chapters two and three in relation to the arch-braced nave roof canopy of honour embellished with sacred monograms at Metfield and the panels adorned with painted angels of the fifteenth-century aisle roofs at Norwich St John Maddermarket. However, generally such angelic imagery does not appear to have characterised late-fourteenth-century single-framed boarded roofs. Arguably the most spectacular example of these is the scissor-braced chancel roof of St Helen at St Giles Hospital, subsequently Eagle Ward at the Great Hospital in Norwich, dating from c.1383 (Fig. 174).<sup>597</sup> Extensive modifications to the church since 1548 (including the insertion of a ward for impoverished elderly women in the upper level of the chancel) have distorted its appearance and diminish the visitor's impression of its original scale and function.<sup>598</sup> Evidence for Bishop Despenser's oft-cited commission of the chancel is purely circumstantial and other members of the clergy also supported the work, but the eastern chestnut roof and its impressive painted ceiling survive alongside other features as evidence of the undoubted ambition, expense and elite patronage of the chancel rebuild, intended to solicit the future support of increasingly sophisticated prospective donors.<sup>599</sup> Debate also surrounds the exact circumstances regarding the selection of the imperial black eagle motif, stencilled and painted onto each of the 252 ceiling panels, punctuated by 232 foliate and other bosses at their intersections.<sup>600</sup> Rawcliffe cites compelling evidence in support of the

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<sup>597</sup> Rawcliffe 1999, p.115 and p. 286, n. 88 cites evidence from will bequests and requests for burials which support this date; Bridge, Centre for Archaeology Report 10/2003 'Tree-ring analysis of timbers from the Great Hospital, Bishopgate, Norwich, Norfolk.' Bridge was unable to access the roof, although he regarded the timbers as 'potentially datable'.

<sup>598</sup> Rawcliffe 1999, p.115; Bennett-Symons 1925, p. 63 observes that the church was 198 feet in length.

<sup>599</sup> Rawcliffe 1999, pp.116-118; Wearing 1957, p. 114 confirms the unusual use of chestnut 'on the trussed rafter principle throughout' from direct observation in his report on the repair and repainting of the roof and ceiling during 1950-1951.

<sup>600</sup> As Rawcliffe 1995, p. 107 observes, the eagle motifs are actually single- rather than double-headed. Canterbury Historical and Archaeological Society <http://www.canterbury->

assertion that Richard II himself may have instigated the use of this image to promote his marriage to Anne of Bohemia, rather than Despenser in an act of homage; the latter was otherwise preoccupied with military matters in Flanders in 1383.<sup>601</sup> The association of this roof design with Richard II is intriguing, given the subsequent impact across East Anglia of the carved angelic roof imagery that he commissioned at Westminster a decade later.

In Suffolk, another outstanding ceiled 'wagon' roof surmounts the fourteenth-century chancel at Bury St Edmunds St Mary (Fig. 175), apparently pre-dating the alternating arch-braced and hammer-beam angel roof in the nave by several decades. Cautley and Pevsner categorise it as a canted single-framed and braced structure, although Darkin's nineteenth-century inspection report is intriguingly unclear.<sup>602</sup> Equally, caution must be exercised in any assessment of its iconographical programme, given extensive restoration work.<sup>603</sup> However, material and documentary evidence indicates

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[archaeology.org.uk/westwindow/4590809741](http://archaeology.org.uk/westwindow/4590809741) [accessed 18 October 2018]. Anne of Bohemia's arms show a single-headed eagle, as depicted in the west window of the nave at Canterbury c. 1400.

<sup>601</sup> Rawcliffe 1999, p. 118 also notes the 'strong possibility that Richard and his queen inspected the new chancel, then still in the process of construction.' Wearing 1957, facing p. 113 and pp. 114-115 illustrates and outlines restoration work to specific panels and bosses, this work 'coloured to match the original and an exact record kept'; he also outlines the rather random distribution of the larger bosses in the form of heads and the location to the north of three shield bosses charged with Passion symbols. Rawcliffe 1995, p. 107 points out that 'it is now impossible to know when [the panels] were painted.' Paint analysis would be valuable to confirm the dating of the earlier pigment, alongside dendrochronological analysis of the timbers.

<sup>602</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 95 notes that 'the chancel was not repaired' during the 1844 restoration, but states that the Corporation ordered 'an examination of the state of the roof' in 1845, which was conducted by Mr Darkin, a local builder. The wording of his report as transcribed by Tymms refers to 'hammer beams' with 'rotten' ends, although the roof has the appearance of a canted single-framed and braced rather than hammer-beam structure. This merits scrutiny.

<sup>603</sup> According to Tymms 1854, p. 95, in 1845, Darkin found 'the close boarding of the ceiling...decayed in several places, more injured by neglect...than by age.' The roof was restored by A. Mackintosh of Burlison and Grylls in 1880 and by Jan Kurske in 1968.

<https://stchrysostoms.wordpress.com/2016/10/19/burlison-and-grylls/> [accessed 8 July 2018]. 'To date, the work of Burlison & Grylls is largely undocumented: records appear to have been lost...thus an accurate and complete compilation is virtually impossible.'

that its late-medieval adornment included angelic imagery. This may have been augmented in the mid to late fifteenth century, when the aisles and sanctuary were added. Although the roof appears to have been 'left up' during the work, it cannot have escaped its impact.<sup>604</sup> Carved and painted angels populate the roof, although the carvings are combined with a wide range of representations of other subjects. Foliate bosses punctuate the intersections of the ribs which subdivide the boards into five rows of panelling, many with heads (from the mitred to the grotesque) and other symbols.<sup>605</sup> At the midpoint of each rib is a cusped lozenge, each adorned with a carved motif, including animals, the Lancastrian chained swan and other birds, and musical and other angels; many of these motifs are reminiscent of the imagery of the beam and spandrel carvings in the elaborate early fifteenth-century aisle roofs at nearby Mildenhall St Mary, discussed in chapter three.<sup>606</sup> In the chancel roof at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, the painted cornices may date from the insertion of the chancel aisles

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<sup>604</sup> The roof surmounts the original span of the chancel before it was opened up. According to Tymms 1854, p. 95, Darkin's 1845 report observed that 'a more antient wall [had] supported the present roof [which] appears to have been left up during the time the old wall was taken down and the pillars and arches &c. were building.' This had caused the lower section of roof to protrude at the centre. 'The rubble wall is built to the bulging curve of the roof, which would not have been so built if the roof had been put on after the wall was up.' Tymms 1854, p. 21 and p. 26; Tymms 1850, pp. 15-44. In 1480, Jankyn Smyth bequeathed Turret Close in Bury St Edmunds to the 'reparacion of the new Eles...made by me'. He built the north chapel before 1463, when it is referred to in John Baret's will, the south chapel between 1463 and 1473 and the sanctuary before 1479, when William of Worcester recorded chancel dimensions identical to the current fabric; see Harvey 1969, p. 161.

<sup>605</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 175. The panels are painted blue; when Tymms viewed them, they were 'plain and of a lead-coloured ground, but were originally painted in azure.' The ribs are painted gold, green and red; Tymms describes them as 'gorgeously coloured and gilt.'

<sup>606</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 175 describes a range of animals, from 'the Lancastrian and Yorkist badges of the swan, the antelope spotted and the boar', to 'a talbot dog seizing a bear' and 'a fox with a crosier [sic] by his side preaching from a pulpit to a cock and a hen'; he lists angels playing 'the organ, the harp, the cittern [sic], the violin and the kettle drums; an angel with a star in front of it; an angel with a crescent before it'. These descriptions are accompanied by Darkin's illustrations of some of the carvings.

with their chapels in the mid to late fifteenth century.<sup>607</sup> They comprise three panels and are divided into twenty-two sections, featuring nimbed angels on clouds; feathered or in ecclesiastical attire, they carry scrolls emblazoned with verses from the *Te Deum*, against a blue background studded with gold stars. Although these were restored by Mackintosh in 1880, this design largely follows the arrangement described by Tymms in 1854 and is not unprecedented in late-medieval roofs, as in the fragmented painted cornice of the nave roof at Salle SS Peter and Paul in Norfolk (early fifteenth century), which features nimbed demi-angels carrying scrolls displaying verses from the *Te Deum* and Psalm 150.<sup>608</sup>

Unlike the open timber angel roof of the nave at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, the panelled chancel roof appears to bear little relation to the hammer-beam form of the Westminster Hall structure in the angelic imagery of its cornice and bosses. In contrast, the royal roof seems to be more directly referenced in the early fifteenth-century open single-framed and braced nave roof at Wingfield St Andrew, further north-east in Suffolk (Fig. 176). A number of factors support the attribution of the nave clerestory and associated roof to the second building campaign of c. 1415 at the latest, including the window tracery and the rather antiquated roof form.<sup>609</sup> Within this structural roof type, the insertion of short hammer-beams carved as shield-bearing angels (Fig. 177) is exceptional and requires explanation. Michael de la Pole, second Earl

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<sup>607</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 95 and p.175 observes that in 1845, the coving was much decayed; the arcades were 'built to the roof', which was 'somewhat injured by this alteration.' It is probable that the cornices were replaced or modified when the aisles were added and they clearly required restoration by the late nineteenth century.

<sup>608</sup> Tymms 1854, p. 175. His description is very similar, although all of the angels were also crowned.

<sup>609</sup> These have been outlined in detail by Goodall 2001, pp. 55-65 and Beech 2015, pp. 278-280. The main body of the church was completed following the death of Sir John Wingfield in 1361, but the inclusion of angelic hammer-beams in the otherwise fourteenth-century roof structure suggests an early fifteenth-century date. The roof must pre-date a third building phase (for which Hawes' estimate for work to the chancel exists and which Goodall 2001, pp. 269-272 transcribes and dates convincingly to the early 1460s). As Goodall 2001, p. 60 and Beech 2015, p. 279 observe, it is clear from the wording of Hawes' estimate (see Goodall 2001, p. 271) that he was contracted to heighten the walls of the chancel to the level of the existing clerestoried nave.

of Suffolk, died during the siege at Harfleur in 1415; the building work to the church around this period included the construction of the Lady Chapel, where his tomb was installed. De la Pole's direct encounters with the new roof at Westminster in 1399 and the addition of angelic hammer-beams to the nave roof of his church, apparently shortly afterwards, are unlikely to be coincidental.<sup>610</sup> The relationship of the Wingfield roof to that at Westminster is certainly one of visual impact, rather than structural influence; alongside other examples discussed later, this suggests the agency of patrons rather than craftspeople in the introduction of angel roofs in East Anglia. Yet this primarily visual device was turned to elegant structural advantage. Far from the single-framed and braced roof type 'belonging to a carpentry tradition then centuries old, functioning happily for generations without the carpenter finding it necessary to include hammer beams', such construction had inherent weaknesses, as Cautley outlines.<sup>611</sup> Although the hammer-beams at Wingfield are not supported on arch-braced wall-posts, sturdy arch-braces rise from them to the common rafters and collars above, discreetly augmenting the structure. This construction appears to be unique in surviving East Anglian late-medieval roofs, adapting a 'prestigious' structural form for angelic display.<sup>612</sup> Elsewhere, carvings of angels would adorn an array of open double-, rather than single-framed structures.<sup>613</sup>

#### Arch-braced roofs (fig. 178)

According to Pevsner, 'the majority [of Norfolk roofs] are simple arch-braced roofs with principals and purlins' and this is supported by a survey of extant medieval structures, despite Cautley's assertion that the lack of collar-beams

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<sup>610</sup> Bloore and Martin 2015, p. 224; Beech 2015, p. 241.

<sup>611</sup> Beech 2015, p. 241.

<sup>612</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 1999, p. 92. Open single-framed scissor-braced roofs were used in elite buildings from C13-C15, despite their structural flaws. The nave roof at Ely Cathedral (c. 1240s) is a notable example, only concealed by boarding and painted in the mid-nineteenth century (1858-1864).

<sup>613</sup> Double-framed roofs incorporate principal rafters at intervals, generally marking the limits or mid-point of a bay, and incorporate structural longitudinal timbers, comprising purlins and a ridge-piece.

'peculiar' to many Norfolk roofs accounts for a lower rate of their survival than elsewhere.<sup>614</sup> The architect and surveyor contrasted the rarity of collar-beams in Norfolk open timber roofs with their ubiquity in Suffolk roofs, and outlined the potential risks and implications of the absence of these horizontal structural members, which principally act to support the principal rafters to which they are joined, thus reducing the risk of the rafters sagging under the load of the roof casing.<sup>615</sup> More recently, Beech has examined the alleged audacity of Norfolk carpenters in their neglect of the collar in early hammer-beam roofs, proposing their substitution of its structural role by alternative solutions, such as incorporating king pendants, as discussed below.<sup>616</sup> In Suffolk, arch-braced roofs are more predominant in the east of the county than the wool towns of the west, where cambered tie-beam roof structures prevail. Although arch-brace technology was adapted to accommodate alternating hammer-beams in a number of roofs (as discussed later), extant carvings indicate that angelic imagery was often assimilated more simply into this locally popular structural type during the fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

One of the earliest examples is the early fifteenth-century nave roof at Harpley St Lawrence in Norfolk (Fig. 179).<sup>617</sup> Although a 'knuckle-piece

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<sup>614</sup> Cautley 1949, pp. 27-28; appendix 2; research cross-references my material surveys (where indicated), Pevsner's Buildings of England series (volumes as indicated), Cautley 1937, Cautley 1949, Mortlock and Roberts 2017, Mortlock 2009 and Simon Knott's online entries with photographic evidence <http://norfolkchurches.co.uk/norfolkindex.htm>, <http://www.suffolkchurches.co.uk/Alist.htm>, <http://www.simonknott.co.uk/essexchurches/essexindex.htm>, and <https://www.flickr.com/photos/norfolkodyssey/collections/72157627378610438/>, plus other online photographic evidence as indicated.

<sup>615</sup> [http://medieval-carpentry.org.uk/A\\_to\\_F.html](http://medieval-carpentry.org.uk/A_to_F.html) [accessed 21 July 2018]. 'In medieval documents collars are usually called 'wyndebemes' or a similar derivative - an indication that carpenters thought that this timber counteracted lateral wind forces. In reality, diagonal bracing timbers, such as soulaces and scissor bracing more efficiently serve this purpose.'

<sup>616</sup> Beech 2015, pp. 243-245.

<sup>617</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 386 date the clerestory to 'c. 1400'; Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 8, p. 458. Blomefield attributed the church to Sir Robert Knollys (Knowles) and observed his arms and

under the double ridge...acts as a collar', braced wall-posts cut at their ends between the clerestory windows alternate with post-less arch-braces at their apex, perhaps accounting for repair work in the form of clasps at the intersections of the purlins and principal rafters and collars to arch-braces.<sup>618</sup> Foliate bosses adorn the undersides of four of the collar-beams. Refined yet spare in effect, the roof is peppered with small demi-angel relief carvings, along the cornice and at the intersections of the purlins and ridge with the principal rafters, carrying shields, or their hands either raised or clasped in prayer (Fig. 180).<sup>619</sup> If Sir Robert Knollys was responsible for the roof as Blomefield suggests, far from demanding hammer-beam angels in the wake of the Westminster roof, he was satisfied with a more generalised angelic roof presence often characterised as typical of later fifteenth-century roofs.<sup>620</sup> The structure and form of the arch-braced nave roof at Brinton St Andrew (19 miles north-east of Harpley in Norfolk) was admired by Brandon and Brandon.<sup>621</sup> If it is another of the first of this roof type, as Cautley claims, its carvings of shield-bearing angels at the ends of alternate intermediate principal rafters at the apex of the arcade arches would represent an equally early, more restrained manifestation of applied angelic imagery in a non-hammer-beam roof. However, a somewhat ambivalent early-sixteenth-century will bequest could equally reference this roof.<sup>622</sup> The continuity and

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those of his wife on the screens; Mortlock and Roberts 2017, p. 133 also assign the nave clerestory and roof to Sir Robert Knollys (1330-1407) and his executor John Drewe (rector 1389-1421). Both were supporters of the House of Lancaster. The battlements of the clerestory carry shields with the arms of Knollys, but also of other families. Knollys also restored Sculthorpe All Saints, but the nave roof was replaced in the nineteenth century;

<sup>618</sup> Cautley 1949, p. 27.

<sup>619</sup> Some of the cornice angels in darker wood are clearly replaced. All are winged, whereas some of the ridge angels are wingless or missing.

<sup>620</sup> Clearly the roof was not commissioned by one of the patrons who, 'in the two decades following the completion of Westminster Hall...were eager to specify angel-hammer beams irrespective of structural need', according to Beech 2015, p. 241; Cautley 1949, p. 27. These angelic carvings and their shields were repainted during the 1965 restoration.

<sup>621</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 75.

<sup>622</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 240 record the Reverend John Skye's 1529 bequest of '10 marks to edify and perform a new roof' at Brinton (NRO NCC will reg. Palgrave 83). Exactly which roof is



endurance of applications of angelic imagery to arch-braced roofs which this would suggest appear to be confirmed in the nave roofs of two other Norfolk church rebuilding programmes asserting wealth and status, at Sparham St Mary, 22 miles south-east of Harpley, and at nearby Great Witchingham St Mary (Fig. 181), where bequests offer probable dating evidence for the late fifteenth century.<sup>623</sup>

At Sparham, the mid-fifteenth-century roof of the high, narrow nave is steeply pitched. Despite this, there is no sign of stress to the fabric, although it is debatable whether this is accounted for by the consistent support of the principal rafters by braced wall-posts, rather than the alternating arrangement at Harpley. Against the ridge are nine rather garishly repainted demi-angels carrying shields, facing east, except for R1 at the threshold to the chancel (Fig. 182). This carved angelic presence is augmented by stone corbels in the form of shield-bearing demi-angels, appearing to support the roof under the wall-posts, between the three-light clerestory windows.

