

DEVOTION AND IDENTITY:
THE PATRONAGE OF STAINED GLASS IN LATE MEDIEVAL ENGLAND

by

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Abstract

The patronage of stained glass was an act of power that expressed the identity and piety of the donor. Both aristocratic and merchant-class patrons donated stained glass windows to the churches and cathedrals of late medieval England, but key differences in the location and imagery of their windows indicate a disparity between the two social classes. Firstly, this thesis studies the written works on stained glass by medieval chroniclers and modern historians, showing a movement toward focusing on the role of the patron in the analysis of medieval stained glass. Next, this thesis examines the windows donated by members of the aristocracy, which demonstrate the agency and piety of the patron through their placement throughout the entirety of the ecclesiastical structure, most notably in the east ends of cathedrals, and their representation of significant biblical and hagiographical imagery. Aristocratic patrons chose to express their noble heritage through the use of heraldry, primarily within the nave, identifying themselves as members of the aristocracy. This thesis then analyzes the stained glass windows donated by members of the merchant-class and the notable absence of their windows from the east ends of cathedrals, which exhibits the limitations faced by merchant-class patrons of stained glass. Merchant-class donors chose to express their identity through representations of occupational and mercantile activities, predominantly within the nave, which demonstrated both their connection to the community and pride in their societal roles. Ultimately, this thesis illustrates that the societal structures of late medieval England are echoed in the placement and imagery of stained glass windows donated to churches and cathedrals by both aristocratic and merchant-class patrons.

List of Abbreviations

- CVMA* “Picture Archive.” Corpus Vitrearum Medii Aevi. Accessed March 2016.
<http://www.cvma.ac.uk/index.html>.
- SGAYM* Brown, Sarah. *Stained Glass at York Minster*. London: Scala Publishers, Ltd., 1999.
- SGEMA* Marks, Richard. *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993.
- OMF* Brown, Sarah. *Our Magnificent Fabrick’. York Minster: An Architectural History c1220-1500*. Swindon, 2003.

Chapter One: “Historiography”

Introduction

Late medieval stained glass has been written about in many different ways, both during and after the Middle Ages. Contemporary medieval authors wrote about glass in terms of its relation to cathedral-building, as well as in its role in worship. As the popularity of stained glass dwindled with the ending of the Middle Ages and Tudor period, the level of interest in stained glass also declined, resulting in little to no scholarship on the topic. With the coming of the Victorian era, the resurgence of interest in the Middle Ages allowed for the study of stained glass to be resumed, and antiquarians and historians alike marvelled at the intricate beauty of medieval glass. The twentieth century saw an increased interest in the development of techniques for glass-making, which led to the study of imagery and narrative in stained glass windows. The coming of social history at the end of the twentieth century brought focus to the glazier and the patron, broadening the fields of study available for stained glass historians.

The aim of this chapter is to outline the different ways that stained glass has been studied in the past in order to highlight areas which require further analysis. Examining the development of the study of patronage in late medieval England alongside the progression of the analysis of stained glass will demonstrate how relevant each subject is to the other. An emphasis has been placed on the scholarship of stained glass rather than on patronage because of the important role stained glass windows play in the later chapters of this thesis. Over time, the historiography of stained glass has grown to incorporate the study of patronage, which emphasizes their importance and relation to each other. The detailed work completed on the role patrons had in the production of

stained glass windows is important to understanding stained glass as a whole. The lack of scholarship focusing on the ways in which the identities of different patrons, namely aristocratic and merchant-class donors, were reflected in stained glass, however, leaves room for additional exploration and analysis to be done.

Medieval Treatises

There are not many surviving medieval textual sources pertaining to stained glass. Of those that remain, several mention stained glass briefly in rather technical terms, or only in relation to the building in which the glass was located.¹ Some treatises, such as Abbot Suger's *On the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*, and Theophilus' *On Divers Arts*, however, discuss stained glass in a more conceptual way, describing stained glass beyond its simple inclusion within the building's structure.

The early twelfth century treatise *On Divers Arts* was written by Theophilus Presbyter, who likely was the Benedictine monk Roger of Helmarshausen.² The original treatise was probably written in the early twelfth century, with the earliest surviving manuscripts being twelfth century German copies.³ The treatise is comprised of three books: the first about the art of painting, the second about glass working, and the third about metalworking. Book two focuses on the process of making glass, as well as the

¹ See Gervase of Canterbury, "History of the Burning and Repair of the Church of Canterbury," in *A Documentary History of Art, Volume 1: The Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, 1947 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); "Contract for Building the Nave of Fotheringhay Church, 22nd September, 1434," in *A Documentary History of Art, Volume 1: The Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, 1947 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

² Theophilus Presbyter, *On Divers Arts*, trans. John G. Hawthorne and Cyril Stanley Smith (New York: Dover Publications, 1979), xv. Some argue that the source could be dated to as early as the 10th century, though the 12th century creation date by Roger of Helmarshausen is agreed upon by many. For the sake of this thesis, the name Theophilus will be used throughout.

³ Theophilus, xv-xvii.

different techniques used to achieve various colours of glass. Theophilus begins by detailing how to construct the furnace required for making glass, and moves into outlining which components are necessary for making clear, or white, glass. He then gives instruction on making coloured glass with the addition of various elements, and eventually explains the construction of coloured glass windows. Book two of the treatise serves as a 'how-to' manual for producing various types of glass and glass windows, so Theophilus' descriptions are quite technical in their nature. With his focus being on the craft of glass-making and window-making rather than on stained glass and its context within Gothic structures, book two of Theophilus' *On Divers Arts* takes a rather narrow view on stained glass. In the prologue for book two, however, Theophilus expresses his admiration for stained glass, describing his first experience with it as follows:

I drew near to the forecourt of holy Wisdom and I saw the sanctuary filled with a variety of all kinds of differing colors, displaying the utility and nature of each pigment. I entered it unseen and immediately filled the storeroom of my heart fully with all these things... Since this method of painting [on glass] cannot be obvious, I worked hard like a careful investigator using every means to learn by what skilled arts the variety of pigments could decorate the work without repelling the daylight and the rays of the sun.⁴

Theophilus, by explaining how he came to know so much about stained glass, provides a personal reflection on the qualities of stained glass. He is enamoured with the characteristics of the coloured glass, and seeks to understand it.⁵ By thinking about stained glass as being more than an architectural feature, more specifically by thinking of it as an art, Theophilus understands glass quite similarly to Abbot Suger.

⁴ Theophilus, 47-48.

⁵ Ibid.

Abbot Suger, during the Gothic reconstruction of St.-Denis, emphasizes the importance of stained glass and its presence in the church. In his twelfth century writing, *On the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*, Suger contemplates stained glass in its relation to light and to the experience of the worshipper. Suger describes the glass as “urging us onward from the material to the immaterial,”⁶ crediting stained glass with providing heavenly light, or the immaterial, on Earth. He recounts the stained glass windows as being “very valuable on account of their wonderful execution,”⁷ saying that “an official master craftsman [was hired] for their protection and repair.”⁸ Here, Suger is discussing glass in its relation to the craftsman. This description is important for studying medieval stained glass since Suger was unique in his broad explanation of the function and importance of stained glass windows in the cathedral. Suger’s references to stained glass, however, were amongst other commentaries on different projects within the rebuilding of St.-Denis. Though extra observations were made on the properties of stained glass, its inclusion by Suger was very much in relation to the overall construction of the cathedral.

By looking at contemporary chroniclers such as Theophilus and Suger, medieval writings on stained glass are shown to be quite technical, examining the composition of the coloured glass itself, the windows as a whole, and the setting of the windows within the cathedral. Theophilus describes the procedures for making stained glass and stained glass windows, and he also marvels at the properties and beauty of it. Suger alternatively discusses glass in relation to light and stresses its importance in worship. None but the

⁶ Abbot Suger, *On the Abbey Church of St.-Denis and its Art Treasures*, ed., trans. Erwin Panofsky, 1946 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 75.

⁷ Suger, 77.

⁸ Ibid.

treatises of Abbot Suger and Theophilus go beyond the physical nature of stained glass windows, making their interpretations of glass integral for further examination on the subject.

The Descriptive Chronology of Glass

With interest in stained glass declining after the end of the Middle Ages, the Victorian era was the next period when medieval stained glass windows were discussed in any significant capacity. In a similar fashion to particular medieval sources,⁹ stained glass windows are often described in Victorian and early twentieth century literature with meticulous detail and intricacy, while little to no consideration is given to their wider significance within the context of the Church or medieval world. Authors such as Richard John King, Albert Ilg, and William Walton centre their scholarship on the description and detail of stained glass without defining its broader significance. Hugh Arnold and Herbert Read approach glass similarly, centering their analyses on the progression of technical style in stained glass windows through chronological structures, lacking any contextualization of stained glass in the medieval world.

Richard John King emphasizes the architecture and design of cathedrals in England in his 1869 *Handbook to the Cathedrals of England: Northern Division*, part one, volume 5. This book is part of King's *Handbook to the Cathedrals of England* series which is devoted to recording the layout and architectural elements of various English cathedrals. By cataloguing these cathedrals, King provides intricate descriptions of various stained glass windows in England, with a particular focus in volume 5 on the

⁹ Medieval sources such as Gervase of Canterbury's treatise and the "Contract for Building the Nave of Fotheringhay Church" both mention stained glass windows in a purely descriptive way.

windows of York Minster.¹⁰ King notes aspects such as the location of the windows, the imagery within them, the artistic style of the windows, and the dates of their origin.

Though great detail is provided in the description of the cathedrals in this volume, as well as in his 1876 volume on the southern cathedrals,¹¹ King neglects to provide analysis on the larger significance of stained glass in relation to the patron who donated the window, the craftsman who made the window, or the community which looked upon the window.

Several Victorian articles follow a similar pattern of discussing stained glass. The 1874 article “York Minster” by an unnamed author examines the Minster in terms of its size, architecture, and beauty. Much of the article is focused on describing the beauty of York Minster and comparing the magnificence of certain windows within it.¹² This style is common to other articles of the time, as is evident in Albert Ilg’s 1873 article, “On Secular Glass-Painting.” In a similar fashion, Ilg focuses on the beauty of medieval stained glass, emphasizing how it can be used as inspiration for glass being made in contemporary Victorian times.¹³

Ilg’s article introduces another interesting aspect of Victorian scholarship on medieval stained glass, which is the notion that there was a ‘renaissance’ taking place for the production of stained glass in the nineteenth century. Ilg compares the nineteenth century to the Italian Renaissance on several occasions, and uses the term ‘revival’ to

¹⁰ Richard John King, *Handbook to the Cathedrals of England: Northern Division*, Part 1, Vol. 5 (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1869), 1-93.

¹¹ Richard John King, *Handbook to the Cathedrals of England: Southern Division*, Part 2 (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1876).

¹² “York Minster,” *The Aldine*, vol. 7, no. 11 (November, 1874): 226, accessed September 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20636904>.

¹³ Albert Ilg, “On Secular Glass-Painting,” *The Workshop*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1873): 49-51, accessed September 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25586708>.

describe the creation of stained glass in particular.¹⁴ William Walton also exhibits this mentality in his 1887 article, “Church Decoration: A Series of Articles, Number Nine, Stained Glass Windows.” Walton begins his article with the statement: “The art of working in stained glass is one for which a Renaissance, since the commencement of the present century, is most confidently claimed...”¹⁵ This directly exhibits the belief in Victorian literature that the art of stained glass had experienced a rebirth or revitalization. By focusing on this ‘rebirth,’ Victorian authors were connecting the remarkable medieval windows to their own, displaying the tendency to discuss only the beauty and sophistication of medieval stained glass in Victorian literature.

The scholarship of the early twentieth century, however, moves away from the Victorian romantic notion of medieval stained glass windows in different ways. With a focus on the progression of medieval stained glass style rather than simply on the beauty of it, the scholars of the early twentieth century made developments toward a more analytical way of looking at stained glass. This different approach, however, still centres its arguments on description alone, leaving contextualization and broader analysis to later historians.

Hugh Arnold’s book, *Stained Glass of the Middle Ages in England and France*, published in 1913, is a chronological survey of medieval glass in both England and France. Arnold’s analysis is on the progression of stained glass styles over time, but he does this in a manner quite reminiscent of Victorian antiquarianism. Many of his

¹⁴ Ilg, 50.

¹⁵ William Walton, “Church Decoration: A Series of Articles, Number Nine, Stained Glass Windows,” *The Decorator and Furnisher* vol. 9, no. 6 (March, 1887): 201-202, accessed September 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25584706>.

accounts are merely detailed descriptions, leaving much of the analytical aspect up to the reader. In his discussion of the fourteenth century glass at York, Arnold writes:

The first five windows in the south aisle seem to me to follow these [other windows] immediately in order of execution. The style is just a little more advanced; stain is used more freely, and the canopies begin to grow up into the white panel above them until their pinnacles reach its centre and do away with the coloured boss there altogether...¹⁶

Arnold is following a chronological timeline of glass windows in order to outline the progression and development of glass-making techniques. Here, he is commenting on the evolution of glass-painting methods in order to emphasize the transformations that are seen in fourteenth century glass styles in comparison to earlier windows. Arnold often makes comparisons between the windows of Canterbury and Sens,¹⁷ but otherwise divides his chapters by both region and time period in order to better structure his glass style chronology. By doing this, Arnold includes an element of organization in his writing that was absent from Victorian scholarship.

Herbert Read follows a similar pattern to Hugh Arnold in his 1926 book, *English Stained Glass*, but uses an organizational system based on glass style rather than time period. Read focuses solely on English stained glass, and discusses ages of stained glass style, including the Age of Reason, the Age of Sentiment, and the Age of Fancy.¹⁸ The Age of Reason, according to Read, is the height of Christian art, whereas the Age of Sentiment and the Age of Fancy are the establishment and culmination of humanistic art,

¹⁶ Hugh Arnold, *Stained Glass of the Middle Ages in England and France* (London: A. & C. Black, Ltd., 1913), 176.

¹⁷ Arnold, 87-108. This comparison is appropriate because of the involvement of William of Sens in the Gothic reconstruction of Canterbury Cathedral, so many similarities can be found between the English and French Gothic styles.