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referred to is unclear; the executors were also to 'relead [the] Lady Chapel', and the chancel roof (now lost) had a new roof in 1544. Cautley 1949, p. 179. The nave cornice embellished with quatrefoils bears comparison with that at Salhouse St Nicholas, some 7 miles north-east. Beech 2015, p. 260 argues for increased use of relief angelic carvings (in hammer-beam roofs) as the fifteenth century progressed, on grounds of economy and efficiency. However, this form of carving does not assist with dating the Brinton roof, because such carvings were clearly employed across roof types across the period under discussion.

<sup>623</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 265 and p.274 cite two will bequests recorded in registers at the NRO: '1459 13s.4d. to building and reparation of the nave [at Sparham], John Sparham, NCC Brosyard 143', and '1493 10 marks to new roof [at Great Witchingham], John Marchant, NRO NCH Fuller 234.' In relation to the Sparham bequest, Luxford 2010, pp. 303-305 warns that 'such small gifts are not of themselves a sufficient basis for estimating the chronology of buildings.' Instead, he observes similarities in the clerestories of the neighbouring churches, citing Clement Wulvesby's 1498 bequest to the 'fabric' at Sparham and the antiquarian evidence of Thomas Martin, and suggesting a late-fifteenth-century date for both. Cotton 1989, p. 48; Duffy 2005, p. 334; Cassell 2012, p. 27; as Luxford notes, the Sparham screen panels are similar stylistically to those at Foxley St Thomas, to the painting of which donor John Baymond left 4 marks in 1485, suggesting that they were in situ by that date. Additional evidence for their installation prior to 1485 is provided by NRO NCC will reg. Brosyard 174; in the will of Margaret Hastings, she gave 13s 4d 'for a new Rodeloft' at Foxley in 1459.

Bosses in the form of crosses at the intersections of the purlins and principal rafters comprise the only other adornment to the roof. The Sparham and Great Witchingham nave roofs are not identical in their arch-braced structures and embellishment, despite similarities in their clerestories and construction dates.<sup>624</sup> At Sparham, the cornice is narrow, below the exposed eaves, contrasting with the deeper cornice adorned with an upper band of carved quatrefoils at Great Witchingham. The wall-posts at Great Witchingham are more substantial and panelling evidences a slim lost rood canopy at the east. Although both have angelic carvings at the ridge, the Sparham shield-bearers differ in carving and conception to those from Great Witchingham, where several bear symbols of Christ's Passion and their ecclesiastical attire is more detailed (Figs. 183-184.). This distinction is significant. The addition of small carvings of shield-carrying demi-angels high in the rafters references a convention in angelic representation with fourteenth-century origins and royal or elite associations, as discussed in chapter three. It could represent an almost tokenistic gesture towards the trend for angelic imagery, or its appropriation for the advertisement of patronal associations and status. In contrast, the selection of carefully delineated ecclesiastical iconography on this scale, even where it could hardly be seen, alludes to a very different tradition, developed at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel and more commonly expressed in hammer-beam roof structures.

## Salle

In structural terms, the arch-braced angel roofs of the nave and chancel of the celebrated grand church at Salle SS Peter and Paul in Norfolk have more in common with the nave roof at Harpley, some 22 miles west, than with the unique and extravagant hammer-beam roof at nearby Cawston St Agnes (Fig. 185). As at Harpley, the Salle roofs demonstrate that, whilst some

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<sup>624</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 274; NRO NCC will reg. Ryxe 314. There is evidence of direct emulation elsewhere, as at Witton (near Norwich), where John Dade's bequest dated 1505 specified 'new roofs to be made like those of Little Plumstead'. However, it is impossible to corroborate this through material analysis, due to restoration work.

patrons 'were eager to specify angel-hammer-beams' in response to the late-fourteenth-century royal roof at Westminster Hall, others were content with a very different form of angelic expression, integrated within an existing local carpentry tradition.<sup>625</sup> At Salle, the designs of the roofs have been linked to those at Ashwellthorpe All Saints, through the transcription of a contract between Sir Edmund Thorpe and Salle carpenter John Faudy.<sup>626</sup> The agreement regarding the nave and north chapel roofs at Ashwellthorpe dates from 1398, some forty to fifty years prior to the construction of the chancel roof at Salle, yet analysis of the specifications in the contract, restoration details and material evidence reveals apparent similarities in terms of structure and adornment between the roofs of the two churches.<sup>627</sup> The specification of an alternating structure of principal rafters supported by wall-posts with corbels and intermediate 'bastard' principals terminating at the wall-plate for the nave roof at Ashwellthorpe is comparable to that at Salle.<sup>628</sup> Equally, the inclusion of 'skilfully carved' bosses at the ridge is analogous to the chancel roof design at Salle.<sup>629</sup> The north chancel Thorpe chapel roof at Ashwellthorpe was to have 'angels, dogs or other elegant ornaments carrying the ends of the shouldered braces above the cornices', although these are missing from the extant structure. If angels were included in the original roof, it is also interesting to consider their possible impact upon the unusual design of the arch-braced chancel roof with shield-bearing angels inserted at the cornice two miles away at neighbouring Wreningham All

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<sup>625</sup> Beech 2015, p. 241.

<sup>626</sup> Cattermole 1989, pp. 297-302.

<sup>627</sup> Cattermole 1989, p. 299. The chancel roof at Ashwellthorpe shares similar characteristics to those of the roofs specified in the contract, just as the nave and chancel roofs at Salle are analogous in some respects.

<sup>628</sup> Cattermole 1989, pp. 299-300. This alternating structural form is found in a number of arch-braced roofs and is described as a 'Bastard-roof' in this contract. The north chancel chapel roof at Ashwellthorpe shares this form.

<sup>629</sup> Parsons 1937, p. 59 observes that the Salle chancel bosses do not function as 'real roof bosses', as they are separate wood carvings attached to the ridge, rather than inserted as key-pieces, as specified at Ashwellthorpe.

Saints, a church which Thorpe founded shortly before his death in 1417 (Fig. 186).<sup>630</sup>

The choice of conventional arch-braced roof structures at Salle was probably a matter of the priorities, taste and desire of its middle-class patrons and rector to express their piety, rather than of insufficient funds, given the exceptional standard of other art within the church at Salle, and the high quality of the roof structures and their embellishment.<sup>631</sup> Although considerable documentation exists for the church, the patronage of the nave is frustratingly elusive. In 1937, two of the shield-bearing roof angels were recorded as bearing the arms of Brewes and Shardelow, but the material evidence is potentially compromised by the comprehensive early twentieth-century restoration.<sup>632</sup> Several factors indicate an earlier date for this roof than that of the chancel. A particularly interesting feature, first noted by Cautley, is the fact that the principal rafters of the arch-braced aisle roofs project through the nave walls and form corbels with a genuinely structural function, tenoned into the wall-posts and conveying some of the thrust to the

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<sup>630</sup> Roskell, Clark and Rawcliffe 1993; *The History of Parliament*

<https://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1386-1421/member/thorpe-sir-edmund-1418>

[accessed 10 November 2018].

<sup>631</sup> Parsons 1937, pp. 22-3 and p. 37 observes that existing evidence contradicts any suggestion that the church was built by a rich lord, notwithstanding the relatively modest size of the local population; Heslop, in Ford 1988, p. 194-199 outlines the patronage of the fifteenth-century rebuilding and refurnishing of the church by the rector, William Wode and members of local families, including the Mautbys, Brewes, Roses, Briggs and Boleyns; shields charged with the arms of the Brewes (and the Mautbys) are displayed above the west door.

<sup>632</sup> Parsons 1937, p. 148; NRO MC 692/15. Apparently, the 'complete' restoration of the nave and aisles was undertaken before the death of its funder, Sir Woolner White in 1909. The architect was J. A. Reeve of Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster. This work may have been slightly less 'conservative' than the subsequent restoration of the transepts, tower and side chapels by William Weir of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (1910-1912), especially as the nave roof appears to have been in 'a deplorable state...in places open to the sky' with rotting timbers at the end of the nineteenth century. However, care appears to have been taken to retain medieval work where possible and to distinguish this from that of the restoration.

aisle walls.<sup>633</sup> This arrangement is not unique, as it is found at Norwich St Peter Mancroft (see chapter three), but it is unusual, perhaps indicating a connection between building works at the two churches. With documentary evidence it suggests the simultaneous construction of the nave and aisles in the early fifteenth century.<sup>634</sup> The medieval design of the six-bay nave roof at Salle can still be deciphered, despite centuries of decay and extensive restoration (Fig. 187). The rafters carry evidence of sacred monograms and a section survives of the painted cornice imagery of angels holding scrolls inscribed with the words of Psalm 150 and the *Te Deum* (Fig. 57).<sup>635</sup> This angelic display is augmented by carvings of demi-angels at the intersections of the purlins and principal rafters (Fig. 188), most bearing painted shields, with grotesque and other carved heads in relief between them (Fig 199), where the intermediate principals meet the double purlins.<sup>636</sup> As at Harpley, aside from the apparent inclusion of the Brewes family arms, which are more prominently displayed elsewhere in the church, this early array of angelic shield-bearers and angels at prayer appears to have been appropriated for God rather than for the display of patronage or lineage, unlike those along the ridge of the later cambered tie-beam roof at Blythburgh Holy Trinity (see chapter three). At Salle, more individual markers of space exhibited in roofs are found in the use of personal initials in the wooden bosses of the north

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<sup>633</sup> Cautley 1949, p. 240.

<sup>634</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 263; Parsons 1937, p. 19; Heslop, in Ford 1988, p. 196. Wood for the church is referred to in the 1408 Court Rolls of Kirkhall manor, probably for roofing; glass at the east of the south aisle had an inscription to John Holwey (d. 1401), and an inscription to Thomas Boleyn (d. 1411) was recorded in a south window.

<sup>635</sup> James 1930, p. 163. 'The nave roof is powdered with *lis's* and crowned *M's*. On the cornice (from north-west) can be read part of the 150<sup>th</sup> Psalm of the Gloria, and great part of the *Te Deum*.' James was writing after the major restoration (completed by 1909); paint analysis might confirm the extent to which the monograms were restored or added then.

<sup>636</sup> From direct observation, of the twenty four angelic carvings, one is missing towards the north-west (NLP5) and there are at least four replacements to the north and west (NLP2, NLP4, NUP6, SUP6). Some wings are replaced too (NLP3, NUP2, NUP4, SLP1-2, SLP4, SUP2-3 and SUP5). Foliate bosses substitute heads at the west.

and south transepts (c. 1430s), by Thomas Rose and Thomas Briggs respectively.<sup>637</sup>

The eight-bay chancel at Salle represents an ambitious project in terms of its scope and execution. Its roof is no exception, exceeding the earlier nave canopy in the scale of its angelic display and the sophistication of its other carved imagery (Fig. 190). The chancel roof is divided into panels, with angelic carvings at the intersections of the principal timbers, as in the nave roof, foliated bosses where the divisions of the panels meet and others at the ridge representing scenes from the Life and Passion of Christ. Material and documentary evidence, including antiquarian Thomas Martin's record of a lost inscription in the windows, point to its probable completion c. 1440 or c. 1450.<sup>638</sup> Although the inscription apparently ascribed the building of the chancel to William Wode, rector of the church from 1428, it is more likely that it resulted from collaboration between the incumbent and parishioners, most notably the Brewes, whose arms were recorded in the glazing, probably in the east window.<sup>639</sup>

It has been suggested that the roof and its bosses, although 'very good by local standards', are less outstanding than the glass and the stalls, which are certainly exceptional.<sup>640</sup> Several factors appear to support this contention, although its display of angelic carvings at the intersections of the principal timbers is both overwhelming and original in character.<sup>641</sup> Unquestionably, the roof structure itself reflects local craftsmanship; like the nave roof and

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<sup>637</sup> Heslop, in Ford 1988, pp. 196-197.

<sup>638</sup> Parsons 1937, pp. 59-61; Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Norfolk: Salle, Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul <http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/salle/history.html> [accessed 15 July 2018]; NRO, Rye MS 17, iii, f. 174r. Martin seems to have transcribed the date as 1450, but it is suggested that this was an error, and glazing evidence is cited in favour of the earlier date.

<sup>639</sup> Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi, Norfolk: Salle, Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul <http://www.cvma.ac.uk/publications/digital/norfolk/sites/salle/history.html> [accessed 15 July 2018]. Ela Brewes was the patron of the church during the construction of the chancel.

<sup>640</sup> Heslop, in Ford 1988, pp. 198-199.

<sup>641</sup> Parsons 1937, p. 59. '...it is calculated that there were once 276 angel figures distributed over the surface, of which 159 remain'.

many other Norfolk examples, it has no collar-beams, although it has a 'knuckle bend' added at the ridge.<sup>642</sup> It did not pay homage to the trend for hammer-beam construction elsewhere. The imagery of the wooden relief carvings at the apex of the roof is unusual in the context of angel roofs; in fact, the combination of scenes from the early life of Christ and his Passion is atypical in carved roof schemes in Norfolk more generally, probably reflecting patronal choice.<sup>643</sup> It differs from the depiction of the Joys of the Virgin in other high-end production at Norwich St Helen and in the north porch at Wymondham Abbey (both c. 1450), for example, although specific scenes coincide (Figs. 191-192).<sup>644</sup> Although their execution is more refined than many regional roof carvings, as Hawkins has observed, the 'false' Salle bosses are modelled in relief on a flat surface, in contrast to the protruding stone carvings of some local elite production, as exemplified by their conceptually and technically sophisticated contemporaries at Norwich St Helen and the early fifteenth-century cloister bosses at Norwich Cathedral, which demand viewing from different angles.<sup>645</sup> Notwithstanding this, high-end wooden boss carving could take the flatter form, as seen in the central roof boss depicting Christ in Judgement at the crossing at Norwich St Peter Hungate, as discussed in chapter two. However, although the Salle bosses are well-carved, arguably they are more comparable in composition and execution to regional examples such as the central boss of the south porch

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<sup>642</sup> Cautley 1949, p. 240.

<sup>643</sup> From west to east, their subjects are: the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Shepherds, the Adoration of the Magi, the Presentation in the Temple, the Entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Ascension. Hence the Passion themes culminated at the Rood ensemble. Cattermole 1989, p. 298. The contract for roofs at Ashwellthorpe specifies 'skilfully carved [bosses to be] made by the advice of' the patron, Edmund de Thorpe.

<sup>644</sup> For example, the Wymondham carvings include the Annunciation and the Ascension.

<sup>645</sup> Robert Hawkins, in a paper titled 'The representation of space in the late sculpted bosses at Norwich cathedral cloister c. 1410-30', delivered at the conference 'New Directions in the Study of Medieval Sculpture' at the Henry Moore Institute, Leeds on 17 March 2018, and in email correspondence, for which I am grateful.

at Metfield in Suffolk than to the particularly sophisticated configuration and carving of the Hungate boss (Fig. 91).<sup>646</sup>

The display of diminutive standing feathered angelic carvings with multiple wings at the intersections of the principal timbers is unusual, compared to the more typical demi-angels in the nave roof and others elsewhere (Fig. 193). These differ in appearance and scale from the large standing hammer-beam-angels in feathered suits at nearby Cawston St Agnes (Fig. 148). The boss carvings and these chancel roof angels at Salle point to thoughtful conception and above average local workmanship, if not design and execution at the very highest level.

The chancel roof represented the culmination of a series of remarkable early- to mid-fifteenth century roof designs at Salle, where the hammer-beam idiom was consistently eschewed in favour of established arch-braced technology by its lay patrons and rector. This preference was not unique within mid-century construction projects. At Wighton All Saints, fifteen miles north-west of Salle, the chancel rebuilding programme was led by the pre-eminent mason-architect James Woderofe, responsible for work on elite projects at Eton and Norwich Cathedral, and at Norfolk churches with hammer-beam roofs, as at Norwich St Peter Mancroft and at Great Cressingham St Michael. In contrast, at Wighton, the shallow-pitched chancel roof by carpenter William Bishop (c. 1449-51) is a relatively unremarkable arch-braced affair, notwithstanding its restoration.<sup>647</sup> Nonetheless, although Wighton is a large and imposing church, it lacks the grandeur and architectural significance of Salle. In the impressive rebuilding scheme at Worstead St Mary, arch-braced construction was restricted to the late-fifteenth-century chancel roof; a hammer-beam structure surmounts the nave.<sup>648</sup> Some Norfolk churches with

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<sup>646</sup> Parsons 1937, p. 59. Here I differ with Mr Cole, Parsons' photographer, who declared of the boss depicting the Triumphal Entry that 'some of the faces...are far superior' to those in the stone nave bosses at Norwich Cathedral. Parsons differentiated between the Salle bosses in terms of quality of carving and it is possible that they are the work of more than one hand.

<sup>647</sup> Trend 2017, p. 17; NRO DCN 1/2/59.

<sup>648</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 275. Work commenced on the new chancel in 1484-1485; for making the new roof, carpenter Andrew Couper was paid 61s. 10½ d.



arch-braced angel roofs such as Bessingham St Mary and Swainsthorpe St Peter are much smaller.<sup>649</sup> The choice to articulate angelic roof imagery in locally conventional structural terms in ‘the finest church in Norfolk’ underlines the diversity of taste and expression in regional angel roofs.<sup>650</sup>

An example of the late medieval angel roof genre appears to have been installed even as the Reformation dawned at Helmingham St Mary in Suffolk. By the end of the late-medieval period, bequests to church-building in Suffolk appear to have declined, but in her will of 1540, Joan Bacon gave 20s. ‘to the making of the church roof of Helmingham’.<sup>651</sup> Money was left to paint the rood loft in 1497, suggesting that some time had elapsed since the roof was installed.<sup>652</sup> The extant nave roof is plastered between the principal timbers and has a spare late sixteenth- or early seventeenth-century appearance (Fig. 194). There is no clerestory and the moulded wall-posts bear no relation to the fabric of the aisle-less nave. Thin arch-braces with slim square pendants rise to collar-beams, which in turn have similar central pendants. Carved arch-braces support the purlins west to east and demi-angels with wide outstretched wings adorn the cornice. Despite the absence of dendrochronological analysis, there is no evidence to suggest that this is not the 1540 roof, nor is such a late angel roof unprecedented. Tree-ring analysis supports the dating of the nave roof with hammer-beam-end angelic carvings carrying shields emblazoned with Instruments of Christ’s Passion at Llanidloes St Idloes in Powys, Wales to after the suppression of the monasteries.<sup>653</sup> As Marshall and Walsham have observed, some fresh

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<sup>649</sup> These roofs are also heavily restored.