¹⁸ Herbert Read, *English Stained Glass*, 1926, Reprint (New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1973), 7.

respectively.¹⁹ These ages, though more thematic than purely chronological, follow a linear progression. Read's emphasis, much like other earlier scholars, is on the description of the stained glass windows rather than on their importance or role in medieval society.

Contextualizing Stained Glass

Developing beyond the chronological study of stained glass style, historians in the early twentieth century begin analyzing glass in relation to the broader medieval world. The imagery within stained glass windows is studied more earnestly, and looking at glass as an art in comparison to other medieval art forms becomes commonplace. This study of stained glass continues to follow a linear chronology in its structure, but arguments are made about the connection stained glass production has to medieval art and society. The works of Bernard Rackham, O. Elfrida Saunders, and Christopher Woodforde all add an analysis of stained glass' broader context in the medieval world. Glass is compared to other forms of medieval art, most often manuscript illuminations, which connects the study of stained glass to the broader field of medieval art.

The shift to a more contextual approach to stained glass, rather than purely chronological, is evident in Bernard Rackham's article from 1928, "The Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral." Rackham concentrates his study on the glass at Canterbury Cathedral, and compares the styles exhibited in the glass to those used in

¹⁹ Read, 7.

other forms of medieval art, such as in the Canterbury Psalter.²⁰ Rackham states that “the illuminations in the Canterbury psalter... include a figure of the scribe Eadwine...sitting at his desk under an architectural canopy.”²¹ Rackham continues that he finds “striking similarities to the glass-painting- the same stringy festooned folds of the robes... the chair in which the scribe is seated resembles that of Lamech in the stained glass series.”²² Rackham is looking at the imagery in stained glass windows as works of art, therefore providing art historical context for the study of stained glass.

O. Elfrida Saunders also begins to shift toward a broader analysis of stained glass in her 1932 book, *A History of English Art in the Middle Ages*. A chapter is given to stained glass, where Saunders places emphasis on the figures and imagery depicted in the windows.²³ Saunders, like Rackham, compares the imagery found in stained glass windows to other forms of medieval art, such as embroidery and illumination.²⁴ L. C. Evetts takes this one step further in his 1941 article “Genealogical Windows at Canterbury Cathedral,” by focusing on just one aspect of stained glass imagery. Evetts briefly describes the windows which contain patriarchal figures, and focuses on images common to Canterbury’s stained glass windows.²⁵ Evetts connects the technical style of the windows’ images to illuminated manuscripts, saying that “the extent to which this

²⁰ Bernard Rackham, “The Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral,” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, vol. 52, no. 298 (January, 1928), 33-41, accessed September 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/863512>.

²¹ Rackham, 41.

²² Rackham, 41.

²³ O. Elfrida Saunders, *A History of English Art in the Middle Ages*, 1932, Reprint (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1969), 241.

²⁴ Saunders, 241-242.

²⁵ L. C. Evetts, “Genealogical Windows at Canterbury Cathedral,” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs*, vol. 78, no. 456 (March, 1941), 95-98, accessed October 2015, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/868215>.

calligraphic character of drawing, which reached its classical state of execution in the manuscripts of the tenth and eleventh centuries, can be traced in the design of the Patriarchs at Canterbury is considerable.”²⁶ Evetts’ method of looking at stained glass as an art form delineates stained glass as being an important aspect of medieval art generally.

Christopher Woodforde’s 1954 book, *English Stained and Painted Glass*, is a chronological account of English stained glass, with an emphasis on the evolution of glass-painting styles. Though Woodforde continues the method of analyzing the style progression of stained glass that was common to earlier scholarship, he adds an extra dimension to his analysis; Woodforde discusses the reasons behind style changes in stained glass rather than simply noting they happened. When discussing grisaille glass, Woodforde explains the early twelfth century Cistercian ordinance that banned coloured glass and the representation of figures in windows, providing context for the twelfth and thirteenth century movement toward the grisaille style.²⁷ He also takes into account the cost of some windows,²⁸ bringing insight into external factors and their impact on the creation and design of stained glass windows. Woodforde and these other stained glass scholars analyze glass in relation to other medieval art. These analyses depict stained glass as a medieval art form that deserves study, but it is not until the late twentieth century that the craftsmen and patrons behind the production of stained glass windows are deemed worthy of examination.

²⁶ Evetts, 97.

²⁷ Christopher Woodforde, *English Stained and Painted Glass* (Oxford: 1954), 5.

²⁸ Woodforde, 17.

Glaziers as Producers of Glass

In the late twentieth century, medieval craftsmen begin to take precedence in stained glass scholarship. Historians such as Heribert Hutter and Madeline Caviness make brief mentions of the glazier and the patron respectively in their works, while Joseph and Frances Gies, June Osborne and Marilyn Stokstad devote more significant sections of their work to these individuals. By incorporating the role of the glazier into the discussion of stained glass, these historians take their analyses beyond examining stained glass as solely an art by looking at it in connection to the broader medieval society.

Heribert Hutter's 1963 book, *Medieval Stained Glass*, follows some earlier patterns of stained glass analysis. In the introductory segment preceding the many plates of European stained glass, Hutter provides a history of stained glass and discusses common imagery within the windows.²⁹ Hutter also examines stained glass in relation to other forms of medieval art, including manuscript illumination and metalworking.³⁰ Additionally, however, Hutter makes reference to the artists behind the creation of glass windows, noting a difference between "artists who design and artists who carry out the work."³¹ This reference, though brief, marks a change in the historiography of glass from studying the stained glass itself to analyzing stained glass as a piece of medieval society by including the roles of the patron and the glass-painter. The role of the patron is more thoroughly discussed in Margaret Wade Labarge's *Court, Church, and Castle*. Labarge analyzes the general art patronage of Henry III of England and focuses mainly on royal

²⁹ Heribert Hutter, *Medieval Stained Glass*, trans. Margaret Shenfield (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1963), 8-9.

³⁰ Hutter, 8.

³¹ Hutter, 12.

patrons rather than varying types of patrons, but gives discussion to art patronage in some capacity nonetheless.³²

Madeline Caviness explores some wider themes associated with medieval stained glass in her 1977 book, *The Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral, Circa 1175-1220*. Caviness outlines the history of glass-painting and provides a brief overview of the various styles of stained glass as needed for her analysis. She then organizes her topics thematically by types of imagery within windows, emphasizing the important role that images play in medieval stained glass.³³ In her introduction, Caviness explains her desire to compare aspects of Canterbury's glass to other works of art, and she makes mention of the importance of looking at financial factors in conjunction with stained glass, for she notes that "knowledge of the socioeconomic conditions in which much early Gothic art was produced is not irrelevant for the art historian,"³⁴ but she does not elaborate on the subject. By bringing the economic conditions of the medieval world into her discussion of stained glass, Caviness hints at the role of the patron in the donation of art, which extends the scope of stained glass scholarship beyond simple description. Work on the patron and glazier is continued and elaborated on in the 1980s and beyond, bringing the individuals behind the production of stained glass into the field of study.

The scholarship from the 1980s on medieval stained glass and art patronage is vast in both volume and subject matter. In 1981, Joseph and Frances Gies discussed stained glass in their *Life in a Medieval City* in the context of its role in, as the title

³² Margaret Wade Labarge, *Court, Church, and Castle* (Ottawa: The National Gallery of Ottawa, 1972), 13-14.

³³ Madeline Caviness, *The Early Stained Glass of Canterbury Cathedral, Circa 1175-1220* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977),

³⁴ Caviness, 10.

suggests, the medieval city. Though the exploration of the subject is rather brief, stained glass is now being brought into the larger discussion of the role that certain individuals play in medieval society. Gies and Gies describe the glazier, saying that “his craft demands special knowledge... exceptional skill, and long experience. Like the master builder and the masons, the window maker and the workmen he commands are itinerants, moving from town to town and church to church.”³⁵ After providing some technical and historical background on the subject, Gies and Gies narrow their efforts to looking at the role of the glazier as both a craftsman and an artist in the medieval city.³⁶

Aspects of these new perspectives are echoed in June Osborne’s chronological overview of English stained glass in her 1981 book *Stained Glass in England*. Though her analysis is centred around the progression of English glass over time, Osborne discusses the importance of narrative in window imagery as well as the role of the Church in the windows’ function as story-telling devices.³⁷ Osborne also touches on the role of the glazier, discussing glazing workshops and their function in the production of cathedrals.³⁸ She also discusses the skill of the glazier as being passed down in families, bringing the family and life of the glazier into her analysis of the importance of stained glass.

In her 1986 book *Medieval Art*, Marilyn Stokstad devotes a section to the art of stained glass. Stokstad briefly discusses the important role narrative plays in the design of medieval stained glass windows, and makes reference to the designer’s choices, rather

³⁵ Joseph and Frances Gies, *Life in a Medieval City* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1981), 151.

³⁶ Gies and Gies, 150-153.

³⁷ June Osborne, *Stained Glass in England* (London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1981), 31-34.

³⁸ Osborne, 49.

than simply the layout of the window, bringing a personal element into her analysis of stained glass window design. Reference is made to the treatises of Theophilus and Suger, which are quite suited to the new emphasis on the glazier's role in stained glass production. Elizabeth Salter, in her work on patronage, focuses mainly on literary patronage in England, but briefly discusses Henry III's patronage of the arts,³⁹ showing an expansion of the types of patronage being studied at the same time as there was expansion in stained glass scholarship. It is not until the end of the decade with the scholarship of Richard Marks, however, that significant mention is made to the role of the patron in the making of stained glass in the medieval world.

Richard Marks

Richard Marks, an art historian at the University of York, in Yorkshire, England, is an integral figure in the field of medieval stained glass. Marks' different analyses on stained glass mark a significant time in the scholarship of medieval stained glass and patronage alike. Until Marks, the focus of many works had been on the stained glass itself, the style of glass, or the role of the glass-painter. With Marks, however, there is a shift toward focusing on the patron in the production of stained glass, highlighting the significance of the patronage of glass alongside the importance of the imagery and style of glass.

One of Marks' earlier works, an article titled "Stained Glass c.1200-1400" in Alexander and Binski's 1987 *Age of Chivalry*, greatly emphasizes the role of both the

³⁹ Elizabeth Salter, *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art, and Patronage of Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 87-89. From this time also, see Trevor Rowley, *The High Middle Ages 1200-1550* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986).

glazier and the patron. Marks makes the role of the patron his main focus, which is new to the medieval scholarship on stained glass in the 1980s. Marks briefly discusses the process of making glass and the new glass-making technologies that developed since Theophilus' twelfth century description of the art. This segues into his outline of the role the glazier played in the production of stained glass windows, with Marks noting the average payments made to craftsmen for the production of windows in specific centuries.⁴⁰ Marks also describes the types of stained glass patrons common in the Middle Ages, including royals, prelates, clergy, and the laity.⁴¹ His discourse then shifts into the representation of donors in the windows themselves, where Marks explains the most common types of donor images.⁴² His insight into the significance of the patron to the overall importance of stained glass windows in the cathedral, church, and larger community is groundbreaking in the scholarship of medieval stained glass. Previous to Richard Marks, only brief mentions of patrons were made in relation to glass, but in this article and in works after, Marks brings several different aspects of the patron's role into his analysis.

In 1993, Richard Marks published one of the most important books on medieval stained glass and stained glass patronage, *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages*. This work is expansive on both subjects, with a four-part section on the analysis of donors, technical aspects, imagery, and domestic glass, and a seven-part section that serves as a chronological survey of English stained glass until the Post-Reformation

⁴⁰ Richard Marks, "Stained Glass c.1200-1400," in Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski, eds, *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987), 137-139.

⁴¹ Marks, *Age of Chivalry*, 138-139.

⁴² Marks, *Age of Chivalry*, 139-140.

period.⁴³ In the first section, Marks gives an in-depth analysis on stained glass patronage that goes beyond the discussion on the same topic in his 1987 article. More detail, such as the name of donors and specific examples of the patronage of stained glass, is provided,⁴⁴ making this analysis the most comprehensive study on medieval stained glass patronage yet. Marks then takes a thematic approach to looking at the imagery and iconography within stained glass, using intricate subheadings for different types of these depictions.⁴⁵ Marks' chronological survey is immensely detailed in itself, but the theme of patronage remains throughout, as he ties the specifics of stained glass patronage in with the development of glass-making techniques and styles.⁴⁶ Mark's work on patronage and stained glass together have linked two previously separate aspects of medieval material culture, allowing for subsequent historians and art historians to elaborate on the subject further.

The Influence of Richard Marks

Stained glass scholars shaped their analyses in many different ways after Marks' groundbreaking work on the patronage of stained glass. Some historians elaborate on aspects of Marks' work, such as Sarah Brown and David O'Connor who follow Marks' route of centering on the individuals behind the production of stained glass. Brown and O'Connor, however, focus on the glaziers of stained glass rather than the on patrons.

⁴³ Richard Marks, *Stained Glass in England During the Middle Ages* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), vii.

⁴⁴ Marks, *SGEMA*, 3-27.

⁴⁵ Such subheadings include: "Didactic and Moralizing Themes," "The Saints," "Biblical Themes," and "Secular and Historical Subjects." For more on Marks' work on imagery, see: Richard Marks, *Image and Devotion in Late Medieval England* (2004); Richard Marks, *Studies in the Art and Imagery of the Middle Ages* (Pindar Press, 2013).

⁴⁶ Marks, *SGEMA*, 118-119.

Similarly, Nigel Saul discusses the patronage of art within the Church and briefly mentions stained glass, but does not elaborate on the subject. Historians such as June Hall McCash and P. J. P. Goldberg follow suit, exploring patronage of the arts generally, but they do not connect their analyses to stained glass, while Philip Lindley and Heather Gilderdale Scott focus on aspects of stained glass without tying their studies to the patronage of glass. Since Marks' work in the 1980s and 90s, historians have chosen to study aspects of either stained glass or art patronage, but further analysis on the patrons of stained glass has not been done to the extent of Richard Marks' scholarship on the subject.

Countering Marks' emphasis on the role of the patron in stained glass making, Sarah Brown and David O'Connor focus their 1991 book *Glass-Painters* on the role of the glass-painters behind the production of medieval stained glass windows. The focus of this work is distinctly on the glass-painter, though one section is given to the patron as well. After providing a brief history of stained glass making, Brown and O'Connor move into their section on the glass-painter, where discussion is given to John Thornton and other widely known glaziers.⁴⁷ Brown and O'Connor make note of the significant lack of medieval accounts pertaining to glaziers, which they argue is a cause for few glazier names being known today, and also of the disparity between the fame these glaziers have today in comparison to that of medieval painters or sculptors.⁴⁸ A desire to underline the importance of glass-making and the skill of glass-painters is evident throughout the book. In the section on stained glass patrons, Brown and O'Connor mention that often the representation of the donor in windows is mistaken for being that of the artist, which

⁴⁷ Sarah Brown and David O'Connor, *Glass-Painters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 11-14.

⁴⁸ Brown and O'Connor, 4.

further pushes the window's actual glass-painter into obscurity.⁴⁹ This reinforces that their emphasis is on the glass-painter rather than the donor, exhibiting an opposition to Marks' focus on the patron.

Nigel Saul's article, "Forget-Me-Nots" in his 1995 book *Age of Chivalry: Art and Society in Late Medieval England* centres on the patronage of art within the Church in Gothic England. Saul uses Ely Cathedral, the writings of Abbot Suger, and the many brasses found in medieval ecclesiastical structures as evidence of this patronage, and although using several images of stained glass to supplement his article, he mentions glass only briefly as a comment on the patron's desire to remain known.⁵⁰ Saul talks about various types of art patronage, expressing the range of subject matter within the study of patronage, but does not discuss the actual act of donating windows. The exclusion of this important topic is also seen in June Hall McCash's 1996 book *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, which is a collection of essays focused on various types of patronage done by women. The essays discuss literary, art, and cultural patronage of certain women and women generally, which highlights not only the importance of women in medieval society, but also the importance of patrons and patronage to the development of culture.⁵¹ Both Saul and McCash emphasize the role of patronage in medieval society without integrating stained glass into the main narrative.

In the early twenty-first century, the study of stained glass and patronage begins to shift its focus more broadly. P. J. P. Goldberg emphasizes the social structures of the

⁴⁹ Brown and O'Connor, 31.

⁵⁰ Nigel Saul, "Forget-Me-Nots: Patronage in Gothic England," in Nigel Saul, ed. *Age of Chivalry: Art and Society in Late Medieval England* (Brockhampton Press, 1995), 47.

⁵¹ June Hall McCash, ed., *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

late medieval world in his 2004 book *Medieval England: A Social History 1250-1550*. Goldberg includes the donation of stained glass within discussions on various social classes, but the references are rather brief and used only as examples rather than as focal points.⁵² More expansive ways of looking at particular aspects of medieval art, namely patronage and stained glass, are explored. The essay by Phillip Lindley in *The History of British Art: 600-1600* is on the various types of artists found in the Middle Ages. Lindley discusses glaziers, patrons, and stained glass, but the donation of stained glass by the various types of patrons mentioned is not examined itself.⁵³ From the same compilation, Heather Gilderdale Scott's article "John Thornton of Coventry" does not directly focus on the role of the patron alone, but rather, looks at the relationship between the patron and the glazier.⁵⁴

These sources, among others, branch off from Marks' examination of stained glass patronage in different ways, yet none continue the analysis further. Brown and O'Connor focus their study on the glazier rather than the patron, shifting away from Marks' analysis. Saul continued his scholarship into the role of art patronage generally, while Lindley and Scott look at the patron, the glazier, and art patronage. None of the historians writing after Marks' works in the 80s and 90s investigate the role that different types of patrons had in the production of stained glass windows directly, leaving the topic accessible for further study.

⁵² Goldberg, P. J. P. *Medieval England: A Social History 1250-1550* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 273-276.

⁵³ Phillip Lindley, "The 'Artist': Institutions, Training and Status," in *The History of British Art: 600-1600*, ed., Tim Ayers (Yale University Press, 2008), 141-165.

⁵⁴ Heather Gilderdale Scott, "John Thornton of Coventry," in *The History of British Art: 600-1600*, ed. Tim Ayers (Yale University Press, 2008), 170-171. It is interesting to note that Scott cites Marks' *SGEMA* under the 'Further Reading' section, so her increased emphasis on patrons alongside glaziers may have been influenced from Marks' work.

Conclusion

This chapter has served to provide an understanding of the scholarship that has been written on medieval stained glass generally, as well as on the patronage of stained glass specifically. Within this scholarship, an evolution has been made from antiquarian descriptiveness to a chronology of glass style. From that linear progression, the historiography developed into the contextualization of glass and an analysis of the glazier, and from a focus on glaziers to that of patrons. Victorian scholarship concentrated specifically on the intricacies of stained glass windows, lacking further analysis on the subject. Early twentieth century work looked at the development of glass style over time and began to focus more on imagery and artistic context. Historians from the late twentieth century opened stained glass scholarship up to analyzing the role of the glazier, leading into the focus of Richard Marks' work. The scholarship of Richard Marks is the peak of study into the patronage of stained glass, with an emphasis on not only the patrons involved in stained glass production, but also the types of patrons and the ways in which they were represented in the glass itself.

Many subsequent works on stained glass have stemmed from the analyses of Richard Marks, but all have failed to further examine the importance that patrons, particularly aristocratic and merchant-class donors, had on the resulting stained glass windows. By continuing Marks' work on the patronage of stained glass, a deeper understanding of the patron's influence on the location and imagery of the window and the effects of different medieval social classes on the donation of stained glass will be reached.

This Thesis

The gap in scholarship on the importance of the patron allows for further analysis on how different patrons affected the production of stained glass windows in late medieval England. This thesis seeks to highlight the similarities and differences between windows donated by patrons of aristocratic standing versus those given by merchant-class benefactors. This examination will show that merchant-class patrons were restricted in the location of their windows within cathedrals, but that both aristocratic and merchant-class donors expressed their identity and devotion to God in the imagery of their windows. The windows of York will be greatly emphasized, within both York Minster and in York's many medieval parish churches, as circumstances allot for an abundance of medieval glass surviving in the area.

Chapter two of this thesis will examine stained glass windows donated by aristocratic patrons. It will highlight the freedom of aristocratic benefactors in their choice of window location by examining windows throughout the structures of both churches and cathedrals, and will also analyze the imagery within these windows. By donating windows that featured heraldic and biblical imagery, aristocratic patrons were expressing both their piety and sense of identity in late medieval society.

Chapter three of this thesis will contrast chapter two by focusing on stained glass windows given by merchant-class patrons. The absence of merchant-class windows within cathedral east ends suggests that merchant-class donors were limited in their choice of window location, but the merchant-class windows throughout the rest of cathedrals and churches reflect the merchant-class pride in their identity as members of the community and their devotion to God. By looking at stained glass windows donated

by merchant-class individuals, broader class relations between aristocratic and merchant-class individuals will be demonstrated in the location and imagery of windows.

In conclusion, this thesis will prove that the similarities and differences between aristocratic and merchant-class patrons are visible through the internal location and imagery of late medieval stained glass windows in England. The donation of windows by both aristocratic and merchant-class donors made statements that benefitted the patron on both spiritual and secular levels. While aristocratic benefactors had the ability to bequeath windows in an array of locations, merchant-class donors were largely limited to placing their windows in the nave of churches and cathedrals, illustrating the disparity between the aristocracy and the merchant class. Though the identifying symbols and images in the windows donated by aristocratic and merchant-class patrons differ, both patrons demonstrate the desire to identify themselves as being member of their own class. Thus, through the patronage of stained glass windows in late medieval England, donors of both the aristocracy and the merchant class expressed their piety and pride of identity.

Chapter Two “The Aristocratic Patronage of Stained Glass”:

Introduction

The aristocratic patronage of stained glass in late medieval England was a pious act that was indicative of important aspects of medieval society. Aristocratic patrons had the resources needed to donate magnificent works of art to both cathedrals and churches, and they used their devotion to God to help validate their own status as aristocratic members of society. The unlimited nature of aristocratic glass patronage is reflected in the breadth of interior locations available for aristocratic donors, but the east end in particular is representative of their aristocratic freedom. The biblical imagery in the windows of the east end reflects the piety of aristocratic donors, while the heraldic images throughout the rest of the ecclesiastical structure demonstrate the aristocratic sense of identity.

Windows donated by aristocratic patrons were located throughout late medieval churches and cathedrals in England. In its structure, this chapter will move through the spaces within the ecclesiastical building itself, demonstrating the freedom that aristocratic donors had in choosing the location of their windows, while also emphasizing the abundance of aristocratic windows in late medieval churches and cathedrals. Firstly, this chapter will examine aristocratic windows in the east ends of churches and cathedrals, which represent the piety and devotion of the aristocratic patron. By donating windows depicting immensely significant biblical and hagiographical figures, aristocratic donors associated themselves with the sanctity of the east end, which, within cathedrals, was exclusively filled with aristocratic windows.

The stained glass windows given by aristocratic patrons found throughout the rest of the church or cathedral displayed many heraldic elements, which emphasized the familial prestige of the donor. Moreover, this chapter will show that in representing themselves through their arms and shields, aristocratic patrons were making their societal status known, identifying themselves as esteemed members of the aristocracy. Thus, by donating stained glass windows within different areas in the late medieval churches and cathedrals of England, aristocratic patrons expressed not only their power and agency, but also their piety and sense of identity.

The Aristocratic Patron

The term ‘aristocratic patron’ encompasses a wide array of people. Individual members of the monarchy, nobility, or clergy were often patrons of stained glass, as were institutions, such as cathedral chapters, which was likely the case in the choir of Canterbury Cathedral.⁵⁵ Every medieval stained glass window was commissioned by a patron of some kind,⁵⁶ and having sufficient funds was necessary for the role.⁵⁷ In its simplest form, an aristocratic patron of stained glass was any aristocratic individual or institution who provided the resources, whether monetary or material, which were needed in order to create a stained glass window.⁵⁸

Royalty and members of the nobility were often the patrons of aristocratic stained glass windows in late medieval England. The nobility was made up of dukes, barons,

⁵⁵ Marks, *SGEMA*, 3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Gies and Gies, 148-149.

⁵⁸ Marks, *SGEMA*, 3-4.

earls, or even esquires, who all held power and wealth in late medieval society.⁵⁹ The assumed advantage of being a royal patron is that rulers would always be able to fund the production of stained glass,⁶⁰ but Nigel Saul argues that noble patrons had a greater chance of seeing their patronage through than monarchs did, as royal patrons often had disturbances in the availability of funds accessible for donation.⁶¹

The nature of aristocratic life in late medieval England is reflected in the windows donated by noble patrons. The ability of lesser individuals and families to move up the ranks within aristocratic society meant that there was an influx in ‘new’ nobility that urged the existing noble families to emphasize their familial lineage and prestige.⁶² Thus, noble individuals became the patrons of copious amounts of art and, in particular, stained glass.⁶³

Clergymen were commonly patrons of stained glass windows in late medieval England. Archbishops, bishops, deacons, and deans, were some of the secular clergymen who were often found as patrons of stained glass windows, such as Archbishop William de Melton⁶⁴ of York and Bishop Walter Skirlaw of Durham,⁶⁵ both of whom donated windows within York Minster. Members of the secular clergy often had aristocratic backgrounds, such as Archbishop Richard Scrope of York, who was one of the gentry of Richmondshire.⁶⁶ Their devotion to God is evident through their roles within the Church, but the abundance of stained glass windows donated by members of the clergy suggests a

⁵⁹ Goldberg, 114.

⁶⁰ Labarge, 25-28.

⁶¹ Saul, 41-43.

⁶² Goldberg, 116-118.

⁶³ Goldberg, 118.

⁶⁴ Brown, *OMF*, 291

⁶⁵ Brown, *OMF*, 280.

⁶⁶ Goldberg, 125.

desire to express their piety in a more visual way. By donating stained glass windows depicting significant biblical or hagiographical imagery, members of the clergy demonstrated their devotion to God as well as their power within the aristocracy.

Aristocratic patrons donated art and stained glass to the Church for several reasons. The simplest reason was for the betterment of their souls. Supplying funds for stained glass and other works of art displayed the donor's piety and devotion to God, aiding in the likelihood of the eternal salvation of the patron.⁶⁷ Another reason behind the aristocratic patronage of stained glass, perhaps the most important, was displaying the piety and aristocratic identity of the patron. Affixing one's name to a decorative representation of Christ or other important figures connected the donor to the power held by that image. By choosing evocative biblical, or even secular, imagery to adorn the walls of ecclesiastical structures with, and attributing their name to it, the aristocratic patron visually recognized their own power, devotion to God, and identity as a member of the aristocracy.

Aristocratic patrons commissioned these stained glass windows in different ways. One common method of bequeathing a window was through a donor's will. These wills survive predominantly from the fifteenth century onward, but they provide insight into what level of control the patrons had in the imagery, size, and placement of the windows.⁶⁸ Richard Marks, in his discussion on the topic, provides several examples of the bequeathing of windows through wills. Sir Edward Benstede in 1519 outlined his wish for windows to be created in Hertingfordbury church in Hertfordshire.⁶⁹ He

⁶⁷ Julian Luxford, "The Patronage of the Church and its Purposes," in *The History of British Art: 600-1600*, ed. Tim Ayers, (Yale University Press, 2008), 90.

⁶⁸ Marks, *SGEMA*, 20.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

specified that he desired the window to be on the south side of the church, and that it would depict St. Alban and St. Amphibalus as well as the arms of his and his wife's families.⁷⁰ Without the window surviving, it cannot be known if Benstede's wishes were carried out, but the descriptiveness of his will highlights the patron's desire to identify himself and his wife through their familial heraldry.