<sup>650</sup> Cautley 1949, p. 239.

<sup>651</sup> SROI IC/AA2/13/291; Northeast, in Harper-Bill, Rawcliffe and Wilson 2002, p. 97, notes another late roof bequest at Chattisham All Saints and St Margaret, but the roof is concealed by plaster, with additional tie-beams to the lower walls.

<sup>652</sup> Cotton, Lunnon and Wrapson 2014, p. 226; NRO NCC will reg. Types 136. 5 marks were left by John Holme.

<sup>653</sup> CPAT Regional Historic Environment Record:

<https://archwilio.org.uk/arch/query/page.php?prn=CPAT1856> [accessed 12 September 2018]; Miles and Suggett 2003, pp. 118-121. Tree-ring dating of the nave roof timbers in 2002/3 established a precise felling date of summer/autumn 1538. One of the shields held by the carved angels at the

representations of angels 'managed to creep into [English] churches' during the Elizabethan period, as in the painted roof panels depicting angels with scrolls bearing inscriptions at Muchelney SS Peter and Paul in Somerset (c. 1600).<sup>654</sup> Such imagery was exceptional and was characterised by an evolving aesthetic and conceptual framework. Ambivalence towards the representation of angels after the Reformation was nothing new, and their depiction in church roofs waned rather than ending abruptly with Henry VIII's First Act of Supremacy in 1534.<sup>655</sup>

### Tie-beam roofs (Fig. 195)

Arguably the safest option structurally, medieval tie-beam roofs are particularly diverse in pitch and form, spanning single- and double-framed construction.<sup>656</sup> Tie-beams are structurally advantageous in reducing lateral thrust by bringing it down as low as possible.<sup>657</sup> Aesthetic concerns regarding vertical effect and the relationship of the roof to the profile of the chancel and tower arches were addressed through the use of cambered tie-beams with curved arch-braces, and later through their elegant suppression in almost flat-pitched structures. As noted earlier, tie-beams were employed with king- or crown-posts in some fourteenth-century single-framed roofs to increase their stability. Examples of this period are generally plain and rustic, often supporting aisle-less naves of relatively small churches, as at Naughton St Mary and Whatfield St Margaret in Suffolk; similarly unadorned structures are predominant in Essex churches too, especially to the south. The roof of the

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beam-ends is inscribed AD1542, opposite another inscribed '2 Feb. 33 Henry VIII' (1542). The north side of the roof surmounts a stone arcade of c.1190-1215 brought from Cwm Hir Abbey after its suppression in 1536. It is often argued that the roof also came from the abbey and that the inscription dates were added to mark its re-erection. Tree-ring analysis proves that the roof dates after the suppression of the monastery; it must have been built specifically to cover the recycled stone arcade in the church.

<sup>654</sup> Marshall and Walsham 2006, p. 153.

<sup>655</sup> Walsham, in Marshall and Walsham 2006, pp. 134-167 provides a useful account of the ambiguity surrounding attitudes towards angels and their representation during the period.

<sup>656</sup> Cautley 1937, p. 111.

<sup>657</sup> Cordingley 1961, pp. 78-9.

arcaded nave at Barking St Mary is an unusual survivor in a grand fifteenth-century extension project and the moulded wall-posts at Ringshall St Catherine, also in Suffolk, are early sixteenth-century additions.<sup>658</sup> Two other main variants of the tie-beam idiom which emerged in the fifteenth century would be characterised by a concern for adornment and refinement. Particularly to the west of the region, an influential form developed in which tie-beams with queen-posts were combined with hammer-beams in some of the earliest angel roofs in East Anglian parish churches, as discussed in chapter one and below, in relation to other single hammer-beam roof types. In a separate development, understated low-pitched cambered tie-beam roofs provided sophisticated, structurally sound and understated canopies in later-fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century church rebuilding projects, especially in wool-rich south-west Suffolk and adjoining areas of Essex and Cambridgeshire.<sup>659</sup> Networks connecting leading parishioners, patrons and makers in this milieu led west and south to Cambridge and London, rather than east or north-east to Ipswich or Norwich.<sup>660</sup>

#### Burwell and cambered tie-beam roofs

Angelic expression is manifest in some of these roofs, albeit often rather restrained and almost tokenistic in character, typically restricted to relief cornice carvings of demi-angels. An exception to this characteristic design is found in the imagery of the flat-pitched cambered tie-beam chancel roof at Burwell St Mary, some eleven miles north-east of Cambridge (Fig. 196). The bequest of the rector John Higham, to finish the newly started chancel, dates from 1467, comprising an interesting example of clerical patronage within a

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<sup>658</sup> British Listed Buildings: [https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101283864-church-of-st-catherine-ringshall#.W5jr9\\_ZFzIU](https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101283864-church-of-st-catherine-ringshall#.W5jr9_ZFzIU) [accessed 3 August 2018].

<sup>659</sup> Cescinsky and Gribble 1922, p. 69. Regarding this type, the authors observed that ‘with these low-pitched roofs there is practically no outward thrust, and the little there is, the wall-posts, to which the tie-beams are arch-braced, take up very efficiently.’

<sup>660</sup> Byng 2015, p. 336.

project with lay support, as observed by Stewart.<sup>661</sup> The relative sophistication of the carving and imagery of the stone angelic corbels is perhaps unsurprising, given the probable provision of the designs at Burwell by Reginald Ely, master mason at King's College chapel in Cambridge.<sup>662</sup> From the north-east, demi-angels bear a crown, with evidence of extant pigment (NC1), a heart (NC2), a bishop's mitre (NC3) and musical pipes (NC4), the fifth lost to the rood stair; from the south-east, another crown (SC1), a clasped book (SC2), a shield charged with Higham's arms of three boars (SC3), a lute or gittern (SC4) and a reliquary casket in the form of a micro-architectural representation of an early Christian church (SC5).<sup>663</sup> At the east and west ends, these stone corbel angels appear to support less refined carved wooden figures holding clasped books, in a reversal of the usual relationship between carved roof angels and saints or other wall-post figures (Fig. 197-198). Between them, other angelic corbels are placed at the apex of the chancel windows, beneath the intermediate tie-beams, alternating with additional carved wooden figures against the wall-posts to sturdy arch-braced principal ties above imposing empty niches with spired, crocketed canopies flanking the glazing (Fig. 199). Higham's identity is asserted subtly in this primarily ecclesiastical angelic scheme, in which there is an atypical dialogue between roof images in stone and wood. Angelic representation elsewhere in the richly decorated scheme is confined to a single cornice panel. Caution must be exercised given evidence of restoration work to the roof, but other brattished panels feature an array of creatures, foliate carvings adorn the principal brace spandrels, and foliate and avian bosses punctuate the intersections of the main timbers in an unusually extravagant display within this roof genre.

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<sup>661</sup> Zachary Stewart, in a paper titled 'The Architecture of Incumbency? Burwell and Beyond', delivered at the 2018 Annual BAA conference, 'Cambridge: College, Church and City';

<sup>662</sup> <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/cambs/vol10/pp358-364>

<sup>663</sup> Palmer 1935, p. 85; the reliquary casket is an unusual object in angel roofs; another rare example is found at Emneth St Edmund.

The chancel roof represents the climax of a unified yet differentiated articulation of roof structures and imagery at Burwell, as noted by Stewart.<sup>664</sup> An *orate* inscription over the chancel arch records that John Benet, 'lessee of Ramsey's manor demesne' funded its wall and the construction of the nave roof c. 1464, following work on the north aisle from c. 1449. The aisle roofs presage the tie-beam idiom of the chancel roof. Notwithstanding evidence of restoration, losses and replacement work (to some scroll-bearing angel corbels, carved angelic figures holding open books and cornice panels for example) in the north aisle, and additional work in the south aisle (Fig. 200), on a more restrained level these roofs also herald the angelic corbels, the bosses at the intersections of the moulded principal timbers and the cornice adornment of the chancel roof. Alongside cornice displays of creatures and birds, one north aisle panel features scroll-bearing angels flanking a crown.

The structure of the flat-pitched cambered tie-beam nave roof high above the clerestory is distinguished from the later chancel roof in two main respects; it lacks alternating intermediate beams and the arch-braces are quite different (Fig. 201). Although the braces also terminate at the ridge, they are much steeper, rising from longer wall-posts between the clerestory windows. Their spandrels are wide and open, with restrained pierced tracery, in contrast to the elaborately carved shallow blind brace spandrels of the chancel roof. Signalling the imagery of the chancel roof, full bosses with carvings of foliate, angelic and avian motifs and heads clasp the moulded principals where they meet the ridge, others flank the purlins and the brattished cornice panels are alive with animals and birds flanking shields, foliate motifs and roses and the chalice and Host. Yet intriguingly, the stone corbels below the wall-posts take the form of pier capitals rather than angels and angelic representations in the roof are restricted to relief carvings along the cornice at the east of the nave. Here censing angels flank an angel at prayer to the north and a scroll-bearing angel and winged lion frame the chalice and Host. Based upon material surveys, the proliferation of angelic roof imagery in the aisles and chancel and its virtual absence in the nave at Burwell represents a reversal of the apparent trend in many other regional late-medieval churches, where

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<sup>664</sup> Stewart 2018.

the nave canopy alone is filled with angels, from Bardwell and Carbrooke to Necton and Trunch.

However, if one combines these accidents of survival with wider analysis, a more complex picture can be painted. Surviving late medieval East Anglian church roofs predominantly surmount naves rather than chancels.<sup>665</sup> Extant 'open plan' angel roofs span the nave and chancel of churches such as King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel and Norwich St Peter Mancroft. Some remarkable angel roofs survive in aisles, as at Mildenhall St Mary and Woolpit St Mary, and to a lesser extent in chancels, as at Barningham St Andrew and Ufford St Mary of the Assumption. Documents can verify lost angelic chancel roofs, as at Knapton SS Peter and Paul (discussed in chapter five). All of this evidence points to a more varied and layered manifestation of late-medieval angelic roof imagery across the region than endures today, encompassing lay and clerical collaboration and cooperation, alongside individual expressions of status or piety.

At Saffron Walden St Mary in Essex, the arch-braced low-pitched cambered tie-beam roofs to both nave and chancel appear to be separated considerably in date, perhaps by over half a century. Byng has shown that the chancel clerestory and roof could conceivably date between c. 1439 (or earlier) and 1443.<sup>666</sup> The churchwardens signed a renowned contract with Simon Clerk, master mason of King's College Cambridge, and his successor, John Wastell, in 1485. If this was to rebuild the nave, as has been suggested, the 'sumptuous' clerestory and roof do not appear to have been completed until 1518, in which case the roof represents a relatively late example with angelic iconography (Fig. 202).<sup>667</sup> Despite this delay, the chancel and nave roofs speak to each other, related but not identical in structure and imagery, although one must allow for the impact of Griffith's

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<sup>665</sup> See appendices 2 and 3 .

<sup>666</sup> Byng 2015, pp. 331-332.

<sup>667</sup> Byng 2015, pp. 334-336. The last surviving will bequest to the clerestory dates from 1518, when another bequest was made to 'the building of the rood loft', suggesting that the clerestory and its roof were complete.

restoration work (1790-1793).<sup>668</sup> The bays of the chancel roof are shorter than those of the nave, spanning a single clerestory window, rather than a pair. As at Burwell, the chancel wall-posts have niches with carved figures and the arch-braces to the tie-beams in the nave have pierced tracery. However, in contrast to Burwell, angelic roof imagery borders the nave in the form of demi-angels flanking bosses along the nave cornice. This mode of restrained angelic display is characteristic of these regional cambered tie-beam roofs, as seen elsewhere, from Sudbury All Saints in Suffolk to Stamford All Saints in Lincolnshire. Its marked contrast to the assertive angelic hammer-beam expression of the alternating tie-beam and hammer-beam roof type devised at King's Lynn (discussed in chapter one) underlines the versatility of the tie-beam mode in angel roof development.

#### Single hammer-beam roofs (Fig. 203)

The early development and subsequent spread in the west of the region of a roof form in which angelic hammer-beams alternate with tie-beams with queen-posts or arch-braces has already been rehearsed within the context of a discussion of the methodology of material analysis in chapter two. It is not my intention to repeat this material here, but instead, to explore the significant alternative regional hammer-beam roof types and developments. As the width of most parish church naves did not exceed that which could be spanned using existing roof technology, the introduction of the hammer-beam form appears to have been driven by iconographic rather than structural concerns, although some solutions were more audacious than others.<sup>669</sup> Of course, this is not to say that the hammer-beam had no structural function, simply that other more conventional structural forms were available so its deployment was principally a matter of aesthetic or formal choice.

Brandon and Brandon rejected the mid-nineteenth-century hypothesis that hammer-beam construction is essentially cut-away tie-beam construction,

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<sup>668</sup> ERO Q/SBb 343/8.

<sup>669</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 61. Norfolk 2: NW and S; see appendix 2 for typical dimensions.

proposing instead its basis in the lengthening of the horizontal sole-piece at the foot of the rafter, into which the wall-post is tenoned. In this augmented framing, the arch-brace bears the weight of the roof 'lower down upon the wall', although their confidence that this precluded roof spread reflects an instinctive optimism, not always supported by the performance of some roofs.<sup>670</sup> As discussed in the introduction, hammer-beam construction was developed in the early fourteenth century, following the unveiling of Herland's angelic canopy at Westminster Hall, but did not prove popular until its spread across East Anglian churches and elite buildings in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

### Early single hammer-beam roofs

A very different solution to the insertion of angelic imagery in an alternating tie-beam and hammer-beam roof structure than the influential model devised in King's Lynn in Norfolk emerged in mid Suffolk in the early fifteenth-century. The felling date range of timbers in the nave roof at Debenham St Mary Magdalene has been established as c. 1397-1409, so it is contemporary with the roof at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, yet there are significant differences between the two structures.<sup>671</sup> At Debenham, the hammer-beams appear to have displayed relief carvings of demi-angels at their ends, although these are lost, leaving only the exposed tenons (Fig. 204). In contrast, hammer-beams comprising horizontal carved angels characterise the King's Lynn roof. It is clear that horizontal angelic beams and beam-end angels co-existed in East Anglian angel roofs immediately after the completion of the royal canopy at Westminster Hall. Although neither type

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<sup>670</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, pp. 21-22. Beech 2015, p. 68 cites the insertion of later metal ties at Thornham All Saints in Norfolk and Bacton St Mary in Suffolk as examples. Both are poised over clerestories rather than solid masonry, the Thornham roof has alternating wall-posts and braces overhanging the windows precariously, and Bacton has a 'false' double hammer-beam roof, yet even so, roof spread is not obvious, unlike at Cotton St Andrew in Suffolk. Undoubtedly, spread was a risk, but some later interventions are unnecessary, as discussed below.

<sup>671</sup> Centre for Archaeology Report 43/2001.

<http://research.historicengland.org.uk/Report.aspx?i=7473&ru=%2fResults.aspx%3fn%3d10%26a%3d479%26p%3d15> [accessed 17 March 2016].



replicated the royal roof angels, the beam-end form would have referenced them more obliquely. Both the castellated tie-beams and the hammer-beams at Debenham are supported by plain arch-braces on wall-posts between the clerestory windows (Fig. 205), whereas the angelic hammer-beams at Lynn are unbraced and project above the apex of the clerestory windows to secure maximum illumination. In both roofs, braces rise from the hammer-beams to the principals above and there are no collar-beams, but the Debenham roof lacks any additional bracing, whereas the Lynn tie-beams feature queen-posts with braces to the principals above the purlins. These feature lively and varied spandrel carvings, and the roof at St Nicholas Chapel is enriched with a wealth of adornment, as outlined in chapter two, whereas the roof at St Mary Magdalene represents a relatively plain introduction to angelic roof imagery in East Anglia. The understatement of the Suffolk roof belies its significance, as the simultaneous development of beam-end angelic carvings and horizontal beam angels in East Anglian church roofs at the dawn of the fifteenth century negates the suggestion that angel carving type by itself is a useful roof dating tool.<sup>672</sup>

To underline this point, the Debenham model appears not to have been an isolated early experiment in Suffolk. Seventeen miles south-west of Debenham is another early fifteenth-century alternating tie-beam and hammer-beam roof at Bildeston St Mary Magdalene. This probably dates to c. 1420, based upon stylistic connections between the masonry and clerestory window designs here and at Debenham, and the bequest of John Hastyng, who left 20s for 'new work' to be undertaken.<sup>673</sup> The rather more steeply-pitched Bildeston roof has been subject to restoration and the beam-end angels are adorned with modern paint, but it appears to confirm the early distribution of an alternative roof model in which hammer-beams with angelic imagery at their ends were combined with tried and tested tie-beam technology (Fig. 206).<sup>674</sup> Less than seventeen miles north, the nave roof at Walsham-le-Willows St Mary the Virgin in Suffolk is a refined manifestation of

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<sup>672</sup> Haward 1999, p. 19.

<sup>673</sup> Haward 2000, pp. 18-19; Beech 2015, p. 280.