One instance of a will's description lining up with a surviving piece of stained glass is found in Northamptonshire.⁷¹ The vicar of Stanford on Avon, Henry Williams, provided such great detail in his will dated to 1500 that the influence of the patron's wishes can be directly seen in the remaining window. Williams outlined that: "I wyll that the glasse windowes in the chancell wth ymagery that was thereyn before allso wth my ymage knelying in ytt and the ymage of deth shotying at me...theys to be done in smalle quarells of as gode glasse as can be goten."⁷² With this panel of glass surviving, the minute details of Williams' description in the will can be examined in comparison to how they were translated into glass, which is a rare and valuable occurrence.⁷³

The Northamptonshire quarry depicts Henry Williams' kneeling figure to the right of a roundel, which contains death's image shooting an arrow at the patron. Death is represented by a skeletal figure holding a bow, and Williams is shown kneeling, just as he requested in his will. The window was likely glazed shortly after the death of the patron, and the glazier followed Williams' description intricately.⁷⁴ Luckily, both the panel and the will survived to present day where examination of the two can take place,

⁷⁰ Marks, *SGEMA*, 20.

⁷¹ Marks, *SGEMA*, 21.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

which highlights the agency and involvement of aristocratic donors in the patronage of stained glass windows in late medieval England, even after death.

Another method of commissioning stained glass windows was through the creation of a contract. Donors would often form contracts with glaziers to outline the parameters of their windows, such as location, imagery, size, etc.⁷⁵ Two of the most important contracts for the creation of late medieval stained glass windows are the contracts of Archbishop William de Melton for the Great West Window of York Minster and the contract between the Dean and Chapter of York and John Thornton of Coventry for the Great East Window.⁷⁶ Similar to wills, contracts outlined the wishes of the patron for the window. The patron, still being alive, was more actively involved in the commissioning of windows through contracts rather than through wills, so more explicit details were provided for the glazier in a contract. Payments, timelines, locations, and instructions for imagery were included in these contracts, outlining both the relationship between patron and glazier, and the patron and the window itself.⁷⁷

Aristocratic donors of stained glass were the individuals, usually lords, dukes, bishops, deans, or others, that provided the funds or materials necessary for creating a stained glass window. Aristocratic patrons had active roles in selecting the location and imagery of these windows, using their aristocratic agency to further establish and promote their lineage and piety.

⁷⁵ Marks, *SGEMA*, 21.

⁷⁶ Brown and O'Connor, 32.

⁷⁷ Marks, *SGEMA*, 21-22.

Windows in the East End

In studying the aristocratic patronage of stained glass windows, analyzing the east end separately is necessary. The east end of any ecclesiastical structure is the holiest area, therefore only the most pious patrons could have the opportunity and the funds to place their windows there. East windows were often the largest and most outstanding pieces of stained glass within a church, as several windows demonstrate. The Great East Window of York Minster is a stunning illustration of how expansive and elaborate east windows could be in fifteenth century England, while the east windows of Great Malvern Priory in Malvern, Worcestershire, and St. Denys, Walmgate in York highlight the intricacy of east windows in lesser churches. Aristocratic stained glass windows in the choir also accentuate the sanctity of the choir through the depiction of fundamental biblical imagery, as York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral demonstrate along with the lesser ecclesiastical structures of Tewkesbury Abbey and Great Malvern Priory. The exclusive nature of the east end and the biblical and hagiographical imagery of the windows within this area make east end windows representative of the piety and influence that aristocratic donors wanted to display in their patronage of stained glass in late medieval England.

East End Windows in Cathedrals

The east ends of both York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral contain exquisite stained glass windows that depict fundamental biblical and hagiographical scenes. The Great East Window of York Minster is not only the most significant window in the Minster, but also within the examination of cathedral east ends in England. The many windows in the choirs of York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral also are significant, as

their depiction of important saints and biblical figures emphasizes the sanctity of both the east end and the aristocratic donor behind their creation.

The Great East Window of York Minster more than adequately expresses the sanctity of the east end and piety of its donor. The Great East Window is an appropriate window with which to begin an analysis of cathedral east windows, due to its size and elaborate nature. Begun in 1405, the east window was glazed by the workshop of John Thornton of Coventry, and given by Bishop Walter Skirlaw of Durham.⁷⁸ Prior to Skirlaw's fifteenth century donation, the window contained only clear glass.⁷⁹ Measuring 23.4m by 9.8m, it is the largest expanse of medieval stained glass surviving in Britain today, making it a very important subject of study.⁸⁰

The Great East Window, though technically the east window of the Lady Chapel, serves as the east window of the entire Minster.⁸¹ The window's imagery highlights the overall importance of the east window and ranges from biblical to political by representing important figures from both the ecclesiastical and secular worlds. The window depicts many biblical scenes, including scenes from the Old Testament and The Life of St. John the Baptist, with the main subject being the Book of Revelation of St. John the Divine. At the apex, God is shown seated, holding a book bearing the inscription "Ego sum Alph[a] et [Ω]."⁸² Surrounding God is the Company of Heaven, the Order of Angels, and apostles, saints, prophets, and patriarchs, emphasizing the holy nature of both the window and the east end together.

⁷⁸ Brown, *OMF*, 280.

⁷⁹ Brown, *OMF*, 218.

⁸⁰ Brown and O'Connor, 11.

⁸¹ Brown, *OMF*, 218.

⁸² *Ibid.*

The main imagery of the Great East Window of York Minster is the beginning and ending of the world, or the books of Genesis and Revelations. In the main lights, the imagery starts with scenes from the Old Testament in panels 14a through 13j,⁸³ showing in particular the Seven Days of Creation from the Book of Genesis,⁸⁴ as well as Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark. The narrative then shifts to the Apocalypse from Revelation, the final book of the Bible.⁸⁵ Scenes such as The Opening of the First Seal and The Last Judgement are depicted throughout the main lights of the window, narrating the end of the world according to Revelations. Sarah Brown analyzes the Great East Window in her architectural history of York Minster, acknowledging that through the depiction of such important biblical imagery, like the First Day of Creation and God's words 'Fiat Lux,' "the window thus underlines the symbolic significance of stained glass as the medium that illuminated the medieval Church, literally and metaphorically."⁸⁶ Brown thus stresses the importance of the window's imagery and its function as a narrative device.

The most significant image for this study, however, is the depiction of Bishop Skirlaw amongst important historical figures. Along the bottom of the window, heraldic and figurative representations of Bishop Skirlaw and the See of York are present, alongside historical kings, saints, and clergy.⁸⁷ Bishop Skirlaw is depicted in panel 1e (Appendix A, fig. 1), kneeling before an altar which holds a manuscript, as was typical for benefactors at the time.⁸⁸ Donors depicted in this manner were usually owners of

⁸³ Panel numbers reflect CVMA categorization and are used in several sources.

⁸⁴ Brown, *OMF*, 218.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Brown, *OMF*, 218-219.

⁸⁷ Brown, *OMF*, 281.

⁸⁸ Marks, *SGEMA*, 14.

manuscripts and were some of the wealthiest stained glass donors.⁸⁹ The desk is often placed at an angle to the kneeling donor,⁹⁰ which adds an aspect of perspective to the stained glass imagery and highlights the technical sophistication of the Great East Window. The shields of Skirlaw, England, the see of York ancient and York modern, are represented in the window, as well as those of important and powerful kings such as William I, Edward the Confessor, and Edward III (Appendix A, fig. 2).⁹¹

Sarah Brown discusses Skirlaw's patronage in her analysis of the Great East Window, noting the positioning of the bishop amongst prominent figures. Brown discusses the political events of the early fifteenth century in York, namely the execution of Archbishop Richard le Scrope, who was killed at the request of the King Henry IV in 1405 after his involvement in the rebellion against the king.⁹² Brown states that the east window:

...was commissioned a few months after le Scrope's execution and was the first major work to be installed in its aftermath. The figures of *Ebrauk* and *King Lucius*, references to York's ancient foundation, were unlikely to cause offence... at first glance, Edward the Confessor and his successor, William the Conqueror, are somewhat surprising choices.⁹³

After le Scrope's execution, a period of uncertainty fell upon York Minster, and the choice of imagery by Bishop Skirlaw reflects his desire to affiliate the Minster with the power of the king so as to forge an alliance between the ecclesiastical and secular worlds within York. Brown explains that the choice to represent these kings was made deliberately and with good reason, saying that "the choice of Bishop Skirlaw's companions highlights the political sensitivities of the period in which the window was

⁸⁹ Marks, *SGEMA*, 14.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Brown, *OMF*, 281.

⁹² Brown, *OMF*, 177, 217, 277.

⁹³ Brown, *OMF*, 220.

conceived,” since Bishop Skirlaw, and perhaps Archbishop de Thoresby as well⁹⁴ were making a very public and prominent donation that affected the entire community.⁹⁵ Bishop Skirlaw was a close associate of Archbishop de Thoresby, and as a regular patron of the Minster, de Thoresby was likely involved in or at least accepting of the design scheme of the window.⁹⁶ Thus the manner in which Skirlaw chose to depict himself was a strong statement to the visitors of the east end that he was on the side of the king.

The Great East Window of York Minster serves as an example of how exquisite and expansive medieval east windows in England could be. The magnificently executed stained glass by John Thornton and the vastness of the window make the Great East Window a physically impressive work of art. The theologically important imagery and the association of the window with politically significant historical figures, however, are what make the Great East Window such a noteworthy window. Bishop Skirlaw’s donation of the window displays not only that he was a powerful individual within the Church and the aristocracy, but also within the broader political world of York.

Windows other than the main east window of cathedral east ends were significant in their grandeur and imagery as well. One of the most important choir windows of York Minster is the St. William window of the north choir aisle. The window was donated c. 1414 by the baronial family of Ros of Helmsley, who were prominently associated with the Minster and have their arms represented in the nave clerestory windows as well.⁹⁷ The window serves as the most extensive hagiographical window devoted to the life of St.

⁹⁴ Brown, *OMF*, 219.

⁹⁵ Brown, *OMF*, 220-221.

⁹⁶ Brown, *OMF*, 219.

⁹⁷ Brown, *SGAYM*, 74.

William, one of York Minster's patron saints,⁹⁸ depicting St. William's activities, as well as archbishops, kings, angels, and the Coronation of the Virgin in the tracery.⁹⁹ Major biblical scenes are depicted, alongside the representation of one of York Minster's patron saints, as suited to the sanctity of the east end and connection of the Ros family to the Minster.

At Canterbury Cathedral, the twelfth century north choir aisle depicts the life of St. Dunstan, one of Canterbury's patron saints, in a similar manner, focusing on the life of one individual hagiographical subject.¹⁰⁰ Elsewhere in Canterbury's choir are depictions of Christ, important biblical figures, and other saints, such as St. Alphege.¹⁰¹ The importance of Sts. Dunstan and Alphege was emphasized at Canterbury with the placement of their two effigies on either side of Christ in Glory over the high altar, which was further accentuated by their representations in stained glass throughout the choir.¹⁰² An interesting trend within the choirs of York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral is the emphasis of saints with regional importance. Sts. William, Dunstan and Alphege are all insular saints, so their prominence within the two most significant cathedrals in England indicates a desire to emphasize the sanctity of England, as well as the east end.

Choir clerestory windows were also rich in their imagery and design. Archbishop Henry Bowet donated one of York Minster's north choir clerestory windows in the early fifteenth century. The window depicts multiple shields of Bowet, among shields of Ufford, the See of York, and Zouche of Harringworth.¹⁰³ The heraldic imagery is

⁹⁸ Brown, *SGAYM*, 74.

⁹⁹ Brown, *OMF*, 282.

¹⁰⁰ Caviness, figure 109.

¹⁰¹ Caviness, 144-146.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Brown, *OMF*, 285.

supplemented with representations of St. John of Beverley and King Ceolwulf of Northumbria, as well as King Eadbert and Archbishop Wilfrid II. In the tracery of the window, biblical figures such as Zachariah, Micah, Solomon, and David are depicted, tying the strong earthly leaders to the important biblical figures. The remaining choir clerestory windows of York Minster follow a similar structure as a part of the glazing scheme, with heraldry intermingling with depictions of archbishops, kings, and popes, surrounded by prominent saints and biblical figures in the tracery.¹⁰⁴

Windows in the east end of cathedrals exemplify the most significant biblical, hagiographical, and political imagery of the ecclesiastical structure. The Great East Window illustrates the beginning and end of the world, and representations of saints, such as St. William in York and St. Dunstan in Canterbury, demonstrate the sanctity and significance of cathedral east ends. Within cathedrals, the representation of such important religious imagery expresses the devotion of the patron, but most importantly, the choice of imagery and location made by the donor conveys the desire of the patron to be identified as a pious member of the aristocracy.

East End Windows in Lesser Ecclesiastical Structures

The east windows of lesser churches were significant features of ecclesiastical structures as well. Though the size of lesser churches meant that their windows were often smaller than those of cathedrals, the east windows of certain lesser ecclesiastical structures in England were exceptionally well executed. These windows also illustrated the sanctity of the east end through their imagery, such as the east window of Great Malvern Priory in Worcestershire, which displays significant biblical imagery, as well as

¹⁰⁴ Brown, *OMF*, 284-285.

the east window of St. Denys, Walmgate in York. By depicting hagiographical and biblical figures, the patrons of east end windows in lesser churches made just as significant a statement of their power and piety as the patrons of east end windows in cathedrals.

The east window of Great Malvern Priory in Malvern, Worcestershire, is an excellent example of a priory east window. It was donated by Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, in the mid fifteenth century and its imagery includes donor heraldry, biblical themes, and saints.¹⁰⁵ In the main lights, the window includes a Passion cycle, containing representations of Jesus leading up to his crucifixion.¹⁰⁶ The tracery contains apostles and other major biblical figures, emphasizing the theological nature of the window.¹⁰⁷ The inclusion of the Passion cycle and the many representations of prominent biblical figures stress the holy nature of the east end, not just in large cathedrals, but in lesser ecclesiastical sites as well.

Richard Beauchamp chose central biblical imagery as the main theme of his window, tying himself and his family to the power of God and the Church. Connecting oneself to the depiction of holy imagery through stained glass patronage is significant in the salvation of one's soul, but other more important factors contributed to Beauchamp's benefaction. Beauchamp was an important knight in late medieval England with strong ties to the continent, and he made many trips there in his life, being received by kings such as Charles VI of France.¹⁰⁸ The arms of the donor, Richard Beauchamp, and his

¹⁰⁵ Marks, *SGEMA*, 188.

¹⁰⁶ Marks, *SGEMA*, 70.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ Viscount Dillon and W. H. St. John Hope, eds., *Pageant of the Birth, Life and Death of Richard Beauchamp, Earl of Warwick, K. G. 1389-1439*, (London: Longmans, Green, 1914), iv.

wife, Isabella Despenser, are depicted on a shield in the apex of the window.¹⁰⁹ Other east windows, such as York Minster's Great East Window, depict God the Father at the apex,¹¹⁰ so Beauchamp's placement of the arms at the apex emphasizes the prominence of both his and his wife's families. Therefore, Beauchamp is directly connecting the aristocratic families of both himself and his wife to the power of God through this design choice.

The patron of the east window of St. Denys, Walmgate, in York also made a powerful statement about his piety and identity. The east window of St. Denys, Walmgate, also known as the 'Percy Window,' was donated c.1452-55 by the second Earl of Northumberland, a member of the Percy family.¹¹¹ The Percy's were one of the most prominent families in late medieval England, and were involved in several important events in English history. The scholar A. S. G. Edwards contends that the Percy family was heavily involved in the deposition of Richard II as well as in various rebellions throughout the fifteenth century.¹¹² The east window depicts the crucifixion of Christ in its centre panel surrounded by representations of saints, including St. Denys who is shown holding his own severed head. In choosing to depict such important ecclesiastical imagery in the east window of St. Denys, the Earl of Northumberland was undoubtedly displaying his piety. In a more significant way, however, the Earl was expressing both his devotion to God and identity as a member of the aristocracy together by emphasizing his piety in his patronage of the east window of St. Denys.

¹⁰⁹ Dillon and Hope, iv.

¹¹⁰ Brown, *OMF*, 218.

¹¹¹ Barbara Wilson and Frances Mee, *The Medieval Parish Churches of York: The Pictorial Evidence*, (York: York Archaeological Trust, 1998), 73.

¹¹² A. S. G. Edwards, "A Verse Chronicle of the House of Percy," *Studies in Philology*, vol. 105, no. 2 (Spring, 2008), 240, notes by author. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20464317>.

The choice of self-representation is an interesting aspect of aristocratic windows in the east ends of lesser churches as well as cathedrals. The late thirteenth or early fourteenth century windows in the choir of Merton College Chapel, Oxford, depict many donor portraits of the patron, Henry de Mamesfield.¹¹³ There are twenty-four portraits of de Mamesfield in total, depicted kneeling on either side of important biblical figures and saints along the side windows of the choir,¹¹⁴ over-emphasizing both his role in the creation of the windows themselves and his devout piety and reverence for God.

Eleanor de Clare also represents herself in an interesting fashion. The choir windows from Tewkesbury Abbey, Gloucestershire, depict biblical imagery, with Eleanor de Clare's clerestory window, in particular, depicting her naked kneeling donor figure as well.¹¹⁵ De Clare's figure is naked because of its inclusion in the Last Judgement, which is a less common way of depicting donors in England than it is on the continent, but it aptly shows the representation of significant biblical themes mixed with donor figures in choir clerestory windows.¹¹⁶ By including her naked figure in the choir window, Eleanor de Clare is not only emphasizing her piety and connection to important biblical imagery, but also highlighting her identity as an aristocratic donor. Eleanor de Clare was the noble patron of Tewkesbury Abbey's window devoted to the family of Hugh Despenser, Eleanor's first husband who was executed in 1326.¹¹⁷ After remarrying and being put back into the favour of the new king, Edward III of England, Eleanor

¹¹³ Brown and O'Connor, 31.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Marks, *SGEMA*, 7.

¹¹⁶ Marks, *SGEMA*, 11-12.

¹¹⁷ J. Phillip McAleer, "The Romanesque Choir of Tewkesbury Abbey and the Problem of a 'Colossal Order,'" *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 65, no. 4 (December, 1983), 554. Hugh Despenser was executed under King Edward II of England, who was then himself killed the following year.

resumed the patronage that was begun during her first husband's final years.¹¹⁸

Interestingly, de Clare's completion of the window under the reign of the new king suggests that her standing in the eyes of the king impacted her ability to donate a window. However, by completing the window devoted to her husband's family, de Clare expressed her humility and piety, which are powerfully expressed in her naked donor figure.

Overall, the stained glass windows in the east ends of English cathedrals and churches predominantly depicted biblical and hagiographical imagery, emphasizing the holiness of both the east end and the patron. Bishop Skirlaw also emphasized his political power in York Minster's Great East Window through his choice to represent kings and secular authority, which expressed to his audience, along with his piety, his good standing with the king. Similarly, the completion of her husband's window expressed Eleanor de Clare's relationship with the king and her connections to the political world. Windows within the choirs of York Minster and Canterbury Cathedral had representations of saints important to insular history, while the windows of Tewkesbury Abbey and Great Malvern Priory illustrated significant biblical scenes. By tying themselves to the holy nature of cathedral and church east ends and expressing strong political connections, these patrons of stained glass showed themselves as being pious members of the aristocracy.

Windows Elsewhere

Aristocratic windows were not limited to only being placed in the east end of an ecclesiastical structure, but rather were found throughout the church or cathedral in

¹¹⁸ McAleer, 554.

various locations and with different imagery. Where the windows in the east ends of ecclesiastical structures expressed the piety of the donor through their fundamental biblical and hagiographical imagery, the windows within the nave and transepts emphasized the familial identity of the patron through the abundant use of heraldry. The donation of stained glass windows throughout the churches and cathedrals of late medieval England was a pious act that, in the nave and transepts, expressed to the congregation the identity of the patron as being an esteemed member of the aristocracy.

Nave

The nave of any late medieval church or cathedral was the main gathering area for worshippers. Naves were typically large areas with ample space for stained glass windows, and an abundance of medieval stained glass exists in the naves of English churches and cathedrals due, in part, to the size of naves themselves. The windows in medieval naves were often donated by many different patrons, predominantly aristocratic patrons, resulting in windows with an array of images and themes. One recurring theme in the imagery of the nave, however, is the representation of shields, arms, and familial identifiers.

The aptly named ‘Heraldic Window’ of York Minster exquisitely demonstrates the emphasis on heraldry found within medieval naves. The window of the nave north aisle was given in c.1306-10 by Peter de Dene, a prebendary of Givendale and Grindale from 1312-1313 and 1313-1322 respectively,¹¹⁹ and a canon of York.¹²⁰ Being a heraldic window, the shield motifs are surrounded by beautiful grisaille glass, which is a

¹¹⁹ Brown, *OMF*, 288.

¹²⁰ Marks, *SGEMA*, 154.

characteristic of the style. The window contains the most heraldic imagery in all of York Minster,¹²¹ depicting the regional shields of England, France, Jerusalem, and Castile and Leon, which emphasize the political nature of heraldry.¹²² During the late Middle Ages, an influx of new members of the nobility pushed the existing aristocracy to reaffirm their status through the representation of abundant heraldic imagery.¹²³ The ‘Heraldic Window’ demonstrates how patrons expressed their status as aristocratic individuals through the use heraldic identifiers.

The ‘Heraldic Window’ has several important features beyond the abundance of heraldry, such as the donor figure of Peter de Dene. Panel 1b of the window depicts the kneeling Peter de Dene in recognition of his patronage, alongside the inscription reading, “[Priez] P Meistre Piere de Dene Ke Ceste F[enest]re Fist Fere.”¹²⁴ De Dene’s donor portrait is placed under the shields of the aforementioned kingdoms and regions, and though the shields are for territories rather than individuals, De Dene is associating his image with the power and might of the heraldry.

Another important window from York Minster’s nave is the ‘Penitencers’ Window,’ also from the north aisle. It was donated between 1310-20, likely by William de Langtoft, a penitencer of the Minster from 1308 and keeper of the fabric from 1312-17.¹²⁵ This window is significant in the examination of nave windows since it demonstrates the tendency of aristocratic donors to self-identify in their windows through

¹²¹ Marks, *SGEMA*, 154.

¹²² Brown, *OMF*, 288.

¹²³ Goldberg, 116; Marks, *SGEMA*, 10. Heraldry was introduced into stained glass after the onset of the fourteenth century, and was widely recognizable by many medieval individuals. Knights and members of the clergy were often schooled in the identification of shields of arms and family lineage, so identifying oneself through one’s heraldry was every bit as recognizable as an inscription of one’s name.

¹²⁴ Brown, *OMF*, 288.

¹²⁵ Marks, *SGEMA*, 10.

both their piety and a personal identifier. The early 14th century window shows St. Paul, the Virgin Mary, the martyrdom of St. Peter, bishops, penitencers, and angels.¹²⁶ The depiction of penitencers shows the level of involvement that the patron had in the design of stained glass windows, as here, the patron has chosen to depict his own role in the Church, alongside important biblical and ecclesiastical figures, such as saints and martyrs.

The depiction of saints is a common theme in aristocratic stained glass, and the windows in the nave of Great Malvern Priory, in Worcestershire, and York Minster represent many.¹²⁷ Sts. Christopher, George, Wulfstan, and Lawrence are each depicted multiple times in the church, both within the nave and elsewhere.¹²⁸ By choosing to depict saints in their windows, aristocratic donors associated themselves with the prestige of those saints. Saints were revered in their own right beyond the worship of Christ, and particular saints became quite popular throughout the Middle Ages, in some areas specifically or throughout all of England.¹²⁹ York Minster and its chapter house have the most hagiographical windows in England, dating from the late twelfth to the early sixteenth century.¹³⁰ Since York Minster has an abundance of individual donors, many hagiographical cycles are repeated, expressing the popularity and significance of donating hagiographical windows.¹³¹ So many donors wished to represent the lives of

¹²⁶ Marks, *SGEMA*, 10.

¹²⁷ Marks, *SGEMA*, 65.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Marks, *SGEMA*, 72-73.

¹³⁰ Marks, *SGEMA*, 72.

¹³¹ Ibid.

certain saints, in particular St. William of York and Thomas Becket, that there are duplicates of their cycles within the Minster.¹³²

One such hagiographical window, ‘The Life of St. Nicholas’ window in York Minster’s nave, depicts the life of one saint. The south aisle window was donated between 1306-1310 by Archbishop William de Greenfield,¹³³ who was archbishop from 1304-1315 at York, preceding William de Melton.¹³⁴ The window shows scenes from St. Nicholas’ life amongst grisaille glass, including the depiction of the saint restoring life to three boys in panels 2a-3a. Representations of unnamed archbishops and other clerical figures are supplemented with more grisaille work and medallions depicting the shields and arms of de Greenfield, St. George, and England, mixing heraldic imagery with hagiographical panels. Archbishop de Greenfield was not only paying tribute to St. Nicholas’ life, but also benefitting his own life by publically displaying his heraldic imagery amongst those of saints and the kingdom. De Greenfield’s time as archbishop was dominated by the rebuilding of York Minster’s nave, and by donating an important hagiographical window, de Greenfield was encouraging the piety of other donors so the nave could be filled with stained glass.¹³⁵

Parish churches also contained exquisite hagiographical imagery in their aristocratic windows. One window in particular is the St. Martin window of St-Martin-le-Grand, Coney Street, York. The parish church’s vicar, Robert Semer, donated the

¹³²Marks, *SGEMA*, 72.

¹³³ Brown, *OMF*, 289. Brown estimates the date of the window’s donation as being 1308, but it cannot be known with certainty.

¹³⁴ Brown, *OMF*, 277.

¹³⁵ Brown, *OMF*, 90.

window in 1437 as a part of his rebuilding project.¹³⁶ It was originally the west window of the nave, but is now located in the north wall of the church after the bombings of the World War II.¹³⁷ The window depicts the life of St. Martin, and makes heavy use of architectural imagery. The donor is depicted in the window, kneeling before an altar with a manuscript placed upon it. By placing his kneeling figure beneath St. Martin, Semer, is connecting himself and his image to the might of the saint whose name is given to the church, expressing his devotion to his parish.

The imagery in stained glass windows often relayed moralities to parishioners, and by depicting certain images, patrons and churches could structure a narrative that served as a moral example for the congregation.¹³⁸ The abundant representation of a particular saint often reflected the patron saint of a church, such as St. Peter for York Minster, or St. Martin for St-Martin-le-Grand, Coney Street, York. Likewise, the gathering of the congregation in the nave meant that stained glass windows within the space reached a large group of people, which can account for the abundant use of heraldic and other personal imagery within the nave.

The significant ecclesiastical and biblical imagery in the Great West Window of York Minster greatly expresses the method of self-identification that was used by patrons in the nave. The Great West Window was donated for 100 marks by Archbishop William de Melton in 1339, and was likely created in the workshop of master glazier Robert

¹³⁶ Wilson & Mee, 106. Rebuilding was done in the perpendicular style under vicar Semer, who was vicar from 1425-43.

¹³⁷ Ibid. The best windows were removed and preserved in 1940 to protect from the bombings of WWII, and unfortunately, St-Martin-le-Grand was hit, shattering those windows that were not removed. Because of the removal of the St. Martin window, the largest parish church window in York from the Middle Ages was preserved.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

Ketelbarn.¹³⁹ The window depicts various saints, such as St. Peter, St. John of Beverley, St. Wilfrid, and St. John the Evangelist, as well as many archbishops (Appendix A, fig. 3).¹⁴⁰ Biblical themes such as the Agnus Dei, the Annunciation, the Coronation of the Virgin, and the Nativity are represented, and were common in west window glass.¹⁴¹ Archbishop de Melton chose to include the imagery of his role within the Church, though it is not known if the archbishop represented himself as one of the unidentified archbishops depicted in the window.¹⁴² With the west window being the largest, and often most elaborate window in the nave it was the most significant window throughout the space, thus the emphasis on de Melton's reverence for God is indicative of a desire to represent his role in the Church to the large congregation.

Stained glass windows in the naves of cathedrals and churches in England depicted a wide range of imagery. Heraldry, hagiography, and biblical imagery were common representations that expressed both the piety and identity of the aristocratic patron through the donation of their stained glass windows. The size of the nave allowed for an abundance of different donors, which resulted in great variety in types of imagery, but the most prevalent form of expression was through heraldry. By depicting their own arms, shields, or symbols alongside representations of saints, biblical scenes, or ecclesiastical figures, aristocratic patrons expressed their devotion to God and their ancestral nobility to the congregation.

¹³⁹ Brown, *OMF*, 291.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Marks, *SGEMA*, 67.