<sup>674</sup> SROB FB79/E6/1-13; SROB FB 79/E2/1.

another variant of the alternating tie-beam and hammer-beam structure, retaining evidence of medieval pigment (Fig. 207). There is no record of the church in Dowsing's journal, but exposed tenons at the beam-ends confirm the removal of carvings, probably angelic (Fig. 208). The roof has a much shallower pitch and the alternating crested and cambered tie-beams and hammer-beams are supported on arch-braces adorned with suns in splendour and stars, on long slender wall-posts between the clerestory windows, rather than at their apex (Fig. 209). There are no corbels; exposed tenons at the ends of the wall-posts indicate the loss of further carved imagery. There are no collars, nor ridge-posts; instead, braced queen-posts rise from the tie-beams to support the principals at and above the purlins and short hammer-posts spring from the hammer-beams to the principals below the purlins. The cornices are also embattled. The date of the roof is a matter of contention. It has been suggested that it dates from c. 1400, contemporary with the alternating horizontal angelic hammer-beam and tie-beam with queen-post model developed in north-west Norfolk at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel.<sup>675</sup> This is problematic, given that the device of North Lopham mason Thomas Aldryche, 'active from the 1460s', embellishes the clerestory exterior, and the existence of bequests to clerestory glazing in 1473 and others for the rood beam in 1441 and 1448.<sup>676</sup> The 'sunbursts' on alternate arch-braces have been assigned to John de la Pole, second Duke of Suffolk, and it seems far more likely that these motifs commensurate with the reign of Edward IV were added at the installation of the roof rather than that they were added later. This further diminishes any suggestion that fifteenth-century roof type offers dating evidence; only in conjunction with other material evidence from building fabric, comparison with other securely dated examples and/or documentary support can dating be established with confidence.

Early fifteenth-century beam-end angelic carvings were not confined to the alternating tie-beam and hammer-beam structural mode, although dating evidence for some roofs is rather nebulous, as at Westerfield St Mary

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<sup>675</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 544.

<sup>676</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 544.

Magdalene, eleven miles south of Debenham, near Ipswich. Acknowledging the dearth of secure documentary evidence, Beech offers a convincing argument for carpentry which ‘may be indicative of early construction’ in the nave and chancel single hammer-beam roofs, often dated to c. 1400.<sup>677</sup> Their construction is certainly unusual; the arch-braces end at the middle of the underside of the hammer-beams, and the hammer-posts are positioned close to the wall, rather than rising from the ends of the hammer-beams (Fig. 210). This is visually alarming, as the hammer-beams appear largely unsupported, the wall-posts are stunted and shortened further above the windows, the nave wall to the north leans outwards and the purlin bows. Yet it may represent the incorporation and extension of established technology, in the form of an enlarged rafter foot to increase horizontal stability, within experimental hammer-beam construction.<sup>678</sup> Clearly, angelic display took priority over structural security. An impression of unified ambition is created by the similarities between the nave and chancel roofs, despite the (perhaps structurally fortunate) lack of the aisles and clerestories so common elsewhere.<sup>679</sup> A watercolour view of the nave painted by Elizabeth Drage before the 1867 restoration shows the roof ceiled in at and above the collar-beams; damage and repair are imprinted within the fabric of the roof, from the rafters replaced after its collapse in the nave, to the restoration angels peppered throughout, at the beam ends and at the base of the wall-posts (Fig. 211). Yet despite the substitution of most of the angels, especially in the chancel, and the loss of their wings in the nave (Fig. 212), enough medieval carving survives to confirm a scheme characterised by shield-carrying crowned angels in ecclesiastical attire, some bearing symbols of the Passion or the Mass, and their intended relationship with other furnishings is evoked

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<sup>677</sup> Beech 2015, p. 277; Historic England <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1236090> [accessed 21 July 2018] states that the church ‘was refurbished in c 1400, when the hammerbeam roof was constructed and restored in 1867 when it was re-seated.’

<sup>678</sup> Beech 2015, pp. 277-278.

<sup>679</sup> These similarities also include their braced collar-beams with king-posts, deep layered cornices and boarding to the eaves. The roof structures are separated, unlike the continuous ‘open-plan’ design at King’s Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, for example.

by the rood stair in the south wall and the rood beam to the east of the nave.<sup>680</sup>

Twenty-one miles north-west of Debenham in north Suffolk, the steeply-pitched single hammer-beam roof at Bardwell SS Peter and Paul may represent the work of Diss carpenter John Hore and almost certainly dates from this early period (Fig. 213).<sup>681</sup> The rebuilding of the church facilitated by Sir William Berdewell (d. 1434) is commemorated in the display of his arms in the south porch spandrels and in his depiction in the glazing of the nave of twelve bays. Of the twenty-six hammer-beams, most have exposed tenons at their ends, some displaying evidence of repair; only four retain wingless beam-end demi-angels (N/S 2 and N/S4).<sup>682</sup> Angelic carving N4 carries an open book, painted with the date 1421; although restored in the nineteenth century, it is possible that this replicates a previous inscription, although one cannot be certain (Fig. 214).<sup>683</sup> A Passion scheme is indicated by the attributes carried by the other surviving angels in ecclesiastical attire (Fig. 215). Alternate arch-braced hammer-beams have long slender wall-posts to small corbels between the clerestory windows and arch-braces on small corbels at the apex of the windows. Further deep arch-braces instead of posts rise from the hammer-beams to the principals at the purlins, where the intersection of the timbers is marked by finely-carved foliate bosses. There are no collar-beams, but the ridge is supported by braced king pendant-posts (Fig. 216). Their structural function is matched by their aesthetic advantage; here, as elsewhere, bosses are displayed at their ends. Further adornment is painted; it takes the form of tracery on the brace spandrels, trailing vines

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<sup>680</sup> One of the beam-end angels appears to have been removed during the installation of the organ to the south-west of the nave. Located on a shelf at the north-west, it typifies the restoration work, in its crisp carving in dark soft wood, and shield emblazoned with an ornate Crown of Thorns. However, some of the nave carvings are clearly medieval and carved in oak. One carries a jousting shield, or *ecranche* (SWP4); other shield motifs include a candlestick (N3) and a cross (N6).

<sup>681</sup> Haward 1999, pp. 24-25.

<sup>682</sup> SROB 2113/1/1; Cooper 2001, p. 371. As Cooper observes, the churchwardens' accounts suggest that iconoclasm to 'pictures in glasse & wood' was not activated by Dowsing, but may have been prompted in anticipation of a visit by him.

<sup>683</sup> Cautley 1937, p. 221.

along the common rafters and red, green and white pigment on the main timbers and cornice.

Haward compares this refined early fifteenth-century single hammer-beam roof to another painted nave roof at Palgrave St Peter, twelve miles east in north Suffolk, citing the 'admirable restraint' and 'architectural unity...so economically achieved in these early examples'.<sup>684</sup> The nave lacks a clerestory and there is an uneasy mixture of arch-braces and arch-braces to wall-posts to accommodate the south windows and north aisle arcade (Fig. 217). The extremely short yet elaborately moulded and crested arch-braced hammer-beams are curtailed at the ends; Palgrave does not appear in Dowsing's journal, so it is a matter of conjecture as to whether angelic imagery was removed from the beam-ends, which have been re-painted since (like the rafters 'prettily painted with tracery patterns', and the stars and roses on the common rafters), although it seems probable.<sup>685</sup> Cautley designates the Palgrave roof uncertainly as an 'early type of this form of roof...probably', on the basis of the continuous arch-bracing of large timbers from the hammer-beam to the purlin and above to under the ridge, and the 'lack' of collar, although Beech has shown that a form of high collar does exist, albeit idiosyncratic.<sup>686</sup> Cautley sees this as an early experimental form of hammer-beam construction, prior to the use of the hammer-post. However, variations of this form are found in a cluster of mainly mid- to south-west Suffolk double hammer-beam roofs, which are often referred to

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<sup>684</sup> Haward 1999, pp. 24-25; Haward 2000, p. 44. Haward also links these roofs to that at Wickham Skeith St Andrew, citing the 'lack of collars and most other features' as similar. Yet the treatment at the ridge is very different in each case, and the beam braces and those to the principals from the beams differ considerably. However, a restrained idiom certainly characterises these roofs, as at Walsham-le-Willows.

<sup>685</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 454; Brandon and Brandon 2005, pp. 68-70. The Brandons admired the roof of this 'small church', especially for 'its colouring, which remains very perfect', and stated that their plates gave 'a faithful representation.' The extant painted adornment when the author visited in March 2016 was remarkably similar to their representations in 1849.

<sup>686</sup> Cautley 1937, p. 105. He was probably influenced by Brandon and Brandon pp. 70-71. Beech 2015, pp. 69-70 argues for a 'severely cranked form...[comprising]...a single transverse timber', rather than two jointed arch-braces, which the construction resembles.

as 'false', as discussed below, suggesting that it may represent a specific regional development in craftsmanship instead, especially as the dating of the Palgrave roof is a matter of debate. Bequests to painting the roof and the 'canopy' in 1471 and 1518 respectively, and to leading in 1518-35 may suggest a later date for its construction, but are inconclusive.<sup>687</sup> In this respect, Palgrave serves as a reminder of the need for further material analysis of such roofs, combined with dendrochronology and paint analysis.

In contrast, tree-ring analysis of timbers from the south transept single hammer-beam roof at Ely Cathedral in Cambridgeshire has been undertaken and confirms a fairly precise felling date span c. 1426-1427.<sup>688</sup> The results can probably be extrapolated to apply to the roof of the north transept, which is extremely similar, albeit not quite identical (Fig. 218).<sup>689</sup> For the designer of these roofs, which surmount the substantial walls of the late-eleventh- and early-twelfth-century masonry, spread was less of a threat than rafter sag, given the exceptional width of their span.<sup>690</sup> To counteract this, in these 'prime examples of collarless construction', arch-braced hammer-posts rise from the beams to the principals, there are two sets of purlins and, instead of collar-beams, king pendants at the ridge are supported by secure transverse and lateral bracing.<sup>691</sup> These replacement roofs marry structural ingenuity with sophisticated visual display, apparently referencing the earlier adornment of the adjacent Octagon vaulting in the paintwork of the rafters,

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<sup>687</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 454.

<sup>688</sup> Howard, Laxton, Linon and Simpson 1991, p. 40; Simpson and Litton, in Tatton-Brown and Munby 1996, pp. 185-189.

<sup>689</sup> For example, both transepts have three bays, but there are eight principals each side of the north transept roof to fit the space, compared to seven each side of the south; also, there are only two wall-post-end angels in the south transept roof; the other posts rise from small corbel heads.

<sup>690</sup> Beech 2015, p. 243-244; Maddison, in Meadows and Ramsay 2003, p. 140 suggests that this 'expensive [fifteenth-century] reroofing operation may imply the structural failure of the fourteenth century mansards.' Rafter sag may have accounted for this if so. The roofs span 33 feet, compared to the more usual width of many parish church naves (19-21 feet).

<sup>691</sup> Beech 2015, p. 243.

alongside fashionable carved angelic imagery.<sup>692</sup> The arch-braced hammer-beams are finely carved as angels, and this imagery is augmented by the addition of relief demi-angels at the brace ends. The carving is refined, befitting the location. Repainted and gilded, many of the angels hold Mass, Passion and musical symbols, such as the chalice and Host (NE3 and SE5), a Pax (NW6 and SW6), the Crown of Thorns (NWWP6) and lute or gittern (SE4). Other attributes include clasped or open books (NE4 and SE6, for example) and crowns (NE6 and SE3); some angels are at prayer (NEWP2/6 and SE2). Several carry shields, especially in the north transept, but the heraldic design of NEWP5 and gilding of SW4 are clearly repainted, so their original motifs are uncertain.<sup>693</sup> This angelic imagery is augmented by the addition of gilded demi-angels along the cornice. Lastly, bosses punctuate the intersections of the moulded ridge and purlins with the principals.

In Norfolk, further collar-less early fifteenth-century single hammer-beam roofs are located at Great Cressingham St Michael and at Carbrooke SS Peter and Paul (as discussed in chapter two), just seven miles apart. Substantial bequests in relation to Great Cressingham appear to confirm construction work during the period c. 1415-1431, and material evidence for a similar date for the roof at Carbrooke has been outlined in chapter two.<sup>694</sup> Great Cressingham is only eleven miles east of Methwold St George and its surrounding locale of other churches with roofs which feature alternating angelic hammer-beam and tie-beam-with-queen-post construction, yet the nave roof of St Michael represents a distinctly different structural model to angelic roof display. Arch-braced hammer-beams on long wall-posts between large two-light Decorated-style clerestory windows alternate with arch-braces to principals above the glass, in contrast to the structure devised

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<sup>692</sup> Maddison, in Meadows and Ramsay 2003, p. 140. The painting is much restored, as Maddison acknowledges, but his suggestion that the repeated quatrefoil design may have been intended to 'tie in' with the central vaulting seems plausible. This design is not generally found in contemporary parish church roofs.

<sup>693</sup> NE1/SW1 etc. denote the locations of beam angels to the east or west of the north or south transepts. The addition of WP signifies a wall-post angel carving.

<sup>694</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 244.

at King's Lynn St Nicholas, in which the angelic beams are fully illuminated at the apex of the glazing (Fig. 70). The slim cornice has lateral bracing. In early collar-less angel roofs, the beams are generally braced to the principals and the principals are braced to the ridge for stiffening, but Beech suggests that the brace and principal comprise a single 'flared' timber at Great Cressingham, and that visual illusion characterises its adroit and unconventional framing more generally, including its 'fictive' collar.<sup>695</sup> Direct observation from ground level and photographic evidence appear to support these contentions, although scrutiny from scaffolding would enable closer analysis of these structural details and restoration evidence. Undoubtedly, aesthetic and iconographic concerns were supreme at Great Cressingham. Foliate bosses adorn the intersections of the main timbers. The beams are carved fully as rather masculine angels, with large hands, although they have lost their wings (Fig. 219). Similarly carved atypical wooden shield-bearing demi-angel corbels are located at the base of the wall-posts. Unusually, feathered angels (N/S3, carrying scrolls; N4/5 with hands raised) are juxtaposed with others in ecclesiastical attire (N/S1, hands raised and facing west; N/S2, with some damage or loss to N2; S4, right hand raised, and S5, wearing a mitre and hands in prayer).

The nave roof at Carbrooke SS Peter and Paul has been discussed in relation to the early single hammer-beam roof at Norwich St Giles in chapter two. Its structure is comparable to that at nearby Great Cressingham, but it is distorted by extensive restoration (Figs. 64-65 & 147). Nonetheless, it is possible to draw several parallels. These include the arch-braced angelic hammer-beams on slender wall-posts with replaced wingless angel corbels between the (three-light) clerestory windows, alternating with moulded principals at the apex of the windows. Other similarities are the lack of collar-beams and their substitution with braced king-pendants at the ridge, the plain brace spandrels, and the 'false' appearance of the arch-braces from the hammer-beams. The foliate bosses at the ends of the king-pendants below the ridge and at the intersections of the principals and purlins are particularly generous in scale, but their crisp profiles are suggestive of restoration work,

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<sup>695</sup> Beech 2015, pp. 263-264.



which is also evident in the beam angels, as discussed previously. A scheme including feathered angels with six wings is evidenced by extant material, as outlined in chapters two and three, implying a connection with the iconography of the Great Cressingham roof (Fig. 220). Establishing a link with its carving requires more detailed material analysis at roof level, but there is a clear conceptual relationship between the two roofs, notwithstanding Blomefield's enigmatic assertion that the Carbrooke roof 'was adorned with the images of the Saviour and his Apostles, all of which were demolished in the time of the Usurpation'.<sup>696</sup> This implies the inclusion of wall-post figures in the original scheme, yet its restoration wall-post angelic carvings speak to the unusual medieval angelic timber angels at the base of the wall-posts at nearby Great Cressingham (Fig. 221).

A particularly interesting and apparently early variant upon the hammer-beam idiom in Norfolk is to be found in the roofs of Beeston-next-Mileham St Mary. Despite the iconoclasm inflicted upon their figural carvings, Pevsner described these roofs as 'a special pleasure', tucked away in 'the best church by far in this strange and inaccessible area'.<sup>697</sup> Despite iconoclasm and restoration work, the conception and execution of the work at Beeston is of evidently high quality.

An early fifteenth-century date is suggested by an inscription in the glass of the three-light clerestory windows on both sides, recorded by the antiquarian Francis Blomefield.<sup>698</sup> Like St Giles, Beeston St Mary appears to represent a remarkably early manifestation of a form of hammer-beam roof structure, although here, principal hammer-beams alternate with smaller intermediate hammer-beam trusses and the iconography is more complex.

The eight-bay nave roof comprises five principal hammer-beam trusses, each supported by a shallow arch-brace which springs from a long wall-post. The wall-posts stand on stone corbels, carved to represent shield-bearing angels. On the wall-posts are 'fine' figures under hoods with nodding ogee

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<sup>696</sup> Blomefield 1805-1810, vol. 2, pp. 336.

<sup>697</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 200. Norfolk NW and S.

<sup>698</sup> Blomefield 1805-1810, vol. 8, p. 465.

arches.<sup>699</sup> These figures include St Peter, unusually with a prostrate donor at his feet; the inclusion of the four evangelists, like the varied delineation of attire, is also exceptional.<sup>700</sup> Each main truss is surmounted by two adjacent hammer-posts, the join covered with chamfered board. In each case, an arch-brace is jointed to the outer strut by an integral abutment.<sup>701</sup> The arch-brace is solid, but intricate and finely-carved tracery fills the space between the wall and the rear of the hammer-post. Other refined embellishment is found in the spandrels of the supporting arch-braces and carved brattishing on the beams. The cornice moulding is continued on the beams, the upper half carved as discrete panels which are nailed on.

There are four smaller and shorter intermediate secondary hammer-beams. Arch-braces above these beams are jointed to blind spandrels, but there are no arch-braces supporting them. Instead, carved representations of angels underneath the beams reach to the cornice. It is significant that angelic carvings appear similarly on the undersides of intermediate small hammer-beams between tie-beams in some other Norfolk roofs, suggesting that this intermediate mode of representation was adopted early on by carvers and carpenters, primarily as an opportunity to express angelic content, regardless of the vocabulary of the arch-brace or added tie-beams for the main trusses.

At Beeston, the eight angels carry an interesting mixture of attributes, although some of these elude interpretation, as they have been badly attacked, perhaps because of their specific religious significance. To the north-east, one can identify the vestige of a crown of thorns; further west, Heywood suggests a folded cloth or inscription and a scroll. To the south, two of the angels held their hands in prayer, although these have been

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<sup>699</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 201. Norfolk: NW and S.

<sup>700</sup> Heywood, in Longcroft 2007, p. 131; most of the iconoclasm is focused upon the hands and faces of the figural carvings, rendering some other details possible to identify; the four evangelists are placed at the corners of the roof; other figures are unidentified, including another with a kneeling donor figure, opposite St Peter (identified by his keys). St Matthew is attired in clerical dress with an amice, the other evangelists and St Peter wear togas; others are dressed in scapulars and one wears a cope.

<sup>701</sup> Heywood 2007, p. 127.

severely hewn. The other two hold shields; it is impossible to be certain of any original painted scheme, but it seems more likely that these carried ecclesiastical heraldry in this mixed scheme, rather than donor arms. The angels are damaged and wingless, but timber joints (and later nails) on at least four of them provide evidence that carved wings previously sprang from their shoulders.<sup>702</sup>

### Late single hammer-beam roofs

A remarkable late variant of the single hammer-beam roof type at Earl Stonham St Mary in mid Suffolk features emphatic angelic and saintly imagery in concert with diverse and fully modelled spandrel carvings, as noted in chapter three. The roof of the aisle-less nave traverses the crossing of the cruciform church and is of relatively steeply-pitched single hammer-beam construction; it is made of oak, despite nineteenth-century assertions that it was made of chestnut (Fig. 222).<sup>703</sup> The date of the tower, clerestory and roof has been the subject of debate, suggestions ranging from c. 1450 to the early sixteenth century.<sup>704</sup> Based on material evidence, comparison with other roofs and the wider architectural context, the roof appears to date no earlier than c. 1475-1480, but before the painting of the chancel arch Doom,

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<sup>702</sup> Heywood, in Longcroft 2007, p. 131; this evidence supports my contention that wingless angels elsewhere (as at North Creake) had wings previously. The nails presumably indicate earlier repairs.

<sup>703</sup> The pitch is 41.5 degrees; other angel roofs vary in pitch from as low as 18.2 degrees at Hockwold St Peter to 48.1 degrees at Northwold St Andrew. In email correspondence dated 09/04/2015, John Jones noted that the nineteenth-century restoration committee had described the Earl Stonham roof as chestnut, but informed me that when there was scaffolding inside the church 'some years ago' he 'was able to inspect the roof at close quarters and the medullary rays that are characteristic of oak were to be seen everywhere. The late Dr Oliver Rackham had written to [them] some time ago, questioning the description in the [old] guide book, because in his experience chestnut was most unlikely to be available in the sizes necessary.'

<sup>704</sup> SROI FB 23/E3/4. The 1876 restoration committee report suggests 'some time in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, probably about 1460'. Cautley 1937, p. 252 ascribes the additions to 'late in the 15c'. Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 220 propose that 'a bequest of 1534 to have the church 'new hallowed' may have been prompted by' the completion of the roof.

followed by a rood bequest in 1526, as discussed below.<sup>705</sup> Despite evidence of iconoclasm and extensive ‘restoration’ of the fabric and fittings in 1874, much of the original work survives.<sup>706</sup> Pevsner describes it ‘without hesitation’ as ‘the most beautiful single hammer-beam roof in England’, and its ornate splendour and rich carving certainly references elements of contemporary elite English architecture.<sup>707</sup>

At Earl Stonham, the nave comprises ten bays, with seven deeply-set elongated two-light Perpendicular windows with depressed trefoil-cusped Y-tracery to the north and south respectively. Between the clerestory windows and above the transept arches, carved angelic hammer-beams supporting plain hammer-posts alternate with hammer-beams tenoned into the sides of hammer-posts ending below in elaborately carved pendants (Fig. 223). This single hammer-beam design belies the suggestion that such pendant-post construction prohibits the inclusion of horizontal beam angels, except within a double hammer-beam structure, although it is surprisingly uncommon.<sup>708</sup> The wall-posts at each end terminate in more diminutive pendants than the others, enabling the roof to fit quite neatly against the east wall, flanking the Doom painted afterwards within its profile. These pendants are relatively unusual in East Anglian parish churches; other examples vary in character and where they are found elsewhere it is in double rather than single hammer-beam roofs, as discussed below, within the context of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century elite English rib and fan vaulting.

As outlined above, at Earl Stonham, alternate hammer-beams are tenoned horizontally into the ends of the hammer-posts (Fig. 224), as opposed to standard hammer-beam construction, in which the post is tenoned vertically into the beam, leading to the designation of the structure at Stonham as ‘false’. This structural issue has been debated with reference to other examples and is discussed further below in the context of double hammer-

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<sup>705</sup> See chapter four.

<sup>706</sup> See chapter four; church guide 2008, p. 1.

<sup>707</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 31.

<sup>708</sup> Beech 2015, p. 254.

beam roofs. Emery argues in relation to the elite ‘false’ hammer-beam hall roof at Eltham Palace (Fig. 225), dated to the reign of Edward IV (c. 1475-1479), that it is a perfectly resilient design, and Priestley proclaims the Eltham roof ‘an outstanding example of the work of medieval carpenters’.<sup>709</sup> Their opinions are at odds with several other authorities, including Baines, who restored the roof in 1914, and more recently, Beech.<sup>710</sup> Undoubtedly, the pendant form employed at Eltham and some other royal roofs (see below), at Earl Stonham and in a few double hammer-beam church roofs in Suffolk and Essex ‘is a construction of negative structural implications’, the force of gravity placing immense pressure on the tenon, as opposed to being spread across the entire beam.<sup>711</sup> Other aspects of the Eltham design have been called into question in terms of their impact upon its stability and the roof has certainly been subject to extensive repair work, as Priestley, and Strong and Forman outline.<sup>712</sup> Yet at least some of the repair work at Eltham appears to have been occasioned by other factors, including damage to the structure, changes to the roof covering and periods of neglect, while the roof structure at Earl Stonham has survived without the need for later structural interventions.<sup>713</sup> The endurance of the Stonham roof appears to be a

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<sup>709</sup> Emery 2006, p. 228. ‘Because the hammer-beams [at Eltham Palace] are morticed into the ends of the hammer-beams rather than resting on them, architectural historians have dubbed the construction a ‘false’ one. This is regrettable and gives the unjustifiable connotation of fakery. It is a gloriously robust structure.’ Priestley 2013, p. 61.

<sup>710</sup> Cescinsky and Gribble 1922, pp. 83-85 and pp. 87-88; Beech 2015, pp. 256-257.

<sup>711</sup> Beech 2015, p. 253.

<sup>712</sup> As Beech 2015, p. 257 outlines, the drawings of Dunnage and Laver 1828, p. 16 highlight the design of the wall-post and hammer-beam bracket, shorter vertically in relation to the horizontal, placing immense thrust on top of the walls; Priestley 2013, pp. 60-61; Strong and Forman 1958, pp. 11-13 and p. 21, as cited by Priestley.

<sup>713</sup> Priestley 2013, pp. 60-61; Strong and Forman 1983, pp. 11-13 and p. 21, and Hussey 1937, p. 536. For example, during repair work in 1952, it was discovered that some timbers ‘had been cut’ after the construction of the roof, to facilitate the insertion of a louvre or turret, subsequently removed in 1724. The pre-1650 lead roof covering was substituted for tiles, probably c. 1724. Beech 2015, p. 257 observes that, for an extended period, the roof ‘was deemed fit to shelter, not grandees, but agricultural paraphernalia.’ Yet the use of the hall as an agricultural barn, as outlined by Buckler 1828, p. 76, and Dunnage and Laver 1828, p. 7, and illustrated in a watercolour view of the west end

testament both to the innate strength of its design and the thickness of the walls of the aisle-less nave. The single hammer-beam roof at Earl Stonham has a sturdy character, from the substantial girth of the king-posts to the full carving of the drapery of the angelic costumes. No expense was spared in the provision of timber, which is remarkably generous compared with a number of other Suffolk roofs such as the alternating hammer-beam and arch-braced solution in the nave at Kersey St Mary. Unlike at Eltham, where the single hammer-posts are placed at intervals between paired window openings, in the single hammer-beam roof at Earl Stonham, the pendant hammer-posts alternate with robust conventional hammer-beams in the form of recumbent angels between single clerestory windows. In contrast, the daring combination of 'false' double hammer-beam structures with arcades in aisled churches appears to have been more risky structurally, as the outward leaning aisle arcades at Cotton St Andrew demonstrate all too clearly (Fig. 226). As Beech asserts, ornament was the most compelling concern over structure in these pendant post roofs; but one can argue that a harmonious balance between these interests was achieved at Earl Stonham.<sup>714</sup>

The extent of the carved embellishment is exceptional at Earl Stonham and differs in character from the plainer moulded timbers of the non-ecclesiastical hall roof at Eltham. At Stonham, the octagonal pendants terminate in generous foliate forms, some incorporating other imagery, such as a lion or a head, in contrast to the restored open geometric 'cages' with lighter tiered drop-finials of the royal roof (Fig. 223). The brattished hammer-beams and collar-beams at Earl Stonham are supported by arch-braces with spandrels elaborately carved with a variety of designs, including a fox and goose, a duck, a fool and a dog. The deep cornice carries two rows of relief carvings of demi-angels with wings. Further carvings adorn the arch braces springing from the hammer-posts to the collar beams, which support short solid king posts that rise to the ridge. Additional pendants are suspended from the centre of the collars. Carved openwork tracery is found above the hammer-

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of the hall by J.M.W. Turner c. 1795, may itself have aggravated the state of the roof, albeit already in need of repair.

<sup>714</sup> Beech 2015, pp. 253-257.

beams and collar-beams. All of the timbers including the common rafters are moulded. As discussed in chapter three, the wall-posts have canopied niches with mutilated figures of saints and apostles and the angelic beam carvings wear ecclesiastical dress and hold shields; most are blank or damaged, but three towards the west bear a mitre, hammer and pincers and chalice and Host (Fig. 227).

Most single hammer-beam roofs appear to have incorporated angelic imagery, and the nave roof at Earl Stonham provides a late example, confirming the endurance of the horizontal ecclesiastical beam angel type. Yet extant material evidence confirms the existence of alternative modes of display, particularly towards the end of the period under discussion. The nave roof at Bressingham St John the Baptist in Norfolk barely post-dates that at Earl Stonham, just seventeen miles south in Suffolk, yet it represents a very different expression of the late hammer-beam genre (Fig. 228). The early sixteenth-century date of the roof appears to be corroborated by lead bequests and the carving of the year 1527 at the centre of the ornate north clerestory. Its association with Sir Roger Pilkington was posthumous and more communal funding is implied by the bequests and the suggestion that in 1517 there were collections in neighbouring villages to help to fund its completion.<sup>715</sup>

The moulded timbers and adornment of the Bressingham roof convey a refined and delicate aesthetic, in contrast to the robust form and carving at Earl Stonham. The eight-bay Norfolk roof is a unified single hammer-beam structure, unlike the alternating beams and posts with pendants of the Suffolk roof. At Bressingham, there are no collar-beams, as is typical in Norfolk roofs. In place of Earl Stonham's sturdy brattished cambered collars with

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<sup>715</sup> George Bulcock gave a 'fodder of lead' in 1509 (NRO, NCC will reg. Splytimbre 210); Richard Kene gave a 'fodder of lead' in 1515 (NRO, ANF, will reg. liber, fol. 115); Blomefield 1805-10, vol. 1, p. 68 noted the date, which is still visible on the north clerestory; Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 240 and p. 277; Cotton and Tricker 1997, p. 2. 'Most of the upper portion of the church was re-built by Sir Roger Pilkington, the date and initials appearing outside on the north clerestory.' The Pilkington arms quartering Verdoun appear in the left spandrel above the west tower door, but Sir Roger died in 1447, long before the completion of the clerestory and roof.

pendants, king-posts and exuberant brace spandrel carvings, there are understated moulded braces to the ridge at Bressingham. Although mutilated relief carvings of angels adorn five of the sixteenth-century bench ends in the nave, the roof adornment is emphatically non-angelic. Between the two-light clerestory windows at Bressingham, the diminutive beams are supported by small blind arch-braces, above moulded wall-posts on wooden corbels in the form of foliate capitals (Fig. 229). The hammer-beams and their ends and the slim cornice are delicately moulded and castellated (Fig. 123).

#### Double hammer-beam roofs (Fig. 230)

According to Bettley and Pevsner, there are thirty-two extant medieval double hammer-beam roofs in England; of these, twenty-one are in Suffolk, four in Norfolk, two in Essex and three in Cambridgeshire.<sup>716</sup> This structural form is generally closely associated with carved angelic imagery and is often described using superlative language, as the pinnacle of open-timber roof construction.<sup>717</sup> A generic model of the roof type is held at the Victoria and Albert Museum (W.3-2003); probably made in the nineteenth century, it features angels carved in relief at the lower beam ends, wall-post figures, brace spandrels carved in relief and pierced Perpendicular spandrel tracery above the braces and collars (Fig. 231).<sup>718</sup> In fact, whilst extant double hammer-beam roofs are generally characterised by lower and upper tiers of arch-braced hammer-beams, there are significant variations across the genre in terms of structure and form. At Tilney All Saints, shield-bearing horizontal beam angels are combined with beam-end angels (Fig. 232). In some cases, hammer-posts with pendants or figures replace, or are interspersed with hammer-beams, as at Gestingthorpe St Mary in Essex and Grundisburgh St Mary in Suffolk, for example (Fig. 233). Some roofs feature alternating braced hammer-beams and arch-braces, as at Cotton St Andrew

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<sup>716</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 31. Suffolk: E and W.

<sup>717</sup> <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O88264/hammerbeam-roof-model-of-a-unknown/> [accessed 10 July 2018].

<sup>718</sup> Model of a Roof-Hammerbeam Roof <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O88264/hammerbeam-roof-model-of-a-unknown/> [accessed 10 July 2018].



and Tostock St Andrew (Fig. 234). At Shotley St Mary in Suffolk, the upper hammer-beams are much smaller than their lower counterparts (Fig 235.); here, arch-braces rather than hammer-posts rise to the collar-beams, suggesting a relationship with a cluster of roofs with this feature further west in the county, including Bacton St Andrew (Fig. 236), Wetherden St Mary and Woolpit St Mary. These have been labelled ‘false’ double hammer-beam roofs, due to their lack of upper hammer-posts, although this term is a matter of debate, as discussed below.<sup>719</sup> More generally, construction of a double hammer-beam roof was extravagant, requiring extra timber and labour in comparison to the single hammer-beam type. It seems that this two-tiered form was developed and chosen for its capacity for overwhelming angelic display, regardless of cost implications and its lack or even loss of structural advantage.<sup>720</sup>

Most surviving English double hammer-beam roofs are located in Suffolk, with distinct forms of the roof type clustered in different areas across the county and close to its borders. These factors imply the development, both of a shared regional patronal taste for this extravagant and overwhelmingly angelic form of roof display, and of specialist carpentry skills and techniques, some with elite connections in London and Cambridge, to meet the demands of this fashion.

#### Pendant post construction in Suffolk

As mentioned above in relation to the single hammer-beam roof with alternating pendant posts at Earl Stonham St Mary, timber pendant post construction was primarily confined to a small number of double hammer-beam nave roofs in Suffolk and north Essex. In these roofs, the hammer-beams are tenoned into the sides of the hammer-posts, as opposed to typical hammer-beam construction, in which the posts are tenoned vertically into the beams. As discussed above, this development signals the over-

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<sup>719</sup> Bettley and Pevsner 2015, p. 31. Suffolk W.

<sup>720</sup> Cautley 1937, p. 111. The architect, antiquarian and surveyor admired double hammer-beam roofs aesthetically, but regarded it as ‘extremely doubtful if the construction is so sound as that of single hammer-beam type.’

riding importance of adornment in these roofs, given the potentially negative structural consequences of this approach. In the upper tier of the roof at Cotton St Andrew (late fifteenth century), posts with simple embellishments alternate with arch-braces (Fig. 226). At Tostock St Andrew (mid to late fifteenth-century), the lower pendants are canopied, with mutilated figures of saints; figures carved into the pendants are also found at Wetherden St Mary, dating to the late fifteenth century (Figs. 237-238). Another ‘false’ double hammer-beam roof at Grundisburgh St Mary (late fifteenth century) features pendants below the collars. Long hammer-posts terminate in finials at Needham Market St John the Baptist (late fifteenth century), but the combination of high tie-beams with an extended lower hammer-beam structure is quite different and the roof is heavily restored. Other alternatives are found at Hitcham All Saints (often dated to the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries, but the wall-post saints indicate that it is probably a restored late medieval roof), and in north-west Essex, in the early sixteenth-century roofs at Gestingthorpe St Nicholas and Castle Hedingham St Nicholas (Fig. 239).<sup>721</sup>

The varied forms of these parish church pendant posts reflect their dialogue with a wider range of elite exemplars than the Eltham Palace hall model alone. For example, the figurative pendant posts at Tostock St Andrew and Wetherden St Mary parallel the form of the pendants of the elaborately embellished stone vault constructed over the Divinity School at the University of Oxford (c. 1480-1483, but probably conceived c. 1430), of which Alice, Duchess of Suffolk was one of the benefactors.<sup>722</sup> At Oxford, the micro-architectural pendants are suspended beneath the vaulting, at the termination of the ribs, two pairs per bay (Fig. 240). Each face is adorned with a seated canopied figure, including the evangelists, popes, bishops and a cardinal, rather than the saints and apostles more commonly represented

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<sup>721</sup> Cescinsky and Gribble 1922, p. 82; Cautley 1937, p. 275.

<sup>722</sup> Gillam 1988, pp. 33-34; Goodall and Tyack, in ‘Country Life’, 10 April 2017.