¹⁴² Brown, *OMF*, 291. Two of the archbishops depicted are not identified, so whether one was meant to represent the archbishop himself is not known.

Transepts

Aristocratic stained glass windows in the transepts of cathedrals and churches have imagery that is just as broadly themed as nave windows. The use of quarries is extensive in the transepts of York Minster, along with an abundant use of heraldry in the south transept, and the north façade window of Great Malvern Priory depicts major biblical themes. Though the aristocratic transept windows examined differ in location from nave windows, their emphasis on heraldry and biblical imagery highlight the piety and sense of identity that aristocratic patrons had in the donation of stained glass windows in late medieval England, much like the windows of the nave.

The ‘Magnificat Window’ of Great Malvern Priory is located in the north transept façade of the priory, and dated to 1501.¹⁴³ It is associated with Sir Reginald Bray, whose name has been connected with other stained glass windows of the time.¹⁴⁴ The window depicts in eleven scenes the story of the Virgin Mary, from the Annunciation to the Coronation, and each panel is supplemented with an inscription from the Magnificat, which is the speech of the Virgin from after the Visitation.¹⁴⁵ The ‘Magnificat Window’ is an exquisite transept window not only for its significant biblical imagery, but also for its patron. Sir Reginald Bray chose the Virgin Mary as the subject of his window, who, alongside other saints, is a common figure to depict in stained glass.¹⁴⁶ The figure of Sir Reginald Bray is represented in full armour in his donor portrait, kneeling before a

¹⁴³ Marks, *SGEMA*, 5.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.* The window was also made at the Twygge-Wodshawe workshop, where other windows in Great Malvern Priory were created.

¹⁴⁵ Marks, *SGEMA*, 84-85.

¹⁴⁶ Marks, *SGEMA*, 70-72.

manuscript on an altar.¹⁴⁷ By depicting his own figure underneath such a prominent biblical figure,¹⁴⁸ Bray is expressing his devotion to God and his identity as a nobleman.

Another aristocratic individual who represented himself in transept windows is Robert Wolveden. Wolveden was a prebendary of Throckington, South Newbald, Knaresborough, and Wetwang, and was the Treasurer of York and the Dean of Coventry and Lichfield.¹⁴⁹ The donor Robert Wolveden posthumously bequeathed two transept windows to York Minster in c.1435, one in the north transept, and the other in the south.¹⁵⁰ The north window depicts St. Nicholas in mass vestments, as well as Wolveden's shield encircled with a scroll reading the donor's family name repeatedly.¹⁵¹ The same shield and scroll motif is mirrored in Wolveden's window in York Minster's south transept, but rather than St. Nicholas, St. William is depicted, and there is an addition of a crown and scroll inscribed with 'Wolveden.'¹⁵² Richard Marks notes that Robert Wolveden also bequeathed funds to the hospital devoted to St. William in York, indicating a strong personal connection to the saint.¹⁵³

Also in York Minster's south transept is a window donated by John and Isabella Saxton, depicting kneeling donors surrounding St. John the Baptist. The window now contains some twentieth century glass, but the remaining medieval glass illustrates the presence of donor figures in the transepts of York Minster. Like in the north transept, the donors depict themselves with an important saint, highlighting the devotion of the patrons.

¹⁴⁷ Marks, *SGEMA*, 14.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Brown, *OMF*, 286.

¹⁵⁰ Brown, *OMF*, 286-287.

¹⁵¹ Brown, *OMF*, 286.

¹⁵² Brown, *OMF*, 286-287.

¹⁵³ Marks, *SGEMA*, 63.

Of the different types of imagery found in the transepts of medieval churches and cathedrals, heraldry is the most predominantly featured. The windows in York Minster's transepts exhibit an emphasis on heraldry, hagiography, and grisaille,¹⁵⁴ while the 'Magnificat Window' of Great Malvern Priory displays important biblical iconography. The aristocratic donors of windows located in the transepts represented their identities through heraldry, inscriptions, and donor portraits, expressing pride in their familial ties and noble ancestry. By donating windows with themes of heraldry and hagiography, the patrons of church and cathedral transepts were establishing themselves as pious and powerful aristocratic individuals to the congregation.

Conclusion

In choosing the imagery and location of stained glass windows in the late medieval churches and cathedrals of England, patrons expressed their own piety and identity as aristocratic individuals. Aristocratic windows in the east ends of cathedrals and churches were expansive and rich in their imagery and size, and by depicting major biblical and hagiographical imagery, they emphasized both the holiness of the east end and the devout nature of the donors. Windows in the nave and transepts could be as varied in subject as they were in benefactor, and represented an abundance of different themes, with heraldry dominating. By representing their heraldic symbols, aristocratic patrons of the nave and transepts of ecclesiastical structures identified their aristocratic status through their ancestral nobility. The windows located in the transepts also

¹⁵⁴ Brown, *SGAYM*, 21. The 'Five Sister's Window,' dated to c.1250, is one of the most exquisite windows in York Minster. The window is made up of five tall lancets comprised of intricate foliage grisaille work, and though the donor is not known, its presence in the north transept highlights the emphasis that the transepts once had on grisaille.

represented major biblical scenes, as is seen in the 'Magnificat Window' of Great Malvern Priory, presenting the aristocratic donor as being both pious and powerful. Thus, the patrons of windows in the east ends of churches and cathedrals expressed their devotion to God and the Church through the depiction of significant biblical imagery, while the patrons of windows throughout the rest of the ecclesiastical structure demonstrated a pride in their aristocratic status through the representation of heraldic symbols and inscriptions.

Chapter Three “Merchant-Class Patronage of Stained Glass”:

Introduction

Though there are many similarities between the patronage of stained glass by aristocratic and merchant-class donors in late medieval England, the differences that exist between them demonstrate a great deal about the social and class structures of late medieval English society. In the previous chapter, aristocratic donors were shown to have self-identified through the representation of heraldic elements in their windows, whereas in this chapter, merchant-class patrons will be demonstrated as identifying through their occupational symbols. It will be argued that through the pious act of donating stained glass windows, merchant-class patrons expressed pride in their identity as active members of the merchant class in late medieval England.

This chapter will follow a thematic structure to illustrate both the piety expressed by merchant-class donors and their means of identifying themselves through their donation of stained glass. By first examining the ways in which merchant-class windows demonstrated the devotion of their donor, this chapter will show that merchant-class patrons of stained glass did donate windows in the east ends of ecclesiastical structures. This east end patronage, however, was limited to lesser churches, and an absence of merchant-class windows within cathedral east ends is indicative of the societal constraints placed on the merchant class.

This chapter will also demonstrate the ways in which merchant-class donors expressed their identity through the patronage of stained glass. The windows of merchant-class patrons predominantly featured mercantile and occupational symbols and scenes which expressed the identity of the donor. Although merchant-class donors did

represent some important biblical imagery in their windows, the emphasis on mercantile and secular activities found in merchant-class windows suggests a sense of pride in the donor's identity as a member of the merchant class. Ultimately, this chapter will express the merchant-class emphasis on community and identity through examining the imagery and location of merchant-class windows in the churches and cathedrals of late medieval England.

The Merchant-Class Patron

Merchant-class donors were important figures in the patronage of stained glass windows in late medieval England. Although most stained glass was donated by aristocratic donors, owing to their access to funds and prominence in society, the windows given by merchant-class benefactors hold great significance in the analysis of stained glass patronage. Merchant-class donors could be many different types of people, including individuals, families, or associations, such as confraternities or guilds.¹⁵⁵ Examining the ways in which merchant-class identity was different from that of aristocratic donors is essential to analyzing the merchant-class patronage of stained glass. Likewise, studying the similarities between the methods of donation by both merchant-class and aristocratic patrons facilitates the analysis of merchant-class window patronage.

Donors of stained glass windows could be affluent individuals or families who were members of the merchant class. An unknown layman named Vincent donated in the fourteenth century the 'Martyrdom Window' of York Minster's nave north aisle, which depicts, as the name suggests, the martyrdoms of Sts. Lawrence, Vincent, Denis, Edmond

¹⁵⁵ Marks, *SGEMA*, 3-6.

and Stephen.¹⁵⁶ The donor portrait shows the kneeling benefactor, the unknown Vincent, holding out a model of the window in offering to the saint of his namesake.¹⁵⁷ Another individual donor shown presenting a miniature version of their window is the mercer Robert Skelton, who was also chamberlain and bailiff of York from 1353-1356.¹⁵⁸ The window, located in St. Denys, Walmgate, York, was donated c.1350, and Skelton's donor portrait is located next to the depictions of a kneeling female and male figure (Appendix A, figs. 4 & 5).¹⁵⁹ A notable merchant-class family, the Blackburn family of York who are discussed later in this chapter, has members who are associated with multiple windows within the parish church of All Saints, North Street.¹⁶⁰ Through their local power and wealth, the Blackburn family expresses their piety and influence in the donation of multiple stained glass windows.

Merchant-class patrons could also take the form of groups who, through collective contribution, donated stained glass windows as an association in late medieval England. Medieval guilds were very diverse, with guilds formed around many different aspects of medieval society.¹⁶¹ Guilds could be both religious and secular, and could focus on particular saints, parishes, crafts, or trades.¹⁶² Religious guilds were commonly called confraternities, and often followed and were named after a particular saint.¹⁶³ Craft guilds,

¹⁵⁶ Brown, *OMF*, 132.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ Marks, *SGEMA*, 12.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ "Testamentum Nicholai Blakburn Senioris Civis et Mercatoris Ebor," In *Testamenta Eboracensia: A Selection of Wills from the Registry at York, Part 2* (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1855), 17-18, notes by editor. <https://archive.org/details/testamentaeborac02york>.

¹⁶¹ Goldberg, 59.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

¹⁶³ Goldberg, 59-61.

though sometimes also named after saints, were centred on the craft of its members.¹⁶⁴

Whether based on religious cults or crafts, medieval guilds functioned as small communities within the larger town or city,¹⁶⁵ and their emphasis on brotherhood is echoed in the nature of their patronage.

Guilds were powerful players in medieval society, not only for their ability to hold monopolies over certain kinds of production in order to ensure their own success, but also for their patronage of the arts.¹⁶⁶ These late medieval guilds contributed to the arts in many ways, but they did so most notably through pageants and drama centered on religious themes, called mystery plays.¹⁶⁷ These plays were important events for the local populous, as they were funded largely by the guilds of the community, and they served to instruct and provide spiritual well-being to those in the audience.¹⁶⁸ Like some of the imagery found within stained glass windows, the mystery plays relayed models of morality through their cycles,¹⁶⁹ so by funding these plays, guilds expressed their piety and involvement in the community.

In addition to funding mystery plays, English guilds could also serve as benefactors of stained glass windows in late medieval churches. Richard Marks considers the donation of stained glass by guilds in his discussion of glass patrons, noting that though guild patronage of stained glass did exist, it “is poorly represented in surviving

¹⁶⁴ Goldberg, 63.

¹⁶⁵ Goldberg, 59, 62.

¹⁶⁶ Goldberg, 63. In the 12th century, the weavers guild of York held a monopoly over certain kinds of fabric that required an annual payment.

¹⁶⁷ Goldberg, 65.

¹⁶⁸ J. W. Robinson, “The Late Medieval Cult of Jesus and the Mystery Plays,” *PMLA*, vol. 80, no. 5 (December 1965): 512. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/460842>.

¹⁶⁹ Robinson, 512.

glass.”¹⁷⁰ Windows in a Franciscan church within the City of London were attributed to the Fishmongers, Vitners, and Drapers Guilds, though they have not survived.¹⁷¹ Surviving examples of guild windows, however, include the windows at St. Laurence’s Church in Ludlow, Shropshire, given by two different guilds. Either the Clothiers or Shearman of Ludlow donated the westernmost window of the north chancel wall, as recognized by the original inscription, *Orate pro bono statu totius artis scissora de Lodelowe. Qui hanc fenestram fieri fecerunt Ann. Dom. MCCCCXXV*.¹⁷² St. John’s Chapel of the same St. Laurence’s church houses a window that depicts scenes associated with the founding of the Palmers Guild, likely the patron of the window.¹⁷³ By donating windows through the collective effort of prominent guilds, merchant-class patrons expressed their importance not as individuals, but as a collective sector of society.

Other significant players in the medieval merchant-class world were women. The role of women in the merchant-class patronage of stained glass cannot be overlooked, as merchant-class women’s involvement in parish churches and guilds was integral to late medieval society.¹⁷⁴ Women, as with most members of society, were heavily involved in the parish church. For merchant-class women in particular, the parish church was a centre where organization could take place, and during periods of church rebuilding, these groups of women could collect funds and contribute to the ongoing patronage.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰ Marks, *SGEMA*, 6.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² Marks, *SGEMA*, 6. Translation by Kelsey Comeau: ‘Pray for the good of the entire state of the art of scissors of Ludlow. Who made this window in the year of our lord 1425.’

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁴ Katherine L. French, “Maidens' Lights and Wives' Stores: Women's Parish Guilds in Late Medieval England,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 29, no. 2 (Summer, 1998): 401-402. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2544523>.

¹⁷⁵ French, 402.

Katherine French in her article notes the sum of 9 shillings that was given in 1495 by the wives of Walberswick, Suffolk, for new windows in the church.¹⁷⁶

Other parish wives were also involved in the donation of stained glass windows. The wives of the parish of St. Neot, Cornwall, are depicted a window within St. Neot church's nave in the early sixteenth century.¹⁷⁷ The window was glazed with two others, which together show the figures of the brothers, sisters, and wives of the western part of the parish kneeling beneath the figures of Cornish saints and biblical figures.¹⁷⁸ Richard Marks notes that, "almost certainly these and other groupings at St. Neot represented confraternities,"¹⁷⁹ which shows how involved women were, not only in the patronage of stained glass windows, but within the guilds and confraternities as well.¹⁸⁰

Merchant-class patrons donated their windows in the same ways as aristocratic benefactors. An excellent example of the post-mortem donation of a window by a merchant-class individual comes with the will of Richard Russel. Russel was a parishioner of St. John the Baptist church, located in Hungate, York, between St. Saviourgate and the River Foss, and he was also Lord Mayor from 1421-1430.¹⁸¹ The parish church was founded sometime before 1194, and by the mid fifteenth century, areas of it required rebuilding.¹⁸² In 1435, Russel bequeathed to the church the funds for a chantry, the church tower, and the repainting of the interior, as well as new altars.¹⁸³ Most

¹⁷⁶ French, 402.