<https://www.countrylife.co.uk/architecture/oxford-universitys-buildings-154006> [accessed 18 June 2018]

in church roofs (Fig. 241).<sup>723</sup> As discussed in chapter three, this form of display in East Anglian parochial angel roofs is more typically confined to the wall-posts. Beech argues that pendant posts in this form as at Tostock offered 'more perceptible locations for these devotional figures, from which their exempla could be more profoundly apprehended.'<sup>724</sup> Yet one needs to consider the alternative context, conception and construction of the stone examples which probably inspired the parochial carvings. Saints, bishops, popes and prophets in niches were perfectly visible on the wall-posts of a parish church roof, which offered an ideal opportunity for the presentation of such imagery beneath higher angelic beam carvings, flanking the Rood and the Doom at the east in a hierarchical arrangement. In the Oxford edifice, canopied niches formed an elegant design at the ends of the vault ribs. More importantly, they were ideally located more centrally relative to the other imagery of the vault and the interior it was designed to surmount. The Divinity School is often described as a 'secular' building, yet, designed as an academic space for theological debate, its form and decoration have an appropriately ecclesiastical appearance. The vault is adorned with some four hundred bosses, arranged above and around the pendants; alongside heraldic devices and initials, many represent religious subjects, including the Trinity (key boss, third bay from west, south end) and the Virgin and Child (key boss, same bay, north end). Angels pepper the scheme, some bearing heraldic shields such as those of the main benefactor, Thomas Kemp, Bishop of London (same bay, south end), whilst others carry books, scrolls and religious items.<sup>725</sup> Figure sculptures below the vault are restricted to the arch mouldings and walls at the east and west ends, rather than drawing the eye to the north and south walls. Those in the arch mouldings include angels and doctors, a bishop and an archbishop. Above, to the east, the empty central niche of the lost Rood is flanked by the Virgin and St John above and SS Peter and Paul beneath. At the west, the Virgin and Child are flanked by the four Evangelists, surmounted by two angels. Hence the pendant figures

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<sup>723</sup> Legge 1923, p. 13.

<sup>724</sup> Beech 2015, p. 254.

<sup>725</sup> Legge 1923, p. 8, pp. 31-32. This is a comprehensive guide to the imagery of the bosses.

at the centre of the space reflect and reinforce the teachings of the Church and its authority at the core of the iconography and function of the late medieval Divinity School.

Tostock and Wetherden are only three miles apart, so the shared vocabulary of pendant-post construction in their roofs may not seem surprising. In both roofs, the lower hammer-beams are tenoned into the hammer-posts with canopied figures, whilst the upper beams are cut at the ends, probably to remove beam-end angelic carvings; those at Wetherden terminate in blank shields, clearly added later.<sup>726</sup> There are several other parallels, including the lack of clerestories and comparable heights of the naves and the collar-beam and king-post construction and addition of two purlins to both roof structures.<sup>727</sup> Yet close observation reveals some significant distinctions in their structures and carvings, in addition to their restorations. The roof pitch is slightly shallower at Tostock, where the nave is unusually wide; at Wetherden, there is an impression of greater scale, and there are ten double hammer-beams along its extended length.<sup>728</sup> At Tostock, there are only five pairs of double hammer-beams, including at the ends; these alternate with arch-braced principals, as at Cotton St Andrew, some nine miles north-east, where Thomas Cook, in his will of 1471, left a close called Garlekis towards the 'reparation and edification' of the new roof.<sup>729</sup> Another factor which divides Tostock from Wetherden, but unites it with Cotton, is the unusual angle of the pendant posts, which have been turned to face the beams tenoned into them by 45° (Fig. 242). This design made production more complex and reduced the strength of the joint.<sup>730</sup> Clearly, form was the

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<sup>726</sup> Cooper 2005, pp. 241-242. Dowsing recorded his instructions to 'take down 68 cherubims' at Wetherden, although he was not as specific at Tostock. It seems likely that the decapitation of the hammer-post figures at Tostock and damage to those at Wetherden dates to this period of seventeenth-century iconoclasm.

<sup>727</sup> The ridge at Tostock is approximately 33 feet high, compared to 32 feet 6 inches at Wetherden.

<sup>728</sup> The nave is just over 27 feet wide and 47 feet long at Tostock, compared to 22 feet and 59 feet respectively at Wetherden, where the roof is slightly shortened by the tower buttresses.

<sup>729</sup> SROI R2/10/545. The roof at Cotton is also of ten bays, although narrower, at just under 20 feet wide.

<sup>730</sup> Beech 2015, p. 255.

primary driver over optimal structural function, as it was in the ‘secular’ double hammer-beam roof at Gifford’s Hall (c. 1495-1510), another example where the hammer-posts are positioned diagonally.<sup>731</sup> Beech proposes that this strategy was developed at Tostock to take advantage of an increased span of timber, in order to render the carved niche figures more fully and allow sufficient depth for the hammer-beam tenon.<sup>732</sup> This argument is not entirely convincing, for two reasons. Firstly, at Gifford’s Hall, the beams are tenoned into the sides of the posts above sturdy foliate drop-finials for aesthetic purposes.<sup>733</sup> Secondly, Wetherden carvers were able to model their hammer-post figures in deep canopies without rotating the posts in relation to the beams. The Tostock posts do appear more deeply carved and slighter in scale, so this may have been a motivating factor, but an alternative strategy at Grundisburgh St Mary, twenty-one miles south-east, demonstrates that an alternative approach was available. There, the upper hammer-posts terminate in a non-figurative, simpler, albeit similarly geometric foliate carved design than those at Wetherden and Tostock. In contrast to the arrangements at Cotton, Wetherden and Tostock, these diminutive pendant ends are suspended below the mortice and tenon joints between the sturdier uncarved post sections above and the robust braced beams. This strategy is necessary given the small scale of the carved drop-finials, but could have been employed elsewhere, which further undermines the suggestion that the Tostock posts were pivoted for functional rather than aesthetic reasons. This idiosyncratic post rotation was probably devised at Tostock and imitated at Cotton, where the pendant posts retain a similar geometric profile, but are carved more simply and cautiously, retaining the full breadth of the timber. This restraint was well-founded, for, unlike at Tostock, the roof at Cotton surmounts a clerestory above aisle arcades and there is clear evidence of

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<sup>731</sup> Emery 2000, pp. 103-5.

<sup>732</sup> Beech 2015, p. 255.

<sup>733</sup> Emery 2000, p. 103. ‘The hammer-posts ‘are set diagonally to enhance the wave-moulding effect.’ In this and other respects, ‘enrichment conceals inadequate construction’ in the design of this roof.

wall-spread. Later metal ties span the arch-braces, so often unnecessary elsewhere, but clearly needed here.<sup>734</sup>

The Tostock hammer-posts reference the form of the Oxford Divinity School pendants, both in their niched figures and in the foliate carvings beneath them. This design is faintly echoed at Cotton; at Wetherden, there are flat foliate bosses at the base of the pendants, which probably represent restoration work. A striking feature at Wetherden is the addition of wall-post figures (Fig. 238). The combination of two tiers of carved figures on both wall- and hammer-posts is unprecedented and close analysis to determine the full impact of the nineteenth-century restoration work is merited. There is no extant evidence at Tostock, where the wall-posts and the braces to the intermediate principals have been cut short, the posts resting on simple curved wooden corbels. However, extant material at Cotton is more promising. Exposed tenons project from some of the ends of the braced posts, indicating the loss of carved imagery below them. The concave curves of the deliberately terminated brace-ends are found also at Bacton St Mary and probably accommodated niched forms rather than angelic reliefs. The idiosyncratic approach towards the representation of carved imagery which characterises these church roofs is also discernible in the single hammer-beam chancel roof at Wetherden. Like those at Bressingham discussed earlier, the brattished hammer-beams were not designed to display angelic imagery. Instead, close study of the wall-post figures confirms that they were carved as scroll-bearing angels in ecclesiastical attire, despite some insensitive restoration work.<sup>735</sup>

#### 'False' and 'true' double hammer-beam roofs

The Tostock, Wetherden and Cotton roofs are often characterised as 'false' double hammer-beam roofs, not only on account of the structural concessions inherent in the relationship between hammer-beam and

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<sup>734</sup> Architect Nicholas Warnes has undertaken several church roof restorations and confirms that such ties are often installed unnecessarily.

<sup>735</sup> For example, one of the substituted heads is bearded.

hammer-post, but also due to the substitution of the upper hammer-post with the arch-brace. The latter is not confined to double hammer-beam roofs and distinguishes a number of single hammer-beam roofs, as exemplified by those at Carbrooke SS Peter and Paul in Norfolk, and Rougham St Mary in Suffolk. However, this feature is most obviously concentrated in a cluster of late-fifteenth-century 'false' double hammer-beam roofs within south and south-west Suffolk, west of Ipswich; the others are at Bacton St Mary, Gislingham St Mary and Grundisburgh St Mary, Rattlesden St Nicholas and Woolpit St Mary. Another is located south-east of Ipswich on the coast at Shotley St Mary, and there are two isolated examples in west Norfolk, at Swaffham SS Peter and Paul and at Tilney All Saints. In the mid nineteenth century, the Brandons cited Bacton St Mary as a 'very good example of a double hammer-beam roof'.<sup>736</sup> It is the only Suffolk roof of this type illustrated by them; of the other Suffolk examples they listed, all bar one features arch-braces instead of hammer-posts to the upper beams, yet they did not distinguish between them and those with upper hammer-posts in terms of their structural roles.<sup>737</sup> It seems likely that to state baldly that a ('true') double hammer-beam roof with upper hammer-posts is always structurally sounder than one with upper arch-braces alone instead ('false') is to fail to take account of other factors in the construction, maintenance and restoration of a roof. The only Suffolk example with upper hammer-posts named by the Brandons is the late-fifteenth-century roof at Ipswich St Margaret, discussed in chapters two and three. Although the nave is quite wide, the structure has an extremely sturdy appearance, with solid figurative wall-posts, two sets of purlins and braces to the robust hammer-beams and collars (Fig. 129).<sup>738</sup> There is no obvious sign of spread, and the later metal ties which connect the ends of the lower hammers appear to result from unnecessary caution. Another early- or mid-sixteenth-century 'true' double

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<sup>736</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 90.

<sup>737</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 23. Their limited coverage of the double hammer-beam type may be accounted for by aesthetic taste; they regarded their effect as 'more intricate, but generally less pleasing than that of a single hammer-beam roof'.

<sup>738</sup> The nave is almost 24 feet wide, which is unusual.

hammer-beam roof at Framdsen St Mary is a much thinner construction (Fig. 243).<sup>739</sup> Although the width of the nave is only nineteen feet, the insertion of only one purlin, the brevity of the lower beams in particular (which have lost the angels at their ends), and the slightness of the timbers and braces may account for the insertion of metal ties across the beams, although there is no sign of spread or sag. In contrast, the restoration ties connecting the second braces above the lower beams of the shallower-pitched 'true' roof at Coddensham St Mary (mid to late fifteenth century), which spans a wide nave, could be justified, as arcade arches N3 and S4 lean out, suggesting spread, and the ridge and purlins appear somewhat askew.<sup>740</sup> At Bacton St Mary, where metal ties connect the walls beneath the 'false' roof, the arch-braces from the upper beams to the collars are very slender and somewhat set back from the beam ends; also the failing upper hammer-beams in particular are shorter and less substantial than those at St Margaret. The structure is further compromised by the deliberate removal of the lower section of the wall-posts. Given that the roof was in a 'very dilapidated state' by the mid nineteenth century, it is unsurprising that it has required repair.<sup>741</sup> At nearby Cotton St Andrew, the combination of some of the factors at Bacton with lower pendant-post construction may account for the wall-spread noted earlier.

Apart from Hitcham All Saints (probably late fifteenth or early sixteenth century) further west, so-called 'true' Suffolk double hammer-beam roofs with upper hammer-posts are located in an arc of east Suffolk with Ipswich at the centre, as noted in chapter two; outlying examples range from Heveningham St Margaret (early sixteenth century) (Fig. 244) in the north-east to Tattingstone St Mary in the south. Although there are differences in the form and construction of some of the roofs, an understanding of upper hammer-post construction appears to have emanated from the town. Common features between some others clustered north of Ipswich may suggest the

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<sup>739</sup>British Listed Buildings <https://britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/101033063-church-of-st-mary-framsden#.W9r1AfZ2vIU> [accessed 30 September 2016].

<sup>740</sup> The nave is 22 feet and 6 inches wide.

<sup>741</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 90.



possibility of shared craftsmanship, but most obviously, the character of the roof at Coddendam St Mary resembles that at Gissing St Mary in Norfolk, as discussed below. In addition, some of these structures relate to others of different roof types. For example, whilst the exposed tenons at the beam-ends of the early sixteenth-century nave roof at Stonham Parva St Mary indicate that they held angelic reliefs, and there is only one set of purlins rather than two, compared to the alternating single hammer-post and horizontal angelic beams and two purlins at nearby Earl Stonham St Mary, there are distinct similarities in the robust nature of their construction, their adornment and the full rendering of the wall-post figures (Fig. 245).<sup>742</sup> It has been argued that other 'true' roofs share characteristics of other so-called 'false' examples with upper arch-braces, predominantly grouped further west. For example, aspects of the design and carving of the nave roof at Coddendam St Mary have been linked with those at Gisingham, Woolpit and Grundisburgh.<sup>743</sup> This may be correct, but there are significant distinctions in every case. The Coddendam roof has been subject to iconoclasm and restoration, but it is an interesting late fifteenth-century example of 'true' double hammer-beam construction (Fig. 246). There appears to be evidence of patronage of the clerestory at Coddendam (similar to that at Stonham Aspal St Mary and St Lambert of c. 1440-60), and maybe the roof; the clerestory inscription states: 'orate pro animae Johannis Frenche et Margaret'. The angelic carvings at the beam ends are replacements dating to Bishopp's restoration, and the squat seated wall-post figures are mutilated beyond identification, as discussed in chapter three. They are quite different from the elongated figures in the restored late-fifteenth-century 'false' nave roof at Woolpit St Mary, which has a far more elaborate and generous angelic cornice, richer adornment and where the full figurative spandrel carvings relate more closely to Bacton than to the more restrained geometric designs at Coddendam. The late-fifteenth century nave roof at Grundisburgh

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<sup>742</sup> The wall-post figures have survived at Stonham Parva; although they are defaced, they lack the extensive mutilation evident at Earl Stonham. Note: the wall-post, brace and beams above were elaborately altered in the early seventeenth century. The carving here has a Renaissance character.

<sup>743</sup> Wilson Compton Associates 2006, p. 16.

St Mary has also been restored, but there are evident distinctions here too (Fig. 247). It features restrained pendant posts to the upper beams, and the braces to the beams and low collars differ in construction and are plain. There are no wall-post figures, as at Coddendam; instead, there are small angelic reliefs at the post-ends, and the angelic presence is augmented further by angelic carvings against the long king-posts above the low collar-beams.<sup>744</sup>

#### Pendant post construction in Essex

Pendant post construction in Essex double hammer-beam roofs is confined to a narrow corridor close to the north-west border with Suffolk, in the naves at Gestingthorpe St Mary the Virgin, Castle Hedingham St Nicholas and Sturmer St Mary the Virgin, although there are important distinctions between them, in terms of construction and iconography. The Gestingthorpe roof appears to be securely attributed to carpenter and 'project manager' Thomas Loveday (fl. 1503-1536), whose networks extended to Cambridge and London.<sup>745</sup> The names of Loveday and his wife Alys carved into the cornice of the north-east bay of the roof probably commemorate them as donors; elsewhere, what survives of the medieval cornice also features mouldings typical of his other work (Fig. 248). Loveday was recorded living in Gestingthorpe by 1523 and was probably responsible for the chancel screen too.<sup>746</sup> There is no angelic imagery in the Gestingthorpe roof; instead, there are two tiers of pendant posts, which terminate in short square drop-finials with foliate trails (Fig. 249). The hammer-beams have roll-mouldings and plain braces. They are tenoned into the sides of the moulded posts above the drop-finials. The lower posts are longer than those of the upper tier; the former descend from the principals below the first purlin, and the latter from the second purlin, where they are braced to the collar-beams, with further

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<sup>744</sup> The heads and wings are restored, but the flat reliefs of the bodies which carry scrolls or hold their hands in prayer are authentic.

<sup>745</sup> Lucy Wrapson, in a paper titled 'Thomas Gooch and Thomas Loveday', at the University of Cambridge on 23 January 2017.

<sup>746</sup> Lucy Wrapson 2017.

pendant drops at their apex. Unlike the Suffolk roofs discussed, there is no longitudinal ridge timber. Instead, an uninterrupted purlin is attached to the upper surface of the collar-beams. Some of the post spandrel tracery is replaced, but generally the roof has a light oak appearance, as at Cotton St Andrew in Suffolk. Wrapson and others have observed an affinity between the Gestingthorpe roof and the restored hall roof at St John's College, Cambridge (founded from the income of the estate of Lady Margaret Beaufort, mother of Henry VII), where Loveday was contracted to undertake the chapel stalls and other woodwork in 1516, presumably post-dating the roof.<sup>747</sup> This is certainly the general impression created, confirmed in details such as the profile of the single moulded strut in each spandrel. Yet horizontal demi-angels at the post-ends and significant structural differences should be noted; the Cambridge roof is a single hammer-beam roof, there are queen-posts from the lower to an additional set of upper collar-beams, and most importantly, the hammer-posts are tenoned into the upper ends of the hammer-beams, without drop-finials beneath.<sup>748</sup> If Loveday was responsible for this conventional and cautious approach, as seems likely, it appears that he abandoned such structural restraint in favour of form at Gestingthorpe and Castle Hedingham.

Castle Hedingham St Nicholas is just three miles south-west of Gestingthorpe; Loveday moved there, wrote his will in 1535 and was buried there, and is often credited with constructing the nave roof.<sup>749</sup> At first glance, the roof is almost identical to the Gestingthorpe structure, having two tiers of braced hammer-posts with drop-finials and braces to the collars, above which the roof is boarded.<sup>750</sup> Its distinctions primarily relate to its adornment. This is an understated late angel roof; carvings of crowned demi-angels

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<sup>747</sup> Wrapson 2017; Haward 2000, p. 177.

<sup>748</sup> The double collar construction is similar, if not identical, to that at Needham Market St John the Baptist in Suffolk.

<sup>749</sup> Wrapson 2017.

<sup>750</sup> Hence one cannot confirm whether the arrangement above and at the ridge matches that at Gestingthorpe, as seems likely.

carrying a variety of attributes adorn the cornice (Fig. 250).<sup>751</sup> The lower cornice scrolled design is augmented with an undulating trail in relief. The junction between the hammer-beams and hammer-posts is concealed by similarly carved panelling, the corners of the posts flanked by purely ornamental pinnaced struts. This artifice elaborately disguises the ‘false’ pendant post construction in which the hammer-beam is tenoned into the side of the hammer-post, unlike at Gestingthorpe, where it is expressed openly. The foliate drop-finials at the ends of the posts at Castle Hedingham are slightly more flamboyant than at Gestingthorpe, but they are manifestations of the same dialogue with elite architecture elsewhere. As Wrapson has shown in relation to Loveday, identifying a craftsman’s name can provide a valuable frame, revealing orbits and networks of production, patronage and influence.<sup>752</sup> Haward argues that the design of the hammer-beam roof at St John’s Hall is ‘closely modelled’ on Herland’s Westminster Hall roof (1393-1399); in fact, there are significant differences, but its form loosely echoes the royal roof.<sup>753</sup> Loveday may have seen this earlier elite exemplar during his 1505 London visit at the invitation of his patron Thomas Lucas. However, the Gestingthorpe and Castle Hedingham roofs speak to subsequent elite roof developments, as in Henry VII’s fan-vaulted chapel at Westminster Abbey, dated c. 1503-1509. Heyman describes the illusion and artifice in the design of the hexagonal Westminster chapel pendants, which do not support the fans which spring from them, but are designed ‘to astonish and to delight’.<sup>754</sup> Whereas the structural vault arches were exposed in the Oxford Divinity School, they are playfully concealed at Westminster, just as Loveday disguised the jointing at Castle Hedingham.<sup>755</sup> This may point to a reciprocal dialogue between such elite vaulting and open timber church roofs, as Wilson suggests.<sup>756</sup> The early sixteenth-century double

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<sup>751</sup> At least some of these are medieval, despite evidence of restoration work

<sup>752</sup> Lucy Wrapson, in a paper titled ‘Thomas Loveday and his ‘occupation of carpynter’s craft’, delivered at the annual conference of the British Archaeological Association on 5 September 2018.

<sup>753</sup> Haward 2000, p. 177.

<sup>754</sup> Heyman, in Tatton-Brown and Mortimer 2003, p. 219.

<sup>755</sup> Heyman, in Tatton-Brown and Mortimer 2003, p. 221.

<sup>756</sup> Wilson 2017, p. 222.

hammer-beam roof in the aisle-less nave at Sturmer St Mary the Virgin, some ten miles north-west of Gestingthorpe, may manifest a more local discourse (Fig. 251). It is possible, but unlikely that Loveday was directly responsible for this less refined and rather unstable structure, a reduced version with plainer pendant posts.<sup>757</sup> Nonetheless, the rare double hammer-post form, with signature cornice foliate trails and pierced brace spandrel tracery, point to his influence at least.

Extant double hammer-beam roof structures are notable for their absence in Norwich, as noted in chapter two. This paucity of such roofs is reflected across Norfolk and is significant, when contrasted with their remarkable concentration in Suffolk. The nave roofs at Knapton and Gissing are the only surviving examples of 'true' double hammer-beam roofs in Norfolk. In addition 'false' double hammer-beam roofs cover the naves at Swaffham SS Peter and Paul and Tilney All Saints. The four Norfolk examples are thus widely dispersed across the county.<sup>758</sup> In contrast, three of the four Essex double hammer-beam roofs are clustered and all are near the border with Suffolk.<sup>759</sup> The scattered manifestation of this roof form raises the question of the motivation and inspiration for its selection in Norfolk, taking into account losses of other roofs to iconoclasm, changing faith or taste and the elements. Ultimately, the selection of this structural type appears to be accounted for by influences and networks across county borders, rather than within Norfolk, as exemplified by the main case study of Knapton.

## Knapton

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<sup>757</sup> Metal ties have been added at Gestingthorpe and Castle Hedingham too, but it is at Sturmer that the upper beams in particular lean alarmingly.

<sup>758</sup> From Tilney All Saints in the west to Knapton in the north-east is approximately 56 miles. Gissing is at least 36 miles south of Knapton and 29 miles south-east of Swaffham. Swaffham and Tilney are 19 miles apart.

<sup>759</sup> Sturmer St Mary, Castle Hedingham St Nicholas and Gestingthorpe St Mary the Virgin are grouped near the north-west border with Suffolk and are characterised by open spandrel tracery and carved pendant bosses; the latter two have been attributed to Thomas Loveday and share resemblances with the hall roof at St. John's College, Cambridge. The fourth roof is in the nave of the 'East Anglian-style' church of Great Bromley St George to the north-east.

Today, the double hammer-beam roof at Knapton SS Peter and Paul (c. 1504) appears isolated in north-east Norfolk. The nave roof with angelic carvings at neighbouring Trunch St Botolph is a single hammer-beam model, which speaks to other examples of its structural type in Norfolk, as discussed earlier. In contrast, the Knapton roof relates to Suffolk roofs in its collared structure and tiered beam-end angelic adornment (Fig. 252). Knapton's proximity to the sea and its maritime transport routes is significant in this respect.<sup>760</sup> Access to trading and fishing routes with Europe and Scandinavia brought wealth to a series of east-coast ports and settlements, despite their subsequent decline.<sup>761</sup> Although extant material evidence paints a sparse and intermittent picture, the Suffolk coast was punctuated by towns defined by churches with angel roofs, from the lost Covehithe canopy described by Dowsing to the north, to the surviving (albeit 'false') double hammer-beam nave roof on the Shotley peninsula below Ipswich to the south, perched on a now lonely promontory overlooking Felixstowe docks in the distance.<sup>762</sup> Although travel by land had become easier due to thirteenth- and fourteenth-century bridge construction campaigns, the transportation of building materials by ship or boat was cost-effective and it is plausible that dialogue between patronal or family contacts in Knapton and east Suffolk led to the physical conveyance of the Norfolk roof or its timbers from Suffolk by water.<sup>763</sup>

The celebrated nave roof at Knapton merits close scrutiny, despite its extensive repair and renovation. Brandon and Brandon regarded it as 'exquisite' and 'the most beautiful' of the double hammer-beam roofs they had surveyed and it has subsequently been described as 'of national, rather than local importance'.<sup>764</sup> The availability of documentary evidence for

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<sup>760</sup> Knapton is less than two miles from the east coast.

<sup>761</sup> Middleton-Stewart 2001, p. 104.

<sup>762</sup> Cooper 2001; appendix 3; the roofs for which there is material evidence are those at Southwold, Blythburgh and Shotley, although the Southwold roof is substantially restored. 'Cherubims' or angels are recorded by Dowsing at Covehithe, South Cove, Dunwich and Aldeburgh.

<sup>763</sup> Bailey 2007, pp. 163-167.

<sup>764</sup> Brandon and Brandon 2005, p. 23 and p. 94. Also NRO DN/QQN 29/27, p. 1.

restoration work on this roof by George Gilbert Scott Junior is advantageous, in stark contrast to its apparent dearth elsewhere.<sup>765</sup> Direct study of the fabric has been enhanced by limited access to the east end of the Knapton roof via scaffolding in early 2017. Above all, given that evidence supports an early-sixteenth-century date for the roof, it demonstrates the endurance of ecclesiastical angelic and saintly roof adornment as the Reformation approached.

Much of the fabric of the existing church at Knapton appears to date from the fourteenth century. In his 1881 draft restoration report, Gilbert Scott Junior notes the positioning of the springers and saddle-stones as material evidence of preparation for, if not execution of a nave roof of higher pitch than the extant canopy. He suggests a temporary covering for the nave as most likely prior to the installation of the current roof, on the grounds that there would have been no practical reason to replace a fourteenth-century roof a hundred years or so later. Yet he is prepared to propose the likely completion of a similarly high-pitched predecessor to the now lost early sixteenth-century chancel roof and finally concedes changing taste as a potential explanation for such seemingly unnecessary adaptation and expense.<sup>766</sup>

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<sup>765</sup> In my survey of the Gilbert Scott Junior papers in the RIBA Archives Collection (held as part of the RIBA Library Drawings and Archives Collections at the V&A), I found no documents relating to St Nicholas Chapel King's Lynn and those related to St Mary Woolpit do not appear to address restoration of the roof.

<sup>766</sup> RIBA SC/KN/28, pp. 3-4. 'There is further some evidence that both nave and chancel were, if not roofed in, at any rate prepared for the roofing during the same period. The springers and saddle-stones of the east and west gables of the nave, are not of the pitch of the present nave roof (something over 100 degrees) but are adapted to the higher pitch (p. 4) characteristic of an earlier date, while there exists upon the east wall of the nave the mark of a chancel roof of the same high pitch.'

'It is difficult to bring oneself to believe that the whole church, having been roofed in, before the close of the 14c, can have required a new roof before the termination of the next century. The curious stories, current in the neighbourhood, with respect to the existing nave roof, may possibly have had their origin in the fact that the church remained for some generations either unroofed, or as is more probable, with some merely temporary covering, and that when, from whatever source,

The oft-repeated attribution of the patronage of the nave roof at the start of the sixteenth century to the rector John Smith needs scrutiny. Such benefaction would have been extremely unusual, given the responsibility of the rector for the chancel rather than the nave. The funding of the nave roof somehow became muddled up with that of the chancel in the twentieth century. Cautley mistakenly asserts that the nave roof was 'given by John Smithe in 1503.'<sup>767</sup> Pevsner and Wilson erroneously state that the nave roof is 'datable to the year 1504 by an inscription to the then rector John Smith (1471-1518): QUI HOC OPUS FABRICARI FECIT, quoted by Blomefield.'<sup>768</sup> Mortlock made the same mistake and Rimmer cites Mortlock.<sup>769</sup>

Heywood's report corrects this, citing antiquarians Francis Blomefield and Anthony Norris:

'The chancel was greatly embellished by the rector John Smith...qui hoc opus fabricari fecit... in 1504, which is recorded by Blomefield (Blomefield 8, 134) and Anthony Norris (Rye 3, vol. 4) in the 18th century. Norris gives a more full description of the painted inscription as follows:

'Round the bottom of chancel roof is the inscription in very large letters, so as to extend the length of the chancel on each side.'<sup>770</sup>

Blomefield certainly states that 'John Smithe...built the chancel' and records an inscription under the chancel roof:

'...on the wood-work, under the roof of the chancel,

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...funds became available for the erection of the present nave roof, the high pitch originally planned for (and, very possibly carried out in the chancel) was abandoned in deference to the new fashion which had then come into vogue.'

<sup>767</sup> Cautley 1949, p. 215.

<sup>768</sup> Pevsner and Wilson 2002, p. 581.

<sup>769</sup> Mortlock and Roberts 2007, p. x and Rimmer 2015, p. 44.

<sup>770</sup> NHER 6912 Heywood 2014, p. 8.

<http://hbsmrgateway2.esdm.co.uk/norfolk/DataFiles/Docs/AssocDoc62092.pdf> [accessed 15

January 2017]



Orate p. a'i'a. Johs. Smithe, in decretis baccalaurei, rectoris istius eccl'ie, qui hoc opus fabricari fecit, 1504, cujus a'i'e, &c.....'<sup>771</sup>

Lorraine observes 'markings ...on the chancel walls corresponding to the wall-pieces and bays of the present nave roof' and asserts that 'apparently...there was a single hammer-beam roof here', but Smith's roof was dismantled and replaced by a low-pitched structure covered by a plaster ceiling probably dating from c. 1780, before Ladbrooke's c. 1820 study, so the material evidence is lost.<sup>772</sup> Was the heightening of the chancel walls commensurate with the raising of the nave walls for the double hammer-beam roof or with the later erection of the eighteenth-century chancel ceiling, as asserted by Heywood?<sup>773</sup> Despite Scott Junior's assertions of the low pitch of Smith's roof, one cannot be certain.

Norris states that the chancel was as 'expensively and ...elegantly roofed' as the nave, 'adorned with much carving and painting of images, cherubims etc.' and he describes heraldry and inscriptions 'painted in the [chancel] roof.'<sup>774</sup> Many extant roofs with carved angelic representations are located in naves, but Norris implies a shared form and iconography at Knapton between nave and chancel, which would suggest a unified purpose between laity and clergy. It is interesting to compare with other churches where there is material and/or documentary verification for clerical engagement in lay building projects, as at Burwell St Mary in Cambridgeshire, discussed earlier. Larger urban open plan rebuilding projects where the deliberate elimination of the chancel arch and uninterrupted roof designs assert communal mercantile and clerical ambition, as at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel and Norwich St Peter Mancroft, offer a similar opportunity for comparison. Such collaboration was probably more common than the fragmentary surviving evidence suggests.

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<sup>771</sup> Blomefield and Parkin 1808, vol. 8, p. 134.

<sup>772</sup> Lorraine 1985, p. 3.

<sup>773</sup> NHER 6912 Heywood 2014, p. 7.

<sup>774</sup> NRO MS 370 (transcript notes on Knapton by Anthony Norris from NRO RYE 3). '....scripture sentences painted in the Roof as GLORIA DEO PAR HOM and the like and four shields of Arms often repeated Argt. a Cross gules-gules a Cross argt.-gules a Cross fleuree argt.-Gule a Salter argt.'

There appears to be no reason for the extant nave roof at Knapton not to date to c. 1504, like the lost chancel roof. In preparation for a roof of lower pitch than the previous model or planning, the walls of the nave appear to have been heightened in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. This is evidenced by the extension of the additional section further west than the vertical seam of the fourteenth-century north wall below, located west of the door. The earlier lower north wall seems to have been abbreviated to accommodate the building of the off-set tower. The return of the diminutive section of the east tower wall meets the precisely defined joint of this lower wall, whereas four blocks of ashlar mark the point where the later wall extension meets the tower.<sup>775</sup>

Cattermole and Cotton cite Adam Kyng's will bequest dated 1511 for 'pinyng church roof.'<sup>776</sup> This meaning of this term is ambivalent; it could signify pegging or framing. Heywood has speculated that it might refer to painting the roof, which, if so, could have been nearing completion structurally.<sup>777</sup> He notes that Blomefield records a donation of 40 marks towards the 'building of this church', which in today's money is not far short of £20,000.<sup>778</sup> He cites the date 1506, but appears to have conflated Thomas Tanner's undated bequest with Blomefield's record of another less specific *orate* inscription of that date mentioning William Smith.<sup>779</sup> Nonetheless, the latter implies likely funding towards building or embellishment of the church.

If the nave walls were heightened (and extended westward on the north side) in preparation for the installation of the double hammer-beam roof, it was not to the extent that clerestory fenestration could be inserted, as illustrated by

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<sup>775</sup> NHER 6912 Heywood 2014, p. 3.

<sup>776</sup> Cattermole and Cotton 1983, p. 253; NRO ANF, will reg. liber 5, fol. 153.

<sup>777</sup> NHER 6912 Heywood 2014, p. 8.

<sup>778</sup> NHER 6912 Heywood 2014, p. 8.

<sup>779</sup> Blomefield 1805-1810, vol. 8, p. 134. 'In the church, Orate p. a'i'a. Willi. Smith, qui obt. quinto die Januarij, 1506.— Orate p. a'i'a. Tho. Thanner, qui dedit ad fabricationem istius eccl'ie quadraginta marcas. This benefaction of 40 marks, to the building of the church, was a great sum at that time; the roof, as I have observed, is curious, and on the principals of it are many angels carved, and saints.'

Cotman's depiction of the church from the north-east (1817).<sup>780</sup> The only illumination of the ambitious roof structure and its complex iconographic scheme in addition to the main south and north nave glazing is through the modest three-light window perched above the main four-light west window. Like Scott Junior, Heywood considers this unassuming aperture contemporaneous with the elevation of the walls.<sup>781</sup> If the additional wall fabric is early sixteenth-century, the tracery of this window seems anachronistic. It may post-date Robert Ladbrooke's c. 1820 view of the church from the south-west, in which it is depicted filled in, yet direct observation suggests a probable medieval date, notwithstanding much later repair work.<sup>782</sup> The erection of this ambitious roof type in the nave of a modestly sized church with no clerestory as at Knapton is noteworthy, but not unprecedented; other examples include Gissing St Mary in Norfolk, Bedingfield St Mary, Earl Soham St Mary, Tattingstone St Mary and Worlingworth St Mary in Suffolk, and Sturmer St Mary in Essex. At Knapton in particular, the forest of heavenly timber is perhaps rather overwhelming as a result, compared to the lofty effect where such roofs surmount the clerestories of Perpendicular rebuilding programmes, as at Swaffham SS Peter and Paul (Fig. 253). Knapton's aisle-less nave is exceptionally broad at over thirty feet wide.<sup>783</sup> Given the remarkably wide span and accordingly low pitch of the roof, the lack of clerestory windows may have been accounted for by concerns for the structural performance of the roof or the strength of the walls. For Cautley, the low pitch flawed the otherwise 'beautiful' roof, as

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<sup>780</sup> <http://collections.britishart.yale.edu/vufind/Record/1671227> [accessed 30 August 2018].

<sup>781</sup> RIBA SC/KN/28, pp. 4-5. '...when the present roof was put up the 14c gable walls were lowered to the new pitch, retaining, however, the kneelers and saddle-stones of the earlier date, and at the same time a new window was inserted in the west gable of the nave designed to fit in with the form of the new roof.' Also, see NHER 6912 Heywood 2014, p. 4.

<sup>782</sup> Detail from author's own copy of lithograph. See also Ladbrooke 1823, vol. 5, pl. 41.