¹⁷⁷ Marks, *SGEMA*, 6.

¹⁷⁸ Marks, *SGEMA*, 6.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Goldberg, 59.

¹⁸¹ Wilson & Mee, 90.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

importantly for this study, however, is the donation by Russel of three new glazed windows. The will reads:

*Et quod tres fenestrae novae lapideae in ecclesia predicta sint vitriatae et perimpletae in aestate proxima futura, meliori modo quo poterint, secundum discrecionem executorum meorum.*¹⁸⁴

Russel had great power and wealth as Lord Mayor, and as a result, was able to bequeath such things to his local parish church. Russel, later in his will, also makes a request for the creation of a window in the monastery of St. Peter in York:

*Et fabricae novae fenestrae vitriae super ostium vestibuli in monasterio Beati Petri Ebor.*¹⁸⁵

By bequeathing windows in his will, Richard Russel is shown as being a wealthy and powerful merchant-class individual who is not only concerned with the salvation of his soul, but also with preserving his own legacy beyond death.

Merchant-class patrons donated windows in a similar fashion to aristocratic donors, but they differed in key ways. The patronage of windows by both guilds and women highlights the community-driven nature of merchant-class donors, as opposed to the prevalence of individual window donation by aristocratic patrons. Though there are many prominent merchant-class individuals who were benefactors of stained glass, the collective donation of glass found with merchant-class windows is indicative of an alternative motive behind the patronage of merchant-class benefactors than that of aristocratic donors. Where aristocratic donors seek recognition for being individual

¹⁸⁴ “Testamentum Ricardi Russell Civis et Mercatoris Ebor,” In *Testamenta Eboracensia: A Selection of Wills from the Registry at York, Part 2* (London: J. B. Nichols and Sons, 1855), 53. <https://archive.org/details/testamentaeborac02york>. Translation by Kelsey Comeau: ‘And that three new windows in the aforementioned stone church are glazed and fulfilled in summer in the near future, in the best way possible, according to the discretion of my executors.’

¹⁸⁵ “Testamentum Ricardi Russell Civis et Mercatoris Ebor,” 55. Translation by Kelsey Comeau: ‘And make new glass windows above the vestibule door in the monastery of St. Peter of York.’

members of prominent families, merchant-class patrons pursue identification as members of a community-based social class.

Windows in the East End

As with aristocratic patrons, the donation of stained glass windows in the east end was representative of the great piety and reverence for God that merchant-class patrons had. The absence of merchant-class windows in the east ends of cathedrals, however, suggests that certain limitations were placed on patrons of the merchant class, whereas the presence of merchant-class east windows in lesser churches and their biblical imagery is representative of the merchant class' piety and sense of identity. Thus, the constraints faced by merchant-class donors, as well as their self-expression and devotion to God, are shown through the examination of east windows donated by merchant-class patrons.

The absence of merchant-class windows in the east ends of cathedrals can be seen within York Minster. The merchant-class windows in the Minster's nave, such as the 'Bell-Founder's Window,' were donated in the fourteenth century, decades before the installation of the Great East Window, which was begun in 1405.¹⁸⁶ Since the Great East Window housed clear glass before its glazing and was an available space for potential patrons,¹⁸⁷ the placement of merchant-class windows within York Minster's nave was a deliberate choice made, not out of lack of availability, but out of will. Similarly, the fifteenth century 'Percy Window' in the east end of St. Denys, Walmgate, York, was donated nearly a century after the mercer Robert Skelton's window in the nave. Had these east windows been donated prior to the windows of the nave, east end patronage

¹⁸⁶ Brown, *OMF*, 280.

¹⁸⁷ Brown, *OMF*, 218.

would not have been an option for merchant-class benefactors. A question arises, then, as to why this absence of merchant-class windows is seen. If the east end as a general interior location was expressly off-limits to merchant-class donors, then no merchant-class east windows would ever exist. Yet this is not the case. The east windows of All Saints, North Street and Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, both in York, counter this argument.

The presence of merchant-class windows in the east ends of lesser churches displays the power and status of merchant-class donors in different ways, as is seen in the east windows of All Saints, North Street and Holy Trinity, Goodramgate. The ‘Blackburn Window’ of All Saints, North Street in York was donated in the fifteenth century by Nicholas Blackburn and his family (Appendix A, fig. 6). Nicholas Blackburn Sr. was one of York’s wealthiest merchants and served as Lord Mayor for the city in both 1413 and 1429.¹⁸⁸ Nicholas Blackburn Jr. was the son of Nicholas Sr., and also was a merchant, as well as a sheriff of York in 1438.¹⁸⁹ In the will of Nicholas Sr., the extent of his influence is demonstrated through the monetary sums and goods left to his family and fellow citizens,¹⁹⁰ further illustrating the magnitude of the Blackburn prestige in fifteenth century York.

The ‘Blackburn Window’ is an important window for several reasons, but its imagery is what makes it most significant for this study.¹⁹¹ In the central light, St. Anne is shown teaching the Virgin to read above a depiction of the Holy Trinity,¹⁹² alongside

¹⁸⁸ “Testamentum Nicholai Blakburn Senioris Civis et Mercatoris Ebor,” 17, notes by editor.

¹⁸⁹ “Testamentum Nicholai Blakburn Senioris Civis et Mercatoris Ebor,” 18, notes by editor.

¹⁹⁰ “Testamentum Nicholai Blakburn Senioris Civis et Mercatoris Ebor,” 17-19.

¹⁹¹ Wilson & Mee, 26.

¹⁹² Marks, *SGEMA*, 75. The representation of St. Anne teaching Mary to read is used predominantly in English medieval art, rather than throughout the medieval world. Beneath this, God the father is shown seated, holding a cross with the son hanging, crucified. The Holy Spirit is represented by a dove placed between the representations of the father and son.

other important biblical figures.¹⁹³ The donor portraits of Nicholas Sr. and his wife are in the bottommost right panel where their figures are represented kneeling in piety. An interesting aspect of this window, beyond the depiction of saints and biblical figures, is the prominence of women, particularly merchant-class women. The central light is filled with the image of St. Anne and her daughter, the Virgin Mary, reading,¹⁹⁴ while Nicholas Blackburn's wife and another female family member are shown kneeling before a book. The entire Blackburn family, and particularly the women of the family, are connecting themselves to both the Virgin Mary and St. Anne through the depiction of reading, which represented the affluence of the donors. The inclusion of the books strengthens the connection of the Blackburn women to the Virgin, but also displays their wealth and prestige as merchants.¹⁹⁵ In donating a window containing scenes focused on female literacy, the members of the Blackburn family are choosing to identify themselves as pious and literate members of the merchant class.

The east window of Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, prominently demonstrates the expression of personal identity and piety within merchant-class windows (Appendix A, fig. 7). The window is a highly decorative and substantial work that was donated by the rector, John Walker in the late fifteenth century. John Walker was an official of several prominent guilds in York, including the Corpus Christi Guild and the Guild of St. Christopher and St. George.¹⁹⁶ The Corpus Christi Guild of York was established in 1408

¹⁹³ Marks, *SGEMA*, 75.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ Marks, *SGEMA*, 14. As mentioned in the previous chapter, donors depicted before an altar containing a manuscript were often the wealthiest patrons.

¹⁹⁶ England, Royal Commission on Historical Monuments, *York Historic Buildings in the Central Area*, (London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, 1981), 7.

for the worship of, as the title suggests, the body of Christ,¹⁹⁷ and was one of York's most prestigious guilds.¹⁹⁸ The Guild of St. Christopher and St. George was founded after the two separate guilds dedicated to each saint, which were both influential guilds on their own, merged in the late 1470s.¹⁹⁹ Walker's membership in both of these guilds is indicative of his devotion to God and the level of his prominence in York, which both influence the nature of his window.

The main iconography of Holy Trinity's east window is the Corpus Christi, depicting the body of Christ (Appendix A, fig. 8). Surrounding Christ are representations of saints and biblical figures, such as St. George, St. Christopher, St. John the Baptist, and the Virgin Mary, alongside a rare portrayal of the Holy Trinity as three bearded and crowned individuals.²⁰⁰ Walker's choice in imagery directly reflects his own devotion to and involvement in both the Corpus Christi Guild and the Guild of St. Christopher and St. George. In choosing to depict such important ecclesiastical imagery in the east window of Holy Trinity, John Walker was undoubtedly displaying his piety and emphasizing the holiness of the east end. More important to this study, however, is the notion that Walker was expressing his identity as a member of the merchant class by highlighting his involvement in two of York's most prominent guilds.

Holy Trinity, Goodramgate's east window depicts the Sts. George and Christopher (Appendix A, figs. 9 & 10), who were the chosen hagiographical subjects of Walker's second guild, on either side of the body of Christ, who represented the Corpus

¹⁹⁷ Robert H. Skaife, ed., *The Register of the Guild of Corpus Christi in the City of York*, (London: Mitchell and Hughes, 1872), v.

¹⁹⁸ Eileen White, *The St. Christopher and St. George Guild of York* (York: Borthwick Publications, 1987), 1.

¹⁹⁹ White, 4.

²⁰⁰ Wilson & Mee, 40.

Christi Guild. St. George had been acknowledged as the protector of England since the fourteenth century,²⁰¹ and depicting him alongside St. Christopher and Christ would have had spiritual significance for the congregation beyond being secular symbols of local guilds. Thus, Rector John Walker, in choosing to depict figures associated with two of York's most prominent guilds, the Corpus Christi Guild and the Guild of St. Christopher and St. George, expressed not only his desire to identify as a guild member, but also his devotion to God and his parish.

The merchant-class donation of east end stained glass windows in late medieval England was an act of piety that represented the merchant-class identity of the patron. The hierarchical nature of window location is seen in the presence of exclusively aristocratic windows in the east ends of cathedrals as well as the existence of merchant-class east windows in the east ends of smaller churches. The windows donated by merchant-class donors in the east end depict important biblical and hagiographical figures, much like the east end windows of aristocratic donation. However, these merchant-class east windows reflect the piety of merchant-class patrons through the representation of imagery linked to their roles within the merchant class.

Windows Elsewhere

Merchant-class windows located elsewhere throughout the structure of either a cathedral or church tied the patron to their merchant-class identity, but did so by depicting different imagery than those of the east end. The windows found within both York Minster and lesser churches represent the occupational activities of the donor, which express the patron's desire to identify themselves by their social class and role in

²⁰¹ Marks, *SGEMA*, 75.

society. In examining these windows, the predominance of merchant-class windows located within the nave of both cathedrals and churches indicates a location-based aspect in the choice of imagery.

The imagery of merchant-class windows favoured secular scenes that reflected the daily lives of the merchant-class patron. Though found less often in England than on the continent,²⁰² merchant-class windows often represented the craft or trade of the patron, either through the depiction of crafting or selling scenes, or the presence of a symbol representing their trade.²⁰³ The use of symbols and badges was popular in late fourteenth and fifteenth century stained glass, and John Barton represented himself through his merchant's mark and other visual identifiers in his window at Holme-by-Newark in Nottinghamshire.²⁰⁴ The merchant's mark of John Barton is accompanied by his initials and a barrel,²⁰⁵ which was a punning device used by donors whose surnames ended with *tun* or *ton*, such as in the family name Barton.²⁰⁶ What is significant about Barton's use of imagery in this instance is that he chose to identify himself through the use of both his merchant's mark and personal identifiers. Barton emphasized his identity as a merchant by incorporating mercantile imagery and symbols in his window, expressing the desire for his status as a merchant-class individual to be known, as well as his name.

A panel at St. Mary Magdalene Church in Helmdon, Northamptonshire represents the merchant-class occupational activity of stonemasonry. In the tracery lights of the nave north window, dated to c.1313, the craft of William Campiun is represented as Campiun is shown hammering at a bit of stone, likely in commemoration of his work on the

²⁰² Marks, *Age of Chivalry*, 139.

²⁰³ Marks, *SGEMA*, 18-19.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Marks, *SGEMA*, 19.

church.²⁰⁷ Though it is unknown whether Campiun was simply the stonemason²⁰⁸ responsible for the rebuilding of the church or both that and the donor, the depiction of craftsmanship is an important feature of merchant-class windows that must be emphasized. Campiun is identified through the representation of his occupation, perhaps as an acknowledgement of the craft that led to the wealth of the donor.

The ‘Bell-founder’s Window’ from the north aisle of York Minster’s nave excellently displays the identity of its patron, Richard Tunnoc. Tunnoc was a bell-founder and goldsmith of Stonegate and he served as bailiff of the city from 1320-1321, as well as mayor in 1327.²⁰⁹ The window depicts multiple scenes, including representations of St. William of York, a patron saint of York Minster.²¹⁰ The miracle of Ouse Bridge, one of St. William’s most important miracles, is depicted across the three main lights, with Tunnoc’s donor portrait underneath it.²¹¹ In the central panel of the window, Tunnoc is shown kneeling before St. William with a banner spelling out ‘Richard Tunnoc’ above the portrait, emphasizing his role as the donor of the window.²¹² By placing his own image and name before a saint of such local importance, Tunnoc is connecting himself to the power and prominence of that saint.

The ‘Bell-Founder’s Window’ is also notable for another aspect of its imagery, namely the repetition and emphasis of one of Richard Tunnoc’s main occupational activities, which was bell-founding.²¹³ To the left of the donor portrait is a panel showing

²⁰⁷ Marks, *SGEMA*, 12-13.

²⁰⁸ Marks, *SGEMA*, 12-13, 36.

²⁰⁹ Brown, *OMF*, 288.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² *Ibid.* As discussed earlier in this thesis, St. William of York is depicted many times throughout York Minster, with entire hagiographical windows devoted to his life.