<sup>783</sup> The Gissing nave is more typical of most at just under 21ft. Of all naves with angel roofs surveyed to date, only St Nicholas King's Lynn is wider at 31 ft. 6 ins., but the roof is much higher (50ft. compared to 38ft. 3½ ins.) and the alternating tie-beam with queen-post and hammer-beam structure at Lynn is less audacious. Most naves are less than 25ft. wide; several are less than 20ft. wide.

he argued that it rendered the braces ineffective, due to their 'short vertical underpinning'.<sup>784</sup> In fact, the roof has performed perfectly well for over six hundred years, with no material evidence of spread or damage to the fabric of the nave, either past or present.<sup>785</sup> A rood beam at the east end was retained by Scott, although removed during the 1930 restoration work and replaced by hammer-beams.<sup>786</sup>

Like the roofs at Gissing and Tilney All Saints, the Knapton nave roof was installed to protect existing church fabric and its eleven bays do not correspond to the windows, although it fits relatively neatly at the east and west ends. Wall-posts WPN/WPS 2, 5 and 8 overhang the window arches

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<sup>784</sup> Cautley 1949, pp. 29-30. '...its pitch of 35% is too flat for a double hammer-beam roof, which should have a steep pitch as otherwise all the braces are much too flat to be fully effective. A brace, to exert its full bracing effect, should have a vertical height of one and a half times its horizontal dimension.'

<sup>785</sup> This has been attested by past commentators such as Gilbert Scott Junior, as in RIBA SC/KN/28, p. 5. 'The scientific skill displayed in its design is well illustrated by the fact that although its pitch is little higher than 100 degrees (at the apex) and it has no cross-tie below the collar, which is placed unusually high, it does not appear to have spread, nor to have thrust out the walls, though these, in proportion to their height, are far from massive'. More recently, it has been confirmed by the author in conversation by the builders undertaking restoration work in January 2017.

<sup>786</sup> RIBA SC/KN/28, pp. 5-6. 'One truss, indeed, forms an exception to the rest in having a tie-beam; it is that which terminates the roof eastward. The designer appears to have been apprehensive of the combined thrust of roof and chancel arch, and has in this instance continued the lower hammer-beam across the nave, thus forming a tie-beam, which cuts, a little awkwardly perhaps, across the apex of the chancel-arch. There is, however, no sort of doubt that this beam is a feature of the original design, and it is moulded and decorated in colour in the same style precisely as the hammer-beams of the other trusses which it answers in position.' See also NRO PD 265/23 for drawings of the 1930 restoration. These show that the following lower-tier hammer-beams were replaced, from east to west, including the substitution of the tie-beam by new hammer-beams: HBN/HBS1 ('new figures'), HBS2, HBS3, HBS4, HBS5, HBS7, HBS8 and HBN11. This probably shows the typical susceptibility of the south of the structure to water damage, in addition to death-watch beetle activity. Hammer-posts HPN/S9 and HPN/S12 were replaced and other hidden structural repairs undertaken.

(Fig. 254).<sup>787</sup> This is typical of a number of late medieval roofs mounted over earlier fabric, with which they can have an uneasy relationship; at Gissing they have been cut short. The posts at Knapton lack the elegant slender length of those at Swaffham, but their carvings in canopied niches are more extended than their Gissing counterparts.

Blomefield's assertion regarding the use of Irish oak in the roof seems somewhat arbitrary (Irish oak comprises two native species, including pedunculate oak which predominated in lowland England) and I have found no evidence to support it to date.<sup>788</sup> It might suggest that Blomefield observed straight timbers of sessile oak reminiscent of those from the Baltic, but it can be difficult to differentiate between the two native species, the degree of straightness or curvature of the trunk is extremely inconsistent even within the pedunculate species and there were advantages to the latter in terms of planting and development of new woodland which led to its favour in the past.<sup>789</sup> It seems more probable that lowland English pedunculate oak

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<sup>787</sup> RIBA SC/KN/28, p. 6. 'There is a proof that the walls of the church were erected before, and quite independently of, the design of the roof which they now support in the fact that its trusses do not in any way correspond with the setting out of the side windows. Thus, while the walls are set out in four bays, the roof is designed with eleven. This is very frequently found to be the case, especially in the Eastern Counties, and it would lead one to conjecture that these splendid roofs were prepared by guilds of carpenters in some of the large towns, and not upon the spot. It is likely enough that in such cases the only dimensions furnished would be the width and length of the area to be roofed over.'

<sup>788</sup> Blomefield 1808, vol. 8, p. 134. 'The roof of both church and chancel is neat, of Irish oak.'  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/gardenerscorner/trees/oak.shtml> [accessed 31 January 2017]. 'This Irish source states that 'our two great native oaks are *Quercus robur* (pedunculate) and *Quercus petraea* (sessile). Sessile oak is the traditional Irish oak, but the pedunculate or English oak is also considered native...'

<sup>789</sup> Rackham 1990, pp. 124-125. See also:  
<http://www.woodlands.co.uk/blog/flora-and-fauna/the-oak> [accessed 31 January 2017]. 'There are two native species of oak; the sessile oak (*Quercus petraea*) and the pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*)...It is not always easy to distinguish between the sessile and pedunculate oak as the two species hybridise quite readily, and it may be difficult to find a 'pure' representative of each species. Sessile Oak: found in west and northern Britain, the dominant species in upland oak woodlands...Sessile oak is considered by some to be better for long, straight boles. However, it has

was used. In his 1882 restoration specification, Gilbert Scott Junior clearly specified the use of seasoned good quality English oak.<sup>790</sup> This suggests that he did not perceive such a distinction in the original timbers, especially given that his 1876 specifications at St Matthew and St Peter in Ipswich were less definitive, allowing the use of either English or Baltic oak.<sup>791</sup> It is worth noting the contrast between these Victorian stipulations for well-seasoned replacement timbers to prevent distortions or damage and the general medieval use of unseasoned timbers to ensure a constant supply.<sup>792</sup>

The inclusion of the collar in the structural design at Knapton is noteworthy, as collar-beams are rare in Norfolk open timber roofs more generally, as discussed earlier. The deployment of the cambered collar carrying a king-post in the Knapton roof is suggestive of potential Suffolk craftsmanship or its influence. The carved and painted imagery of the wall-post figures and relief angels at the beam-ends, against the king-posts and along the cornices at Knapton have been interpreted in chapter three, but it is clear that, both in its structure and its adornment, this roof relates especially to 'true' double hammer-beam production in east Suffolk.

## Conclusion

Variety is the hallmark of angelic roof expression in East Anglian parish churches, from the end of the fourteenth century to the dawn of the Reformation. Horizontal beams carved as angels co-existed with angelic

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been suggested that some of the finest sessile oaks on lowland sites had their 'origin' on the continent, where the seed was selected deliberately for timber. Pedunculate or English Oak: many to be found in the south and east, the dominant tree of deciduous woods in Britain. Also found in coppice woodland...'

<sup>790</sup> RIBA SC/KN/29, p. 10. 'The oak to be well-seasoned English oak free from sap shakes, large and loose knots sapwood and all other defects'.

<sup>791</sup> RIBA SC/IPMA/21, p. 5. 'Oak English Dantzee or Slettin [latter in pencil]'; again he stresses 'All to be free from all defect to be thoroughly seasoned' at Ipswich St Matthew. RIBA SC/IPP/118, p. 5. He specifies 'The oak to be English-or the best Dantzic free from all shakes-soft wood-dead knots or other defects' at Ipswich St Peter.

<sup>792</sup> Rackham 1990, p. 69.

reliefs at the beam-ends, at the intersections of the main timbers and along cornices, throughout the period. It has been possible to ascertain this from evidence in written sources and timber analyses. Further archival research and (above all) close material study of jointing, timbers and pigment is essential, to widen the body of dating evidence, to confirm connections in craftsmanship and to prevent misinterpretation of structure and imagery due to the distortions of restoration work.

The multiplicity and endurance of angel roof types suggests a complex relationship between Herland's prestigious hammer-beam structure at Westminster Hall and parochial church roof development. The suggestion that Herland's engagement with the Yarmouth harbour construction scheme from 1398 might have embedded the necessary skills 'to build hammer-beam and angel roofs' in the region is difficult to reconcile with the employment of tie-beam technology in early examples, such as the influential model at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, or the nave roof at Debenham St Mary, where angelic beam-end rather than beam carvings were clearly introduced.<sup>793</sup> The direct influence of the royal roof structure was relatively restricted, although it was a catalyst for parochial angelic roof displays, including beam-angel variants.<sup>794</sup> More probable initial conduits for its dissemination were the nobles and clerics who approved the overthrow of Richard II and attended the opening of a new Parliament beneath its roof angels in the autumn of 1399, including Michael de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk and Bishop Despenser of Norwich.<sup>795</sup>

Beech's assertion that 'the notion of the hammer-beam roof as a vehicle solely for angel-hammer-beams [had] been abandoned' by the mid-fifteenth century appears overstated.<sup>796</sup> Ecclesiastical beam angels persisted, as at Kersey St Mary and alternating with pendant hammer-posts in the richly carved single hammer-beam roof at Earl Stonham St Mary (c. 1500). In

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<sup>793</sup> Rimmer 2015, p. 8.

<sup>794</sup> Here I concur with Beech 2015, pp. 258-259.

<sup>795</sup> Given-Wilson 2005, p. 3 and p. 9.

<sup>796</sup> Beech 2015, p. 254.

contrast, unusual relief carvings characterise the roof at Helmingham St Mary (c. 1540). Diversity in structure and iconography continued to characterise late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century angel roofs. Alongside new approaches to roof ornamentation, the deliberate deployment of angelic roof imagery endured as the Reformation approached.

## Conclusion

Late medieval angel roofs are most concentrated in East Anglian parish churches. Notwithstanding their frequent correspondence with hammer-beam roof forms in the region, they constitute a significant corpus of evidence regarding the development and distribution of different open timber roof structures which could accommodate carved angelic representations. This has been largely overlooked to date. In addition, these roofs present a substantial body of previously neglected visual material for investigating the significance of angelic imagery in comprehensive representational schemes, often covering the entire nave. This thesis begins to address these omissions, examining the relationship between structure and imagery through comparative work across an ambitious chronological and geographical range, and detailed examination of significant case studies.

The investigation of these roofs and their carvings spans different research fields, but previous studies have fallen between them. Nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century studies primarily addressed structural typology. After a relative hiatus during the mid-twentieth-century, most late-twentieth- and early-twenty-first-century analyses have continued to focus upon structure and construction, at the expense of the detail and significance of angelic carvings and other imagery. The same disparity between attention to structure, as opposed to art and iconography, applies to the study of the elite roof at Westminster Hall, although arguably, this has been privileged above that of parochial roofs. This thesis has attempted to address this discrepancy with a cross-disciplinary approach. Material analysis, the study of carpentry



and construction, and art historical methodology have been combined with documentary research and the wider study of late medieval angels.

At the core of the research is the detailed material study of roofs across Norfolk, Suffolk and some comparators in Cambridgeshire, Essex and Lincolnshire. This methodology has been followed to assess other aspects of parish church fabric, such as Lunnon's studies of porches and screens, or Trend's analyses of window tracery. However, its application to roof structures and their imagery in this research is unprecedented in scale. It has included systematic photography, measuring of roof structures and recording of carved angels and their attributes and gestures in situ. Roof surveys have included scrutiny of the development and archaeology of the whole building, combining empirical and phenomenological approaches with reference to any written evidence available.

Each element of this research practice has its advantages and limitations. For example, measuring the roof structure including width, cornice and ridge has enabled calculation of the roof pitch at most sites, except where the ridge is boarded or otherwise obstructed. This has demonstrated the surprisingly wide variation of pitch during the period, contradicting any impression of an almost universal development towards low-pitched roofs. Opportunities to examine angelic beam construction, especially from scaffolding, as at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, have facilitated relative assessment of structural properties against primarily formal intent, although this can be altered by renovation work, as discussed in chapters one and four. Such close visual study can also give an indication of timbers used, and of the extent of pigment and its restoration. There are practical obstacles to such direct study and access to the rafters generally depends upon renovation projects. Ideally, more of these would embrace recording and measuring with paint and timber analyses to further augment direct observation, and for dating purposes, especially of particularly significant roofs.

Close scrutiny of angelic and other figurative carvings and their attributes has enabled accurate recording of their iconography and assessment of the

extent of distortion to a given scheme through iconoclasm or restoration work. In an influential model, such as the roof at King's Lynn St Nicholas Chapel, this was particularly important, in order to establish its impact. Material analysis highlighted the extent of the range of options, and inventive variations within these other programmes, suggesting that in some cases, for different reasons, the inclusion of certain imagery could be more important than its specific location. Elsewhere, at Gissing, access from a temporary scaffold and repeated close analysis with a monocular determined the extent of iconoclasm and restoration in the wall-post figures, preventing their misidentification. This thesis has engaged briefly with patterns and characteristics of iconoclasm, and religious attitudes in relation to roofs, but more needs to be done to unpick this slippery field of investigation.

It has also identified certain patterns of representation which appear to relate to human activity on the ground, or other church art, as discussed in relation to the Rood in chapter four. Following similar approaches to details of other late medieval parish church imagery by Nichols, Baker and Varnam, examining the specificity of angelic roof display can illuminate its function within the parish church. On the basis of this direct observational study, informed analysis of the significance of angelic iconography in relation to the liturgy, lay piety, and individualistic appropriation has been possible to undertake in detail in this thesis. These heavenly roof schemes did not provide static canopies, and need to be understood with regard to their correspondence and dialogue with their audiences, and events at ground level, including multi-sensory experience of the Mass and guild activities. There is more to examine in this respect, including the study of the relationship between roof angels and burial patterns or requests, and further examination of the factors which account for relative structural types, angelic expression and appropriation of space in adjacent nave, aisle and chancel roofs.

Comparison with angelic imagery in other modes of production has informed the interpretation of the attire, attributes and arrangement of roof angels in this thesis. There is additional scope for their examination within the wider context of late medieval angelic representation, from painted glass and

alabaster panels with relief carvings to literary interpretations and illuminations. Equally, this research and further angel roof studies can better inform scholars of medieval angels from other disciplines. The need for this is demonstrated by Gibson's interpretation of the nave roof imagery at Bury St Edmunds St Mary, discussed in chapter two.

Careful recording and comparative observation of carpentry and carvings has begun to highlight shared craftsmanship between different sites. For example, the common idiom of the design of the hammer-beams and the character of the spandrel carvings at Ipswich St Margaret and at Great Bromley St George in Essex indicates a particular relationship between the urban centre and its rural hinterland to the south. Likewise, the identification of the localised impact of a relatively unusual beam angel design at Norwich St Peter Hungate upon a group of church roofs in north-east Norfolk was facilitated by direct comparative study of the sophisticated Norwich carvings in relation to those at Blakeney, Trunch, Marsham and Banningham. This implies patronal connections, as between Hungate and Stody, where the common nave and transept timber vaulted roof designs and Paston connections are unlikely to be purely coincidental.

Despite these examples, detailed examination of craftsmanship has been beyond the scope of this thesis. Extant contracts for roofs are rare, but offer an insight into production methods, spheres of operation and the relationships between patrons and artisans, from which to extrapolate. As Wrapson has shown in relation to screens and (more recently) the roof carpentry of Thomas Loveday, jointing techniques and adornment can identify spheres of workshop activity. Few East Anglian carpenters moved in the elite milieu frequented by Loveday, nor combined roof carpentry and patronage as he appears to have done at Gestingthorpe in Essex. There is much work to be done, both in mapping workshop production and identification of craftsmen known to have been active in a given area with specific roofing projects.

As stated above, material study and art historical analysis have been cross-referenced with documentary sources where available. There is limited

written evidence to date roofs; testamentary bequests are often ambivalent, compared to screens and other furnishings, as Cattermole and Cotton have shown. Patronage can be elusive. However, sufficient supporting data survives to have corroborated the timescales of some significant roof construction programmes in this thesis, confirming the initial hypothesis of concurrent diversity of regional angel roof and carving types throughout the period c. 1390-c. 1540, as shown in chapter five.

The gazetteer widens the scope of evidence of this diversity of roof structures and the distribution of angelic representations within them, to encompass every extant and recorded late medieval church roof identified across Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Essex and Lincolnshire. Where it has not been possible to undertake a physical survey, assessment has been based upon a range of written and photographic sources available. Some of the findings are indeterminate and require further research, and others may be contested. Hopefully, the data will provide a useful resource for those attempting to navigate the field and to undertake the next steps in ordering and interpreting the relationship between structure and imagery in open timber church roofs in the east of England. Similar charting and recording is needed across the country to fully discern patterns of angelic expression, craftsmanship and patronage, and to facilitate comparative study.

Clearly, there is a vast amount of potential study material beyond the immediate focus of the thesis upon East Anglian roofs, specifically those in Norfolk and Suffolk, with limited reference to specific examples in bordering counties. This area was chosen because of the remarkable density, invention and variety of its angel roofs, which emerged in the wake of the completion of Richard II's roof at Westminster Hall. The thesis has established that the relationship between the structure and angelic beam imagery of the royal roof and those in parish churches was not straightforward. Angelic expression appears to have been determined by patronal influence, allied to local craftsmanship in many cases, although there are examples of elite work, particularly in Norwich, Bury St Edmunds and west Suffolk, north Essex, Cambridge and east Cambridgeshire, to be explored further. Key case studies have been examined on the basis of their significance and

impact, coherence and invention and/or availability of documentary evidence in this thesis. The well-known example at March St Wendreda in Cambridgeshire has been omitted, as it is the subject of other research. Some other lesser-known and more understated examples are included as they offer insights to significant aspects of angel roof development. Still others merit study beyond the confines of the length of this thesis.

The relationship between East Anglian angel roofs and most others elsewhere in England and Wales has been beyond the confines of the thesis, but is ripe for serious study. Some non-East Anglian roofs are linked to the region through patronage and craftsmanship, like the chapel canopy at Ewelme St Mary in Oxfordshire, associated with Alice, Duchess of Suffolk. Others follow different carpentry models. Hammer-beam development was specific to England, but the relationship between roofs and roof imagery in continental Europe needs examining in depth in separate studies, as the similarities between some roofs in Brittany in France and others in the West Country imply other links; likewise, in-depth discussion of angel roofs in secular buildings, and their relationship to church roofs, are topics for prospective research.

After years of neglect, interest in the study of parochial angel roofs is undoubtedly growing. Yet it is evident from site visits that many roofs require urgent repair, under threat from the incursion of water and insect damage. This thesis offers a methodology for much-needed further research, grounded in their materiality.

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