²¹³ *Ibid.*

two men tuning a bell, and to the right of it are two men casting a bell.²¹⁴ Both panels, in addition to many other scenes in the window, are under architectural canopies that are heavily decorated with bells.²¹⁵ Tunnoc had the wealth and agency to donate a window that depicted such a locally important saint, but he chose also to represent his own craft. The overabundance of bells present in the ‘Bell-founder’s Window’ suggests a desire of Tunnoc’s to emphasize his importance as a craftsman and member of the merchant class rather than only as a pious individual honouring important hagiographical subjects. The depiction of St. William expresses Tunnoc’s piety, which is a significant aspect of his patronage, but with the inclusion of his occupational identifiers, Tunnoc also conveys a sense of pride in his merchant-class status.

Other windows in York Minster contain important mercantile imagery, including the wine-selling panels from the nave’s north clerestory. The early fourteenth century window is made up of five main lights and contains a combination of heraldic, mercantile, and hagiographical subjects, with the most significant to this study being the depictions of wine-selling.²¹⁶ The second highest leftmost panel of the window depicts a wine merchant selling three barrels of wine to a customer.²¹⁷ This scene is mirrored by another wine-selling depiction in the rightmost panel of the same row, which shows the business transaction between the merchant and his customer taking place at a table.²¹⁸ These two panels depict the mercantile activities of a wine merchant, who was also likely the donor,²¹⁹ emphasizing the trade of the merchant as being important.

²¹⁴ Brown, *OMF*, 288.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Brown, *OMF*, 290.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

²¹⁹ Marks, *SGEMA*, 7, 12.

The presence of the business side of merchant activities is a fascinating aspect of the wine-selling panels. William Campiun from Helmdon and the bellfounders in Tunnoc's window are shown actively crafting in their representations, but in the wine-selling panels, the wine merchant is also shown negotiating a transaction, which highlights the commercial aspect of mercantile activities. The wine-sellers are being identified as active members of the merchant class, which suggests that there was a desire to recognize the piety and contribution of merchants and craftsmen beyond the simple acknowledgment of their social class.

Even within lesser churches there was a tendency for merchant-class patrons to emphasize their mercantile occupation. The nave of Long Melford church in Suffolk is richly decorated with stained glass donated by merchant-class patrons, who were primarily from the Martin and Clopton families.²²⁰ John Clopton of Suffolk was a wealthy clothier of the rural area, and as a part of funding the rebuilding of the church in the late fifteenth century, he donated stained glass to the nave north clerestory of the ecclesiastical structure.²²¹ Clopton chose to depict his customers alongside his own ancestors, family members, and friends,²²² representing the strong link that he had to his own occupation and his clients. Clopton's depiction of his clientele could indicate a desire to display both his trade and his reputation as a successful merchant.

The representation of a donor's profession in stained glass was a deliberate acknowledgement of a merchant-class patron's societal role. Merchant-class donors had agency over the imagery within their windows, so by choosing to display the symbols and actions associated with their occupational roles, the patrons directly identify

²²⁰ Marks, *SGEMA*, 5.

²²¹ Marks, *SGEMA*, 198-199.

²²² *Ibid.*

themselves as being merchant-class. This blatant recognition indicates that the donors felt a sense of pride in their background and that they wanted to represent themselves as accomplished members of the merchant class.

A significant number of windows representing the mercantile identifiers of their merchant-class donors are within the nave, which indicates a correlation between location and occupational motifs. Through identifying themselves in the most central area of the ecclesiastical structure, merchant-class patrons highlighted their status to the congregation and fellow parishioners. Whether individuals or guilds, the merchant-class patrons of stained glass emphasized their importance in terms of their role within the community, so conveying their identity within the most central area expresses the interconnectivity of the merchant class.

Overall, the windows donated by merchant-class patrons in the naves of churches and cathedrals represented occupational symbols and figures that identified the patron as a merchant-class individual or institution. Though sometimes donating windows in the naves of immensely significant cathedrals, merchant-class patrons continually chose to associate themselves with the merchant class, exhibiting great pride in their identity.

Conclusion

The donation of stained glass windows by merchant-class patrons in late medieval England was undeniably an act of piety. In performing this pious act, however, merchant-class patrons expressed just as much about themselves as they did about the imagery they depicted. The ability of merchant-class individuals and organizations to place windows in both cathedrals and lesser churches represents the agency and power of merchant-class

patrons, but the lack of merchant-class windows in the east ends of cathedrals is indicative of the societal constraints placed on the merchant class. Though merchant-class patrons were able to donate some east end windows, the placement of these windows was limited to only lesser churches. Despite the limitations placed on where merchant-class patrons could place their windows, a strong sense of pride is seen in the imagery within them, representing the community-driven nature of merchant-class donors.

The biblical and hagiographical imagery of merchant-class windows in the east ends of lesser churches expressed both the piety and identity of the patron. John Walker of York represented the Corpus Christi and Sts. Christopher and George in his east window, which were the symbols of two of York's most prominent guilds, of both he was a member. Just as the aristocratic patrons of windows within naves emphasized heraldry as an identifier of their status, the merchant-class patrons of windows in church and cathedral naves abundantly represented occupational symbols and scenes to identify themselves as merchant-class. The patrons chose to acknowledge and celebrate their status as merchant-class individuals and guilds, expressing a sense of pride in their social class. Thus, through donating windows in late medieval England, merchant-class patrons represented not only their piety, but also their identity.

Conclusion: “Class Influence on Stained Glass Patronage”

By donating beautiful works of art to the medieval Church, patrons of different social classes secured the salvation of their souls whilst magnifying the beauty of heaven, expressing their devotion to and reverence for God. Donating stained glass in particular meant that aristocratic and merchant-class patrons illuminated the churches and cathedrals of late medieval England with images of biblical and hagiographical figures. Donors also represented aspects of their own lives by depicting heraldry or mercantile activities in their windows that were located within various areas of ecclesiastical structures, expressing their identity and connections to the political world. Thus, this thesis has analyzed the location and imagery of stained glass windows donated by aristocratic and merchant-class patrons in order to highlight the influence of social class on the donation of stained glass in late medieval England.

Donors of stained glass from both the aristocracy and the merchant class represented a range of people within each of those social classes. Aristocratic donors encompassed noblemen, occasionally noblewomen, bishops, archbishops, monarchs, knights, or lords, and their windows were often donated by individuals. Merchant-class patrons, alternatively, were wealthy merchants, craftsmen, rectors, and most importantly groups such as guilds, confraternities, or women’s organizations. The merchant class in its nature was centred on the community, and that tendency is echoed in the abundant donation of stained glass by merchant-class groups and associations.

The placement of aristocratic and merchant-class windows in the east ends of ecclesiastical structures expresses the disparity between social classes in late medieval England. While aristocratic and merchant-class patrons gave windows to both cathedrals

and lesser churches, the exclusion of merchant-class windows from the east ends of cathedrals, and the corresponding presence of merchant-class windows in the east ends of only lesser churches, indicates a hierarchical element in the patronage of stained glass. The exclusive nature of cathedral east ends indicates that aristocratic patrons had the agency to place their windows within any location in the church or cathedral that they desired, whereas merchant-class patrons did not. In the east end, however, stained glass windows tied the aristocratic or merchant-class donor to significant biblical imagery that emphasized their piety.

The windows located within other areas of churches and cathedrals expressed the identity of aristocratic and merchant-class patrons in different ways. Aristocratic donors, who were predominantly individuals from important families, chose to identify themselves through their ancestral nobility in the form of heraldry. This connection to their familial status then strengthened their identity as members of the aristocracy. Alternatively, merchant-class patrons identified themselves through their occupational roles in the community, whether that was as a craftsman, merchant, or guild-member. The prevalence of such windows in the naves of both cathedrals and lesser churches demonstrates the relationship that patrons had with their communities, as the representation of personal or occupational imagery amongst the congregation in the nave meant that the celebration of their identity was shared with the entire community.

In conclusion, the donation of stained glass windows by both merchant-class and aristocratic patrons was an act of piety that also illustrated the power and agency of the benefactor; moreover, the imagery and location of the windows donated by these different patrons represent much broader notions of medieval class-structures. The use of

heraldic or occupational imagery expresses the patrons' pride in their identity whereas the absence of merchant windows from certain locations within cathedrals shows societal limitations placed on the merchant class donors. Thus the patrons of stained glass, both aristocratic and merchant-class, expressed their identity, power, and piety through the donation of stained glass windows in late medieval England.

Appendix A: Images of Stained Glass



Figure 1: *Donor portrait of Bishop Walter Skirlaw*, panel 1e, c.1405, York: York Minster, the Great East Window. Photo by Andrewrabbott, own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=40023677>.



Figure 2: *Kings Edward the Confessor, William I, and Edward III*, panel 1d, c.1405, York: York Minster, the Great East Window. Photo by Andrewrabbott, own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=39998810>.



Figure 3: *St. John of Beverley, Archbishop Thomas of Bayeux, and St. Wilfrid*, panels 2a-3a, 2b-3b, and 2c-3c, 1339, York: York Minster, the Great West Window. Photo by Diliff, own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=35079749>.



Figure 4: *Donor Portrait of Robert Skelton, c.1350, York: St. Denys, Walmgate. Photo by Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, 2009.*



Figure 5: *Female Donor with Robert Skelton*, c.1350, York: St. Denys, Walmgate. Photo by Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, 2009.



Figure 6: *The Blackburn Window*, fifteenth century, York: All Saints, North Street, east window. Photo by Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, 2009.



Figure 7: *East Window*, stained glass, late fifteenth century, York: Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, east window. Photo by Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, 2007.



Figure 8: *Central Panel*, late fifteenth century, York: Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, east window. Photo by Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, 2007.



Figure 9: *St. George*, late fifteenth century, York: Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, east window. Photo by Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, 2007.



Figure 10: *St. Christopher*, late fifteenth century, York: Holy Trinity, Goodramgate, east window. Photo by Dr. Jennifer MacDonald, 2007.

Appendix B: Glossary of Terms

Donor Portrait A representation of the patron who donated the window in the glass itself. The donors are typically shown kneeling, sometimes before an altar or holding out a miniature version of the window.

Flashed Glass A process by which glass is coloured, involving the coating of one side of clear glass with a layer of coloured glass. This was most commonly used for ruby glass, whose pure coloured glass had too high an opacity to be used alone.

Foliage A common decorative motif used in medieval stained glass. Depictions of plant imagery often served as background details, commonly in either ruby or sapphire glass.

Glass Painter The individual who painted the designs onto the stained glass.

Glazier The title given to the craftsman responsible for making a stained glass window.

Grisaille A style of stained glass with intricate patterning painted onto clear glass. Sometimes light colouring was used amongst grisaille designs, but primarily colourless glass was used. This style was common in the 12th and 13th centuries, and often accompanies heraldic windows.

Heraldry The depiction of coats of arms, shields, badges, and crests representing either a family or institution, such as the monarchy or kingdom.

Lights The term used for a section of a window delineated by a stone framework.

Micro-architecture The use of architectural design elements in a window. Typically this was used in a canopy style to frame a panel of glass.

Quarry A diamond shaped panel of glass. Lattice-like designs could be made with quarries when either two or all four sides were painted with lines.

Roundel A panel of glass that is round in shape.

Ruby Glass A dense and richly coloured red glass made from the addition of copper oxide to the liquid glass mixture. Ruby glass was typically flashed in order to allow for the passage through of sufficient light.

Sapphire Glass A deep blue coloured glass made from the addition of cobalt to the liquid glass mixture.

Tracery The smaller panels of a window outside of the main lights. The tracery is typically located at the apex of a window.

Yellow Stain A wash of a silver oxide ‘paint’ on clear glass that resulted in a bright yellow translucent colouring. This innovation meant that yellow colourant could be painted onto glass in fine detail, freeing the glazier from having to lead yellow glass separately.

Appendix C: The Production of Stained Glass

The creation of stained glass was a significant process that greatly impacted Gothic cathedrals and churches in England. The most valuable treatise on the manufacturing of stained glass comes from Theophilus Presbyter, an early twelfth century monk,²²³ who outlines the steps required for the creation of the many different colours of stained glass. Theophilus also explains the process of cutting, painting, and assembling the pieces of glass in order to create entire stained glass windows. The preparation of stained glass is also represented in an illustration from the early fifteenth century manuscript describing the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville, which visually displays important aspects of this process.²²⁴

Theophilus begins his treatise by outlining the production of coloured glass, the first step of which is the preparation of the proper furnace. One of the furnaces used in the production of stained glass is represented in the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville, which shows workers removing finished glass from within it.²²⁵ With the furnace correctly assembled, a mixture comprising of two parts ash and one part sand is then collected and placed into the furnace for a night and a day.²²⁶ The mixture is subsequently transferred to clay pots, where it is stirred until it adheres to the iron blowpipe, which is used in the glass-blowing process.²²⁷ If the glass were to remain white, or clear, the glass-blowing would begin from this step in the process. If, however, the glass were to be coloured, different oxides would be added to the mixture within the pots in order to create

²²³ Theophilus, xv.

²²⁴ Marks, *SGEMA*, 29.

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Theophilus, 52-53.

²²⁷ Theophilus, 54.

vibrant colours.²²⁸ Cobalt produced blue glass, sometimes referred to as sapphire glass, copper created red or ruby glass, and iron oxide made green or yellow glass.²²⁹ Ruby glass, so abundantly used in cathedrals on the continent and in some English cathedrals, such as Canterbury Cathedral, was often used in windows through a technique called ‘flashing,’ where one side of a sheet of clear glass was coated with a layer of red glass in order to retain its transparency.²³⁰

When the mixture was properly coloured, the glass could then be blown into sheets.²³¹ Workers in the *Travels* of Sir John Mandeville are shown collecting sand and blowing glass, which visually conveys this expert practice.²³² The liquid glass mixture would stick onto the end of a hollowed blow-pipe, and the glass-maker would blow the glass into a bottle-like shape that would subsequently be cut and flattened, making a single sheet of glass.²³³ This glass sheet, whether coloured or clear, would then be cut to fit the design of the window, and painted by the glass-painter with both dark and light pigments.²³⁴ Once the glass was painted and fired, the pieces were fixed together with strips of lead (called ‘comes’) and small nails, becoming assembled into one window.²³⁵

²²⁸ Marks, *SGEMA*, 28.

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Marks, *SGEMA*, 29.

²³³ Theophilus, 54-55.

²³⁴ Theophilus, 63-64.

²³⁵ Theophilus, 69-71.

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